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Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

# CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

| 7.30 pm | Wednesday 6 March 2013 | Town Hall |
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Members 14: Quorum 6

**COUNCILLORS:**

Sandra Binion (Chairman)
Gillian Ford (Vice-Chair)
Nic Dodin
Robby Misir
Pat Murray
Garry Pain
Frederick Thompson
Melvin Wallace
Keith Wells

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:**

**Statutory Members representing the Churches**

Phillip Grundy, Church of England
Jack How, Roman Catholic Church

**Statutory Members representing parent governors**

Julie Lamb, Special Schools
Anne Ling, Primary Schools
Garry Dennis, Secondary Schools

Non-voting members representing local teacher unions and professional associations:
Margaret Cameron, (NAHT), Bev Whitehead (NUT), Keith Passingham (NASUWT)

**For information about the meeting please contact:**
**Sean Cable (01708) 432436**
**sean.cable@havering.gov.uk**

## What is Overview & Scrutiny?

Each local authority is required by law to establish an overview and scrutiny function to support and scrutinise the Council's executive arrangements. Each overview and scrutiny committee has its own remit as set out in the terms of reference but they each meet to consider issues of local importance.

They have a number of key roles:

1. Providing a critical friend challenge to policy and decision makers.

2. Driving improvement in public services.

3. Holding key local partners to account.

4. Enabling the voice and concerns of the public.

The committees consider issues by receiving information from, and questioning, Cabinet Members, officers and external partners to develop an understanding of proposals, policy and practices. They can then develop recommendations that they believe will improve performance, or as a response to public consultations.

Committees will often establish Topic Groups to examine specific areas in much greater detail. These groups consist of a number of Members and the review period can last for anything from a few weeks to a year or more to allow the Members to comprehensively examine an issue through interviewing expert witnesses, conducting research and site visits. Once the topic group has finished its work it will send a report to the Committee that created it and it will often suggest recommendations to the executive.

## Terms of Reference

The areas scrutinised by the Committee are:

- School Improvement (BSF)
- Pupil and Student Services (including the Youth Service)
- Children's Social Services
- Safeguarding
- Adult Education
- 14-19 Diploma
- Scrutiny of relevant aspects of the LAA
- Councillor Calls for Action
- Social Inclusion

## AGENDA ITEMS

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(if any) - receive.

**2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Members are invited to declare any interests in any of the items on the agenda at this point of the meeting. Members may still declare an interest in an item at any time prior to the consideration of the matter.

**3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman will announce details of the arrangements in case of fire or other events that might require the meeting room or building's evacuation.

**4 REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S CENTRES - CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION** (Pages 1 - 66)

**Ian Buckmaster**
**Committee Administration &**
**Member Support Manager**

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Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

# CHILDREN & LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**6 March 2013 (Special)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Subject Heading:** | Review of Children's Centres |
| **CMT Lead:** | Joy Hollister, Group Director, Social Care & Learning |
| **Report Author and contact details:** | Sean Cable<br>Committee Officer<br>sean.cable@havering.gov.uk |
| **Policy context:** | See Cabinet Report attached |

In accordance with Paragraph 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Rules, a requisition signed by two Members representing more than one Group (Councillors Keith Darvill and Gillian Ford) has called in a decision of Cabinet dated 13 February 2013. The text of the requisition appears at the end of this report:

**CABINET DECISION**

At its meeting on 13 February 2013 Cabinet considered a report on proposals for the merger of Children Centre activities around 6 hub sites. Alternative operators (such as Schools and Libraries) would run and maintain the other smaller and less-used sites, which would be decommissioned as Children Centres, but continue to provide early years services such as pre-school provision. Cabinet made the following decisions:

1. Approved the decommissioning of the following Children's Centres and the services currently provided within them to be transferred to the remaining hub sites by 2 April 2013, subject to receiving final approval from the Department for Education:

    - Airfield
    - Harold Court
    - Hilldene
    - Pyrgo
    - South Hornchurch
    - Thistledene
    - Upminster

2. Approved the continued provision of services from the following larger hub centres:

    - Collier Row
    - Chippenham Road
    - Elm Park
    - Ingrebourne
    - St Kildas
    - Rainham Village

3. the commencement of a tendering process for construction/ refurbishment works at issue of tenders for Harold Court Primary, Harold Wood Primary, Mead Primary, Parsonage Farm Primary, Rise Park Infant and Junior schools, Towers Infant and Junior schools, together with all associated investigations e.g. soil survey

4. that the final allocation of available Capital funding as detailed within this report be delegated to the Lead Members for Children and Learning and Value, and the Group Directors of Children's Services and Finance and Commerce.

**Reasons for decisions:**

Alongside the background evidence base, feedback from the consultation suggested support for the merger of Centres as indicated. Consultation feedback as detailed in stakeholder consultation minutes attached also indicated that Chippenham Road should remain open as a Children's Centre.

The implementation of the proposals would continue the delivery of service provision to a high standard without affecting current staffing levels and allow for closer co-location of staff to deliver targeted and preventative services for families.

Children's Centres would still offer free services to all, although resources would be mainly focused on more targeted and specialist work with families. Wherever possible, the voluntary sector and parent volunteers would continue to be encouraged to deliver these services, supported with training where necessary or families signposted to other opportunities in the area.

The proposals would ensure:

- Havering still meets its statutory duty to have sufficient centres to meet local need (demand at the larger Hub Centres is far higher as detailed in the evidence section, and positive infomal feedback has been received from Department for Education on initial proposals).
- That the impact on local communities will be minimal, due to the provision of alternative early years services from former sites. Increased outreach provision will also ensure that services are accessible and all communities can be served.
- Provision of local childcare, particularly given significant recent increases in the early years population in Havering are likely to increase placement

demand[1]. The proposals will also help the Council implement its Childcare Sufficiency Audit Objectives[2] and provide additional free places for two year olds from vulnerable families.[3]

**Other options considered and rejected:**

Alternative options considered have included:

1. Keeping all centres open - this is not a long-term option. It would mean staff resources remain over-stretched across multiple sites and are unable to deliver a new targeted and early help service. In addition, this option would not allow the Service to make financial savings.

2. Keeping Hilldene Children's Centre rather Chippenham Road open. This would be unattractive because
   - Consultation findings and background evidence reveal the Chippenham Centre is well use, popular and should remain open.
   - It is in a central and densely populated area.
   - Due to the high rent costs, alternative early years provision (such as pre-school provision) is not financial. Without alternative early years provision from the site, DfE would be entitled to claw back Sure Start capital grant.
   - In comparison, Hilldene Primary School is interested in using Hilldene Children's Centre for pre-school provision and family activities.

## REASONS FOR REQUISITION

The reasons for the requisition were detailed on the formal notification and were detailed as follows:

1. The decision appears to be counter to Central Government and the Councils policies on early intervention

2. The decision does not appear to have taken due consideration to the rise in the birth rate

3. To allow Overview & Scrutiny Committees to consider the impact of the Council taking responsibility for Public Health Policy before the closure of Children's Centres.

## RECOMMENDATION

**That the Committee considers the requisition of the decision of Cabinet and determine whether to uphold it.**

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[1]Havering Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011/12, Demographics Update. Available online at http://www.haveringdata.net/resource/view?resourceId=JSNAtwentytwelveDemographicsUpdate.
[2]Havering Childcare Sufficiency Review 2011/12. Available online at: http://www.havering.gov.uk/Documents/London_Borough_of_Havering_Childcare_Sufficiency_Review_2010-11.pdf
[3]Further information on the new Two year old offer and eligibility criteria are available at http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Education-early-years-grant.aspx

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|---|---|
| **CABINET**<br>**13 February 2013** | |
| **Subject Heading:** | **Review of Children's Centres** |
| **Cabinet Member:** | Councillor Paul Rochford |
| **CMT Lead:** | Joy Hollister, Group Director, Social Care & Learning |
| **Report Author and contact details:** | Ann Domeney,<br>Early Help Service Manager<br>Tel, 01708 433042; email<br>Ann.Domeny@havering.gov.uk<br><br>Children, Families and Learning Transformation Team<br>cfp@havering.gov.uk |
| **Policy context:** | These proposals will enable Children's Centre resources to be targeted where they are most needed, to support vulnerable children and families, particularly in areas of higher deprivation.<br><br>These proposals will take forward the practical delivery of the council's offer for early help and support for troubled families, whilst saving on building running costs. |
| **Financial summary:** | Beyond the anticipated service benefits. these proposals are forecast to contribute £138,000 per annum to MTFS Savings.<br><br>The issue of clawback has been explored with DfE and feedback is that it is unlikely that these proposals will attract a claw back of Surestart capital grant. |
| **Is this a Key Decision?** | Yes |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Is this a Strategic Decision?** | Yes |
| **When should this matter be reviewed?** | February 2014 |
| **Reviewing OSC:** | Children's Services |

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

| | |
|---|---|
| Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough | [] |
| Championing education and learning for all | [x] |
| Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages | [] |
| Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents | [x] |
| Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax | [] |

## SUMMARY

This report presents the findings from the recent consultation on a review of Children Centres, which proposed the merger of Children Centre activities around 6 hub sites that took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013. Alternative operators (such as Schools and Libraries) would run and maintain the other smaller and less-used sites, which would be decommissioned as Children Centres, but continue to provide early years services such as pre-school provision.

Overall, the consultation responses received are supportive of the proposals which Cabinet are asked to approve.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

I. Note the comments received and the overall findings from the consultation on the review of Children's Centres.

II. Approve the decommissioning of the following Children's Centres and the services currently provided within them to be transferred to the remaining hub sites by 2nd April 2013, subject to receiving final approval from the Department for Education:
- Airfield
- Harold Court
- Hilldene
- Pyrgo
- South Hornchurch
- Thistledene

- Upminster

III. Approve the continued provision of services from the following larger hub centres:
- Collier Row
- Chippenham Road
- Elm Park
- Ingrebourne
- St Kildas
- Rainham Village

**REPORT DETAIL**

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Following an Executive Decision by Cllr Rochford on 8th October 2012, a 12 week extensive public consultation took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013 on proposals to change how Children's Centre services will be delivered, with particular focus on changes to Children's Centre sites.

1.2 The consultation proposed to reduce the number of Children's Centre sites from 13 to 6 hub centres from April 2013, transferring all staff and services to hub sites. The following larger hub Centres would remain open:
- Collier Row
- Chippenham Road or Hilldene (to be determined)
- Elm Park
- Ingrebourne
- St Kildas
- Rainham Village

1.3 The proposals would enable the Children's Centres Service to:

- Reduce the amount of time staff (administrators, managers and professionals) spend staffing and running multiple sites.
- Deliver all services from the more widely-used Children's Centres Hubs by transferring operations from smaller and less-used sites.
- Redirect more staff time towards more targeted front-line work, supporting vulnerable families and children.
- Increase outreach work with children and families throughout the Borough.
- Emphasise preventative working and early help (delivering the Council's Prevention Strategy) through an integrated multi-agency approach.
- Continue to offer wider universal advice, support and guidance, focused in areas of higher deprivation and need, primarily via volunteer groups being set up across the borough.
- Contribute to meeting the Council's MTFS savings.

1.4 The consultation sought views from the public and stakeholders on whether to deregister the following smaller and less-used sites:
- Airfield
- Harold Court
- South Hornchurch

- Thistledene
- Upminster Library
- Either Chippenham Road or Hilldene

1.5 The consultation was advertised widely in the local press and Children's Services. Staff also actively encouraged Service Users to complete a survey and share their views. A wider range of Stakeholders were also consulted, both at formal consultation events and other meetings. Consultees included: Health, Police, Job Centre Plus, local charities, schools, faith organisations, all Council services and the Department for Education.

## 2. Background Evidence

2.1 The decision to consult was based upon the following body of evidence as detailed in the October 2012 Executive Key Decision report, which was approved by Councillor Rochford on 8th October.

## 3. 2012 Children's Centre Needs Analysis

3.1 This was a comprehensive and in-depth examination of Children Centres in Spring 2012, which included demographic and performance data, alongside consideration of customer feedback. This concluded that:

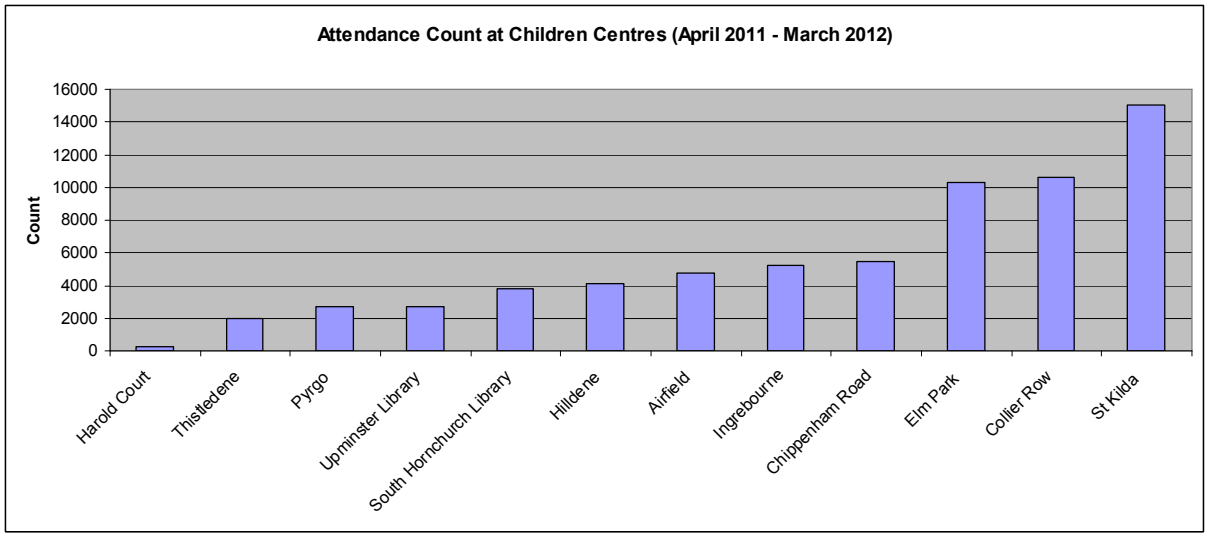
- Some Children's Centres were used more than others.
- Not all families used their closest Centre – they shop around.
- Some Children's Centres are located in areas of higher deprivation and family need, whereas others are not.
- Some areas have multiple centres (for example around Harold Hill) close by, whereas in other areas, residents may have to travel further to access a centre.
- Customer feedback is highly positive about the services received.
- Children's Centres undertake a significant amount of targeted work and received 550 referrals in 2011, mainly from Social Care and Health services.

