

Report for: Cabinet 10th November 2015

Item number: 9

Title: Approval of a New Commissioning Model for Children's Centres in Haringey

Report

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Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 In June 2015, Cabinet approved for statutory consultation, proposals for the future delivery of children's centre services in Haringey. The proposals were as follows:

- a) To reduce the number of designated children's centres from 16 to 9
- b) To close seven designated children's centres but to support these sites to become Community Access Points (CAPs) offering some support to children and families to access services
- c) To establish five children's centre planning areas
- d) To widen the focus of children's centre services from families with children 0-5 years of age to 0-19 years of age, and up to 25 years for children and young people with special educational needs
- e) To increase current service availability to include evenings, weekends and across 48 weeks of the year
- f) To establish new Children's Centre Advisory Boards(CCAB)
- g) To develop Parent Engagement Forums for each children's centre planning area.

The statutory consultation was undertaken between 22nd June 2015 and 21st September 2015.

1.2 Cabinet is asked to consider: the detailed feedback from the consultation which is set out in **Appendix I**; the findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposals which are set out in **Appendix II** and the actions to mitigate the impact on service users; the analysis of the issues contained in the sections of

the report; the legal duties in section 8 and then to make a decision on the future commissioning model for children's centres in Haringey.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1 We are committed to enabling every child and young person in Haringey to have the best start in life and Haringey children centres are a key part of our approach to delivering that commitment. The financial challenges the Council face over the next three years mean that we have to make some difficult decisions about services the Council offers and ensure that we are utilising increasingly scarce resources to best effect. The statutory consultation showed the strength of feeling, amongst those who responded, about the importance of children's centres and many would rather that all of our designated centres remained. However, in order to make the £1.44 million early years budget reductions required over the next three years, we need to change the way we deliver children's centres services to enable us to continue to meet the needs of children and families in Haringey.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 3.1 Consider the detailed feedback from the statutory consultation which is summarised at **Appendix I**
- 3.2 Consider and take into account the findings of the Equalities Impact Assessment at **Appendix II**
- 3.3 Consider and take into account the concerns raised as part of the consultation exercise, actions proposed to mitigate these concerns and the adverse impact of the proposals on service users
- 3.4. Consider and taken into account the statutory guidance (Sure Start Children's Centres Statutory Guidance) attached as **Appendix III** and to be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf
- 3.5 Consider and take into account the options outlined in the report at Section 5.
- 3.6 Having considered the above recommendations, to approve the following:
- 3.6.1 To reduce the number of designated children's centres in the Borough from 16 to 9

3.6.2 To close the following seven designated children's centres by 31st March 2016:

- Bounds Green Children's Centre
- Campsbourne Children Centre
- Earlsmead Children's Centre
- Noel Park Children's Centre
- South Grove Children's Centre
- Stonecroft Children's Centre
- The Ladder Children's Centre

Closing these centres will require the Council to de-designate the centres by formally notifying the Department for Education (DfE) and Ofsted. Following this, they will no longer be recorded as children's centres on the DfE or Ofsted databases.

3.6.3 To close Rokesly Children's Centre, a school-based children's centre, at the request of the school's governing body, by 31st March 2016.

3.6.4 To identify a new provider to deliver children's centre services covering Alexandra, Crouch End, Fortis Green, Hornsey, Highgate, Muswell Hill and Stroud Green wards.

3.6.5 To withdraw the proposal for the development of Community Access Points (CAPs).

3.6.6 To establish five children's centre planning areas, aligned with Haringey schools' Network Learning Communities (NLCs).

3.6.7 To confirm that whilst children's centres should retain a focus on delivering services for children aged 0-5 years and their families future developments should include services for children and young people aged 0 – 19, and 25 where children have additional needs and disabilities, and their families. These early help services, which intervene early to offer support at the right time before needs escalate, will form part of the locality based approach to early help.

3.6.8 To confirm that the commissioning of children 's centres going forward will be outcomes focused, that the service offer will be informed by differing needs across the borough and that a core universal and targeted service offer will be available from all children's centres.

3.6.9 To prioritise access to children's centre services for Haringey residents.

- 3.6.10 To increase current service availability across more weeks of the year and note that work will continue with partner services, including health services, to enable greater access to services in the evenings and at weekends.
- 3.6.11 To bring the current arrangements for Children's Centre Advisory Boards to an end by 31st March 2016 and establish new Children's Centre Advisory Boards (CCAB) from April 2016.
- 3.6.12 To develop Parent Engagement Forums for each children's centre planning area.
- 3.6.13 To introduce the new model for children's centres in Haringey from April 2016 based on the key points above, including the reduction in the number of children's centres, embedding of children's centres within the wider delivery of early help in localities across the borough, an increased universal and targeted offer, a focus on the family, supporting access to children 0-19 (and 25 for children with additional needs and disabilities), strong links with health and other early help provision and greater parental and resident involvement in delivery and governance. The localities are areas that align with the locality groupings that schools in Haringey are organised by.
- 3.7 The implementation of the recommendations set out above to be delegated to the Assistant Director for Commissioning in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families.
- 3.8 The implementation of the proposals to be monitored and overseen by the Best Start in Life Priority Board.
- 3.9 These recommendations take into account the feedback from the consultation exercise, an appraisal of suggestions made, in terms of costs and impact, our strategic priorities for early help and the anticipated levels of funding available from 2016.
- 4. Reasons for decision**
- 4.1 The transformation of early years is a fundamental part of the Council's early help strategy and approach. We recognise that early years represents the best early intervention opportunity to improve outcomes for local residents. Children's centres are an important part of the network of services, including early years education settings, schools, health services and the voluntary and community sector, that children and families use in the borough and that provide access to information, support and where required, more specialist services.

The five strategic objectives of our Early Help Strategy 2015-2018 are:

- Delivering prevention and early intervention to reduce escalation of need
- Enhancing access to, and co-ordination of, integrated services
- Sustaining resilience for children, young people and families
- Developing the workforce to be more confident and empowered practitioners of early help
- Increasing equity of access to quality provision for all children, young people and families

4.2 These objectives provide the framework for the approach we are taking to the development, commissioning and delivery of early help services, including early years services, as we progress towards 2018/19.

4.3 The proposals set out in this section of the report aim to address the three key outcomes enabled by the Early Help Strategy:

- Improved family and community resilience
- Thriving children, young people and families and
- Strong partnerships, making effective use of resources

4.4 ***The future commissioning model for children's centres***

4.4.1 A commissioning approach will be applied transparently and equitably to the delivery of early years provision in the borough. This approach will seek to focus funding on the achievement of identified outcomes, rather than on settings, and allow for local variations to meet specific outcomes based on identified need. The new model for delivering children's centres in Haringey will build on the current mixed commissioning model, establishing a more consistent approach across the borough and one that is based on needs, assets and resources.

4.4.2 Implementing this approach will mean that we will:

- Commission for outcomes
- Commission for children's centre integration within a wider early help locality model
- Commission in a way that builds the engagement of families and strengthens community and individual resilience
- Commission for sustainability

- Commission to engage with, and benefit from, the wider opportunities of closer joint working with health, education, employment and other providers

4.4.3 We are seeking to introduce a more consistent approach to the commissioning of children’s centre service delivery and build in greater degrees of flexibility, enabling the model to adapt to changing needs over time. The emphasis will be less on buildings and more on the network of services that will operate across an area in a range of locations and delivered by both community and professional partners.

4.5 **Financial Impact**

4.5.1 The overall early years budget for 2014/2015 was £4.145m. The need to find savings of £1.440m between the financial years 2015/16 and 2018/19 means an overall reduction of 35%.

