

'CALL IN' OF DECISIONS OF THE CABINET

This form is to be used for the 'calling in' of decisions of the above bodies, in accordance with the procedure set out in Part 4 Section H.2 of the Constitution.

TITLE OF MEETING	Cabinet Member (Children's Services) Signing
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DATE OF MEETING	18 th May 2011
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MINUTE No. AND TITLE OF ITEM	1. Children's Centres in Haringey
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1. Reason for Call-In/Is it claimed to be outside the policy or budget framework?

The proposals are considered to be inside the policy and budget framework but:

- Whilst understanding the requirement that the Council has to reduce spending as a result of the wider reductions in government grant and increased pressure on some Council services, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should re-examine Cabinet's decision to close Children's Centres in Highgate, North Bank, Rokesly and Tower Gardens.
- The closure of Children's Centres is contrary:
 - To objectives of Haringey's Children's Trust and its Preventative Strategy and
 - To the Council's Children and Young People's plan (CYPP) 2009-12 which all place great emphasis on early intervention. Priority 4 of the CYPP 'Stay Safe' is to:

"Deepen integration of systems and processes that promote early intervention, prevention and the delivery of locally based services."

- To the observations of the Munro Review (April 2011) which says:

"Preventative services will do more to reduce abuse and neglect than reactive services" and that Council's should "secure sufficient provision of early help services for children, young people and families"

- Early Intervention services should not be the target for cuts which will only create problems, social and financial, in the long-term. The National Children's Plan say that:

"It is always better to prevent failure than tackle a crisis later."

As the 2008/09 evaluation of the Children and Young People's plan says:

“Early intervention and prevention are key areas to focus on improving, in order to address the high levels of demand for acute services.”

- Not only will long-term costs increase but the outcomes for children will be worse if Children’s Centres close. Haringey’s Children’s Trust Prevention Strategy says:

“If we do not invest sufficient resources into prevention and early intervention, the more likely it is that at risk and vulnerable children and young people will have increasing dependence on high cost and long-term interventions.”

- The Council may be open to costly and lengthy legal proceedings if it is to be seen to neglect its legal duty in the Children’s Act
- The Children’s Centre consultation failed to provide an opportunity for centres, families and individuals to respond effectively as it failed to provide clear information on costs and alternative delivery methods. This is shown in the lack of change in the funding
- The Council’s proposals have failed to consider the relative deprivation in all wards and ascertain whether the service is reaching the children in each area in most need.

2. Variation of Action Proposed

- Whilst understanding the need to target more of the reduced resources at deprived areas the model proposed fails to consider need across the entire borough and residents living in pockets of deprivation in wealthier areas which the Council still has a duty to provide for. For this reason the Council should reconsider plans to close Children’s centres.
- The Children and Young People Service (CYPS) should consider a reduction in its overall budget to ensure that all Children’s Centres remain open.
- Funding currently earmarked in the CYPS budget for future demographic changes should be utilised for Children’s Centres which are used by children currently living in the borough and for whom the Council has a duty to provide.
- Differential charging structures and income generation should be explored in all Children’s Centres to boost revenue to be spent on these services.

Signed:

Councillor: Karl Teece (Please print name): KATHLEEN REECE

Countersigned:

1. Councillor: Rachel Allison (Please print name): RACHEL ALLISON
2. Councillor: Monica Whyte (Please print name): [Signature]
3. Councillor: David Schmitz (Please print name): [Signature]
4. Councillor: [Signature] (Please print name): RICHARD WILSON

Date Submitted: 24/5/11

Date Received: 24 May 2011 @ 15.05hrs
(to be completed by the Non Cabinet Committees Manager)

[Signature]

Notes:

1. Please send this form to:
Clifford Hart (on behalf of the Proper Officer)
Non Cabinet Committees Manager
7th Floor
River Park House
225 High Road, Wood Green, London N22 8HQ

Fax: 020 8489 2660
2. This form must be received by the Non Cabinet Committees Manager by 10.00 a.m. on the fifth working day following publication of the minutes.
3. The proper officer will forward all timely and proper call-in requests to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and notify the decision taker and the relevant Director.
4. A decision will be implemented after the expiry of ten working days following the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's receipt of a call-in request, unless a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee takes place during the 10 day period.
5. If a call-in request claims that a decision is contrary to the policy or budget framework, the Proper Officer will forward the call-in requests to the Monitoring Officer and /or Chief Financial Officer for a report to be prepared for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advising whether the decision does fall outside the policy or budget framework.