## 4. Examination of Children's Centre Service User Demand

4.1 The conclusions of the Needs Analysis are supported by more research into Children Centre usage data from the Children's Centre database, E-Start. This shows, as detailed in the chart below, that some smaller sites have significantly lower overall attendance counts, namely: Harold Court, Thistledene, Hilldene, Pyrgo, Upminster Library, South Hornchurch Library and Airfield.

4.2 These proposals therefore focus on the amalgamation of these less popular sites into the larger hubs. In making the decision as to which sites should be amalgamated, factors other than attendance have also been considered, in particular the cost of running a site alongside the size and quality of building and facilities.

**Chart 1. Attendance Count at Havering Children's Centres**




## 5. Consideration of new Children Centre Guidance

5.1 These proposals will ensure the Council is in line with recent guidance (Department for Education, Government's Vision for Children's Centres, 2012) for Children's Centres. This can be most effectively achieved with fewer sites, as staff will spend less time staffing smaller and lesser-used sites. Instead they will have more time to deliver front-line services.

5.2 The guidance also states Children's Centres will:

- Provide access to universal early years services in the local area including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare
- Provide targeted evidence based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services
- Act as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion.
- Share expertise with other early years settings to improve quality.

5.3 Changes to Children's Centre funding also allow Havering greater flexibility in how Children's Centre services are delivered on the ground. Funds were originally ring fenced but now local authorities have discretion on how they are spent.

## 6. Supporting Other Government Policies

6.1The proposals will also support the delivery of other Government Polices, most notably:

6.2The Troubled Families Programme. As key service centres within local communities, Children's Centre Staff will become increasingly involved in working with troubled families. The new Children's Centre teams, working over six hub sites, will bring together local partner agencies to identify and better meet the needs of families with multiple and complex needs.

6.3The Munro Review of Child Protection. The proposals will enable greater multi-agency working with social care to support the taking forward of Munro's aspiration of getting the right help to the right child at the right time: the child's journey, from

needing to receiving help. Children's Centres will help deliver the Munro recommendations through delivering a service to families in the greatest need which exceeds minimum requirements.

6.4 Field's "Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances" (2011), alongside Allen's reports on Early Intervention (2011). These highlight the importance of early help within early years as absolutely essential to tackling problems of child poverty later in life. In practice in communities, Havering Children Centres and their staff, alongside families will continue to play a role in addressing Child Poverty. These proposals support ongoing work in this area by siting hub Centres and their respective interventions in areas of high material deprivation.

## 7. Service mapping

7.1 The proposals will not result in a reduction of universal or targeted services. Service mapping of alternative health and early years provision undertaken affirms this and concluded that in areas where a smaller Children's Centre site is proposed to close, a wide range of alternative early years and health services are available. Consequently closure of a site will not disadvantage families.

## 8. Contribution to Council Savings

8.1 By reducing the number of sites, the proposals will enable staff resources to do more work with children and families, and contribute to the Council's MTFS savings target. In the main this will be achieved by transferring operations to schools, libraries and other services thereby reducing building rent and utilities.

## 9. Consultation Approach

9.1 The consultation took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013. The consultation included a variety of consultation approaches, to ensure it was as comprehensive, far-reaching and inclusive as possible.

9.2 Approaches included a survey, developed to capture the views and opinions of Havering's residents and especially those who are connected with Children's Centres. The survey was advertised widely in the local press and via posters at Children's Centres. Staff also actively encouraged Service Users to complete the surveys and share their views, either via a paper version or online survey.

9.3 To ensure the consultation included the views of all relevant partner agencies, in particular those working with Children's Centres, a briefing was held on the 15th November 2012 for Children Centre Local Area Groups (CCLAG) to give them an opportunity to feedback and ask questions about the proposal. Consultation also took place with partner agencies at the Children, Families and Learning Transformation Board meetings (September and October 2012) and via other informal briefings and meetings.

9.4 Staff were also consulted, encouraged to offer feedback and also encourage Children's Centre Service Users to do the same. Two staff briefings were held on the

10th October 2012. The briefings gave children centre staff an opportunity to feedback their views and to ask any questions they had.

9.5 Consultation meetings were also held with other stakeholders, including the PCT and Clinical Commissioning Group, East London NHS, Job Centre Plus, Havering Voluntary Community Sector representatives, Local Members of Parliament, other Council departments and the Department for Education.

## 10. Key Survey Findings

10.1 Whilst the consultation was widely advertised, the number of responses received was lower than expected. Feedback from Staff suggested that a reason for the low response could be that Service Users did not appear particularly interested in the survey and proposals, because they typically did not use the centres proposed for merger. A total of 69 survey responses (58 in hard copy format and 11 online) were received. Where indicated, 83% of respondents were female. The key points which have been identified from the consultation are as follows:

- 46% of those responding indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed changes to centres
- According to the responses received, the most commonly used Children's Centres were Collier Row, St Kildas and Hilldene. However, this may be unrepresentative due to the low response number.
- The most commonly used services mentioned were midwifery and ante-natal support, one-to-one meetings and health visitor sessions.

10.2 A number of comments were received during the public consultation. Most were positive, as detailed in comments detailed in the consultation report and many respondents understood why there was a need to reduce the number of Children's Centres and to merge the services into 6 main hubs.

10.3 A small number of comments raised queries on whether services would be affected by the changes and requested more detail on this. The consultation document attached at Appendix 3 was designed to be short, accessible and in plain English, and gave adequate information in the circumstances and did assure that services would not be reduced as a result of these proposals.

10.4 Some responses requested Council support (most commonly in terms of training and funding) to establish parent-led groups and activities at Children's Centres.

10.5 In conclusion, whilst the number of responses was low and indicated a degree of public disinterest in the proposals, those individuals that did respond were supportive overall.

## 11. Key Stakeholder Consultation Findings

11.1 Consultation of local partners via formal consultation and other meetings identified wide-ranging support for the proposals to go ahead. The following detailed points are also noted:

- There was a general consensus that Chippenham Road Children Centre should remain open as it is well used and has a good foot fall as demonstrated in Chart 1.
- One respondent queried whether the proposals would increase room booking demand at the remaining 6 hubs. Centre Managers have also subsequently examined this and consider the site of the larger centres will be sufficient to meet demand and assure there is space available, however, if any issues arise this will be addressed at local Children Centre Stakeholder Meetings.
- One Stakeholder raised concern that families who have children with disabilities, may find it harder to access Children's Centres in the future due to longer travel distances, particularly by public transport. Centre Managers assured that a solution was already in place to avoid this scenario. Outreach work has already been identified and utilised as a way to reach families who are unable to travel to the hubs. It is anticipated that Children's Centre staff will meet with families at a building which is more accessible to them.

11.2 Over 50 hours consultation has also taken place with schools and libraries affected to develop detailed proposals for individual sites to be decommissioned and transferred to their operation. Affected schools and libraries have indicated that they are highly supportive of the proposals. A legal agreement (covering future use of the buildings and maintenance) has also been drafted with schools.

11.3 Detailed site-specific proposals are listed as background papers. A summary of these proposals are detailed in the table below.

**Table 1. Summary of Proposals**

| Centre to Merge | Received Sure Start Grant? | Future Proposal |
|---|---|---|
| Airfield (22528) | Yes | Expansion to the Bridge Nursery Offer for children with additional needs. |
| South Hornchurch (22766) | Yes | Alternative provision will be provided at the Library. |
| Harold Court (21381) | Yes | To be used by the school to offer pre school provision. |
| Pyrgo (22439) | Yes | To be used by the school to offer pre school provision. |
| Hilldene (21499) | Yes | To be used by the school for early years and pre-school provision. |
| *Thistledene (22381) | No | To be used by Pinewood School to provide new classrooms. |
| *Upminster Library (23383) | No | Currently looking into the possibility of using the site to offer pre school provision. |

**Sure Start grant was not spent on these two sites. Therefore the future use of these sites is more flexible and does not need to focus predominantly on early years services.*

11.4 Discussions with schools continue on technical details, such as confirming the precise assets to transfer including ICT equipment, finalising lease agreements and undertaking building condition surveys. It is anticipated that these discussions will have been finalised by the time Cabinet meets to consider this report.

11.5 In conclusion, the findings of the survey and stakeholder consultations overall indicate support for the progression of the proposals.

## REASONS AND OPTIONS

**Reasons for the decision**

Alongside the background evidence base, feedback from the consultation suggests support for the merger of Centres as indicated. Consultation feedback as detailed in stakeholder consultation minutes attached also indicates that Chippenham Road should remain open as a Children's Centre.

The implementation of this proposal will continue the delivery of service provision to a high standard without affecting current staffing levels and allow for closer co-location of staff to deliver targeted and preventative services for families.

Children's Centres will still offer free services to all, although resources will be mainly focused on more targeted and specialist work with families. Wherever possible, the voluntary sector and parent volunteers will continue to be encouraged to deliver these services, supported with training where necessary or families signposted to other opportunities in the area.

The proposals will ensure:

- Havering still meets its statutory duty to have sufficient centres to meet local need
- (demand at the larger Hub Centres is far higher as detailed in the evidence section, and positive infomal feedback has been received from Department for Education on initial proposals).
- That the impact on local communities will be minimal, due to the provision of alternative early years services from former sites. Increased outreach provision will also ensure that services are accessible and all communities can be served.
- Provision of local childcare, particularly given significant recent increases in the early years population in Havering are likely to increase placement demand[1]. The proposals will also help the Council implement its Childcare Sufficiency Audit Objectives[2] and provide additional free places for two year olds from vulnerable families.[3]

[1]Havering Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2011/12, Demographics Update. Available online at http://www.haveringdata.net/resource/view?resourceId=JSNAtwentytwelveDemographicsUpdate.
[2]Havering Childcare Sufficiency Review 2011/12. Available online at: http://www.havering.gov.uk/Documents/London_Borough_of_Havering_Childcare_Sufficiency_Review_2010-11.pdf
[3]Further information on the new Two year old offer and eligibility criteria are available at http://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Education-early-years-grant.aspx

**Table 2. Proposed Timeline**

| Date | Activity |
|---|---|
| Friday 15th February, or as soon as possible if the report is called in | Cabinet considers and approves proposals..<br><br>Proposals are sent formally to Department for Education for sign off.<br><br>Building condition surveys completed and all other technical queries asked by schools are answered.<br><br>Following any Cabinet approval, consultation feedback, alongside final proposals are distributed at Children Centres and on-line. |
| Friday 1st March | Legal agreements with schools/libraries are finalised and transfer preparations commence.<br><br>Any amendments are made based on Department for Education's formal response to site-specific proposals. |
| Tuesday 2nd April | Centres are deregistered and formerly transfer to new operators. |
| Summer term / holiday | Schools begin commence early years activities from sites, modify buildings as needed, and develop a variety pre-school offers to open from September 2013. |

**Other options considered**

Alternative options considered have included:

1. Keeping all centres open - this is not a long-term option. It would mean staff resources remain over-stretched across multiple sites and are unable to deliver a new targeted and early help service. In addition, this option would not allow the Service to make financial savings.

2. Keeping Hilldene Children's Centre rather Chippenham Road open. This would be unattractive because
    - Consultation findings and background evidence reveal the Chippenham Centre is well use, popular and should remain open.
    - It is in a central and densely populated area.
    - Due to the high rent costs, alternative early years provision (such as pre-school provision) is not financial. Without alternative early years provision from the site, DfE would be entitled to claw back Sure Start capital grant.
    - In comparison, Hilldene Primary School is interested in using Hilldene Children's Centre for pre-school provision and family activities.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

**Legal implications and risks**

Local authorities have a duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to provide sufficient children's centres in order to meet local need.

In the event that authorities propose changes such as opening, closing or merging centres they have a statutory duty to consult all those likely to be affected by the proposed changes. Guidance indicates that there is a presumption against the closure of children's centres and therefore a strong case must be established to justify closure.

Where Children's Centre projects were originally funded by the Sure Start and Early Years Capital Grant, a subsequent change of use may no longer fulfil the original grant conditions and therefore trigger a claw back of the original grant funding. Claw back can only be avoided by a specific consent for waiver or deferral from the Department for Education (DfE).

DfE have advised formal application can only be made following a consultation period, report and final sign off by Cabinet. However initial informal consultation with DfE on draft proposals indicates that clawback can be deferred for up to the balance of 25 years since the grant was given where a former children's centre continues to be used predominantly for early years provision.

In so far as new proposals may involve changes of use of the Children's Centre buildings it will be necessary to also ensure that such changes do not contravene the provisions of any applicable leases or other occupation agreements.

It has been previously advised that the Council draws up agreements with Schools to agree the details of future use of former Centre sites located on school premises, where Sure Start capital grant has been spent. This would also ensure that any change of use does not prejudice the Council to be liable to claw back, and that the School does ensure buildings are maintained in good condition. Schools have also requested condition surveys are undertaken, to ensure any pre-existing structural issues are identified before any such agreements are signed – problems arising are unlikely however, given these are newly constructed buildings.