In 2014/15, the £4.145m was allocated across early years services as follows:

| Budget Area | 2014/15 Early Years Budget Allocation (£) | Percentage of the overall early years budget |
|--|---|--|
| Children’s Centres | 2,400,766 | 58% |
| Haringey’s Early Years Central Teams costs | 733,000 | 18% |
| Early Years Commissioned Services | 1,012,100 | 24% |

4.5.2 If the savings had been apportioned to each service area in line with the budget then it would have been necessary to take £835K from children’s centres. However, during our engagement process, the importance of maintaining a strong network of outcome focused childrens centres services to complement other commissioned services became clear and an alternative approach was therefore taken. Work was undertaken by officers to build up a new model for children’s centres service delivery informed by our strategic objectives and feedback from stakeholders, as well as the need to find savings. This produced a very different profile of savings across the early years budget.

| Area of early years expenditure | 2014/15 budget (£) | Total reduction by 2018/19 (£) | Overall reduction to 2014/15 budget |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | |

| | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----|
| Children's Centres | 2,400,766 | 545,000 | 23% |
| Haringey's Early Years Central Teams costs | 733,000 | 399,000 | 54% |
| Commissioned services | 1,012,100 | 496,000 | 49% |
| TOTAL | 4,145,866 | 1,440,000 | |

- 4.5.4 The full year cost of the recommended proposals is **£1.86m**, contributing a financial saving of **£545,000** in the early year's expenditure by 2018-19. Specifically, the budget for commissioning the future children's centre delivery model will be targeted at maintaining a core children's centre offer that we believe can be sustained in the longer term.
- 4.5.5 The recommendations will enable a continuation of children's centre services with reduced funding and ensure that the active participation and engagement of parents/carers and the community will play a significant part in shaping the children's centre offer over the next three years.
- 4.5.6 The recommendations will also enable the Council to ensure that limited resources are targeted to best effect and that we believe can be sustained over the next two years.
- 4.6 Despite the fact that the Council is proposing to close children's centres, we do not believe the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would be adversely affected for these reasons:
- 4.6.1 The integration of health visiting into the children's centre delivery model which will ensure universal contact with all 0-5 year olds in the borough and the early identification of the most vulnerable
- 4.6.2 The embedding of the Early Help Locality Model and implementation of the Early Help Assessment Framework which will strengthen the early identification and response to more vulnerable children and their families
- 4.6.3 Integrated outreach will be delivered in partnership across health, children's centre and voluntary and community sector staff which will enable greater capacity to meet identified need

4.7 Despite the fact that the Council is proposing to close children's centres, we believe that this will not compromise our duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need, for the following reasons:

4.7.1 Children's centres remain universally accessible, strengthened by a core universal offer, outreach and targeted services, which ensures that the proposed network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in the borough

4.7.2 Having taken into account accessibility and transport links as part of developing the proposals, we believe that children's centres and their services will be within reasonable reach of all families with young children in the borough taking into account distance and availability of transport

4.7.3 The proposed offer as set out in s. 6.15.6.6 reflects our joint approach with local commissioners of health, employment and other services to ensure that we can support those families who need services to access them

4.7.4 Alongside the universal offer, we will ensure targeted children's centres services are accessible to young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes

4.7.5 The proposals build stronger links between children's centre staff and health visiting, early help and voluntary and community sector providers in order to reach all local children and families, supported by effective tracking and information sharing. Our performance management processes will have a particular focus on reach and outcomes for disadvantaged groups

4.7.6 As far as is reasonably practicable, the proposals seek to develop opening times which meet the needs of service users

4.8 The main criticisms of the proposals raised in the consultation process can be summarised as:

- a) The closure of children's centres would lead to lack of service coverage, overcrowding at the centres that remained and further travel for families to access services.
- b) Closure of particular children's centres would lead to a loss of qualified, experienced and high quality staff for the delivery of children's centre services
- c) There would be a reduction in choice for residents and children's centre users

- d) The increased levels of activity at the children’s centres remaining open, could mean a lack of capacity to identify and respond to safeguarding issues at the earliest opportunity
- e) The Community Access Points would lead to a stretching of resources and would lead to a lack of clarity over accountability and governance for service delivery

For further details of respondent’s views on the proposals, see pages 68 -288 of Changes to Haringey’s Children’s Centres: summary report of responses at **Appendix I**.

4.9 Officers believe, as set out in more detail in ss. 6.15 – 6.17 of this report, that the design of the future model responds to these criticisms and that the Equalities Impact Assessment further details how mitigating actions will be taken. In summary, the proposals set out:

- increased levels of outreach
- stronger partnership arrangements to ensure commissioned services can contribute to support for children and families
- the confirmation of an equitable and transparent restructure process across all children’s centre sites and of a children’s centre manager for each children’s centre site
- the core universal and targeted offer to be in place at each centre
- designated Social Worker, Health Visitor and Family Support Worker arrangements for each children’s centre
- increased family support early intervention capacity at each children’s centre
- withdrawal of the proposal to establish Community Access Points in order to focus resources on designated children’s centres

5. Alternative options considered

5.1 **Option 1** - The responses to the statutory consultation showed that the majority of respondents did not agree with any reduction in the current number of children’s centres in the borough.

5.1.1 This option would retain the current model and number of designated children’s centres in Haringey but strengthen the outreach and partnership approach across the borough. The key elements included in this option are:

- Maintaining 16 designated children’s centres
- 4 hour weekend service provision for 38 weeks per year
- Dedicated centre manager for each site
- Allocation towards building running costs and service delivery

5.1.2 An analysis of this option suggested that this would cost £2.834m in funding. This is nearly £1m more than the recommended option and over £400k more than the current service delivery cost.

5.1.3 This option has not been proposed for implementation due to the high costs.

5.2 **Option 2** – This option would propose to implement a commissioning model for children’s centre delivery as set out in the statutory consultation. This proposed the retention of 9 designated children’s centres and 7 Community Access Points. If taking forward this option, we would incorporate the feedback from consultees on the numbers of staff and level of running costs required to maintain this particular delivery model. The key elements included in this option are:

- Maintaining 9 designated children’s centres
- Maintaining 7 community access point open for 15 hours service delivery per week
- 4 hour weekend service provision for 38 weeks per year
- Dedicated centre manager for each site
- Allocation towards building running costs and service delivery

5.2.1 An analysis of costs suggested that the funding required to meet the delivery model as informed by the consultation would be £2.194m. This would represent a saving on the current budget but is still £334K more than the recommended option.

5.2.3 This option has not been proposed for implementation due to the costs.

6. Background information

6.1 The agreed Council budget for 2015-2018 included total savings of £1.44m to be delivered across the Early Years Service by 2018. Achieving this level of savings requires a significant reduction in the commissioning budget for early years and a change to the way in which services are currently being delivered.

6.2 The planned reduction in the early years budget requires a transformation of the current children’s centre delivery model to enable the Council, with reduced levels of resources, to provide parents and carers with access to good information about the services available in their community and ensure they are able to access high quality services through a greater degree of service integration and partnership working.

6.3 There is a need to achieve the right balance between the investment of limited financial resources into fixed arrangements such as buildings and staff and

retaining the flexibility of commissioning time-bound services targeted at specific needs.

6.4 The levels of projected budget reductions are informed by proposed changes to staffing arrangements and our early years commissioning intentions over the next three years.

6.5 It has been set out to Cabinet previously that the redesign of early years is a fundamental element of our early help strategy and approach. A strong early years system which is built around strong partnerships between all universal and targeted services offers the best early intervention opportunity to improve outcomes for children, families and local residents and to reduce the cost of fixing problems later on.

6.6 Children's Centres in Haringey form an important part of the system of early help services available across in the borough, with the aim of ensuring that children and families are able to access the information and support they need at the right time. In developing options for delivering savings across the early years budget, we have sought to protect children's centres, increasing the proportion of spend within the overall budget from 58% to 69%.

6.6.1 Early help in Haringey is being implemented through a locality partnership model, aligned to the Network Learning Community areas by which schools are clustered together. There are three localities across the borough within which Council services delivering early help are being managed and through which local partnerships to respond to need will be further developed. Children's centres will be a core element of the network of community based early intervention services available in a locality, and their services will be delivered both directly through the centres and through other community based settings such as health centres over time.

6.7 The statutory definition of a children's centre is defined in the Statutory Guidance attached as **Appendix III** as a place or a group of places:

- which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- at which activities for young children are provided.

6.7.1 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. Early childhood services are defined as:

- early years provision (early education and childcare);
- social services functions of the local authority relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- health services relating to young children, parents and prospective parents;
- training and employment services to assist parents or prospective parents; and
- information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

6.7.2 A children's centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that children's centres provide some activities for young children on site.

6.8 A key priority is to ensure that, in the context of a significantly reduced budget, we are able to maintain a sustainable network of children's centres services across the borough which meet the statutory definition of a children's centre, with children's centres themselves continuing to act as hubs in the community for families with young children but, in addition to this, operating as part of a network of services working together to provide a coordinated, integrated and 'whole family' response to the differing levels of needs amongst child and families.

