



## Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

<b>Subject Heading:</b>	Front Doors Review – Libraries and Children’s Centres consultations & community hubs/local area coordination engagement
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Robert Benham, Councillor Viddy Persaud
<b>SLT Lead:</b>	Tim Aldridge, Director of Children’s Services
<b>Report Author and contact details:</b>	Gareth Nicholson, AD Customer, Communications & Culture; Tel: 01708 431375 <a href="mailto:gareth.nicholson@havering.gov.uk">gareth.nicholson@havering.gov.uk</a>
<b>Policy context:</b>	Medium Term Financial Strategy
<b>Financial summary:</b>	There are minimal costs associated with the consultation process. A future Cabinet report will consider the financial implications of any decision taken following the consultation.
<b>Relevant OSC:</b>	
<b>Is this decision exempt from being called-in?</b>	Yes. It is a non-key decision by a member of staff

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

Communities making Havering  
Places making Havering  
Opportunities making Havering  
Connections making Havering

## Part A – Report seeking decision

### 1 Introduction/Background

**1.1 Children’s Centres.** Local authorities have a legal duty under the Childcare Act 2006 to ensure that there are sufficient children’s centres, so far as reasonably practical, to meet local need. It follows from the statutory definition of a children’s centre that children’s centres are as much about making appropriate and integrated services available, as it is about providing premises in particular geographical areas. There are currently seven Children’s Centres located in Havering.

**1.2 Libraries.** Local authorities have a legal duty under the Public Libraries and Museum Act 1964 ‘to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons’ in the area that want to make use of it. Local authorities have the power to offer wider library services beyond the statutory service to other user groups, and the Act allows for joint working between library authorities. In considering how best to deliver the statutory duty each library authority is responsible for determining local need and to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources. There are currently ten libraries located in Havering, forming the statutory library service.

**1.3 Sustainability for future service delivery needs to be seen in the context of increasing demand for services and Havering Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy which seeks to adapt and respond to significant reductions in funding and demographic-led pressures.**

**1.4 Proposals have been developed by officers to seek solutions to the challenges of sustainability of Children’s Centres and Libraries. The proposals are informed by survey and outreach work (for Children’s Centres in 2017 and 2018) and Libraries through intensive exploration by consultancy firm *Red Quadrant*.**

**1.5 None of the proposals that have been developed seek to reduce or stop services or activities currently being delivered in localities. However, the proposals for Children’s Centres involve provision currently delivered from three of the seven centres ceasing at that location and instead being delivered by alternate local providers. Similarly the proposals for libraries make no proposal to close any individual library but instead suggest that five of the ten libraries could be run on a day-to-day basis by community groups with council financial, strategic, resource and administrative support.**

**1.6 It is considered useful to group the consultations on proposals for both together for two reasons:**

- o Because there will be many in the borough who use both services

together and the services for young readers provided at libraries overlaps with the work and outcomes of children's centres;

- o Grouping the consultations affords an opportunity to take a more strategic approach to use of buildings and space, in line with the council's regeneration strategy. It also affords an opportunity to take forward long-held ambitions for the development of community hubs which may, *inter alia*, deliver or host services and activities which currently take place in libraries or children's centres, or may even take over the current building space;

**1.7 Community Hubs.** The third part of the consultation will look at whether there is community appetite to explore whether Community Hubs - local spaces at the heart of their communities, offering and hosting a wide range of services, public events and activities, and spaces to meet friends and contribute to community life – can support the delivery of positive community outcomes. Hubs could serve three broad categories of activity:

**WELCOME:** Helping people from different backgrounds and different age groups connect every day on a warm and informal basis. These sort of activities might include some of the activities that currently take place at children's centres or libraries, but could also include informal coffee & cake, lunch clubs, pop-up sessions showing people how to use technology to help them in their lives and information sessions and talks built by the local community.

**INTEREST:** Services and activities that target specific communities of interest, including sports, culture, leisure, supporting social and local identity, intergenerational links, safety, well-being and cohesion, ward councillor surgeries and engagement sessions

**LEARNING:** Supporting people and businesses through open learning, skills workshops, business growth support and advice sessions from groups such as Shelter, CAB, JobCentre+, Mental Health, Autism support, Community Navigators, dementia friends

## **2 Options**

2.1 The options on which consultation is proposed are outlined in the consultation paper attached at Annex A.

## **3. Consultation**

3.1 In order to inform and assist the decision making about the future of Children's Centres and Libraries, and to gauge appetite to take forward the concept of community hubs, a comprehensive consultation exercise is to be undertaken which includes consulting on how proposed changes in how

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services are delivered would impact on residents including users of those services.

**4. Recommendation**

4.1 It is recommended that public consultation is carried out as detailed within this report and attachments at Annex A seeking the views of key stakeholders, residents and users of children's centres and libraries in Havering.

4.2 It is further recommended that a report is presented to Cabinet detailing the results of the consultation and making recommendations for provision going forward.

**AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE**

Part 3, section 3.3 of the Constitution.

**STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION**

**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

Not carrying out a public consultation on proposals is likely to be unlawful and therefore no other options are suitable in order to provide evidence against which a decision on the provision of children's centre and library services can be based.


**PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION**

Not applicable

**NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER**

Name: Gareth Nicholson

Designation: Assistant Director, Customer, Communications and Culture.

Signature: 

Date: 18 June 2019

## **Part B - Assessment of implications and risks**

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

Having regard to the common law duties, in the circumstances of considering the future of this service the service users should be properly consulted and those views should be taken into account by the decision maker when taking a decision about future provision.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

There are costs associated with carrying out the consultation in terms of staff time to set up public meetings and costs circa >£250.00 to design consultation materials. All costs will be met from current departmental budgets.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)**

There are no human resource implications or risks associated with carrying out the consultations.

### **EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have due regard to:

- (i) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are: age, sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and gender reassignment.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

The council has some data about the use of children's centres and libraries by various groups and will present a final Equality Impact Analysis with any future report

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submitted for a decision to be made. The consultation exercise will provide the Council with additional information about who uses the services, their access to other venues, any potential impact on groups of the options and possible routes of mitigation.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**NONE**

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**Part C – Record of decision**

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

**Decision**

Proposal agreed

*Delete as applicable*

Proposal ~~NOT~~ agreed because

**Details of decision maker**

Signed



Name: *Tim Aldridge*

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title *DCS*

Other manager title:

Date: *19.06.2019.*

**Lodging this notice**

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

**For use by Committee Administration**

This notice was lodged with me on *26/6/19*

Signed *A.M.M.*