Cabinet Members are reminded that, when considering what decision to make, they are under a personal duty pursuant to section 149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to—
(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having had careful regard to the Equality Analysis, and also the Consultation responses, Cabinet members are under a personal duty to have due (that is, proportionate) regard to

the matters set out above and (i) to consider and analyse how the decision is likely to affect those with protected characteristics, in practical terms, (ii) to remove any unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other prohibited conduct, (iii) to consider whether practical steps should be taken to mitigate or avoid any adverse consequences that the decision is likely to have, for persons with protected characteristics, and, indeed, to consider whether the decision should not be taken at all, in the interests of persons with protected characteristics, (iv) to consider whether steps should be taken to advance equality, foster good relations and generally promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics, either by varying the recommended decision or by taking some other decision.

However, whilst Cabinet Members are under a duty to have serious regard to the need to protect and promote the interests of persons with protected characteristics, in the ways just described, in reaching their decision, they may also take into account other considerations, such as the desirability of providing cost-effective and good quality services and, in particular in the current climate, the need to make budgetary savings. They may decide that those types of considerations ultimately justify their decision.

Consultation on the Children's Centre proposals has been undertaken. In order to be lawful it must be meaningful. In other words the consultees must have received sufficient information and time to respond meaningfully. The decision maker must then take all the consultation comments conscientiously into account before taking its decision. Cabinet members are therefore requested to carefully consider the responses to the consultation contained in the Report.

**Financial implications and risks:**

The proposals outlined within this report would contribute towards a Children and Young Peoples (CYPS) MTFS target of £1m from April 2013. The projected savings to be achieved are per the table below, totalling £137,640 in a full financial year. These savings are in the form of running costs budgets that would no longer be needed once services merge into fewer hub sites.

**Table 3. MTFS Savings:**

| **Children's Centre** | **Savings** |
|---|---|
| Thistledene | £9,760 |
| Upminster Library | £15,700 |
| Pyrgo | £22,700 |
| Hilldene | £20,700 |
| Airfield | £27,720 |
| South Hornchurch | £20,700 |
| Harold Court | £20,360 |
| **Total** | **£137,640** |

A considerable risk around these proposals is the potential for the Department for Education (DfE) to claw back the equivalent sum of Sure Start capital grant that funded the development of these centres. In total the relevant capital grant totalled £1,931,855 per the table below:

**Table 4. Sure Start Capital Grant Funding**

| Children's Centre | Sure Start Grant Capital Funding |
|---|---|
| Upminster Library | £0 |
| Thistledene | £0 |
| South Hornchurch | £202,688 |
| Airfield | £372,254 |
| Pyrgo | £435,056 |
| Hilldene | £447,991 |
| Harold Court | £473,896 |
| **Total** | **£1,931,855** |

Similar exercises undertaken in Bromley, Haringey and Brent have shown that negotiated agreement to defer claw back can be achieved if alternative early years use for the premises can be agreed. The process involves identification and drawing up of site-specific proposals, which are then discussed directly with DfE.

Therefore the proposed mitigation against this key risk of grant claw back is to agree with DfE alternative early years use of the centres. It should be noted that although other councils have made such agreements, the DfE deferral period is up to twenty five years, so there will be some risk of claw back during whatever period DfE stipulate the deferral shall be in place for.

When considering whether claw back should apply to an asset funded by Sure Start capital funding, DfE consider whether the changes to the asset cause the asset to no longer satisfy the conditions of the grant. The conditions for Sure Start funded assets are that they are predominantly used to provide services for 0-5 year olds and their parents and carers. If an authority transfers or leases the asset to a school or private provider DfE will still hold the local authority responsible for the asset (for the life of the asset).

DfE have been sent pro-forma proposals for all the sites although no formal decisions on claw back have as yet been made.

Although some centres will transfer to schools (or libraries), the buildings will remain owned by the Council. A legal agreement will be put in place to underpin the arrangement, this will include a clause that maintenance of the building and site will fall to the third party. The Council would remain liable for any pre-existing structural condition.

Decommissioning costs have not yet been fully scoped but would include condition surveys for the three sites on school premises to be run by schools (Pyrgo, Hilldene and Harold Court).The one off cost of this is estimated to be £6,000 to be met from transformation budgets. There will also be some ICT related cost such as the removal of network connections (an ICT survey is to be conducted) and removal costs. All one off costs will need to be met from within existing resources; until these are fully scoped there is the risk that a funding source may not be available.

There will be the need for ongoing maintenance of the hub buildings, which would be the case if the current position were to be maintained. The need for any capital expenditure should be assessed and a funding source identified as necessary (as part of the Councils Capital Programme if applicable).

The Upminster Library site saving to CYPS would be in the form of rent paid, meaning there would be a corresponding reduction in income to be absorbed by the Culture and Leisure Directorate.

There will be changes to the management structure to reflect changes to Children's Centre provision, these are being managed through the Councils Organisational Change policy.

Children's Centres revenue budgets were formerly Sure Start grant funded. This was superseded from 2011/12 by the Early Intervention Grant. From April 2013 this grant will be rolled up as part of the Councils' annual Revenue Support Grant settlement. This has transposed as a funding reduction that the Council is currently addressing as part of the overall budget strategy. Children's Centre budgets will be included within an overall review of former EIG funded services.

**HR implications and risks:**

This proposal focuses on how services are delivered to the community and from where. The direct impact on front-line staffing in implementing the recommendation in this report is expected to be minimal, in that the majority of staff work at the larger centres already. All of the affected staff have mobility clauses in their contracts of employment, which require them to work across sites within the borough. The overall intention is for a 'transformation', rather than a reduction, of services. Reviews of services will continue to take place across Havering Council. Therefore, this proposal does not mean that the structure of this service is excluded from any future scrutiny that made be required in order to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of services to the Havering community in line with national and local policy frameworks.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Attached**

1. Consultation Report
2. Equality Impact Assessment
3. Consultation Document
4. Stakeholder and Staff Consultation Minutes
5. Other Meeting Minutes of Relevance

**Other**

6. In-depth evidence background report (August 2012)
7. Children's Centre Needs Assessment

8. E-mail correspondence with Department for Education (October 2012 to January 2013)
9. Site specific proposals (draft) for:
    - Airfield Children's Centre
    - Harold Court Children's Centre
    - Hilldene Children's Centre
    - Pyrgo Children's Centre
    - South Hornchurch Children's Centre
    - Thistledene Children's Centre
    - Upminster Children's Centre

# Children Centre Review Consultation

# Results Analysis

31st January 2013

Children, Families and Learning Transformation Programme

## Executive Summary

This report feeds back on responses from the Review of Children's Centres Consultation, which took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013. The consultation included a variety of consultation approaches, to ensure it was a comprehensive, far-reaching and inclusive as possible.

Overall, careful analysis of the responses received indicates general support for the proposals to go ahead.

## Introduction

This report presents the key findings from the consultation feedback received in respect of the review of Havering's Children Centres, which took place between the 15th October 2012 and the 4th January 2013. Respondents were able to send back their feedback via an online survey or by completing a hard copy survey available from within Havering's children centres.

The public consultation generated 69 survey responses (58 hard-paper responses, 11 online). Not all respondents replied to or commented on every question.

This report provides a written summary and analysis of the responses. The key points which have been identified from the consultation are as follows:

- 46% of those responding indicated that they either strongly agree or agree with the proposed changes to centres
- From the responses the most commonly used Children's Centres were Collier Row, St Kildas and Hilldene.. However, this may be unrepresentative due to the low response number.
- The most commonly used services mentioned were related health services, most commonly Midwifery, Ante-natal and Health Visitor support.

## Consultation Findings

Approaches included a survey, developed to capture the views and opinions of Havering's residents and especially those who are connected with Children's Centres. The survey

was advertised widely in the local press and via posters at Children's Centres. Staff also actively encouraged Service Users to complete the surveys and share their views, either via a paper version or online survey.

To ensure the consultation included the views of all relevant partner agencies, in particular those working with Children's Centres, a briefing was held on the 15th November 2012 for Children Centre Local Area Groups (CCLAG) to give them an opportunity to feedback and ask questions about the proposal. Consultation also took place with partner agencies at the Children, Families and Learning Transformation Board meetings (September and October 2012) and via other informal briefings and meetings.

Staff were also consulted, encouraged to offer feedback and also encourage Children's Centre Service Users to do the same. Two staff briefings were held on the 10th October 2012. The briefings gave children centre staff an opportunity to feedback their views and to ask any questions they had.

Consultation meetings were also held with other stakeholders, including the PCT and Clinical Commissioning Group, East London NHS, Job Centre Plus, Havering Voluntary Community Sector representatives, Local Members of Parliament, other Council departments and the Department for Education.

**Key Survey Findings**

Whilst the consultation was widely advertised, the number of responses received was lower than expected. Feedback from Staff suggested that a reason for the low response could be that Service Users did not appear particularly interested in the survey and proposals, because they typically did not use the centres proposed for merger. A total of 69 survey responses (58 in hard copy format and 11 online) were received. Where indicated, 83% of respondents were female. The key points which have been identified from the consultation are as follows:

- 46% of those responding indicated that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposed changes to centres

- According to the responses received, the most commonly used Children's Centres were Collier Row, St Kildas and Hilldene. However, this may be unrepresentative due to the low response number.
- The most commonly used services mentioned were midwifery and ante-natal support, one-to-one meetings and health visitor sessions.

A number of comments were received during the public consultation. Most were positive, as detailed in comments detailed in the consultation report and many respondents understood why there was a need to reduce the number of Children's Centres and to merge the services into 6 main hubs.

A small number of comments raised queries on whether services would be affected by the changes and requested more detail on this. The consultation document attached at Appendix 3 was designed to be short, accessible and in plain English, and gave adequate information in the circumstances and did assure that services would not be reduced as a result of these proposals.

Some responses requested Council support (most commonly in terms of training and funding) to establish parent-led groups and activities at Children's Centres.

In conclusion, whilst the number of responses was low and indicated a degree of public disinterest in the proposals, those individuals that did respond were supportive overall.

**Key Stakeholder Consultation Findings**

Consultation of local partners via formal consultation and other meetings identified wide-ranging support for the proposals to go ahead. The following detailed points are also noted.:

- There was a general consensus that Chippenham Road Children Centre should remain open as it is well used and has a good foot fall as demonstrated in Chart 1.
- One respondent queried whether the proposals would increase room booking demand at the remaining 6 hubs. Centre Managers have also subsequently examined this and consider the site of the larger centres will be sufficient to meet

demand and assure there is space available, however, if any issues arise this will be addressed at local Children Centre Stakeholder Meetings.

- One Stakeholder raised concern that families who have children with disabilities, may find it harder to access Children's Centres in the future due to longer travel distances, particularly by public transport. Centre Managers assured that a solution was already in place to avoid this scenario. Outreach work has already been identified and utilised as a way to reach families who are unable to travel to the hubs. It is anticipated that Children's Centre staff will meet with families at a building which is more accessible to them.

Over 50 hours consultation has also taken place with schools and libraries affected to develop detailed proposals for individual sites to be decommissioned and transferred to their operation. Affected schools and libraries have indicated that they are highly supportive of the proposals. A legal agreement (covering future use of the buildings and maintenance) has also been drafted with schools.

**Breakdown of Respondents**

1. A total of 69 survey responses (58 in hard copy format and 11 online) were received.

2. Of those that provided equalities information (36/60):
    - 83% were female
    - 61% aged 18-35
    - 81% spoke English as a first language
    - 5 or less had physical disabilities or suffered from a long-term illness

3. Given this is a limited response, the findings and data are highly unlikely to be representative of all service users/wider public opinion, but do offer useful insight into the views of some people who use or are connected with Children's Centre services.

**Consultation questions 1 & 2**

**Which children's centre do you usually use?**
**Have you used other Children's Centres in Havering?**

4. The top three Centres used were identified as follows:
    1. Collier Row / St Kilda's (Collier Row for Question 1, St Kilda's for Question 2)
    2. Hilldene

Interestingly, with the exception of Hilldene, the other Centres proposed for merger with larger centres, appears extremely low, corresponding significantly with overall reported attendance counts examined via e-start in June 2012. However, some caution is needed, as due to small numbers, this sample group may not be representative of overall service usage.

