

Notice of KEY Executive Decision (Special Urgency)

Subject Heading:	Temporary closure of the Cocoon, during COVID-19 Pandemic
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Robert Benham, Deputy Leader, Lead Member for Children and Learning.
SLT Lead:	Robert South, Director, Children's Services
Report Author and contact details:	Tendai Dooley, Head of Care Resources. Tendai.dooley@havering.gov.uk 01708431980
Policy context:	Havering Council Major Emergency Plan
Financial summary:	There are no direct financial costs associated with this decision
Reason decision is Key	Significant effect on two or more Wards
Date notice given of intended decision:	26 th March 2020
Relevant OSC:	Children and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Is it an urgent decision?	Yes
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Yes, due to Special Urgency

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

Communities making Havering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Places making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities making Havering	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Connections making Havering

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Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

In light of the current situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, we are seeking approval of the below proposals in order to maintain a reasonable and safe service delivery. This is during a time when staffing numbers are reduced to illness or self-isolation and fewer children and families are accessing services for the same reasons.

Decision to be made is to temporarily close the Cocoon for an initial period of four weeks, with immediate effect. This is to be reviewed in line with government and public health guidance in four weeks (Monday 20th April) to determine if the closure period should be extended or ceased.

There are now an inconsistent numbers of attendance/footfall and there is the ability to support care leavers remotely or at other main sites when absolutely necessary. It is also a challenge at the Cocoon, to follow government guidelines on social distancing. Staffing capacity had been impacted due to self-isolation and some staff being in the high risk category.

- Face to face targeted services to be replaced by telephone and/or video call contact, as outlined below and in attached supporting document. Every young person knows how to contact their worker
 - Semi-independent provisions and cares in staying put arrangements to be require to use the agreed support hours to ensure young people placed in their care have access to food, gas, electricity and other essentials.
 - Arrangements for additional financial assistance to be put in place should young adults have a genuine need for such support.
- Contact will be made with the corporate communications team to ensure that the public, where relevant, are made aware of any closures and provided with details of how and where to contact the children's centre team if needed.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

The Director as a member of SLT has the following relevant powers under Part 3 section 3.4 As follows:

- (a) To take any steps necessary for proper management and administration for their allocated portfolios.
- (b) ...
- (c) To manage buildings and facilities under their control including letting, hiring or otherwise permitting the use of such premises and property for occasional purposes...
- (d) To be responsible and accountable for all health and safety matters.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

This decision is required under "Special Urgency" to allow the Council to plan and undertake effective strategies for working and service delivery during the current Covid 19 outbreak.

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OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Continuing service delivery as normal; this is not possible due to reduced staffing capacity and government guidelines issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

N/A

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

Name: Jane Carroll

Designation: Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care

Signature:

Date: 26/03/2020

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The services provided at the Cocoon appear to be of a generic nature relating to training and employment. Whilst the services may form part of the obligations of the Local Authority to young people who are in receipt of leaving care services under individual young person's pathway plans the extenuating current circumstances are a sound basis for temporarily suspending the support offered at the Cocoon. There are alternatives being offered which should satisfy the requirements included in pathway plans.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There will be no additional financial costs associated with the temporary closure of the Cocoon. Any costs that are currently incurred that cannot be reduced or suspended during closure will be met from within existing budgets

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

Given the Coronavirus outbreak, the paramount consideration of the Council is the health and wellbeing of Members and officers

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.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out when a current or planned service/policy/activity is likely to affect staff, service users, or other residents. It is acknowledged that due to the urgency of the threat posed by the coronavirus, it will not be

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possible to carry out an EqHIA in advance of the closure of a service, however, managers will undertake the required EqHIAs at the earliest opportunity. Where managers are already clear that particular groups/users will be impacted negatively by the curtailment, this will be noted in the next paragraph and/or put into draft EqHIAs. Where the impact of the closure can be mitigated, this too should be set out in this report.

The Council seeks to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all in all situations.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recently announced 'lockdown' measures by the government have served to minimise client attendance to the Cocoon, such that the impact of temporary closure is assessed to have a nominal impact upon clients when weighed against public health risks.

The care and consideration of all clients is paramount, and through the Emergency Planning process around COVID-19, this is being managed, to meet the ongoing needs of care experienced young people.

Access to support and services will be made available to clients, through professionals using smart working and remote contact tools.

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:

Cabinet Portfolio held:

CMT Member title:

Head of Service title

Other manager title:

Date:

Lodging this notice

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

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____