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Appendix B

Present: Councillor Lorna Reith (Cabinet Member for Childrens' Services)

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
1.	<p>CHILDRENS' CENTRES IN HARINGEY (Report of the Director of the Children and Young Peoples' Service – Agenda Item 3):</p> <p>It was noted that in February 2011 the Cabinet had agreed savings of £6.519 million from Haringey's Early Years' and Children Centre programme and had recommended charges to the fees charged for childcare in Childrens' Centres. Reductions to central staffing costs and commissioning budgets were agreed and a public consultation was held between 16 March and 22 April on how the Children's Centre delivery programme should be configured within the revised budget constraints. The underpinning principle for the model of provision was that the most vulnerable families living in the most deprived areas would be the priority for future service delivery. An addendum to the consultation was issued on 5 April 2011 making explicit the Childrens' Centres that would be at risk of closure if the available finances could not sustain all existing centres. Almost 1,000 responses had been made to the online consultation as well as 13 public meetings and over 65 e-mails and letters and alternative proposals had been received.</p> <p>It was reported that serious concerns had been expressed by all sections of the community about any reductions to resources for this age group of children. National research had consistently demonstrated that the early intervention with young children could prevent greater problems developing as they got older. However, given the scale of reductions that the Council had to make as a result of the changes in Government funding, the over-whelming response from the consultation was support for the proposal to focus the resources that remained on provision for the most vulnerable families living in the areas of greatest deprivation. The report now submitted set out the model that would be adopted for delivering it. Childrens' Centres would be reorganised into four clusters with staff directly employed by the local authority. A Service Level Agreement would be in place that prioritised the most vulnerable and set out the provision required to support the best outcomes for these families. The report also proposed the establishment of Local Partnership Boards in each cluster who would ensure that Children's Centres worked together to deliver an offer within each locality that would provide the full range of services to the families that most needed them and would link with the other partnerships operating in the locality. Funding would no longer be provided to support the following Children's Centres:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highgate • Northbank • Rokesly • Tower Gardens <p>The central commissioning of services would continue to support the most vulnerable families wherever they lived and to provide specialist family support for the families that were most at risk, wherever they lived. No significant changes were proposed to the current pattern of NHS</p>	

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	<p>Haringey services that already operated across Childrens' Centres.</p> <p>Subject to agreement, a new fee structure was proposed from September 2011 that would reduce the subsidy provided for childcare. A further review of the impact of this was planned, so that fees charged would be linked to family income and a sliding scale would be introduced from April 2012. A full equalities impact assessment of these changes would be completed.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the feedback from consultation summarised in Section 16 of the interleaved report and in detail in Appendix 3 and the Equalities Impact Assessment as set out at Appendix 4 be noted. 2. That approval be granted to the arrangements for the delivery of Childrens' Centre services in Haringey as set out in Sections 17 - 19 of the interleaved report. 3. That officers engage in consultation with affected staff on the staffing changes that follow from these arrangements. 4. That a report seeking agreement to the changes to childcare fees as set out in Section 21 of the interleaved report be prepared and that an assessment of the equalities impact of the increases be carried out. 	<p>DCYPS</p> <p>DCYPS</p> <p>DCYPS</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMPLETED CONSULTATION ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' SERVICE DIRECTORATE SPECIFIC CRITERIA TO ASSESS FUNDING FOR THE THIRD SECTOR (AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR WHERE APPROPRIATE) AND ACTUAL FUNDING FOR 2011/12 (Report of the Director of the Children and Young Peoples' Service – Agenda Item 4):</p> <p>The Appendix to the interleaved report was the subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as it contained exempt information relating to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information).</p> <p>It was noted that overarching funding criteria for the Council, based on work from the Audit Commission had been approved by the Cabinet on 8 February. The Children and Young Peoples' Directorate specific criteria measured services against a three stage assessment. Services were first assessed regarding the extent to which they met at least one of the first two strategic priorities of the Children and Young Peoples' Services Strategic Plan 2009-2020. The second stage assessment involved prioritising services where the predominant numbers of service users were vulnerable children and young people with acute or highly complex</p>	