6.9 Initial proposals were developed between February and May 2015 following the budget consultation carried out between December 2014 and February 2015, the agreement to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the setting of the Council's budget in February 2015, engaging stakeholders and service users in redesigning Haringey's model for children's centre service delivery within a reduced budget envelope. This approach was intended to:

- Involve service users and stakeholders in a problem-solving, solution-focused approach
- Harness the insight from service users and stakeholders and build it into the design of the future model
- Enable stakeholders voices to be heard and reflected, as well as possible, in the proposals
- Test how proposed delivery models can best meet needs

6.10 A set of design principles was agreed with stakeholders to be applied to the development of future models alongside giving consideration to:

- The need to operate within a reduced budget, whilst ensuring access to a range of high quality services that are effective and support improved outcomes for children and young people
- Commissioning for better outcomes
- The differences in need that exist across the borough, with particular focus on the number of children under 5 years old in each area, and the levels of deprivation
- Opportunities to improve coordination and access to a range of services for families with children aged 0-19 (0-25 for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities)
- The accessibility of buildings and transport links
- How far people are willing to travel to access services
- Building size and facilities
- The need to ensure that remaining centres have sufficient capacity to work effectively across each area

6.11 The outcome of this work formed the basis of proposals put out for further consultation. In June 2015, Cabinet approved a 90 day statutory consultation, from June 2015 to September 2015, on proposals to reduce the current number of children's centres, resulting in the closure of seven designated children's centres.

6.12 Statutory Consultation

6.12.1 The Council is required to undertake a statutory consultation before making any significant change in the services provided through children's centres and before anything is done that would result in a children's centre ceasing to be a children's centre. The Childcare Act 2006 (as amended)¹, places a requirement on the Council to consult '*everyone who could be affected*' by the proposed changes to the current children's centre model.

6.12.2 The Council, in fulfilling its duty to make arrangements for the provision of children's centres, retains responsibility and accountability for the children's centre offer available in the borough.

6.12.3 The consultation took place between June and September 2015 and sought the views of residents and directly affected groups including;

- Parents, carers and other service users of children's centres

¹ Section 5D

- School staff and Governors
- Children's Centre staff
- Ward Councillors
- Professional partners and commissioned organisations
- Community and voluntary sector service providers
- Staff in other Haringey Council services

6.12.4 Consultees were asked their views on the following:-

- a) The service offer
- b) The proposals around which of the existing children's centres will become children's centre hubs, and which will become a key community access point
- c) Creating parent engagement panels
- d) The opening hours of services
- e) Involving parents in the delivery of service delivery

6.12.5 A variety of methods was employed during the consultation to enable as many stakeholders as possible to actively participate, including:

- a) Questionnaires, which were available online, with hard copies made available on request and from children's centres
- b) Public consultation events
- c) Focused discussions with parents with children under five attending existing children's centres and outreach activity to capture view of families who have children under five that do not currently use children's centres
- d) Meetings with:
 - Children's centre staff
 - Governing Bodies
 - Staff in other local authority and partner services

6.12.6 The statutory consultation sought the views of Haringey residents and affected groups on the following proposals:

- a) To reduce the number of designated children's centres from 16 to 9
- b) To close seven designated children's centres but to support these sites to become Community Access Points (CAPs) offering some support to children and families to access services
- c) To establish five children's centre planning areas
- d) To widen the focus of children's centre services from families with children 0-5 years of age to 0-19 years of age, and up to 25 years for children and young people with special educational needs

- e) To increase current service availability to include evenings, weekends and across 48 weeks of the year
- f) To establish new Children’s Centre Advisory Boards (CCAB)
- g) To develop Parent Engagement Forums for each children’s centre planning area.

6.12.7 A consequence of the statutory consultation process was the emergence of a number of options for the redesign of Haringey’s children’s centres based on the views of respondents and how best to achieve our strategic aims of an effective and integrated partnership approach to delivering early help considering the financial resources available.

6.12.8 The outcome of the statutory consultation has informed the recommendations on the future commissioning model for children’s centres in Haringey set out later in this report.

6.13 Outcome of the consultation

6.13.1 A total of 398 questionnaire responses were received, 166 were posted and 232 were completed on line. A series of evening and weekend public meetings were organised in a variety of sites, covering the whole of the borough. In addition to this, targeted outreach activities were organised at some children’s centres with officers meeting with parents attending Stay & Play sessions and parents meetings in July. Residents also submitted responses by email or letter responses using the following mailbox: childrenscentreconsultation@haringey.gov.uk or using a postage free envelope.

6.13.2 Two meetings with all affected staff took place during the consultation period. A number of meetings with school governors were also set up as part of the process on 1st July 2015 and between 3rd September and 11th September 2015. Haringey officers were invited to two Governing Body meetings – at Rokesly Children’s centre on 15th September 2015 and at Broadwaters Children’s centre on 21st September 2015 to respond to the consultation directly to officers. The majority of Governing Bodies of school-run Children’s Centres submitted formal responses to the statutory consultation.

6.14 Key messages from the feedback

In the main, respondents were:

- a) Overwhelmingly against the closure of children’s centres
- b) In support of a broader offer of outreach
- c) In favour of the continuation of the universal role of children’s centres

- d) Interested in an enhanced role for parents and carers in governance and shaping service delivery
- e) In support of a greater focus on some of the more complex needs of parents and families and on the needs of fathers

More detailed feedback gathered during the statutory consultation exercise is summarised within **Appendix I**.

6.15 Consultation Questions and Responses

6.15.1 Reduction in the current number of children's centres

Question: To what extent do you support our proposals to reduce the number of children's centres from 16 to 9?

6.15.1.1 Responses:

6.15.1.1.1 The majority of respondents to the consultation disagreed with the proposals to reduce the current number of centres.

6.15.1.1.2 74% of respondents stated they "strongly do not agree" with the proposal to reduce the number of children's centres; 12% replied "do not agree"

6.15.1.1.3 General concerns expressed throughout the consultation process were around overcrowding at the centres that remained and the distance that families would have to travel to access services.

6.15.1.2 Recommendation:

6.15.1.2.1 We know from our engagement with staff and other children's centre representatives that there are significant challenges for those delivering children's centres in having to work with diminishing resources. The proposal to close a number of existing centres is based on the view that it is not possible to retain all of the 16 centres in the borough and to be able to deliver high quality services that continue to make a real difference to the outcomes for children and families with the levels of funding that will be available from April 2016.

6.15.1.2.2 This proposal will reduce the number of designated children's centres in the borough from 16 to 9.

6.15.1.3 Impact:

6.15.1.3.1 We recognise that there may be reduced universal access to services for children and families as a consequence of this proposal.

6.15.1.3.2 For families currently accessing services at the children's centres that will be closed, this may mean going to other centres for services and result in a longer journey for some families.

6.15.1.3.3 Women and children are the largest users of children's centres services and therefore their access to services could be negatively impacted on by a reduction in the number of designated centres. Fathers are the group that least use children's centres currently, therefore a reduction in number could further reduce the number of fathers accessing services.

6.15.1.3.4 A risk from this proposal is that access to services for the most vulnerable children could be substantially reduced.

6.15.1.4 Mitigation:

6.15.1.4.1 To address the potentially negative impact of this proposal we will:

- a) Strengthen our outreach offer to ensure contacts with families are maximised in spite of operating from a reduced number of sites.
- b) Integrate the SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) local offer to ensure that information for parents and carers is available as part of the children's centre offer and that support for young children with a special educational need and or a disability and their family can be accessed via the designated children's centre.
- c) Have named Health Visitors for each designated children's centre and, for two sites, develop co-located teams which will strengthen universal contacts with all children under 5 and increase opportunities to signpost and refer vulnerable families to appropriate services.
- d) Make sure each designated centre has a named Social Worker in order to ensure meaningful long term support for vulnerable children.
- e) Have a named Family Support Worker for each designated centre in order to ensure meaningful early help support for families at risk of becoming vulnerable.
- f) Have in place a new, high quality, information, advice and guidance service that will be accessible via the remaining designated centres and other places in the community used by local families.
- g) Introduce clear and robust information sharing protocols and systems to ensure families' needs are identified and met.