**Chart 1. Which Children's Centre do you usually use?**

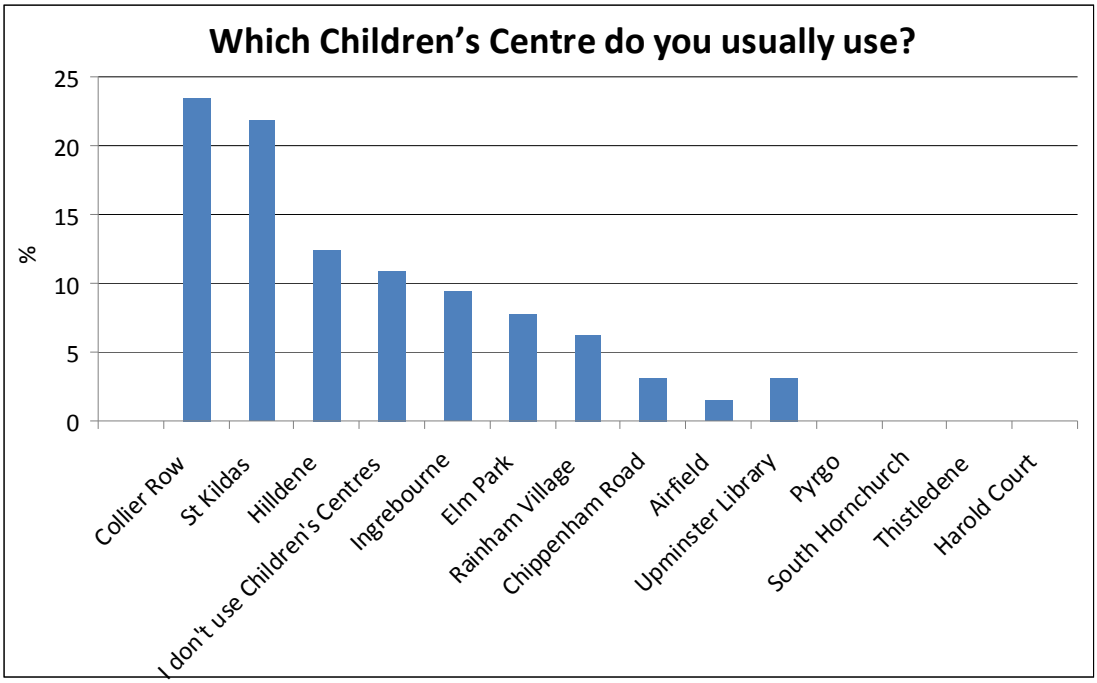
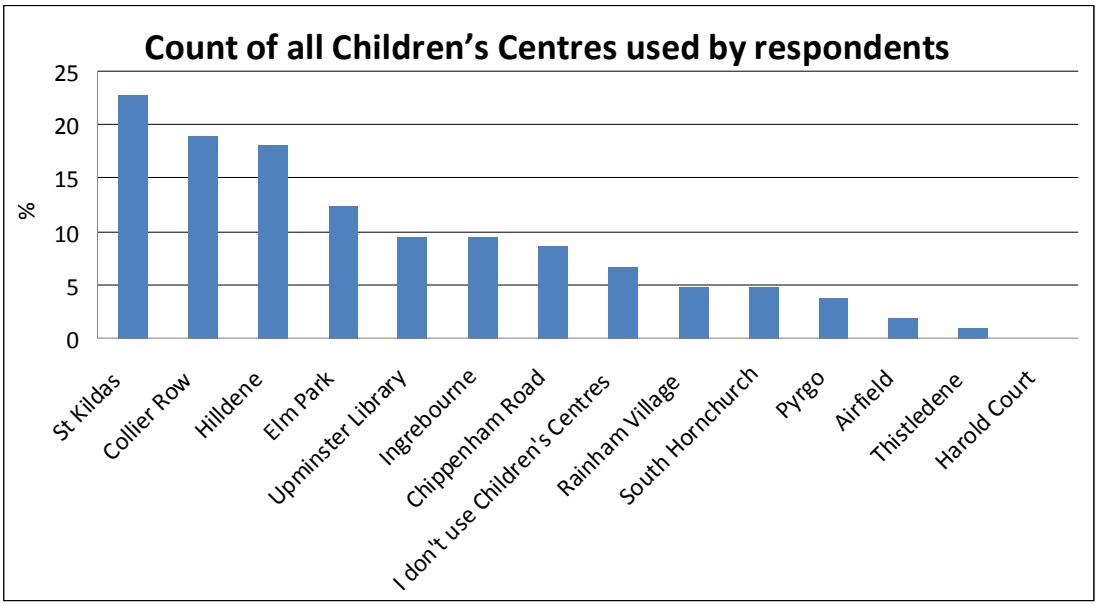


**Chart 2. Count of all Children's Centres used by respondents**

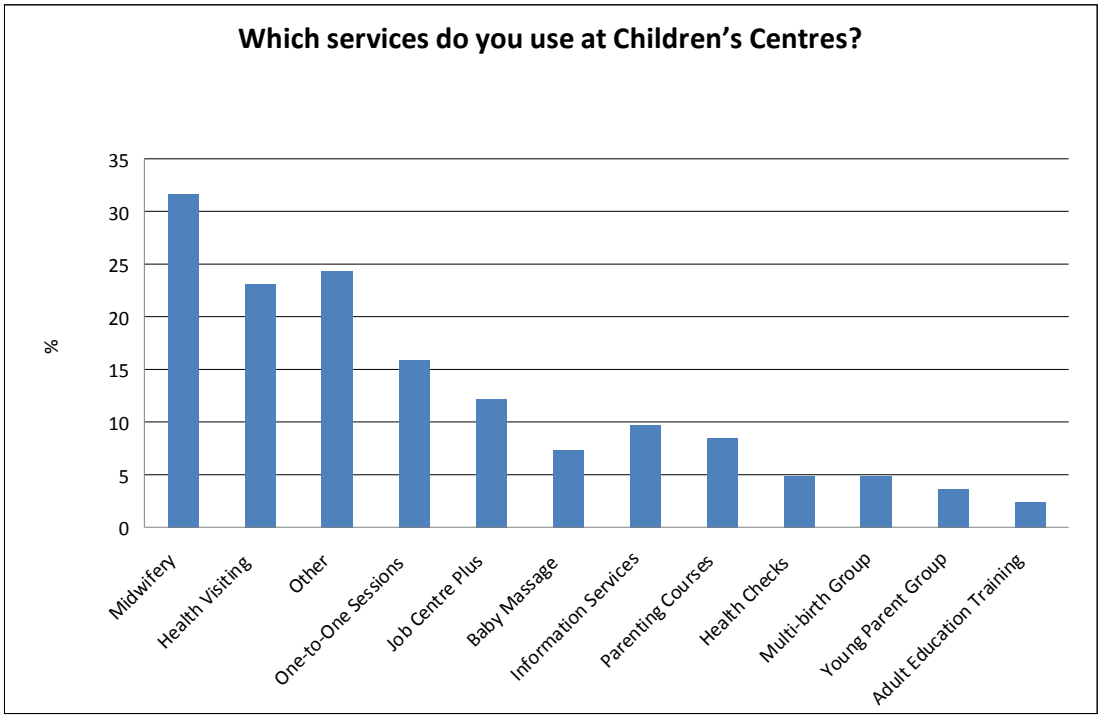


**Consultation question 3**

**Which Children's Centre services have you used in the last year?**

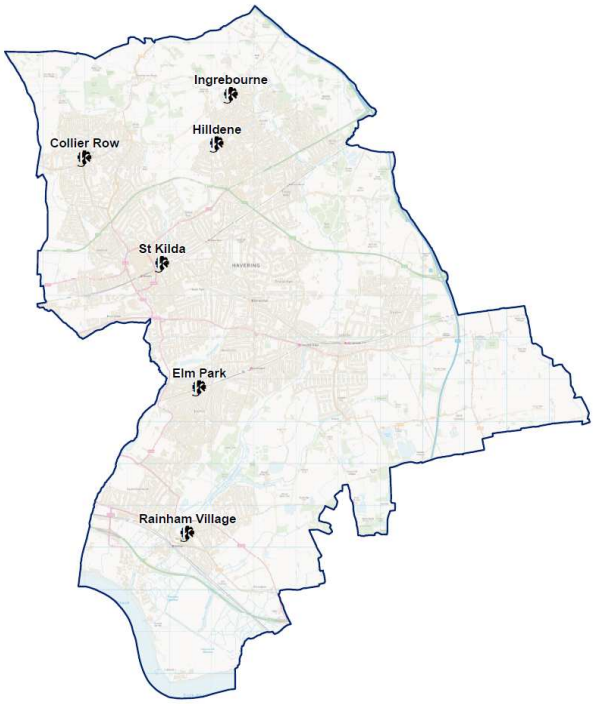
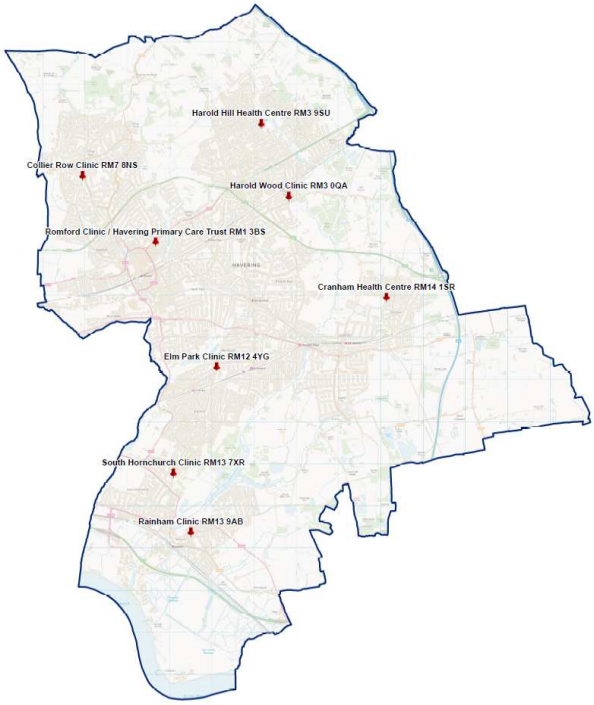
5. The most popular services are typically health service-related:
    1. Midwives ante-natal support services
    2. Health Visiting services
    3. Other services (please see table on page 9 for further details)
    4. One to One sessions

**Chart 3. Which services do you use at Children's Centres?**




6. The public consultation highlighted some concerns in relation to service delivery for Midwives ante-natal support. Some respondents felt as a consequence of merging children centres into 6 main hubs, mums-to-be in Havering would not have adequate access to the midwifery service. However, this will not be the case as the hubs will still continue to offer the service as well as Havering's Health Centres. Furthermore ,the two maps below identify the borough's coverage for delivering Midwifery ante-natal support services and identifies that even though some areas may have reduced children centres, there are still alternative Health Centres close whereby such services can be accessed

**Chart 4. Illustrating Health Centre Locations and Proposed Children Centres in Havering**

| Map of the proposed remaining 6 children centre hubs in Havering | Map of the Health Centres in Havering |
|---|---|
|  |  |

7. We asked respondents to identify any other services which they attend but were not listed in question 3. The following responses were given:

| Children Centres | Other services used |
|---|---|
| Collier Row | • Baby yoga<br>• Baby Weighing<br>• Drop in centre |
| Elm Park | • Baby group<br>• Breast feeding café<br>• Messy play |
| Hilldene | • Stay and play<br>• Coffee morning<br>• Photo taking classes<br>• Toys donated to the brilliant Dads club<br>• Cake making classes<br>• Caring news<br>• Santa sack making classes<br>• Dolls bedding making<br>• Curtain making |
| Ingrebourne | • Stay and play |
| Rainham Village | • To get advice and leaflets<br>• To use the phone to speak to someone about benefits |
| St Kilda's | • Ante-natal classes<br>• Toddler Group<br>• Children's First Aid course<br>• Newborn baby group<br>• Breast feeding Café<br>• Inbetweeners play group<br>• Messy Play |
| Upminster Library | • Baby bounce |

## Consultation question 4

**How much do you agree or disagree with our proposals for Children's Centres?**

8. The survey asked respondents if they agreed with the proposals which had been outlined by Havering council in its review of children centres. The results showed that 46% of the respondents agreed with the proposals, whilst 31% disagreed, and 22% neither agreed nor disagreed. Further details are listed in the table below.

| How much do you agree or disagree with our proposals for children's centres? | % of responses |
|---|---|
| Yes, I strongly agree | 16% |
| Yes, I agree | 30% |
| I neither agree nor disagree | 22% |
| No, I disagree | 14% |
| No, I strongly disagree | 17% |

9. We asked respondents to comment on why they felt this way about Havering's proposals. The following comments were submitted:

*"These proposals on the two centres do not affect me. I have many views on the children's centre in Romford. The only reason I used the Harold Hill ones was because the group's facilities were not offered at Romford."*

*"I agree very cautiously. I see the need for a shakeup considering the complicated economics of people, time and money and the present times. However, you seem very quick to propose cuts without having worked out the finer details of how else you are going to support families in these baby boom times. Ideas of including parents, childminders etc are incredibly sketchy. You don't really know how you are going to pay for these areas or what you will support. Promises of facilities and contractual savings are not quantified with figures or 'by when' expected dates. Your general advertising of the facilities as they are was pretty dire, how are you encouraging usage going forwards with cuts in services and presumably budgets? You seem to be trying to slowly remove these services and just hoping nobody is going to notice! You had 8000 births registered in 2011. These kids are already growing up. That's the point you seem to be woefully underestimating."*

*"I agree that something should be done because support is needed in the area."*
*"As a first time mum depending on public transport it was difficult enough for me to get to groups and meet people in a similar situation to mine. Now I have two under two it with be even more so."*

*"Elm Park is a wonderful children's centre and has continued to offer classes (such as messy play) by allowing parents that value them to pay a small fee. Rather than just "closing" facilities perhaps ask parents what they value and are prepared to help contribute towards."*

*"You have a great building in Romford you have spent thousands on it and yet it is hardly used. You only seem to aim at the most disadvantaged in Romford Why? We all struggle with children! We all want support. Instead you supply Multicultural groups which white families are excluded from. You have no baby massage or any groups really for the bulk of the families that live in Romford. We are all struggling in some way or another. If the council can not afford to run these centres properly then hand the facilities over to charity organisations who know what they are doing and can pull in the families so the facilities get used to their full capacity."*

*"I agree that savings need to be made and buildings lost money to run, however stopping some services within them have left large parts of the buildings empty!"*

*"Usually when a unit merges into another the quality of care usually deteriorates. Some Children's Centres are already very busy and [proposals] will add further stress to the staff at these Children's Centres - usually the community does not benefit."*

*"I am sure the Council could find savings elsewhere - Children Centres are needed for the growing population and are very important for young mothers. Savings can be made by reducing agency staff for example, and better management of public services."*

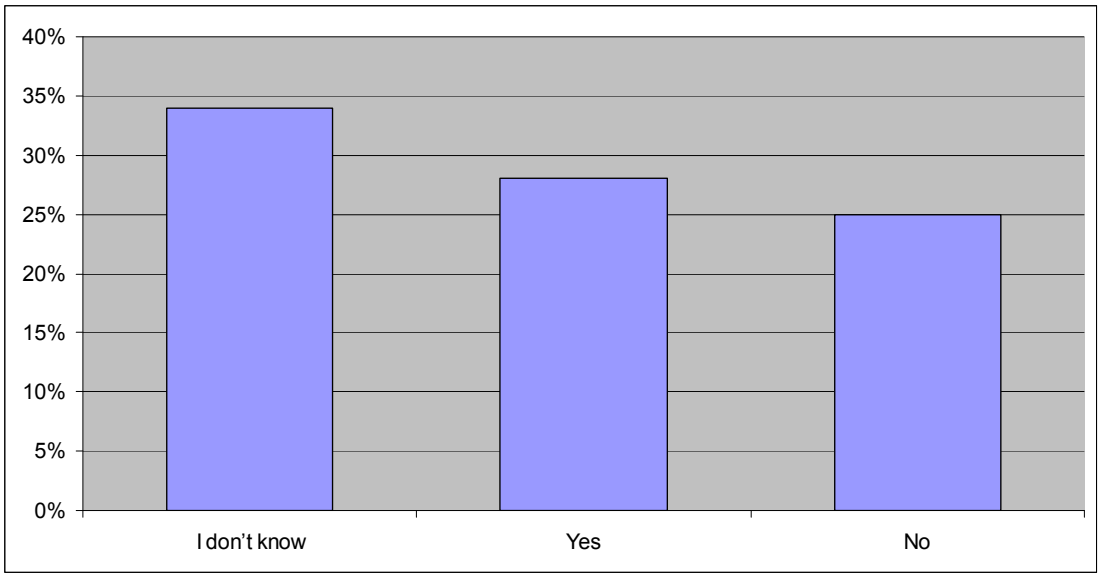
*"It is important that childrens services are accessible to all. Having a few distant centres does not help as it is expensive to travel and young children do not find long trips easy. Some centres are not much used because activities have been cut not due to a lack of interest. Keeping them going is relatively cheap in the context of other council expenditure and there is growing evidence that investment in the early years has a very significant effect on child development."*

*"I think Upminster should have its own centre."*

## Consultation question 5

**Havering Council is interested in supporting parents, carers and childminders to set up their own groups or activities. Is there any specific help or support that we can offer to achieve this?**

10. 28% of the respondents felt that the council should support parents, carers and childminders to set up their own groups or activities.