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need, being level four on the Haringey Continuum of Need. Under provisional assessment, services which did not meet level four would receive no further funding save for circumstances where a withdrawal of service would put the Council at serious risk of failing to meet its statutory duties. In such cases, funding would be reviewed, and this represented the third stage of the assessment.

These criteria had been applied and the provisional decisions were notified to providers and users to enable consultation to be undertaken. The final recommendations for services, having considered the responses to consultation and conducted an Equalities Impact Assessment were set out at Appendix H Annex 1. The recommendations meant that services and organisations would be subject to one of three outcomes which were that, in 2011/12, they would receive: the same level of funding; a reduced level of funding; or no funding.

It was also noted that the criteria reasonably utilised the 'Continuum of Need' as a basis for a risk assessment, as this was the tool used as part of the Common Assessment Framework and was developed by the London Safeguarding Children Board (a multi-agency board) following the statutory guidance as laid out in "Working Together to Safeguard Children" (September 2010). The further criteria stages were developed in response to consultation to include a third stage to ensure that the Authority complied with its Equality Act 2010 duties and the Aiming High government project. The range of services that might be affected by both the design of the criteria and the decision to implement the decisions on applying the criteria was broad. For the purposes of the Equality Impact Assessment, the services provided had been grouped into 8 themes, Early Years Education and Childcare; Activities for Young People 13-19 Years; Disabilities and Special Educational Needs; Family Support; 14 to 19 Education; 6. Children in Care; Youth Offending; and Teenage Pregnancy.

It was reported that in commenting on the application of application of criteria and proposed decisions, the following main themes emerged from consultation responses:

- **Feedback to the consultation process** – The consultation period was considerably less than recommended in the local Compact guidance. Decisions about funding were part of an overall strategy to save £41 million at very short notice. The consultation started as soon as possible given those constraints.
- **Childcare Sufficiency** – The criteria and judgements did not allow a full range of services and organisations and services felt that this would effectively make childcare unaffordable. The introduction of the Council's Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) was anticipated to increase funding for the majority of settings. For those organisations where sustainability was anticipated to be a problem with the introduction of the new system a reduced rate of

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time limited funding had been recommended.

- **Ensure services for individual children at and young people at Level 4** – The Council was dedicated to ensuring that all children in the borough who were judged to be at level 4 on the continuum of need had access to an appropriate level of service. This would be ensured through the appropriate assessments processes.
- **Services that work predominantly with service users at Level 3 and below** – Some organisations expressed concern about differentiating between level 3 and 4 on the continuum of need as they felt that this might lead to more children moving from level 3 to 4. The Children and Young Peoples' Service would support schools, other extended school providers and third sector organisations by providing advice on access arrangements and training to enable them to continue to provide for children and young people at level 3. This, it was hoped, would mitigate against the possibility of these children rising into the level 4 category.
- **Nurseries & playgroups** – Some service providers expressed difficulty in estimating the effect of these proposals because they had not received definitive information about their EYSFF allocation. The EYSFF was a significant change in the way the Council funded private, voluntary and independent organisations (PVI), which had been delayed due to the need to gather extensive data collection from schools and PVI's, which was needed to arrive at the final indicative allocation of each service providers
- **Sustainability of Nursery and playgroup settings** – Organisations expressed concern that the proposed reduction in the sustainability grant was not phased. The financial viability of early years childcare providers had been assessed and of those organisations where there was a serious risk that to withdraw funding would threaten the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties a reduced level of the sustainability grant was recommended to mitigate against this risk.