- h) Through the commissioning arrangements, consider alternative locations for service delivery in the local area working in partnership with other settings/organisations to maximise access.
- i) Produce high quality information in order to raise awareness of the children's centres' network of services and promote equity of access.
- j) Consider, where possible, extended opening hours as part of working with families with children 0 to 19 and where resources can be pulled together from across different agencies and services to support delivery
- k) Ensure centres work within a network of universal services, including maternity and breastfeeding support services, to support women in their journey to becoming mothers.
- l) Commission specific services working with fathers and young parents, linking with existing networks

6.15.2 Centres to close as designated children's centres

Question: To what extent do you support our proposals to close the following centres?

6.15.2.1 Responses:

- 6.15.2.1.1 52% of the respondents strongly opposed the closure of any of the proposed centres listed.
- 6.15.2.1.2 The 3 centres that had the highest percentage of support to stay open were respectively: The Ladder, Bounds Green & Stonecroft. Where respondents raised concerns about the closure of individual centre, The Ladder Children's Centre appeared to be the most popular, receiving 53% of the mentions by respondents.
- 6.15.2.1.3 The proposal to close Campsbourne Children's Centre was supported by the governing body of Campsbourne School in their written response to the consultation. The recommendation to close this centre follows a submission by the school governing body to the Council in 2014, requesting to be de-designated as a children's centre. This decision was delayed pending the subsequent review of children's centre delivery.
- 6.15.2.1.4 One centre, Rokesly Children's Centre had been proposed in the consultation as a centre that would remain open. In their response to the

consultation, the governing body of Rokesly Infants School informed the Council that they no longer wished to remain a designated centre.

6.15.2.1.5 In both cases, the decisions of the governing bodies were influenced by what they felt was the impact of diminishing resources on the ability to deliver effective children's centres services.

6.15.2.2 Recommendation:

6.15.2.2.1 It is proposed that the following seven designated centres close:

a) *Bounds Green Children's Centre*

This centre is proposed for closure as the alternative centre within this planning area offers a greater degree of accessibility from across the planning area due to the transport links. We recognise that an important part of the service offer currently provided at the centre is access to midwifery and antenatal support. We will be seeking to continue to provide access to these services for families in this area and will continue to work with the service provider to identify how this may continue.

b) *Campsbourne Children's Centre*

This centre is proposed for closure for the reasons cited in 6.15.2.1 above. We do, however, recognise that the current centre serves an area of need within Hornsey ward and we will be ensuring that outreach services are targeting this area, as well as seeking to continue to work with Campsbourne School as an important provision for early years within the local community.

c) *Earlsmead Children's Centre*

This centre is proposed for closure as it is a relatively short distance from another centre, Welbourne, within the same planning area. Welbourne children's centre is proposed to remain open as a centre due to the greater physical capacity it offers for the delivery of children's centre services.

d) *Noel Park Children's Centre*

This centre is proposed for closure as it already operates under a single management structure with Woodside children's centre. The current children's centre occupies a building that has been leased over the past 10 years and this is due to come to an end by 31st March 2016. We will be ensuring that access to services is facilitated under the new arrangements through outreach and the utilisation of the many community spaces within the Wood Green planning area.

e) *South Grove Children's Centre*

This centre is proposed for closure as it is located in an area that falls between two relatively large centres: Woodlands Park and the Triangle. The Triangle and Woodlands Park each have greater capacity than South Grove. The Triangle is the more accessible from the reach area of South Grove, although we anticipate current users of that centre will access both Woodlands Park and the Triangle. The levels of need within the area are acknowledged and it is felt that we will be able to meet these needs through the strengthened outreach and partnership approach within the wider proposals.

f) *Stonecroft Children's Centre*

This centre has been proposed for closure due to its strengths as a childcare provision and the fact that there remains high demand for childcare in the area which suggests this should be the focus of future developments. There is also little scope to enhance the children's centre provision due to the limitations of the physical site.

g) *The Ladder Children's Centre*

In the lead up to, and in response to, the consultation process, consideration was given to the suitability of either The Ladder or Woodlands Park remaining as a designated children's centre. The proposal to close The Ladder arose following careful consideration with representatives from both children's centres. During this time, and in response to the statutory consultation, the governing bodies of Woodlands Park Nursery School and South Harringay Infants School (which currently delivers The Ladder Children's Centre) expressed a desire to maintain a close working relationship between the two sites to enable access to services. We would support this approach going forward but stress that this would need to be done within the resources available to the designated children's centre.

h) In addition to the seven listed above, it is proposed that Rokesly Children's Centre is closed for the reasons cited in 6.15.2.1 above.

6.15.2.3 Impact:

6.15.2.3.1 The proposed changes will have more impact on residents, notably children aged from 0-5 and their families, of the Noel Park, Bounds Green, Harringay, Hornsey and Muswell Hill wards who are most likely to feel the impact of not having a designated centre in their ward and therefore potentially having reduced access to services which could meet their needs.

6.15.2.3.2 A large number of respondents (83%) walked to the children's centres they used, followed by 24% using the bus and 11% driving to the centres. This indicates an impact for some families who may have to

walk further distances to reach the nearest centres based on the proposal to close a number of centres.

6.15.2.3.3 The likely impact of closure at each site is set out in the table below. All of the centres listed currently offer children’s centre services as part of a wider offer of services to children and families, notably *childcare and access to health services. We will continue to work with these sites so those services can continue but the impact of closing the children’s centre on site may be that some settings may need to change the way in which they operate those services and this may lead to some services being discontinued at those sites.

| Children’s Centre | Type of Centre | *Services we will be seeking to continue at these sites | Nearest Children’s centre proposed to remain open |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|--|
| Bounds Green | School based | Access to Health visiting and antenatal support /midwifery delivered by health partners | Woodside |
| Campsbourne | School based | Access to Health visiting and antenatal support /midwifery delivered by health partners | <i>New centre to be commissioned</i> |
| Earlsmead | School based | 2 year old programme places | Welbourne |
| Noel Park | Local Authority | Access to Health visiting and antenatal support /midwifery delivered by health partners | Woodside |
| Rokesly | School based | Access to Health visiting and antenatal support /midwifery delivered by health partners | <i>New centre to be commissioned</i> |
| South Grove | School based | 2 year old programme | Triangle |

| | | | |
|------------|-----------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | | places | |
| Stonecroft | Local Authority | Nursery offering full day care | <i>New centre to be commissioned</i> |
| The Ladder | School based | Access to Health visiting and antenatal support /midwifery delivered by health partners | Woodlands Park |

6.15.2.3.4 The families currently accessing services at these children’s centres may need to go to other centres for services and this may mean a longer journey for some children and their parents, particularly women. An exploration of the walking distance between centres proposed for closure, and those proposed to remain open that are closest to each one, suggests that the longest walking distance between centres is just under 20 minutes.

6.15.2.3.5 An assumption we are making is that travel to an alternative children’s centre will take longer than the current journey respondents may be making to a children’s centre now. This may not be the case but data about where respondents would be travelling from is not available and therefore this cannot be fully assessed at this time.

6.15.2.4 Mitigation:

6.15.2.4.1 To address the potentially negative impact of this proposal we will:

- a) Implement the actions set out in 6.15.1.4 of this report.
- b) Work with the children’s centres that remain designated to offer some services off-site in other places within their children’s centre planning in order to maximise access and to minimise the impact of potentially increased journeys for some residents.
- c) Have in place a strengthened outreach offer, with centre-employed staff working closely with other professionals and services engaged in outreach as part of their usual work, to ensure that contact with children and families can be maximised despite the reduction in designated centres and the increased travel required for some residents.
- d) Develop information for all residents about the children’s centre offer they can expect to receive. This will need to take into account the different languages spoken amongst current and potential future service users. A

robust communications plan will ensure we are working with key universal services such as GPs, Midwifery and Health Visiting, Schools and Libraries to raise awareness of childrens' centres and other early help services and how families can access this wherever they live within the borough.

- e) Seek to identify a new children's centre provider in response to Rokesly Children's Centre's request to be de-designated. This will provide the opportunity to develop a model of delivery that will take into account access to services for residents living in Hornsey and Muswell Hill wards.

6.15.3 **Community Access Points**

Question: If the proposals mean that the following centres are closed, to what extent do you support the following buildings being used as key community access points?

Question: Please indicate which of the following key community access points you are most likely to use?

Question: How important is it to you that the following services are available at a key community access point?

Question: Are there any additional services that you feel it is important to deliver from key community access points?