11. The following responses were given:

- Guidance in setting up groups
- Funding for groups
- Training in first aid
- CRB's
- Police checks
- Children centre offices support in the monitoring of groups
- Help in promoting the groups
- Paper required to set up the group outlining what it does
- Staff to be used as play group mentor

## Consultation question 6

**Do you have any other comments, or thoughts or ideas for children's centres in Havering?**

12. The following comments were submitted:

*"I feel that they strongly need groups to be run at Children's Centres as they are not meeting the needs for our local children and parents."*

*"More groups for parents and children i.e. baby groups."*

*"Professionals to run professional groups please."*

*"Organising day trips e.g. zoo. Provide groups/courses to build friendships"*
*"More free groups/activities for babies/toddlers."*

*"More activities not less. I would like to see activities and sessions held in my local area."*

*I agree some have to close. Only keep good staff. All parents/children/babies need support in some way at times."*

*"I agree you have to close some centres. But children's offices are needed to support these new groups. That's why parents come along in the 1st place. Children and babies are so vulnerable. They need the protective eye of a children's officer, who spot problems. DONT DESERT THEM! :o)"*

*"I am a carer who looks after a little girl who is 2 in January. She is very active and gets bored very quickly, I think it is good for her and other children to get together and play. My daughter is also pregnant and due her first baby in a few weeks, I strongly believe there should be support for people like myself and my daughter who is a first time mum and not very confident."*

*"They at Chippenham Road are very helpful and a joy to have help from."*

*"They are a huge benefit to society those on the cusp that miss these targeted services could end up costing the borough/government more in the long run if support services are not more universal."*

*"I personally found children centres useful. The childminder we use also uses children centres and finds them most helpful."*

*"Our Elm Park centre is fantastic the staff here are very helpful and my granddaughter who is 7+ months has benefited greatly from being given an ongoing placement at baby crèche she has come on in leaps and bounds."*

*"This consultation is ridiculous. It has been delivered to justify/validate the proposals, rather than to give parents the opportunity to express their views. Parents view and children's needs*

*are not in scope of the consultation. A consultation should be a 2 way process. What feedback mechanism is in place to provide an overview of views back to parents? How will you demonstrate how feedback has been taken into account within the proposals? And has informed the overall decision making process? I would be interested to receive a response to my questions. [e-mail address supplied]"*

*For more people to know about the centres more. Too many people miss out on help, as unaware of the courses."*

*"You majorly underuse Romford. You did not have half the courses and activities that the other children centres have. The library and churches do more for me than the centre ever did (although the multiple birth groups which you do not run has kept me going!) I can not say where I would be without the church clubs and library and birth group I honestly think if it was not for them I would have left my family through the stress but they kept me sane. The children's centre however offered me nothing, when I asked for help I got complete Incompetence from the staff. I honestly see no value in the centre apart from the building itself which is great and underused. Harold hill is no longer the poor area families in Romford are struggling and need just as much help support and advice."*

*"I am shocked by this survey. There's no questions or consultation at all. There's very little information as to your plans apart from a brief introduction. You have paid employees but this survey suggests that local parents are coming up with all the improvements! You haven't thought about this questionnaire but expect us to trust that you have thought about and have an organised plan on how to move forwards."*

*"Bring back the baby group. It doesn't have to be completely free. I am sure parents would make a small donation of £1 per session or combine it with breastfeeding group. None of the other parent and child groups in the area [Collier Row] are suitable for babies, its a great way to meet mums in the same situation to share views and get advice. If I didn't go to these groups when I had my children I would have stayed at home all day and struggled to meet people and for my son to play with other children his own age (without toddlers climbing all over them). I have made good friends via these groups (especially baby one) and knew there was always advice on hand. The breastfeeding video and visit from the local safety lady advising on the use of car seats and when to move up was especially useful. Please utilise the space you have at these centres to its full capacity and font leave out those of us that are not classed as 'vulnerable'. Thank you."*

*"I am very disappointed that Havering has cut back so drastically on provision for young children. This does not encourage people to move to the borough. Focussing on target groups only services to ghettoise and stigmatise provision. One of the best things about the centres is that they help people from different social groups meet and get to know each other better, surely a great way to promote mutual understanding in a diverse population."*

**Appendix 2**

# EQUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

# OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

**31st January 2013**

| Question 1 | What is the scope and intended outcomes of the activity being assessed; in terms of both the Council's organisation and staffing, and services to the community? |
|---|---|

**SCOPE OF PROPOSAL**

The scope and intended outcome of this proposal is to reduce the number of Children's Centre sites from 13 to 6 hub centres from April 2013. This would not necessarily require a reduction in services delivered, but more a geographical concentration and transformation towards greater targeted work with families.

It is proposed that services would be transferred to the following larger hub Centres:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Collier Row | Former early years centre | Collier Row and north west of borough |
| 2 | Elm Park | Former early years centre | Elm Park and central to the borough |
| 3 | St Kilda's | Former early years centre | Romford |
| 4 | Ingrebourne | Former primary school building | Harold Hill, Gooshays |
| 5 | Chippenham Road* | Former early years centre on a row of shops | Harold Hill , Gooshays |
| 6 | Rainham Village | Former nursery attached to RVPS | South of the district |

*Please note that the initial proposals highlighted that there was the option of keeping either Chippenham Road or Hilldene Children's Centre open. After a consultation with key stakeholders who indicated a strong preference to keep Chippenham Road rather than Hilldene open, it was decided to keep Chippenham Road.

This Equality Analysis is supported and evidence based by an extensive public consultation on proposals, which took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013. The public consultation generated a total of 69 survey responses (58 paper-based and 11 online responses), the majority (83%) of whom were women. It should be noted that not all respondents replied to or commented on every question.

The consultation was also advertised widely via the local press, staff-client interactions (staff encouraged clients to respond to the consultation), posters in children's centres and the Internet. All information on the project was available in different languages and alternative formats upon request. Last but not least, we ensured that our communication materials are written in clear English and were easy to understand.

The public were encouraged to send back their feedback via their preferred method: by completing an online survey or a hard copy survey available at Havering's Children Centres.

Additionally, a specific telephone number and e-mail address were provided as

alternative ways of providing feedback. Staff were also available to respond to questions and queries and/or to assist service users in completing the forms on request.

Employees and other stakeholders (e.g. PCT, Job Centre Plus, libraries, schools, voluntary and community sector and Department for Education) were also consulted via 3 consultation briefings:

- Two staff briefings were held on the 10th October 2012. The briefings gave children centre staff an opportunity to feedback their views and to ask any questions they had.
- A briefing was held on the 15th November 2012 for Children Centre Local Area Groups (CCLAG) to give them an opportunity to feedback and ask questions about the proposal.

Further information on the consultation and feedback is available in section 4.

**1a Organisation and Staffing**

The proposal is focused on how services are delivered by the Children's Centres to the community and from where.

The immediate impact on staffing is likely to be minimal, in that the majority of staff work at the larger centres already and all staff have mobility clauses in their contracts of employment and work across sites within the borough. The intention is for a transformation rather than reduction of services.

This is not to guarantee that structures will always remain the same in the longer term – reviews of services continue across Havering Council and these reviews will be subject to separate EAs.

**1b Services to the Community**

The proposed changes will offer an opportunity of a new way of running Children's Centres which will:

- Better support vulnerable families and children – by outreach work throughout the Borough.
- Focus on preventative working (delivering the Council's Prevention Strategy) by an integrated multi-agency approach.
- Continue to offer a wide universal advice, support and guidance, focused in areas of higher deprivation and need.

The proposals are also designed to take forward and reflect the national and local policies where:

- Funds were originally ring-fenced but now local authorities have discretion on how they are spent.
- A key focus is now on prevention and intervention, engaging with families with multiple complex needs, and evidencing the difference we

make.

- There is greater focus on providing services (including universal services) in areas of higher deprivation and need.

These proposals will ensure that we adhere to new guidance for Children's Centres that requires Children's Centres to:

1. Provide access to universal early years services in the local area including high quality and affordable early years education and childcare.
2. Provide targeted evidence based early interventions for families in greatest need, in the context of integrated services.
3. Act as a hub for the local community, building social capital and cohesion.
4. Share expertise with other early years settings to improve quality.

Universal services to be provided at Children's Centres include:

- **High quality, inclusive, early learning and childcare**, particularly for disadvantaged families or those with particular needs (for example disabled children) or living in disadvantaged areas.
- **Information and activities for families so that parents can make informed choices.** This includes provision of family activities to improve outcomes (for example, learning through play or healthy eating) and could also involve access to wider sources of support (for example benefit or debt advice).
- **Adult learning and employment support**: this includes language, literacy and numeracy support, family learning, access to apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities as steps toward employment and links to Jobcentre Plus. It is supported by good quality and inclusive childcare services.
- **Integrated child and family health services**: this includes Health Visitors delivering the Healthy Child programme, engagement with midwives and GPs.

Specific targeted services to be provided by the Children's Centres include:

- **Parenting and family support**, including outreach work and relationship support (the quality of the relationship between parents is linked to positive parenting and better outcomes for children).

- **Provision of integrated support** in response to identified strengths and risk factors within individual families via targeted evidence-based early intervention programmes and links with specialist services for families with the most complex health and/or social care needs.

*Source: Government's Vision for Children's Centres, 2012*

These proposals will also allow us to focus resources on addressing the Government's Families with multiple complex needs agenda. The Government has estimated the number of 'families with multiple complex needs' in each local

authority area and has identified 415 families in Havering who we should be working with over the next 3 years, 135 in the first year. The majority of these families live in areas of higher deprivation and consequently close to the six hub sites. The service is committed to contribute to the Harold Hill's development due to its high deprivation levels and high take-up of our services, hence the proposed retention of two sites.

As Children's Centres provide key services within local communities, Children's Centre staff members will become increasingly involved in assisting families with multiple complex needs and the development of this project. The new Children Centre teams working over six sites will bring together local partner agencies to identify and better meet the needs of families with multiple and complex needs.

The focus of these changes will be about delivering services differently. The community may experience a difference in how services are delivered, but quality and access to all should not be affected as equalities issues will continue to be considered and associated training undertaken.

In conclusion, through these proposals, Children's Centres can ensure service resilience and improve the quality and scale of services to families and children from all protected characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds. We will particularly target vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children with multiple and complex needs.

At the same time, Children's Centres whilst resources and staff time will increasingly focus on targeted activity, they will remain accessible to all families. For example, parents and carers will continue to be offered insurance, support and training to set up stay and play groups.

| **Question 2** | **Which individuals and groups are likely to be affected by the activity?** |
|---|---|

**2a Staff Individuals and Groups**

This proposal is focusing on how services are delivered to the community and from where. A staffing restructure took place in September 2011 and it is therefore not proposed that any further changes to staff will be likely in the immediate term.

The immediate impact on staffing is minimal, in that the majority of staff work at the larger centres already and all have mobility clauses in their contracts of employment which require them to work across sites within the borough. The intention is for a transformation rather than reduction of services. Staff are also contracted to work at any centre in Havering.

This is not to guarantee that structures will always remain the same – reviews of services continue across Havering Council and these reviews will be subject to separate EAs.

**2b Community Individuals and Groups** *(including voluntary organisations)*

As pointed out in section 1(b) above, the proposed changes will not affect the

quality of services families with young children receive but the focus of provision will become more targeted towards families and their children who are experiencing or who are demonstrating need or vulnerability.

We recognise that the closure of some Children's Centres may cause inconvenience to some families who used to using them and could involve a bus journey to get to another Children's Centre which will impact on their finances. In order to minimise the potential negative impact for service users affected by the proposed changes, two hubs will remain open in the North of the Borough where there are high levels of disadvantage.