It was also reported that the themes and the Council's analysis was set out in more detail at Appendices F and G but that, overall, it was generally acknowledged that there was a need to prioritise services for the most vulnerable children and young people given the budgetary challenges faced by the Council. Organisations had requested assurances that those children on the autistic spectrum that did not necessarily have level 4 needs would continue to receive support to stay healthy and safe. Children on the autistic spectrum might range within the levels on the triangle. The Children and Young Peoples' Service considered that it had a duty to children on the autistic spectrum by virtue of the Aiming High strategy and also because of its Equality Act 2010 duty, and would prioritise resources accordingly so that it effectively discharged its

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statutory duty to meet the needs of this group.

It was also noted that the detailed breakdown of the proposed reduction in budget was set out in the exempt Appendix 1 to the report and that the following table summarised the overall outcome -

Theme	No. of grants	2010/11 Funding	2011/12 Funding	% change	No. of Orgs Not Funded	No. of Orgs with Reduced Funding.	No of Orgs with Maintained Funding.
Early Years Education	23	£354,484.00	£112,900.00	-68.2%	18	5	0
Activities for Young People	37	£277,042.00	£0.00	-100.0%	37	0	0
Disabilities and Special Educational Needs	21	£638,860.75	£552,775.75	-13.5% ¹	5	0	16
Family Support	8	£176,114.76	£170,502.00	-3.2%	3	0	5
14 to 19 Education	8	£229,800.00	£0.00	-100.0%	8	0	0
Children in Care	3	£246,784.40	£94,200.00	-61.8% ²	0	0	3
Youth Offending	1	£30,900.00	£35,000.00	13.3%	0	0	1
Teenage Pregnancy	1	£30,000.00	£12,500.00	-58.3%	0	1	0
Total	102	£1,983,985.91	£977,877.75	-50.7%	71	6	25

The projected 2011/12 spend also included a provision for accessing supported housing and domiciliary services where required for children with Level 4 needs. This had not been identified as a proposed cut, as it did not relate to a contract with a specified provider and was very much case-specific to the individual and their particular needs. Consequently, it was impossible to predict exactly the budget required. Failure to have this resource in place might result in the Authority being unable to meet its statutory duty to the most vulnerable people in some circumstances.

The Director of the Children and Young Peoples' Service further reported that the following amendment was required in relation to paragraphs 4.2 (B), (D), (F) and (H). The contract start date should read 1 April 2011 and not 1 June 2011. The funding allocations in the spreadsheet set out in the exempt Appendix 1 – schedule recommend decisions represented the total funding for the financial year 2011/12.

RESOLVED

1. That approval be granted to the Children and Young Peoples'

DCYPS

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	<p>Service Directorate specific criteria as set out at Appendix B to the interleaved report for the future funding of services in the Children and Young Peoples' Service in order to enable final decisions on funding of individual services to be made.</p> <p>2. That subject to the amendment outlined above approval be granted to the recommendations as set out in the exempt Appendix 1 to the interleaved report to implement the funding changes to individual services resulting from the application of these criteria; such approval must take into account the outcome of consultation with the organisations and service users and, further, due regard must be given to the authority's public sector equality duty, taking into account the attached equality impact assessments.</p>	DCYPS
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The meeting ended at 14.10 hours.

LORNA REITH
Cabinet Member (Childrens' Services)



Haringey Council

Agenda Item:

[No.]**Lead Member Signing****On 17 May 2011**

Report Title Children's Centres in Haringey	
Report of Peter Lewis, Director of the Children and Young People's Service Signed :	
Contact Officer : Jan Doust, Deputy Director, Early Intervention and Prevention	
Wards(s) affected: All	Report for: Key
<p>1. Purpose of the report</p> <p>1.1. To set out proposals, following the period of consultation, to maintain effective children's centre services within the available budget and based upon the principles agreed by Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining a full children's centre services offer in our most deprived areas • ensuring that the delivery of services reflect local needs; • shared management and other jobs across centres; • flexibility amongst staff working across Children's Centres • the closure of centres if the financial appraisals suggest that we are unable to maintain high quality, effective services across all centres. 	
<p>2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)</p> <p>2.1. Not applicable.</p>	

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:

3.1. The plans reflect the Council Plan vision set out in strategic priority 3 to *"Encourage lifetime well being"*. The proposals address this priority by seeking to ensure there is integrated, good quality early childhood service provision available from the earliest point in a child's life.