6.15.3.1 Responses:

6.15.3.1.1 The concept of Community Access Points (CAPs) was set out in the statutory consultation and described as the closed children's centres providing some services typically found at children's centres. It was proposed that each of the closed centre sites would provide access to approximately 15 hours per week of service provision, coordinated by the nearest designated children's centre.

6.15.3.1.2 A significant number of respondents to the consultation had no opinion on the proposal to introduce CAPs, with an additional 20% of respondents strongly against the proposal.

6.15.3.1.3 Whilst 37% of respondents stated that they would use none of the Key Community Access Points, a significant number of respondents (71%) to the question asked about which services they would like to see offered at a CAP rated Stay & Play sessions, Health Appointments and Advice

sessions as extremely important with a further 13% rating them important. 7% of respondents had no opinion.

6.15.3.1.4 It is clear from the consultation that the concept and practical operation of CAPs was not fully understood by respondents and appeared to create confusion and anxiety about the feasibility of implementing CAPs. In addition to this, concerns were raised by Governors and some staff about the management of, and accountability for, services and staff within CAPs.

6.15.3.1.5 Taking into account the feedback from children's centre representatives, when the operational requirements for maintaining CAPs were analysed it became clear that it would be a challenge to address all aspects of the staffing and running costs associated with keeping every site open for the delivery of children's centre services for a reduced number of hours per week with the levels of funding available.

6.15.3.2 Recommendation:

6.15.3.2.1 For this reason, we are not proposing to take forward the development of Community Access Points.

6.15.3.3 Impact:

6.15.3.3.1 The residents, notably children aged 0-5 and their families, of the following wards Noel Park, Bounds Green, Harringay, Hornsey and Muswell Hill wards are most likely to feel the impact in terms of not having a designated centre in their ward and therefore potentially having reduced access to services which could meet their needs.

6.15.3.4 Mitigation:

6.15.3.4.1 To address the potentially negative impact of this proposal we will carry out the mitigating actions set out at 6.15.1.4 and 6.15.2.4 in this report.

6.15.4 **Centres to remain as designated children's centres**

Question: To what extent do you support our proposal to keep the following children's centres open?

6.15.4.1 Responses:

6.15.4.1.1 39% of the respondents who completed this question stated that all centres should be kept open.

6.15.4.1.2 50% of the respondents stated they strongly agreed to keep with the proposals to keep the nine named designated centres open – each centre had a very similar percentage share of consensus.

6.15.4.2 Recommendation:

6.15.4.2.1 It is proposed that the following eight centres are commissioned as designated children’s centres. The decision to retain these as centres was influenced by the locations of the centres, as well as levels of needs within each planning area.

| Children’s Centre | Children’s Centre Planning Area | Wards covered |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Broadwaters | Harringay & West Green Planning Area | West Green ward |
| Park Lane | North East Tottenham Planning Area | Northumberland Park ward |
| Pembury | South East Tottenham Planning Area | Bruce Grove & Tottenham Hale wards |
| Rowland Hill | North East Tottenham Planning Area | White Hart Lane ward |
| Triangle | South East Tottenham Planning Area | Seven Sisters ward |
| Welbourne | South East Tottenham Planning Area | Tottenham Green ward |
| Woodlands Park | Harringay & West Green Planning Area | Harringay & St. Ann’s ward |
| Woodside | Wood Green Planning Area | Bounds Green, Noel Park & Woodside wards |
| <i>New centre to be commissioned</i> | West Planning Area (incorporating Muswell & Highgate and Hornsey & Stroud Green Planning Areas) | Alexandra, Crouch End, Fortis Green, Hornsey, Highgate, Muswell Hill & Stroud Green |

6.15.4.2.2 As Rokesly Infants School has put forward a request no longer to continue as a designated centre, we will carry out an open tender process to identify and commission a new provider to deliver a children’s centre service offer in the West Planning area.

6.15.4.3 Impact:

6.15.4.3.1 Children’s centre service coverage is maintained across the borough, with particular focus on children and families in areas of greater

deprivation and sufficient coverage for all children and families across the borough.

- 6.15.4.3.2 These designated centres will be working closely with the Council's early help locality teams which will mean a more integrated approach to delivering services for children, young people and families in each planning area and ensure that a more effective, 'whole family' approach to the coordination of support and service delivery is in place.

6.15.5 **Children's Centre Planning Areas**

Question: To what extent do you support our proposal to establish five children's centre planning areas?

6.15.5.1 Responses:

- 6.15.5.1.1 35% of respondents stated that they had no opinion about establishing 5 planning areas. 17% of respondents stated that they supported the proposal whilst 22% said they did not.

6.15.5.2 Recommendation:

- 6.15.5.1.2.1 The centres that remain designated will be organised into five children's centre planning areas. In each of these planning areas, the centres will work with partners and schools to ensure that services on offer meet the needs of children and families living in the area.

6.15.5.3 Impact:

- 6.15.5.3.1 All wards in Haringey will be served by children's centre services

6.15.6 **The Service Offer**

Question: To what extent do you support our proposal to widen the focus of children's centre services from 0-5 years of age to 0-19?

6.15.6.1 Responses:

- 6.15.6.1.1 There was some support for widening the service offer to encompass services for children and young people, aged 0-19 (25, if they have special educational needs or disabilities) and their families. Just under 50% of respondents supported the proposal to widen the age range; however, there was not an overall consensus.

6.15.6.1.2 The feedback from the consultation showed mixed views about the proposals to extend the age range of children’s centres which reflected the suggestion that the children’s centre could become places for families to get involved as a whole. 28% of respondents supported the proposal to widen the scope of centres to 0-19 year olds, 19% strongly support this proposal and 20% did not support this proposal. In addition to this, some of the written comments expressed concerns about the physical space in centres, the ability and appropriateness of the environment within centres to accommodate older children and young people and the pressure this may place on children’s centres staff

6.15.6.2 Recommendation:

6.15.6.2.1 We are proposing to ensure that the children’s centre service focus on 0-5 year olds is retained. We will continue to build the service offer to ensure that children’s centres are able to take a ‘whole family’ approach and work with local schools and other services, as part of an early help locality model, to ensure that access to the right services for older children or the family is facilitated.

6.15.6.3 Impact:

6.15.6.3.1 This maintains a focus on early years services for families and their key role in providing the earliest opportunity to engage with children and their families and also to provide access to early help that should improve outcomes for children. This may not deliver the ‘whole family approach’ as originally intended.

6.15.6.4 Mitigation:

6.15.6.4.1 We will ensure that the plans for children’s centres going forward include the development of greater links between other early help services, which, in the main, cover children and young people aged 0-19 (25 if they have special educational needs or disabilities). This approach will be supported by achieving the co-location of key services for families, particularly affecting women and children, as and where appropriate.

Question: How important is it to you that the following services are available at children’s centres?

Question: In future, if we did have to charge for some children’s centre services in order to be able to maintain a good level of service, which services would you be willing to pay for?

6.15.6.5 Responses:

6.15.6.5.1 Respondents to the consultation shared many wide-ranging views about the children’s centre service offer and the importance of some key services for parents and carers to meet each other, talk to someone if they needed help or support or find out the information they need to get support from other professionals or services.

6.15.6.5.2 Services such as stay and play sessions were highly valued amongst respondents.

6.15.6.5.3 The feedback from the consultation suggested that children centre services need to be more accessible for men, namely fathers, in the future. Part of the proposed service offer going forward is the commission of support specifically aimed at fathers, including young fathers.

6.15.6.6 Recommendation:

6.15.6.6.1 The commissioning of children’s centres going forward will be outcomes focused and the service offer will be informed by differing needs across the borough and in each centre planning area, built around evidence-based practice, delivering measurable outcomes for children and families, and shaped by parents and the community. The parental engagement forums in each planning area will have a key role to play in gathering the views of parents ensuring that the voice of parents and carers is present in determining the local offer and what the needs are in communities.

6.15.6.6.2 It is proposed that the nine designated centres will be commissioned to deliver the following minimum service offer:

| Minimum Service Offer | |
|--|---|
| Stay and Play sessions to promote positive attachment, healthy brain development and good communication and language | Support to find volunteering opportunities |
| Healthy eating advice and support programme | Support to find work, training and apprenticeship opportunities |
| Outreach programme to engage with the most vulnerable children and | Information, advice and guidance to support families for example relating to welfare benefits, debt management, |

| | |
|--|--|
| families | housing and child care |
| Effective links with other professionals to offer a team around the family approach | Opportunities for peer support |
| Established links with other professionals including family support, health visiting and social work | Outreach programme to engage with the most vulnerable children and families |
| | Opportunities to become involved in the governance and decision making with regard to Children's Centres |

6.15.7 Additional Commissioned Services

6.15.7.1 The work of each designated centre will be strengthened by other services to form the general children's centre service offer. Some services will be commissioned through the early years commissioning budget, whilst others will be commissioned by other parts of the Council or other agencies.