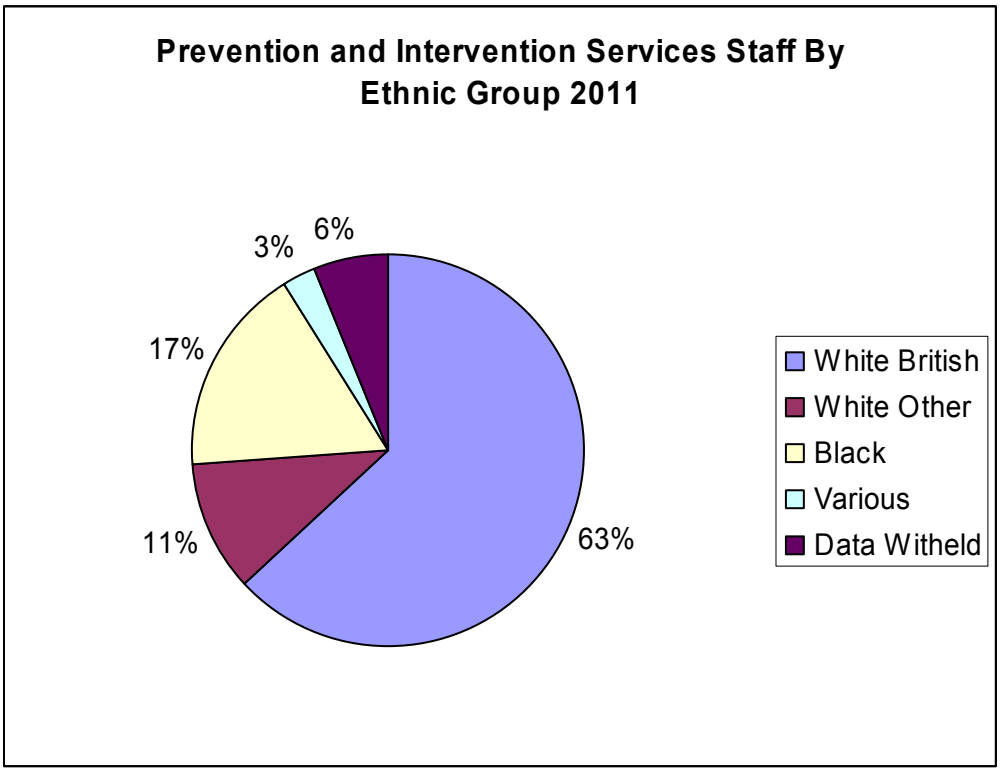
For further information on the impact of the proposed changes on service users with protected characteristics and specific needs, please refer to section 5(b).

| **Question 3** | **What data/information do you have about the people with 'protected characteristics'** (age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation) or **other socio-economic disadvantage** (e.g. disabled and part-time workers, low income and/or lone parents (mothers and fathers), looked-after children, other vulnerable children, families and adults) **among these individuals and groups? What information do you have about how they will be affected by the activity? Will you be seeking further information in order to assess the equalities impact of the activity? How is this information being used to influence decisions on the activity?** |
|---|---|

**3a Organisation and Staffing**

There are 61 FTE members of staff including management across Children's Centres, 59 of whom are female. The Group Manager is male. Across the wider Prevention and Intervention Service, the latest equalities audit (winter 2011) indicated that 94% of staff were female and 6% male. The age range of staff was 21-65.

The latest survey of staff ethnic background was undertaken at the time of the wider Management of Change report for Prevention and Intervention Services. This indicated that 74% of the staff originated from a White British or White Other background, 17% from a Black background, 3% from other ethnic backgrounds (Asian, Asian Other, Indian, Bangladeshi, Dual Heritage). Data was withheld in the case of 6% of staff.




Across the Prevention and Intervention service in winter 2011, 4% of staff declared a disability or long-term illness.

Information is not held on religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership.

**3b Services to the Community**

The proposals are based on comprehensive and in-depth examination of demographic, service user and performance data, alongside consideration of customer feedback gathered through consultation.

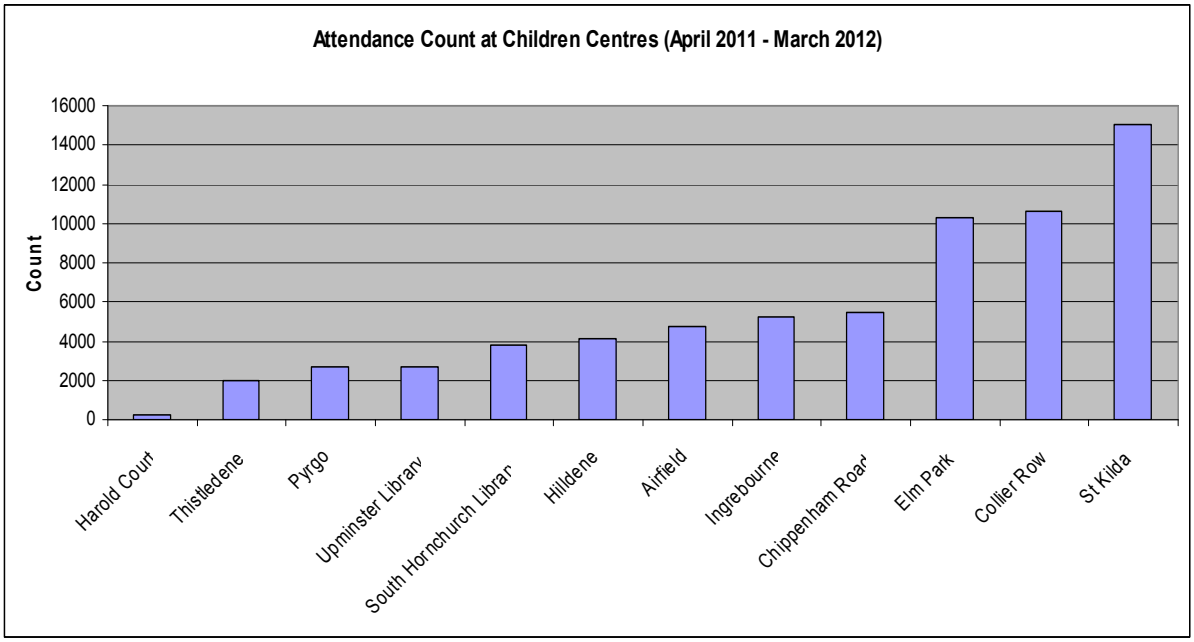
We also examined carefully the needs of our service users by carrying out comprehensive needs assessment – the spring 2012 Children's Centre Needs Analysis.

The evidence showed that:

- Some Children's Centres were used more than others
- Not all families used their closest Children's Centre – i.e. they shop around
- Some Children's Centres are located in areas of higher deprivation and family need, whereas others are not
- Some areas have multiple centres (for example around Harold Hill) close by, whereas in other areas, residents may have to travel further to access a centre
- Customer feedback is highly positive about the services received
- Children's Centres undertake a significant amount of targeted work and received

550 referrals in 2011, mainly from Social Care and Health services

These conclusions are backed up by further research examining Children Centre usage and service supply and demand using data form the Children's Centre database, E-Start. The chart below shows that some smaller sites have significantly lower overall attendance counts, namely: Harold Court, Thistledene, Pyrgo, Upminster Library and Airfield. These proposals therefore focus on amalgamation of these less popular sites.




Source E-start (accessed 02/08/2012)

E-start database evidence also shows that Children's Centres are already doing a significant amount of targeted and preventative work as detailed in the table below, demonstrating that at least 2295 services were delivered to 1325 families between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012.

**Vulnerable groups for period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 at Children's Centres**

| Custom Label | Families registered | Registered & seen at any centre. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Year Pilot Total | 143 | 261 |
| Additional Needs Total | 89 | 165 |
| Asylum seeker Total | 4 | 4 |
| CAF in process or completed Total | 103 | 205 |
| Child Protection Plan Total | 51 | 114 |
| CIN Plan Total | 20 | 38 |
| Domestic Violence Total | 162 | 270 |
| Drug/Alcohol misuse Total | 79 | 147 |
| English not first language Total | 121 | 141 |
| Family member in prison Total | 11 | 16 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Looked After Children Total | 25 | 51 |
| Mental health issues Total | 99 | 200 |
| Referral Total | 384 | 639 |
| Temporary Accommodation Total | 34 | 44 |
| | **1325** | **2295** |

*Source: E-Start Database (accessed 02/08/2012)*

Another evidence source has been an examination of the levels of deprivation in places where sites are currently based. Our proposals prioritise the larger sites to ensure continued service access in areas of high deprivation and child poverty. The one exception is South Hornchurch, which is a small site and the view here is that this area can be better served via outreach services from the new Rainham Centre that is due to open in September 2012. The facilities are based within the South Hornchurch Library, from where early years activities will continue to be provided. The Children's Centre space there will also remain available for Children Centre outreach activity.

We also carried out a service mapping evidence that identified a wide range of alternative services in addition to the services to remain delivered from Hubs are available across Havering. This includes nearby Health Services, such as baby weighing. In addition to their remaining nearby Children's Centre, families will still have many other options and places to go (please refer to Appendix 1).

Other factors that were considered in making the decision as to which sites should be amalgamated are the cost of running a site, the size and quality of building and facilities.

Last but not least, the final proposals were informed by an extensive public consultation which took place between 15th October 2012 and 4th January 2013. The public consultation generated a total of 69 survey responses (58 paper-based and 11 online responses), the majority (83%) of whom were women. It should be noted that not all respondents replied to or commented on every question.

Please refer to sections 1 and 4 for detailed information on the consultation and feedback.

| **Question 4** | **If no data and information is available about the groups likely to be affected by the activity, how would you inform your EA? Will you be considering carrying out some consultation to inform your EA?** |
|---|---|

**4a Organisation and Staffing**

Consultation with staff was a crucial part of the consultation process. As part of the consultation we invited all staff to attend workshops, circulate to colleagues not present and share their views. An email address and telephone number were also

shared for any confidential comments, but none were received. Overall, the staff group appeared positive about the proposals and no concerns specific to staff requirements were raised.

Although no major impact has been identified as a result of these proposals, disabled staff members were actively consulted on the proposed changes of office location and on any specific reasonable adjustment needs they might have (including ICT equipment and software) to enable them to continue to work effectively.

Flexible working requests will also continue to be carefully considered on a case by case basis.

**4b Services to the Community.**

As outlined in section 1, further data has been gathered through a public consultation on the proposed changes on the future of Children's Centres. Other key stakeholders including libraries, voluntary sector organisations and the health sector were also actively engaged in the consultation to ensure that we reach as many current and potential service users as possible.

The consultation was advertised widely via the local press, staff-client interactions (staff encouraged clients to respond to the consultation), posters in children's centres and the internet. Service users were provided with various ways of giving their feedback: on-line, by filling in a hard copy survey or via telephone. A specific telephone number and e-mail address were provided. Staff were also available to respond to questions and queries and/or to assist service users in completing their form. All information on the project was available in different languages and alternative formats upon request. Last but not least, we ensured that our communication materials are written in clear English and were easy to understand.

Consultation responses have been carefully considered within the Cabinet Report, with particular consideration given to groups with protected characteristics. As responses were broadly supportive, the proposals have not been significantly changed, except on the following issues:

- At the beginning of the consultation, the proposals highlighted that there was the option of keeping either Chippenham Road or Hilldene Children's Centre open. Comments received by stakeholders and survey respondents indicated a strong preference to keep Chippenham Road rather than Hilldene open, the main reasons being its central location in Harold Hill (near the shops), its accessibility and popularity. As a result, we will keep the Chippenham Road Children's Centre open.
- Issues raised on access to centre for families with children with disabilities, or with low income will be mitigated through increased outreach activity.
- Further background information on background data and evidence was requested by one respondent although no contact details were supplied. This is therefore included within this Cabinet Report and supporting papers.
- The Service has confirmed that support will be given to parents and carers wishing to set up universally accessible stay and play groups.

| Question 5 | Based on the collected data and information, what will be the likely impact of the activity on individuals and groups with protected characteristics or other socio-economic disadvantage? |
|---|---|

**5a Organisation and Staff**

As outlined in sections 1(a) and 2(a), no major negative impact on staff members is anticipated to arise from this proposal in that the majority of staff work at the larger centres already and all staff have mobility clauses in their contracts of employment and work across sites within the borough. The intention is for a transformation rather than reduction of services.

**5b Services to the Community**

Although the consultation feedback did not identify any major impacts arising from the proposed changes on groups with protected characteristics which cannot be mitigated, the following issues and concerns were raised:

Stakeholder consultation did identify a potential adverse impact on families who have children with disabilities in that they could potentially be further isolated from services as a result of the proposed merger due to extended travel times by public transport.

Likewise, although not identified in consultation responses, the proposed changes could also negatively affect families reliant on public transport and/or on low incomes.

Stakeholders and a number of consultation responses also identified a need to ensure that universally available group activities for families and children continues to take place in some form at Children's Centres.

Some consultation responses indicated concerns that the changes would reduce access to midwifery and ante-natal services for families. Some respondents felt that, as a consequence of merging children centres into 6 main hubs, mums-to-be in Havering would not have adequate access to the midwifery service.
Please refer to section 6 (b) for information on actions taken to reduce or eliminate the potential negative impact arising from the proposals.

The proposed changes are aimed at ensuring that our services are reflective of and responsive to our service users' needs and are particularly targeted at the most vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children. Furthermore, the locations of the remaining six Children's Centres are specifically chosen to provide services where there are mostly needed.

These proposals will also allow us to focus resources on families and children with multiple complex needs. The majority of these families live in areas of higher deprivation and close to the six hub sites. The service is committed to contribute to the Harold Hill's development due to its high deprivation levels and high take-up of our services, hence the proposed retention of two sites.

As Children's Centres provide key services within local communities, staff members will become increasingly involved in assisting families with multiple complex needs and the development of this project. The new Children Centre teams working over six sites will bring together local partner agencies to identify and better meet the needs of families with multiple and complex needs.

Through these proposals, Children's Centres can ensure service resilience and improve the quality and scale of services to families and children from all protected characteristics and socio-economic backgrounds. We will particularly target vulnerable and disadvantaged families and children with multiple and complex needs.

All the remaining Children Centres are accessible to people with physical disabilities including people with hearing or sensory difficulties. Most families currently travel to Children's Centres and will still be the case in the future. Staff will continue to monitor any access issues raised and will support families on an individual basis. Family support outreach activity via home visits will also continue where necessary.