3.2. To support the delivery of the Children's Trust Preventative Strategy and Child Poverty Strategy and to provide a sound basis for early intervention across all services.

3.3. In addition, the proposals link to the Children and Young People's Plan 2009 - 2020 priorities set out below;

Priority 1 – to improve health and well-being throughout life

Priority 3 – to improve safeguarding and child protection

Priority 4 – develop positive human relationships and ensure personal safety

Priority 5 – develop sustainable schooling and services with high expectations of young people

Priority 6 – engender lifelong learning for all across a broad range of subjects both in and out of school

Priority 10 – Empower families and communities

3.4. The proposals also link with the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy - 2007-2016, in particular the outcomes;

-Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all

-Safer for all

-Healthier people with a better quality of life.

3.5. The proposals have clear links to the Council's Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan 2008-2011, namely;

Objectives 1: Addressing worklessness and increasing parental employment in sustainable jobs

Objective 2: Improving the take-up of benefits and tax credits

Objective 3: Reducing educational attainment gaps for children in poverty

4. Recommendations

4.1. That the Lead Member notes the feedback from consultation summarised in section 16 of this report and in detail in Appendix 3 and the Equalities Impact Assessment in Appendix 4.

4.2. That the Lead Member agrees the arrangements for the delivery of Children's

Centre services in Haringey set out in sections 17 - 19 of this report.

4.3. That officers engage in consultation with affected staff on the staffing changes that follow from these arrangements.

4.4. That officers prepare a report seeking agreement to the changes to childcare fees set out in section 21 of this report and undertake an assessment of the equalities impact of the increases.

5. Other options considered

5.1. The options considered were set out in the consultation document, Appendix 1 and the Addendum to the consultation document (Appendix 2)...

6. Chief Financial Officer Comments

6.1. The saving proposed in this report (£6.519m) is consistent with that reported to Cabinet in February 2011 and necessary to achieve the overall level of savings agreed by the Council in setting its budget for 2011-2012 and the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2011-14. The phasing of the saving is however, also important. The supporting papers to Cabinet suggest that £1.3m of the saving is to be achieved in 2012-13 with the bulk (£5.2m) being scheduled for 2011-12.

6.2. Achievement of that savings profile is not possible and, whilst provision exists corporately for overall programme slippage, this cannot necessarily be assumed against individual proposals. Potential slippage of approximately £600,000 against the originally proposed profile has been estimated against this proposal which assumes that any revised structures and proposals take effect from September 2011.

6.3. This also recognises action taken already to reduce non-essential expenditure. It is important that steps continue to be taken in order to minimise slippage and the Directorate should also take such action as it can to identify other areas where savings proposals can be accelerated and/ or identify alternative areas for savings to be made. This is imperative to ensure that, in overall terms the profile of savings agreed for the Directorate are in fact achieved.

7. Head of Legal Services Comments

7.1. Section 5A of the Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on a local authority to, so far as is reasonably practicable, include within its arrangements for early childhood services, sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. The statutory guidance, to which the Council must have regard, states that local authorities should ensure that universal access to Children's Centres is achieved, with the centres configured to meet the needs of local families, especially the

most deprived.

- 7.2. Section 5E of the 2006 Act places a duty on the Council to consider providing services through a children's centre. The non-statutory guidance explains that, when services are not delivered directly at centres, local authorities, working with their Children's Trust partners should consider how best to ensure that the families who require services can be supported to access them.
- 7.3. Section 5D of the 2006 Act requires the local authority to consult before it decides to either close an existing centre or to make a significant alteration to the level and nature of the service.
- 7.4. The report sets out the consultation process that has taken place and demonstrates that the Council has complied with its consultation duty. The proposed way forward for the children's centre service set out in the report meets the duties of the Council under Sections 5A and 5E of the 2006 Act.
- 7.5. In reaching a decision on the proposals set out in the report, the decision maker must take account of the outcome of the public consultation. Further, due account must be taken of the Council's public sector equality duty, taking into account the attached equality impact assessment. The report also makes clear that detailed consultation is now commencing with staff and recognised trades unions on the basis of these proposals. Thus the final decision concerning the service and its staffing complement should only be taken following this latter consultation exercise and take into account its outcome.

8. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments

- 8.1. The proposed changes to the pattern of Children's Centre delivery will result in reduced provision for children under 5 in Haringey. The revised model set out in this report is intended to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable families living in the most deprived areas. Where financial support is withdrawn from centres we expect health services to continue to operate. In addition outreach and family support services will be available to identify and support the most vulnerable children and families wherever they live.
- 8.2. The full Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is in Appendix 4.

9. Consultation

- 9.1. Section 15 summarises the consultation process. A full report on the consultation process is included as Appendix 1 and the addendum to the consultation process is included as Appendix 2.

10. Service Financial Comments

- 10.1. The Cabinet report of 8 February set out details of savings of £6.519m overall in the Early Years' and Children's Centre budgets, including £2.2m through changes to the central management and support arrangements for Children's Centres and Early Years and reductions to the services centrally commissioned to support this age group. £4.8m is available for direct service delivery.
- 10.2. This sum includes the cost of subsidising childcare places (£1.557m) and the costs of the autism provision at Woodside and centrally-managed family support, leaving £2.375m for the actual running costs of Children's Centres.
- 10.3. The proposals in this report have been developed within this budget. The resources have been allocated across clusters as follows:

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
	Broadwater Farm Park Lane Pembury Welbourne Bruce Grove	Stonecroft Stroud Green Campsbourne	Earlsmead The Ladder South Grove Triangle Woodlands Park Downhills	Bounds Green Noel Park Rowland Hill Woodside
	£	£	£	£
Premises and site management	157766	13846	207237	101596
Staffing	441558	231733	381497	439337
Running costs	52458	20000	52599	32374
Service delivery	68234	25000	47107	21538
sub-total	720016	290579	688440	594846

- 10.4. This allocation broadly follows the population of under-5s, taking account of levels of deprivation across the areas served by each cluster. It is not however, allocated on the basis of a formula due to the need to take account of the real costs of running and opening centres in each cluster. The effect of this allocation of funding is considered in more detail in the Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) accompanying these proposals (Appendix 4).

11. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs

- 11.1. Appendix 1: Consultation document
- 11.2. Appendix 2: Addendum to consultation document
- 11.3. Appendix 3: Report on the consultation feedback
- 11.4. Appendix 4: Equalities Impact Assessment

12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 12.1. Relevant documents are attached as Appendices.

13. Summary

- 13.1. In February Cabinet agreed savings of £6.519 from Haringey's Early Years' and Children Centre programme and recommended charges to the fees charged for childcare in Children's Centres. Reductions to central staffing costs and commissioning budgets were agreed and a public consultation was held between 16th March and 22nd April on how the Children's Centre delivery programme should be configured within the revised budget constraints. The underpinning principle for the model of provision was that the most vulnerable families living in the most deprived areas would be the priority for future service delivery. An addendum to the consultation was issued on 5th April 2011 making explicit the Children's Centres that would be at risk of closure if the available finances could not sustain all existing centres. Almost 1000 responses were made to the online consultation as well as 13 public meetings and over 65 emails and letters and alternative proposals were received.
- 13.2. Serious concerns have been expressed by all sections of the community about any reductions to resources for this age group of children. National research consistently demonstrates that the early intervention with young children can prevent greater problems developing as they get older. However given the scale of reductions that the Council has to make due to the changes in Government funding, the over-whelming response from the consultation was support for the proposal to focus the resources that remain on provision for the most vulnerable families living in the areas of greatest deprivation. This report sets out the model that we will adopt for delivering this. Children's Centres will be reorganised into four clusters with staff directly employed by the Local Authority. A Service Level Agreement will be in place that prioritises the most vulnerable and sets out the provision required to support the best outcomes for these families. The report also proposes the establishment of Local Partnership Boards in each cluster who will ensure that Children's Centres work together to deliver an offer within each locality that will provide the full range of services to the families that most need them and will link with the other partnerships

operating in the locality. Funding will no longer be provided to support the following Children's Centres:

- Highgate
- Northbank
- Rokesly
- Tower Gardens

13.3. We will continue to commission services centrally to support the most vulnerable families wherever they live and to provide specialist family support for the families that are most at risk, wherever they live. No significant changes are proposed to the current pattern of NHS Haringey services that already operate across Children's Centres.