6.15.7.2 The reach of each of the nine centres is significant and it is acknowledged that the effectiveness of centres and their impact on improving the outcomes for children and families can be maximised through purposeful on and maintaining strong links between different services and agencies.

6.15.7.3 The transfer, in October 2015, of commissioning responsibility for health visiting to the Council, provides the opportunity to build a new commissioning model for children's centres which recognises GPs, antenatal and midwifery services and health visiting as fundamental blocks on which to build the universal children's centre service offer.

6.15.7.4 The responses in to the statutory consultation indicated that health services for 0-5 year olds were important to many of the respondents and should be an important part of the children's centre service offer.

6.15.7.5 With the implementation of the Healthy Child Programme across the borough in mind, we are proposing a strong, integrated model for the delivery of services for children aged 0-5 years of age. This will take time to establish but as starting point we are proposing, through the new

commissioning arrangements for health visiting and children’s centres, to introduce:

- Joint working between the nursery nurse practitioners within the health visiting teams and the early learning practitioners within the children’s centres, with regular practice network meeting to support skill sharing, communication and planning
- The co-location of two health visiting teams at identified children’s centres
- The consistent participation of health visiting and midwifery team members in vulnerable children’s meetings
- Agreed processes and protocols for data collection and information sharing

6.15.7.6 Centres will need to work in partnership with other key providers of universal services and will play a key role in facilitating access to other services through the provision of information, signposting, effective outreach and referrals.

6.15.7.7 These additional services may be commissioned by a strategic partner of the Council, by the Council or by the centres themselves.

6.15.7.8 Additional commissioned services will be a mixture of universal services i.e. those available to all and where we believe that alignment with children’s centres will enhance access for residents, and those commissioned specifically to address the particular needs of some families or communities.

6.15.7.9 The centre may also introduce services designed to meet the very local needs of their service users.

6.15.7.10 The following additional commissioned services will form part of an integrated service offer:

| Service | Delivery Partner | Commissioner |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Access to information, advice and guidance | Third party provider | Haringey Council |
| Midwife appointments and antenatal checks | Whittington NHS Trust/North Middlesex | Haringey CCG |
| Targeted breast feeding peer support | Third party provider (NCT) | Haringey Council |
| Breast feeding groups | Whittington NHS Trust | |
| Support to help expectant | Whittington NHS | Haringey |

| | | |
|--|--|----------------------|
| parents prepare for the birth of a child | Trust/North Middlesex | CCG/Haringey Council |
| New Birth Visits in the first 10-14 days | Whittington NHS Trust | Haringey Council |
| Visits at 6-8 weeks | Whittington NHS Trust | Haringey Council |
| Health Checks at one years old | Whittington NHS Trust | Haringey Council |
| Integrated Health and Development checks for 2-2.5 year olds | Whittington NHS Trust | Haringey Council |
| Healthy Start Vitamins distribution | NHS Supply Chain | Haringey Council |
| Parenting support programmes | Haringey Early Help Service/Third party provider | Haringey Council |
| *Outreach and support for fathers and fathers to be | Third party provider | Haringey Council |
| *Outreach and support for young parents | Third party provider | Haringey Council |
| *Access to a Family Nurse Partnership Programme | Whittington NHS Trust | Haringey Council |
| Family learning | Haringey Adult Learning Service/third party provider | Haringey Council |
| *English Language and literacy classes | Haringey Adult Learning Service/third party provider | Haringey Council |

*This service offer may vary from centre to centre, depending on levels of need.

6.15.8 Working with children and families most in need of help and support

6.15.8.1 The nine centres will form an important part of an integrated approach to early help across the borough and contribute to a network of services delivered by the Council and other partners across the borough that will work closely to ensure that all children, young people and families

experience a swift, well coordinated response to needs as they are identified.

6.15.8.2 The work of the nine centres will be enhanced by the Council's early help locality team model and each centre being linked to the relevant early help locality team for their planning area. The early help locality team will add some capacity to each centre that is both visible and responsive ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable children can be identified, assessed and met with an appropriate response.

6.15.9 **Links to key services**

6.15.9.1 In order to ensure consistency of support and advice from other professionals working with children, young people and families in contact with any children's centre, we will maintain the existing model of a named family support worker for each designated centre but will, in addition to this, be ensuring that each of the nine centres is linked to a named Social Worker and a named Health Visitor.

6.15.9.2 All commissioned children's centres will be required to hold regular vulnerable children's meetings, involving key agencies, to identify and plan for the most vulnerable children attending services and consider how they will work effectively with families to ensure needs are being met. Centres will also be required to participate in other safeguarding and care planning forums.

6.15.10 **Targeted support and intervention**

6.15.10.1 A family support worker from the relevant early help locality team will spend up to two half days per week in each of the nine designated children's centre to provide additional early intervention capacity. When at the centres, these family support workers will work directly with parents and also offer support for centre staff in the identification and engagement of parents in need of additional support. The impact of this approach will be an immediate ability to signpost or facilitate the speedy resolution of emerging issues, preventing escalation, enabling greater family resilience and supporting sustained independence in respect of parental responsibilities to be achieved.

6.15.11 **Children's Centre Opening Hours**

Question: To what extent do you support our proposal that children's centre opening times should be extended to some evenings?

Question: To what extent do you support our proposal that children’s centre opening times should be extended to some weekends?

Question: What are your preferred times to attend children’s centres?

Question: What services would you like to see delivered at weekends, and in evenings?

6.15.11.1 Responses:

6.15.11.1.1 The responses to the consultation suggested that there was significant support for extending the opening hours of children’s centres. 61% of respondents supported evening opening and a similar number supported weekend opening.

6.15.11.2 Recommendation:

6.15.11.2.1 It was proposed in the consultation that service availability would be increased to include evenings, weekends and across 48 weeks of the year.

6.15.11.3 Impact:

6.15.11.3.1 Services will be available for longer to local families with limited holiday closure.

6.15.12 **Staffing and Resources**

6.15.12.1 The proposed delivery model will introduce significant changes to the job profiles and number of staffing currently in place in the existing children’s centre delivery model. There will be a reduction in the number of management posts and increase in the number of roles undertaking outreach and delivering early help intervention.

| Current job roles | Number of employees | Proposed job roles | Number of employees |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Early Intervention Coordinator | 13 | Centre Manager | 9 |
| Community Development Outreach Worker | 22 | Learning and Volunteering Coordinator | 3,5 |
| Information and Admin Officer | 12 | Early Intervention and Outreach | 16 |

| | | | |
|--|----|------------------------------|------|
| | | Officer | |
| Information and Admin Assistant | 4 | Early Learning Practitioner | 8 |
| Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer | 4 | Admin/reception officer | 4 |
| Data Entry Administrator | 1 | Performance and Data Analyst | 1 |
| Site Manager | 1 | Data Entry Administrator | 2 |
| TOTAL | 57 | TOTAL | 43.5 |

6.15.12.2 Feedback from children’s centre staff during the consultation period highlighted some concerns about the following:

- Not having enough members of staff to continue the work started with families locally.
- The lack of specific data input functions in all front line jobs and the lack of a specific information role

Offer:

- Concerns were raised that the offer could be compromised by lack of partnerships. They wanted clarity around the work with the vulnerable families and responsibilities for attending meeting when engaging with families on plans.

Costs

- Staff made suggestions around increasing income via hiring premises, fundraising, donations and selling venues. It was also suggested that children’s centres operate fully as part of Early Help so that budgets can be streamlined.

Management & Accountability:

- Staff expressed their concern with the lack of clarity in the lines of management and accountability.
- They also raised the issue that Service Level Agreements need to be extremely well defined for such a model to work.
- Governance for delivery sites (also defined as Key Community Access Points) particularly in terms of safeguarding and support was an issue of concern.
- Training and staff development was also an issue raised by staff who were keen to have proper training and development opportunities as part of the process.