The closure of some Children's Centre may also have financial implications for some families affected by the closure of their local Children's Centre who might not be able to afford the travel expenses. In order to minimise the potential negative impact for service users affected by the proposed changes, two hubs will remain open in the North of the Borough where there are high levels of deprivation. In Rainham Village, a programme of regular outreach work will be undertaken in the South Hornchurch area.

To conclude, the focus of these changes will be about delivering services differently. The community may experience a difference in how services are delivered, but quality and access to all should not be affected as equalities issues will continue to be carefully considered and associated training undertaken.

For further information, please refer to section 6 (b).

| **Question 6** | **What is the potential impact on arrangements for safeguarding children or safeguarding vulnerable adults?** |
|---|---|

**6 (a) Vulnerable children**

Please refer to section 5(b) above.

This new and more targeted approach should assist safeguarding as long as staff members are kept up-to-date with safeguarding protocols and referral systems. We will ensure that staff members are provided with relevant training and updates in relation to vulnerable children, identifying risks and raising concerns regarding vulnerability to appropriate statutory services.

Furthermore, linkage with the new MASH system and efficient multi-agency teams working with families with multiple complex needs will ensure consistency and best outcomes for service users. We will also ensure that transition work does not affect service quality or delivery.

**6 (b) Vulnerable adults**

As above, for families.

| Question 7 | If any negative impact is identified, is there a way of eliminating or minimising it to reasonable level? If not, how can the negative impact be justified? |
|---|---|

Please refer to sections 5(a) and 5(b).

**7a. Organisation and Staff**

Although no major impact has been identified as a result of these proposals, we have carried out an extensive staff consultation with staff members and any issues or concerns were carefully considered. Furthermore, disabled staff members were actively consulted on the proposed changes of office location and on any specific reasonable adjustment needs they might have (including ICT equipment and software) to enable them to continue to work effectively.

Flexible working requests will also continue to be carefully considered on a case by case basis.

We also recognise that ongoing awareness of equalities, training and promotion of a proactive approach to equalities will be essential. This will include ensuring full consideration of the specific needs of all protected groups, particularly vulnerable and/or disabled children, as well as children and families from disadvantaged backgrounds and living in deprived areas. In addition it will be important to continue to deliver the recommendations of the national and local policies as described earlier.

In order to avoid any potential negative impact, staff involved in the implementation of the projects will be fully versed on the objectives and expected outcomes. They will also be required to:

- be aware of and comply with our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation;
- be sensitive to the different needs and experiences of service users;
- treat both service users and colleagues with dignity and respect at all times;
- consider service users' needs and experiences on a case by case basis so as to avoid and address any potential negative impact, and ensure we are providing quality, children-focused and value for money services;
- report any discriminatory or inappropriate behaviour and escalate any concerns to their manager or another senior officer, following corporate policies and processes;
- ensure that the provisions of the Equality Act are implemented within service plans, self evaluation frameworks, monitoring and external contracts.

**7b. Services to the Community**

Please refer to section 5 (b).

Although the consultation feedback did not identify any major impacts arising from the proposed changes on groups with protected characteristics which cannot be mitigated, the following issues and concerns were raised:

At the beginning of the consultation, the proposals highlighted that there was the option of keeping either Chippenham Road or Hilldene Children's Centre open. Comments received by stakeholders and survey respondents indicated a strong preference to keep Chippenham Road rather than Hilldene open, the main reasons being its central location in Harold Hill (near the shops), its accessibility and popularity. As a result, we will keep the Chippenham Road Children's Centre open.

Stakeholder consultation did identify a potential adverse impact on families who have children with disabilities in that they could potentially be further isolated from services as a result of the proposed merger due to extended travel times by public transport. Likewise, although not identified in consultation responses, the proposed changes could also negatively affect families reliant on public transport and/or on low incomes. Service Managers have already proactively sought to mitigate this through developing programmes of outreach, which will continue under new proposed arrangements. Outreach work has therefore been identified as a way to reach families who are unable to travel to the hubs. It is anticipated that children centre staff will meet with families at a building which is more accessible to them.

Stakeholders and a number of consultation responses also identified a need to ensure that universally available group activities for families and children continues to take place in some form at Children's Centres. The Service has confirmed that whilst funding for group workers has decreased with a view to an increased focus on targeted activities, it will continue to encourage parents and carers to run such groups with support in terms of training and insurance.

Some consultation responses indicated concerns that the changes would reduce access to midwifery and ante-natal services for families. Some respondents felt that, as a consequence of merging children centres into 6 main hubs, mums-to-be in Havering would not have adequate access to the midwifery service. However, this will not be the case as the hubs will still continue to offer the service as well as Havering's Health Centres. Furthermore, with the exception of the Upminster centre, Health Services are not currently operating from the smaller sites proposed for merger. In the case of Upminster Library, however, alternative services will remain available at Cranham nearby and discussions are ongoing between Library and Health Services to potentially continue this clinic at Upminster Library once a week.

| **Question 8** | **How will the activity help the Council fulfil its legal duty to advance equality of opportunity in the way services are provided?** |
|---|---|
| **8a Organisation and Staffing** | |

Please refer to sections 7(a) and 7(b).

In addition, the following arrangements will be put in place:

- Continued investment in equalities training and impact monitoring, alongside more informal awareness-raising.
- Ensuring consideration of equalities allows for and encourages constructive challenge of existing ways of doing where a concern is noticed either by staff, service user, family or client. Open, approachable and flexible management support will be essential.
- Inviting a staff equalities champion to attend redesign steering events will help ensure that equalities issues are given appropriate weight in the change process.

**8b Services to the Community**

Children's Centres have individual Local Advisory Groups and Parents Forums and will continue to regularly raise and consider equalities issues at these meetings. Recommendations would then made to the Children's Trust Board.

We will also ensure equality questions are included within any further public consultations and will consult with the corporate Diversity Programme Team.

This approach will demonstrate that the authority is proactively fulfilling its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

| **Question 9** | **What actions will you be taking in order to maximise positive impact and minimise negative impact from the activity?** |
|---|---|

**9a Organisation and Staffing**

1. An extensive consultation with staff members, particularly disabled staff members, was carried out to ensure they are able to continue working effectively under the proposed changes of office locations.
2. Ensure equalities training and consideration of equalities issues remains a core requirement in contracts with external providers.

Please also refer to section 9 (b).

**9b Services to the Community**

1. An extensive public consultation including consideration of equalities issues was carried out to identify and issues and concerns regarding the proposed changes and address those early on.
2. Consultation feedback was carefully considered and informed our final decision on the proposed changes.
3. Effectively communicated and continue to communicate the changes to both staff and our current and potential service users.

| Question 10 | Once implemented, how often do you intend to monitor the actual impact of the activity? |
|---|---|
| Monitoring of the impact will be undertaken annually through regular collection of views from staff and stakeholder forums, at which equalities issues will be discussed specifically.<br><br>Learning from the project will be recorded and regularly reported to the Children & Families and Learning Transformation Programme Boards. | |

**Equalities Impact Assessment: Appendix 1**

## EXAMPLES OF LOCAL ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**Parents are advised to complete their own checks for the suitability of the activities**

| NAME OF VENUE | ADDRESS |
|---|---|
| **Rainham, South Hornchurch and Airfields areas** | |
| Mardyke Minis | Mardyke Community Centre, South Street, Rainham, RM13 8PJ |
| Cherubs | St Helen's Court, Rainham, RM13 9YN |
| Baby Stay and Play | Mardyke Community Centre, South Street, Rainham, RM13 8PJ |
| Scribblers Parent and Baby and Toddler Group | Royals Youth Centre, Viking way, Rainham, RM13 9YG |
| M.Y.C.A. Parent and Toddler Group | Mardyke Community Centre, South Street, Rainham, RM13 8PJ |
| St John Pre-School | South End Road, Rainham RM13 |
| Cottage pre-School | Royals Youth Centre, Viking way, Rainham, RM13 9YG |
| South Hornchurch Library Service | Rainham Road, Rainham, RM13 7RD |
| Rainham Village Library | Upminster Road South, Rainham, RM13 9YW |
| Brittons Babes | Brittons School, Ford Lane, Rainham RM13 7BB |
| Little Rascals | Whybridge School, Rainham |
| Tiddlers Mother and Toddler Group | St Johns Church, South End Road, Rainham RM13 7XT |
| Rainham Marshes and the new Trackway - Toddler play area, Wildlife garden and Adventure Play Ground | RSPB, Rainham Marshes Nature Reserve, New Tank Road, Purfleet, RM19 1SZ |
| Lady Bird Nursery | 11 Ryder Gardens, South Hornchurch, RM13 7LS |

| **Chippenham Road, Pyrgo, Hilldene and Ingrebourne areas** | |
|---|---|
| Betty Whiting Parent and Toddler Groups | Bettty Whiting Centre, 35a Briar Road, Harold Hill |
| Hillene Primary School Parent and Toddler Group | Hilldene Primary School, Grange Road, Harold Hill |

| | |
|---|---|
| Salvation Army Parent and Toddler Group | Salvation Army, Petersfield Avenue, Harold Hill |
| Little Stars Parent and Toddler Group | Little Stars, St Pauls Church, Petersfield Avenue, Harold Hill |
| Tommy Tots Parent and Toddler Group | Tommy Tots St Thomas Church, Church Road, Harold Wood |
| Kiddie Koas Parent and Toddler Group | Kiddie Koas, St Georges Church, Chippenham Road, Harold Hill |

| **Romford St Kildas area** | |
|---|---|
| Havering Museum | Havering Museum, 19-21 High Street, Romford, RM1 1JU |
| Buttercup Club | Gidea Park Methodist Church, 398 Brentwood Road, Romford RM2 6DH |
| United Reformed Church Parent and Toddler Group | 58-60 Western Road, Romford RM1 3JL |
| Buttercup | Kids Space, The Brewery, Romford RM1 1AU |

| **Elm Park and Upminster area** | |
|---|---|
| Stubbers Adventure Centre | Stubbers Adventure Centre, Ockendon Road, Upminser, RM14 2TY |
| Thames Chase Visitor Centre | The Forest Centre, Broadfields, Pike Lane, Upminster, RM14 3NS |
| St Joseph's Social Centre | 117 St Marys Lane, Upminster, RM14 2QB |
| ABC Parents and Toddler Group | St Matthews Church Hall, Chelmsford Drive, Upminster, RM14 2PH |
| Salvation Army | Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 2RB |
| Busy Bees Parent and Toddler Group | Havering Christian Fellowship, 2a Newmarket Way, Hornchurch, RM12 6EA |
| Funtasia @ The Hacton Lane Hall | Hacton Social Hall Haydock Close, Hornchurch, RM12 6EA |

| **Collier Row and Thistledene areas** | |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| Wellgate Community Farm | Wellgate Community Farm, Collier Row Road, Collier Row, RM5 2BH |

There are many other activity sites in neighbouring Barking and Dagenham. Brentwood, Ilford,Grays,Hainault

**Appendix 3**

# Consultation on Review of Children's Centres

Havering

## Introduction

Havering Council is looking to make some changes to how it provides services from its children's centres and would like your views on the proposed changes.

Children's centres provide a wide range of services to children and families:

- Support and outreach
- Midwifery and health visiting clinics
- Information and advice to parents and carers on a range of subjects
- Support to childminders
- Drop-in sessions and other activities for children and carers.

There are 13 children's centres in Havering which vary in size and opening times. The larger centres have longer opening hours and are used more often.

The Council is proposing to merge children's centres from April 2013 and to transfer activities from smaller sites to the larger children's centres.

## Children's Centres from April 2013

| | |
|---|---|
| Collier Row | Collier Row, covering the north west of Havering |
| Elm Park | Elm Park and covering the centre of Havering |
| St Kilda's | Romford |
| Ingrebourne | Harold Hill, Gooshays |
| Hilldene* or Chippenham Road* | Harold Hill , Gooshays<br>Harold Hill , Gooshays |
| Rainham Village | Covering the south of Havering |

*Services would be merged into one of these Centres.

This document will tell you more about the proposed changes and give you a chance to share your views on them. All responses will be considered before a final decision is made in February 2013.

## Why are these changes needed?

Like all local authorities, the Council must make savings to ensure we can protect our valuable frontline services. By merging centres we can ensure the future of the services they provide which we know are so valued.

The proposals are for a new way of running children's centres and services will not be further reduced:

- Children and families will continue to have access to any children's centre across the borough
- Outreach work across Havering and family support workers will continue to work with vulnerable families wherever they are
- Services provided with local partners, including health and maternity services, will continue across all six remaining children's centres
- The quality of services will continue to be checked and inspected by OFSTED, an independent body.

The new children's centre service will:

- Allow us to focus on the children and families most in need and spend more time directly working with vulnerable families
- Continue to deliver a high quality service to the public from the most well used centres. Some of the smaller centres are open only a few hours a week and are not widely used
- Help more vulnerable families by working with families earlier, before problems can become bigger issues
- Reduce the cost of running children's centre buildings.

We are also looking at ways to increase opportunities for parents, carers and childminders to get involved in children's centres activities, for example, to support at crèches and stay and play groups.

## What will happen to the closed centres?

The Council is looking into the options for how to use the sites of these centres in a way which will benefit the community.

Some of the smaller centres could transfer to provide early years provision or be used by schools. There are also opportunities for some sites to provide additional nursery places given the high demand for quality childcare, which is likely to rise once the two-year offer for 15 hours free childcare for two-year-olds is in place from September 2013 onwards.

## What happens next?

The Council will consult on the proposals from October 15 to January 4 2013. All responses will be considered after the consultation ends and will inform the recommendations made to the Council's Cabinet before any final decision is made.

## How to give us your views?

Parents, carers and childminders can give their views online at **www.surveymonkey.com/s/childrencentresreview**

Alternatively, please complete the Children's Centres Consultation Response Form attached, place in an envelope and return to your nearest children's centre, or to the address below:

Please also complete and enclose the Equal Opportunities Form.