13.4. Subject to agreement, a new fee structure is proposed from September 2011 that will reduce the subsidy provided for childcare. A further review of the impact of this is planned, so that fees charged will be linked to family income and a sliding scale will be introduced from April 2012. A full equalities impact assessment of these changes will be completed.

14. Background

14.1. In February 2011, Cabinet agreed savings of £6.519m in the Children's Centres and Early Years budget as an element of the Council's overall savings target of £41m for financial year 2011/12.

14.2. In introducing the report to the February Cabinet, Cllr Reith made the following comments:

'It is bitterly disappointing therefore to present this report which outlines how we have to reduce these services because of Central Government cuts. Officers and members have spent long hours trying to stretch the money to keep as many centres open and services available as possible. We have substantially reduced central support and individual centre management costs. We have prioritised those children living in the most severely deprived areas.

However, it is clear that we cannot avoid some reductions in service and we may have to close some centres. We will reach a final decision on this once we have been able to assess the impact of changes to fees as well as the ongoing support from other stakeholders and have completed the consultation with centres.'

14.3. Cabinet were asked to consider an alternative model for the delivery of Children's Centre services. These proposals were based on a model that included :

- the development of 8 clusters including all 19 centres and configured around Lead and Associate centres and three linked sites.
- reduced management and administrative costs of each centre through combining roles; and
- retention of all existing centres but providing different levels of service offers across the borough.

14.4. The Cabinet report also set out details of savings amounting to £2.2m through changes to the central management and support arrangements for Children's Centres and Early Years and reductions to the services centrally commissioned to support this age group. £4.8m is available for direct service delivery. This sum includes the cost of subsidising childcare places (£1.557m) and the costs of the autism provision at Woodside and centrally-managed family support as set out in paragraph 18.8 leaving £2.375m for the actual running costs of Children's Centres.

14.5. Cabinet agreed:

- (4.1) that the future Children's Centre programme should be reconfigured so that it can be delivered within the budget constraints whilst ensuring that children living in the 0-30% most deprived super-output areas are able to access the full range of children's centre services;
- (4.2) that officers complete the detailed work required to meet 4.1 above including a commissioning strategy which sets out the required service level, revised formula for the allocation of funding and a revised fee structure that maximises income and supports the maintenance of services where parents/carers are able to contribute to the cost; and
- (4.3) that consultations on this strategy and proposals should take place with each Children's Centre and school in the current programme in order to ensure that service delivery is protected for the most vulnerable families, resources are targeted to the areas that will be most effective and the programme is delivered within the available budget from April 2011.

15. The consultation process

15.1. Initial proposals were set out in the consultation document (Appendix 1) and the views of the public were sought during a statutory consultation which took place between 16th March 2011 and 22nd April 2011.

- 15.2. An addendum to the consultation was issued on 5th April 2011 (Appendix 2). The original consultation proposed that Children's Centre resources would be targeted at the most vulnerable families and those living in areas of highest deprivation. A map of Haringey showing Children's Centres and deprivation bandings were included in the consultation document. We were given legal advice that we should specifically state which Children's Centres would be at risk of closure if we could not sustain them all and the addendum set out the potential changes.
- 15.3. The process of consultation included a series of 13 open meetings hosted by a combination of the Lead Member for Children and Young People, the Early Years Champion Member and senior officers and these were attended by parents/carers, staff, governors and other interested parties. Written responses were received through the online questionnaires and other forms of submission.
- 15.4. There were a total of 976 questionnaires submitted – 790 from parents/carers, 57 from Children's Centre staff, 82 from school staff and governors and 47 from partner statutory and voluntary organisations. In addition, 65 emails and letters and a video were also received.
- 15.5. Full details of the consultation and the feedback are the subject of a separate report and this has been included as Appendix 3.