6.15.12.3 It was clear that, as part of implementing the new commissioning model, an induction and training plan for staff will need to be put in place. We will ensure that regular practice networks are established to ensure that there is effective communication between staff and associated professionals, opportunities are created for skill sharing and professional development and there is a consistent approach to supporting staff in new roles and ways of working.

6.15.13 **Management and Accountability**

6.15.13.1 The proposals for a new commissioning model for delivering children's centres in Haringey takes into account the Council's role as the Accountable Body. The commissioning arrangements will mean that the Council will have in place service level agreements with each children's centre provider that set out the expectations for minimum service delivery, will make clear how the Council intends to monitor and review the performance of children's centres and other commissioned services associated with meeting identified needs and specify the outcomes being sought through the commission.

6.15.13.2 At the time of writing this report, the Government has proposed a review of children's centres and, as a consequence, suspended Ofsted inspections of children's centres until the review has been completed and the implications for the inspection of children's centres is known. As the accountable body, we will continue to make reference to the role of children's centres as one of our delivery mechanisms for early help and ensure that the coordination and integration of services in the new arrangements contribute to improved outcomes and reduced inequalities as set out and evaluated under the 2013 Framework for the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Centres.

6.15.14 **Governance**

Question: To what extent do you support the proposal to establish new Children's Centre Advisory Boards (CCAB) for each children's centre planning area?

6.15.14.1 Responses:

6.15.14.1.1 When asked to state whether they supported establishing new Children's Centres Advisory Boards for each planning areas, 43% of respondents supported or strongly supported the proposal. 37% of respondents had no opinion.

6.15.14.2 Recommendation:

6.15.14.2.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Council to ensure that all children's centres have in place a Children's Centre Advisory Board (CCAB). The purpose of the CCAB is to provide support and challenge to each children's centre; ensuring representation reflects local stakeholders and engages parents in shaping local service delivery.

6.15.14.2.2 It is proposed that existing CCABs (currently based on four children's centre area clusters) cease by 31st March 2016 in order to move to the new planning areas and are re-established from April 2016, putting in place a new CCAB for each children's centre planning area. The membership for each CCAB will be re-established and the terms of reference for each refreshed to ensure that the function and purpose of each CCAB is clear and the boards fulfil their role as set out in the Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance 2013.

6.15.14.3 Impact:

- Maintenance of partnerships and integrated working with a variety of agencies
- Clear governance and lines of accountability
- Alignment of CCABs and service delivery to strengthen influence
- Increased rigour and challenge over the performance of children's centres
- Links with Network Learning Communities and Early Help Localities

6.15.15 **Parental and Community Involvement**

Question: To what extent do you support the proposal to establish parent engagement forums?

6.15.15.1 Responses:

6.15.15.1.1 When asked about establishing Parents Engagement Forums 67% of respondents supported or strongly supported the proposal, whereas 22% had no opinion. This suggests substantial support for parental engagement

6.15.15.1.2 Whilst the feedback from the consultation showed two-thirds of respondents expressed support for this approach, 19% welcomed the initial proposal but would welcome more details. They also felt the parents should receive proper briefing on the objectives of the forum. 19% made suggestions such as trying to avoid lip service listen to parental voices and having forums that are representative of the community.

6.15.15.2 Recommendation:

6.15.15.2.1 The proposal is to establish Parent Engagement Forums in each children's centre planning area.

6.15.15.2.2 The Parent Engagement Forums, supported by a new Learning and Volunteering Coordinator role, will ensure that local parents have a voice in how children's centre services in their area are delivered, can contribute to their community through volunteering and parent to parent support and participate in the delivery of local services. A key concern of respondents seemed to be that the forums were not tokenistic, were genuinely able to influence and were representative of the community.

6.15.15.3 Impact:

- Strong parental voice building on existing structures
- Parental and community engagement and involvement in services, building the service offer in each planning area
- Build parents' capacity to get involved in governance and decision making

6.16 Subject to Cabinet decision, implementation of the proposals set out above is intended to take effect from 1st April 2016, in order to achieve the required savings in the MTFS and to ensure children's centres users, their staff and other stakeholders have certainty about the change to a new model. In order to achieve this, a draft Implementation Plan has been drawn up, the key points of which are summarised below:

| Action | |
|---|---------------|
| Cabinet decision | November 2015 |
| Communication to all stakeholders of the Cabinet decision: maintaining engagement with current and prospective service users, children's centre representatives and partner agencies throughout the implementation phase. | November 2015 |
| Specific information for users of particular services about how their access to services may be affected and to services providers about how their delivery of services may be affected. | November 2015 |
| Restructure process for all staff employed to deliver children's centre services, whether in school or local authority settings, to get underway. 45 day consultation period for all affected staff to elapse. | November 2015 |
| Parent engagement and co-production work will | On-going |

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|--|--------------------------------|
| continue around implementation planning, the development of service specifications and tender documentation | |
| Development of implementation plans to secure use of premises vacated by children's centre services for the delivery of early years education, health provision or family focused services. This will involve on-going discussions with school governing bodies and partner agencies | December 2015 |
| Development of staff induction and training plan – intended as a preparation plan for support to staff (following a recruit to stay process) in transition to new children's centre model and potentially new roles | December 2016 |
| Development of arrangements for the continued provision of children's centre services in Planning Area 1 to ensure that loss of access to children's centre service does not occur from April 2016, if the proposed closure of Rokesly Children's Centre is approved | December 2015/January 2016 |
| Development of specification for commission of new children's centre provider and agreement sought to go out to tender. | December 2015 to February 2016 |
| Beginning of process to commission children's centre provider for Planning Area 1 | December 2015/January 2016 |
| Following formal staff consultation, the recruit to stay exercise will get underway | January/February 2016 |
| Notification to the Department of Education (DfE) & Ofsted. This will include updating borough, centre profile and organisation and service offer information on the Sure Start On database system | January 2016 |
| Establishment of Parents Engagement Forums and Advisory Boards | March 2016 |
| Drafting of new Service Level Agreements for designated children's centres from April 2016 | February 2016 |
| Refresh Children's Centre Performance Framework | February 2016 |
| Implement staff induction and training plan | March 2016 |
| Further information for all residents about specific changes including details of staff to be employed in each setting | March 2016 |
| Closure of children's centres | By April 2016 |
| New model becomes operational. To include transitional arrangements as required | From April/May 2016 |
| New staffing arrangements fully implemented | May 2016 |
| Procurement: Tender and Evaluation process (3 | April 2016 |

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| months) | |
| Cabinet decision: Award of Contract | October 2016 |

6.17 The proposals form part of the Council’s transformation agenda for children’s services. There is a quarterly Strategic (Best Start in Life) Priority Board which will have oversight of the strategic delivery of the transformation proposals, which is supported by monthly Operational (Best Start in Life) Priority Boards and by the Early Help Partnership Board. In addition, the Children’s Centre Performance Framework will enable quarterly monitoring of the take-up of services across children’s centres in the borough. This will help us to identify any changing patterns of usage and wider activity, in particular by protected groups which may disengage, and which can be reported to the Strategic Priority Board as appropriate. The Cabinet Member sits on the Strategic Priority Board and will receive regular reports from this process.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

7.1 The proposals set out in this report support the achievement of the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities for 2015-2018; in particular Priority 1 which seeks to

Enable every child and young person to have the best start in life.

7.2 Through reshaping the current delivery of children’s centres within a reduced financial envelope, we are meeting the following objectives:

- All children will have the best start in life
- Children and young people across Haringey excel at school, making the most of their potential
- All young people will have access to excellent employment or higher education opportunities
- Children and young people will be healthier, happier and more resilient and those who need extra help will get support at the right time
- Children and families who need more support will be helped earlier before issues escalate
- All children and young people will be safeguarded from abuse

7.3 The proposals embed the commissioning models for health visiting and midwifery services as universal services in recognition of the central role they play in ensuring that we continue to strive for all children to have the best start in life.