**Children Centre Consultation**
**c/o Children and Families Transformation Team**
**Floor 11, Mercury House**
**Romford RM1 3SL**

## How will your comments be used?

Your comments will be extremely helpful and used to inform decision-making on these proposals. They will be carefully considered and summarised in a consultation report to Cabinet members in February 2013.

Your information will remain anonymous in the consultation report. Please note that any individual response may be read by members if requested.

Please return all responses as soon as possible. The latest date we can accept comments is Friday 4 January 2013.

## Getting information in another language or format

If you would like to get this document in a different language or in another format (large print, Braille, audiotape or easy read), please contact the transformation team via email at **cfp@havering.gov.uk** or on **01708 433338**

# Review of Children's Centres Consultation Response Form

**1. Which Children Centre do you usually use?**

*Please tick one box*

- Elm Park
- Upminster
- Airfield
- South Hornchurch Library
- Rainham Village (open October 2012)
- Collier Row
- Thistledene
- St Kildas
- Harold Court
- Ingrebourne
- Pyrgo
- Hilldene
- Chippenham Road
- I don't use children's centres
- I don't know

**2. Have you used other children centres in Havering?**

*Please tick all boxes that apply*

- Elm Park
- Upminster Library
- Airfield
- South Hornchurch Library
- Rainham Village (open Sept 2012)
- Collier Row
- Thistledene
- St Kildas
- Harold Court
- Ingrebourne
- Pyrgo
- Hilldene
- Chippenham Road
- I don't use Children's Centres
- I don't know

**3. Which children's centre services have you used in the last year?**

*Please tick all boxes that apply*

- Respite Creche
- One-to-one Family Support
- Baby Massage
- Stay and play
- Sensory room
- Parenting courses
- Job Centre Plus
- Lifeline - getting ready for your baby
- Health 1 and 2 year development checks
- Midwives ante-natal support
- Health visitors services including nutrician advice
- Young Parents group
- Multiple birth group
- Information services
- Adult education and training
- Other

If you have ticked the 'Other' box, please could you provide further detail?

**4. How much do you agree or disagree with our proposals for children'scentres?**

*Please tick one box*

- Yes, I strongly agree
- Yes, I agree
- I neither agree nor disagree
- No, I disagree
- No, I strongly disagree

Why is this

*Continue overleaf*

5. Havering Council is **interested** in supporting **parents, carers and childminders to** set up their own groups or activities. Is there any specific help or support that we can offer to achieve this?

*Please tick one box*

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

If you have ticked 'Yes' what help or support would be needed?

6. Do you have any other comments, or thoughts or ideas for children's centres in Havering?

## Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

**Appendix 4**

**CCLAG Children's Centre Consultation Briefing**
**15th November 2012**

## Introduction

As part of the public consultation on the review of Children Centres (15th October 2012 to 4th January 2013), Ann Domeney (Family Support Service Manager) and Helen Morris (Team Manager) led a stakeholder/partner briefing session to the Children Centre Local Area Groups in Havering (CCLAG).

Rowan Griffin (Interim Senior Project Manager) and Samantha Kitt (Senior Programme Officer) attended from the Transformation Children, Families and Learning Team to help facilitate the briefing and answer any questions.

The meeting was attended by:

| | |
|---|---|
| Kim O'Neil | Parents in Partnership Service |
| Lesley Odams | Havering Adult College |
| Sharon Hinds | The Family Information Group |
| Julie Byrne | Under Fives Inclusion |
| Richard Shorter | Harold Hill Baptist Minister |
| Amanda Galvin | Job Centre Plus |
| Nicolette Middleton | Action for Children |
| Sally Turner | Community Nursery Nurse Romford Health Centre |
| Emma Zahra | Student Health Visitor Romford Health Centre |

The reason for holding the briefing was to inform groups of the proposals, listen to and consider groups views and ensure:

- Purpose of the Children's Centre consultation was understood.
- Groups have the information needed to explain to its users the reasons for the proposed merger of 7 Children's Centres.
- To encourage groups to feedback their views by completing a survey, found in children's centre or via Survey Monkey.

AD explained that the public consultation started on the 15th October and will continue until 4th January. The consultation includes the following core recommendations:

- To merge a number of smaller and less-used Children's Centre sites to 6 hub centres from April 2013.
- Activities would not be reduced, but transfer from smaller less-used sites to larger hubs.
- The focus will be on changes to sites not Havering council front-line staff numbers.

AD further explained that the proposals do not:

- Change existing services and activities. These will be retained and transferred to other sites.
- Make proposals to change front-line staff structures.
- Make proposals for how specific services should be delivered in detail.

AD also acknowledged that parallel to this consultation on Children's Centre sites, work is ongoing to develop opportunities for parents and carers to run activities and groups.

At the end of the briefing the group were asked to form pairs and discuss the following questions:
1. What work are you currently doing with Children's Centres?
2. What other work are you doing in local areas, but not with Children's Centres?
3. How do you feel the proposed changes will affect your ongoing work in local areas?

The groups then fed back their views to AD and Helen Morris (HM).

**Key points/comments made:**

There was an understanding and general agreement from the group on the proposed changes to the Children's Centres.

The current work being offered by the groups are parenting courses, targeted work, referral work, block courses such as baby massage, early year's health review, and parenting groups.

Sharon Lockey (SL) Job Centre Plus informed the group that it previously delivered a general employment service at Chippenham Road for families who had children under the age of 5. This was a well used service but due to organisational constraints the resources were needed in another area within Job Centre Plus. This highlighted that all services, not just the council have had to rethink how they deliver their service due to the current economic climate.

Richard Shorter (RS) Harold Hill Baptist Minister felt that Sure Start removed the stigma around mixed economy offering free groups and stay and play session for families to attend. Making these groups free allowed children from all societies to be able to attend including those living in deprivation. Would the council commit to ensure that this continues? HM explained that up to 8 families attending the services provided are intended for targeted work. It is anticipated that room will be available for other families who are not targeted to attend. Children Centres remain a place within the community and have some universal services running from the centres. The remaining centres will be committed to supporting but not running groups.

HM explained in more depth that the council is supporting parent led groups. The council is supporting universal services to run free groups in the centres such as baby group, stay and play, messy play etc. The groups would be offered as a drop in service and would mean no waiting list (first come first serve basis). After much research the council is now able to guide groups on the process for obtaining the relative insurance needed, CRB checking, training such as First Aid and other appropriate courses. The aim is to support the groups but not to have children centre staff running the groups.

Nicolette Middleton's (NM) Action for Children main concern was that her service delivered targeted work to families with children, but was unable to find provision for crèche support from the children's centre. HM explained that originally there were 16 group workers but now 8 remain and as a result they are unable to offer the crèche support anymore. The other groups which use the children centre provide their own crèche staff and equipment. This is possibly an avenue that could be explored by Action for Children.

Lesley Odams (LO) Havering Adult College asked if the increase on other sites will cause a bigger issue when block booking space at the children's centres to provide her service.

HM suggested that this is brought up at CCLAG meetings to identify alternative locations to run courses from if children centres are booked already.

Emma Zahra (EZ) raised concerns for families with children with disabilities being able to reach centres via public transport. The families are already isolated and this could isolate them even more. HM recognised this concern and explained that these families would not be expected to travel to centres, instead outreach work takes place and families are visited at a place more appropriate such as their home. The aim is to sign post families to local community run groups as well as children centres. This will give them the opportunity to meet other families at groups which are available locally.

The group asked how the children's centre would be sign posting the families to community run groups. HM referred to the Family Information Service (FIS) community board in the children's centres. The community board identifies all known community led groups that are meeting in the area (the children centres do not recommend any groups). The group then asked if this information is available online, HM confirmed that it wasn't online as it changes too often to be up to date. There are plans to explore further options for promoting the services/groups available to families which are run by the community. This point has been noted by AD and HM for action.

RS raised concerns over the closure of Chippenham Road. As a user of the centres he felt that the training rooms at Hilldene would be unsuitable to deliver his service. He also felt that Chippenham Road was well used and a good children's centre.

There was a general consensus that Chippenham Road Children Centre should not be closed as it is well used and has a good foot fall.

RS asked where the family support workers are going to be based. HM explained that there has been some re-jigging in the centres to make space for family support workers and IT has been upgraded to allow this.

**Note on Children's Centre Staff Briefing**
**Town Hall, 10th October**

Kathy Bundred (KB) (Head of Children and Young People's Services) led two briefing sessions on emerging proposals, which were attended by approximately 40 members of staff.

The reason for holding the briefing was to inform staff of latest proposals prior to consultation launch, to listen to and consider staff views and ensure:

- Staff have the information needed to explain to the public the reasons for the proposed merger of 7 Children's Centres.
- Explain the purpose of the Children's Centre consultation.
- Staff are informed to help Service Users complete the consultation response form.

KB noted that the public consultation will run from 15th October until 4th January and will include the following core recommendations:

- To merge a number of smaller and less-used Children's Centre sites to create 6 hub centres in total from April 2013.
- Activities would not be reduced, but transfer from smaller less-used sites to larger hubs.
- The focus will be on changes to the sites not our front-line staff numbers.

Explaining the key rationale behind the proposals, KB explained they will:

- Support vulnerable families and children by continuing outreach work throughout the borough.
- Emphasise preventative working (delivering the Council's Prevention Strategy) by integrated multi-agency approach.
- Continue to offer wider universal advice, support and guidance, focused in areas of higher deprivation and need.
- Ensure our resources are not spread too thinly over too many (often underused) sites.
- Contribute to meeting the Council's MTFS Savings.

KB further explained that the proposals do not:

- Change existing services and activities. These will be retained and transferred to other sites.
- Make proposals to change front-line staff structures.
- Make proposals for how specific services should be delivered in detail.

KB also noted that parallel to this consultation on Children's Centre sites, work is ongoing to develop opportunities for parents and carers to run activities and groups.

The surveys and boxes will be distributed to St Kilda's on the 12th October 2012.

The following comments were made:

**1. Chippenham Road**

All participants considered that if only either Chippenham Road or Hilldene should remain open, Chippenham Road should stay open and it would be better to focus on merging the

Hilldene site. Staff felt that the site is very well used, that the location and passing trade was ideal for a Children's Centre. They felt that it is especially good for sign posting to other services as the general public often walk into the centre to ask for advice and help.

**2. Universal Groups**

Staff mentioned a key ongoing issue of relevance to the consultation was the disbanding of universal groups earlier this year. This has caused significant public concern, particularly in the Elm Park, St Kilda's and Upminster areas. Helen Morris (HM) (Deputy Manager Children and Young People Service) notes that this is now being resolved as insurance can now be purchased to cover parent/carer groups. Once CRB checks have been completed the training support can be put in place and provided. It will then be possible for parent/carer groups to be established.

**3. Consultation with Stakeholders**

HM clarified that the consultation will also involve discussions with many stakeholders, including health services. This will initially take place via a single CLAG group meeting at the Town Hall, date and time to be confirmed.

The role of Schools in the consultation was also queried. It was confirmed that they will have a central role. School staff, pupils and their families will be able to input into the consultation. It was also noted that meetings are ongoing with various schools which have Children's Centres on site, with a view to the school operating these sites in the future.

**4. Children Centre Reach Areas**

It was highlighted and agreed that if the proposals go ahead, existing centre reach areas would need to be recalculated. This would ensure a balanced distribution of case work between centres. This would require input from Capita E-Start.

This would need to factor in recent increases in the under 8 population in some areas (especially around St Kilda's) and the potential impact this could have on early years work and demand in those areas.

**5. Office Accommodation**

Office accommodation was discussed. Systems were changed earlier this year, introducing hot desking at the larger centres. This would continue under the new proposals.

6. **Possible Government cuts December 2012**

Colin Kerr, representative for GNB union asked KB whether she thought the further budget cuts which are due to take place on the 5th December (estimated £10 million) would have any affect on this consultation. It is felt that until the budget cut is announced we would not know the affects it could have on the Children's Centre services.

**Appendix 5**

**Children, Families' & Learning Transformation Programme Board**

**Notes of Meeting**

**Date: 18 September 2012** **Time: 12.30pm** **Venue**: **CR2, Town Hall, Romford**

**Present:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sue Butterworth | **(SB)** | Group Director, Childrens Services |
| Jacqui Himbury | **(JH)** | Borough Director, CCG |
| Mary Pattinson | **(MP)** | Head of Learning & Achievement |
| Caroline Woolf | **(CW)** | Programme Manager, Corporate Transformation |
| Stephen Doye | **(SD)** | Legal Services Manager |
| Cameron Hill | **(CH)** | Strategic Commissioning Lead (Inclusion) |
| Julie Brown | **(JB)** | Programme Manager, Children Services Transformation |
| John Green | **(JG)** | Programme Office Manager, Children Services Transformation |
| Paul Ryrie | **(PR)** | Interim Consultant for Housing & Public Protection |
| Martin Shipp | **(MS)** | Acting Service Manager for Foundation Years |
| Trevor Cook | **(TC)** | 14 – 19 Manager |
| Rowan Griffin | **(RG)** | Senior Programme Officer, Children's Services Transformation |
| Eve Anderson | **(EA)** | HR Business Partner |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **3.** | **Children's Centre Transformation Project Update** | On behalf of **KB, RG** presented proposals for consultation on Children's Centres (presentation attached), to consult on the amalgamation of activities held with smaller and less used Centres into 6 hub sites. The rationale is to ensure staff are used effectively to increase and improve early help provision with children and families. Subject to approval of the Executive Decision, the consultation would commence October 8 through to January 4. Members were in agreement with the proposed approach.<br><br>During discussions, the way forward was broadly welcomed by the Board. There is a need for further discussion with the CCG regarding the health clinics that take place at Upminster Library.<br><br>SB stressed the need for thorough planning of the consultation process and she outlined the need to link up with the draft Consultation Toolkit developed by the corporate Policy Team.<br><br>SB referred to a small management restructure that was planned to run in parallel to the consultation process, to reflect the revised service management requirement and to realise a small MTFS saving. |

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