16. Feedback from the consultation

- 16.1. The vast majority of responses to the consultation reflect serious concerns about reducing resources to support this age range and about the level of savings required. National independent research commissioned by the government and published as recently as January 2011 demonstrates the importance of targeting support to children in the 0-5 age range and the potential that this has for improving outcomes and reducing the need for more costly interventions later on (*Graham Allen: Early Intervention: The Next Steps*).
- 16.2. Among users of the services almost all respondents to the on-line consultations and attendees at meetings agreed with the principle of maintaining a full children's centre service in our most deprived areas delivered in a way that meets local needs.
- 16.3. It should also be noted that there was substantial opposition expressed in the questionnaire responses to the closure of any centres, even if the financial resources prove insufficient to maintain high quality, effective services

across all centres. Parents/carers expressed particular concerns about cuts or closures and there was some support for increased charges where this would enable services such as 'stay and play' and childcare to remain.

- 16.4. These views must be balanced with the dialogue from the consultation meetings that were held where there were some strong expressions of support for closing centres where this would enable services to be protected for the most vulnerable families and the areas of greatest deprivation.
- 16.5. During the process of consultation Members and officers have continued to do detailed and exhaustive work to evaluate a range of models within the available resources, including financial assessment. Some alternative proposals were submitted by the Early Years Champion Member, the Opposition Party in Haringey and Children Centre staff and managers who have also been actively engaged in the process. There will be a full response to each of these and they have been taken into consideration in developing the proposals set out in this report.
- 16.6. Consultation responses and discussions with Children Centre staff, managers and partner organisations indicates that there is an understanding of the economies that would be achieved through bringing groups of centres together and a shared approach to management and administration as set out in the proposal originally considered by Cabinet.
- 16.7. There has been debate about both the number of clusters and the combination of centres in each cluster. We knew that there would be debate about these areas and have openly encouraged the submission of alternatives.
- 16.8. Whatever combination of clusters we propose, it is unlikely that there will be universal consensus given the range of different perspectives. However, our intention is that the model will:
- maintain and build on the good practice that already exists;
 - recognise the particular challenges for children living in the most deprived areas;
 - provide continued access to the full range of services, to the families that are most vulnerable;
 - enable us to direct as much as possible of the available resources into direct work with children and families;
 - reduce duplication, overlap and gaps, particularly in relation to management and administration of services; and
 - be delivered within the resources that are available.

17. Proposed way forward

- 17.1. The Local Authority has enduring statutory responsibilities and our first priority is to ensure that these continue to be met. These are set out in the Childcare Act 2006. This sets out the commitment to give every child the best start in life and parents/carers greater choice and flexibility about how to balance work and family life. The Act places the following duties on local authorities:
- to improve outcomes for young children and reduce inequalities between them;
 - to secure sufficient childcare to enable parents/carers to work; and
 - to provide information to parents/carers about childcare and a wide range of other services that may be of benefit to them.
- 17.2. The Act defines a Children's Centre as a place or group of places:
- which are managed by or on behalf of the Local Authority with the purpose of securing that early childhood services are delivered in an integrated manner;
 - through which early childhood services are available; and
 - at which activities for young children are provided.
- 17.3. As a result of the feedback and the financial modelling we propose to continue with the principle of cluster-based model of working that was set out in the consultation document. However, we have responded to feedback that eight clusters are too many and that we should not have any 'stand-alone' centres. Concerns were also expressed about the notion of 'lead centres' and different levels of service offer and we have addressed these in the model.
- 17.4. We now propose to have fewer clusters as this will reduce the number of managers required and will release more of the available resources into the frontline. In addition, larger clusters will provide increased flexibility to target resources to where they are most needed. There are no 'stand-alone' centres in the model and as far as possible, the proposed clusters have been configured on the basis of existing collaborative working or suggestions from the Children's Centres themselves. We accept that there will inevitably be some exceptions to this.
- 17.5. The proposal set out here should be seen as a radical rethinking of the management and organisation of Children Centres that will enable us to use these resources as a powerful tool in our strategy for prevention and early intervention.
- 17.6. Effective early intervention services can prevent children from progressing to the higher levels of need where they will require more intensive, expensive and long term interventions and Children's Centres are integral to