

## **Appendix 2: Engagement and Consultation Summary**

Children's centre services in the Bromyard reach are externally commissioned and currently delivered by Hope for Children and their Families Ltd at a current annual contract value of £25,000 per annum. The contract is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The following provides a summary of relevant engagement and consultation undertaken in relation to delivery of Children's Centre services in the Bromyard Reach area.

### **Bromyard Reach Area Consultation (2018)**

Prior to the award of the current contract, consultation was undertaken across the Bromyard children centre reach area, which involved an online survey and drop-in engagement sessions at the HOPE Centre Play Zone and Health Visitor Clinic, Bishops Frome Parent and Toddler Group and St. Peter's Primary School, Bromyard.

The on-line survey received 184 responses with 57% of respondents agreeing that children's centre services should be delivered in places where communities have the most vulnerable children.

Most respondents (40%) thought that voluntary groups or charities would be the best type of provider for children's centre services in Bromyard.

Although respondents liked services delivered from a children's centre building, there was a notable need for outreach services outside of Bromyard town centre in pre-schools, village halls and schools.

### **Hope for Children and their Families Ltd (September 2020)**

Engagement with the CEO of the Hope Centre was undertaken to discuss the potential future options for the delivery of the service. Given the reduced levels of funding through the contract lifetime HOPE were confident that they had delivered against the contract outcomes and brought a great deal of added value due to the wider Hope offer including, for example, attracting lottery funding to broaden their offer to families and their community food programme.

Relationships with partners was positive, enhanced by the MAO being based at the centre and the Hope Centre has good connections with local families and the wider community.

In terms of impact of loss of funding, whilst it is a small amount of funding in monetary terms, concerns about the long standing strategic value of the relationship with the council were raised.

If re-commissioned, which was a clear preference for the provider, even though the funding is now much reduced in comparison to previous levels, HOPE would intend to bid for the contract and work hard to meet the requirements of the contract.

The need for a carefully managed transition was also raised to ensure that disruption was minimised.

This was supplemented by the CEO via email correspondence to the Lead Member which stressed the added value offered by the Hope Centre and concern about community impact of any change in delivery.

Further correspondence has also been received from the Chair of Trustees for Hope for Children and their Families Ltd in December 2020. Concerns relating to timescales for the decision were raised with a request for a longer decision period.

Concerns were raised regarding changing support workers and contact procedures at a difficult time for vulnerable families given the coronavirus pandemic.

Concerns about families' ability to access new models of support were also highlighted in relation to travel/ IT restrictions if local support could not be provided.

### **Bromyard Reach Area Ward Member Engagement (November 2020)**

Engagement with ward members for the Bromyard reach area has been undertaken, supplemented by emails to the Lead Member, where representatives articulated high regard for the Hope Family Centre and the wider role the centre fulfils in the Bromyard area.

With specific reference to Children's Centre provision, a key concern is to ensure that any changes to the way in which provision was arranged should be focussed on improving the support provided for vulnerable families.

The benefits of consistency of the Children's Centre offer across the county was recognised, but members stressed that any change must not lead to duplication of provision, and voiced concern about the potential loss of any added value that the Hope Family Centre delivers under current arrangements.