7.4 The strengthening of parental and community involvement, alongside a real focus on supporting the aspirations of parents and carers seeking opportunities that help them back into training and employment will make a direct contribution

to the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan under Priority 4, in particular objective 3 which states that we will;

Take advantage of growth, by ensuring that residents have the training, skills and support necessary to find and keep good quality employment

8. Statutory Officers comments

8.1 Chief Finance Officer (including procurement) comments

- 8.1.1 The finance department have been consulted in the preparation of this report. The cost of the recommended model for Children's Centres is £1.856 million of which £1.622 million is the cost of staffing. The rest consists of the costs of one crèche session a week and a share of premises costs. This is the cost of providing the minimum Children's Centre service offer and does not include weekend opening. Any extended opening and the additional services referred to above in paragraph 6.15.7 will need additional funding from other budgets such as the Early Years Public Health and Health Visiting Budget.
- 8.1.2 The Children's Centres currently share premises with other services such as childcare or nursery schools and the service delivery costs assume that this will continue. Where Children's Centre services are no longer provided at a site and funding is withdrawn then in some cases there may be financial implications as costs falling to other services at that site may increase.
- 8.1.3 Where Central Government capital funding has been used for Children's Centres, the Department of Education may seek to claw back some or all of the funding if the site ceases to be used as a Children's Centre. However, since there will continue to be some Early Years provision at most of these sites then they may agree to waive or defer this.
- 8.1.4 There may be some transitional costs arising from the implementation of the new model especially staffing costs such as redundancy payments. Provision has been made by the Council for such costs as part of the MTFS process based on the estimates of the likely impact at the time. The estimate for Early Years was approximately 22 FTE staff.
- 8.1.5 There may also be some capital costs; these should be factored into the Council's capital strategy which is currently being prepared.
- 8.1.6 The new model will provide a saving of £0.545 million to the current budget of £2.4 million. The Early Years budget as a whole is expected to make savings of £1.44 million during the MTFS period of which £0.22 million have already been made in 2015/16. A further £0.675 million saving must therefore be found in other areas of the budget. This distribution of saving effectively offers relative

protection to the Children's Centres and means that larger reductions will be required in the Commissioning and Central budgets.

8.2 Procurement comments

8.2.1 The Head of Procurement notes the recommendations within the Report.

8.2.2 Procurement Contracts Regulations 15 (PCR15) will need to be adhered to in regard to any future procurement for the recommendations. These regulations cover the procurement of social care over £625,000 over a four year period and the letting of reserved contracts to Social enterprises and Mutuals.

8.2.3 It is recommended Procurement is engaged as early as possible to determine the most appropriate sourcing approach and to ensure adherence to PCR 15.

8.3 Assistant Director of Corporate Governance comments

8.3.1 Cabinet is being asked to make a decision on the arrangement in the borough for the provision of children centres. The Childcare Act 2006 (as amended) covers, amongst others, the arrangement for provision of children centres. The Department for Education has issued statutory guidance named "Sure Start children's centre statutory guidance" April 2013 ("Statutory Guidance") which Cabinet must have regard to in exercising the functions under the Act.

8.3.2 Under Section 1 (*General duties of local authority in relation to well-being of young children*) the Council has a general duty to improve the well-being of children in its area, and reduce inequalities. Wellbeing means a) physical and mental health and emotional well-being; b) protection from harm and neglect; c) education, training and recreation; d) the contribution made by them to society; and e) social and economic well-being.

8.3.3 Under Section 3 (*Specific duties of local authority in relation to early childhood services*) the Council must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in its area are provided in an integrated manner in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents. The definition of early childhood services include a) early years provision; b) the functions of the Council, so far as relating to young children, parents or prospective parents; c) health services relating to young children, parents or prospective parents; d) information and advice services for parents and prospective parents.

8.3.4 Section 5A (*Arrangements for provision of children's centres*) provides that arrangements made by the Council, must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need (Section 5A). "Local need" is the need of parents, prospective parents and

young children in the authority's area. To secure this outcome, the Sure Start Children's Centre Statutory Guidance provides that local authorities should, amongst others, "a) ensure that a network of children's centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area; b) ensure that children's centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport; c) together with local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them; d) target children's centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need; e) demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively; f) ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area; and g) not close an existing children's centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of children's centres; take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient children's centre provision;...(pg 9).

8.3.5 Section 5C (*Children's centres: advisory boards*) of the Act requires the Council to ensure each children's centre is within the remit of an advisory board.

8.3.6 Section 5D (*Children's centres: consultation*) of the Act provides that the Council must ensure that appropriate consultation is carried out before a) any significant change is made in the services provided through children's centre; or b) anything is done that would result in a children's centre ceasing to be a children's centre, A change in the manner in which, or the location at which, services are provided is to be treated as a change in the services. The Statutory Guidance provides that "*Local authorities must ensure there is consultation before: a) opening a new children's centre; b) making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre and / or how they are delivered, including significant changes to services provided through linked sites; and c) closing a children's centre; or reducing the services provided to such an extent that it no longer meets the statutory definition of a Sure Start children's centre.*"

8.3.7 Further, "*Local authorities should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example, local families, those who use the centres, children's centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations. The consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children*

under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents' views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publically. This should explain why decisions were taken.” (pg 10). The report at paragraphs/section 6 and Appendix 1 sets out how the Council has discharged this statutory duty.

- 8.3.8 The Council must now give genuine and conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees during the consultation before making its final decision on the proposals. The report at paragraphs/section 6 and Appendix 1 sets out the the responses from services users, carers, family members and other stakeholders.
- 8.3.9 As part of its decision making process, the Council must have “due regard” to its equalities duties. Under Section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its early childhood service function, must have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it in order to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. The protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Council is required to give serious, substantive and advance consideration of the what (if any) the proposals would have on the protected group and what mitigating factors can be put in place. This exercise must be carried out with rigour and an open mind and should not be a mere form of box ticking. These are mandatory consideration. In line with its equalities duties, the Council have undertaken an Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) of the proposals on the protected groups. The impact of the proposals on protected groups is set out in the report and in the EqIA document attached as **Appendix II**. Also, the steps to be taken to mitigate the impact of the proposals.
- 8.3.10 Before making its decisions on the proposals, Cabinet must take into account, the responses to the consultation on the proposals, the EqIA of the proposals and the steps being taken to mitigate the impact on the protected groups, the legal duties under the the Childcare Act and the Statutory Guidance. Cabinet members must ask themselves a) whether it is justifiable to seek to make financial savings in the way proposed, having regard to the need to protect and promote the welfare of young children and their families in Haringey, in particular the most disadvantaged children and families, and the risks inherent in the changes proposed; b) whether the mitigating steps proposed are sufficient or whether more needs to be done; c) whether the proposals ought to be adopted or discarded; and d) whether there is adequate provision for monitoring the proposed changes, so that changes can be made, if necessary.

8.4 Equalities comments

8.4.1 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- a) tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- c) foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

8.4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was produced in June 2015 prior to consultation on the proposed changes, and has been updated following the consultation. This EqIA can be found in **Appendix II**.

8.4.3 The EqIA identified some potential negative impacts on service users and residents who use those children's centres that are to be de-designated as part of the proposal. The main risk is that groups of residents disengage from accessing children's centre services altogether, rather than travelling to an alternative centre in a neighbouring ward. Noel Park, Bounds Green, Harringay and Muswell Hill wards are likely to be most affected by the change because these are the wards where designated Children's Centre buildings will be reduced most. A risk from this proposal is that access to children centre services for the most vulnerable families (e.g. families on low incomes, those in temporary accommodation, carers with mental health issues etc) could be substantially reduced from the de-designation of centres.

8.4.4 The attention of Members is particularly drawn to the key risks identified in the Equalities Impact Assessment and also set out in this report. These are:

- a) Potentially reduced access to both universal and targeted services
- b) The potential for disengagement with services for groups such as lone parents and parents and children with disabilities
- c) The families currently accessing services at the children's centres that will be closed may need to go to other centres for services and this may mean a longer journey for some families.
- d) Closure of high quality provision may lead to loss of expertise and local knowledge across the system.
- e) Reduced choice for local residents

- f) Safeguarding issues may not be identified or responded to immediately with a reduction in services
- g) The disproportionate impact on women and young children as the largest users of children's centre services
- h) The impact on fathers as a group who use children's centres; given the numbers using the service are already small and the disproportionate effect a diminution in services could have.

8.4.5 To help mitigate these potential impacts, a number of actions have been identified which are outlined in sections 6.15.1.4 and 6.15.2.4 of this report, and also in Section 8 of the EqIA. Many of the mitigating actions are based around strengthening outreach activities to all families, so that they are aware of opportunities to access children's centre services. There is a particular focus on outreach for those wards where children's centres will be de-designated, and ensuring that the most vulnerable are identified early and are connected to children's centre services.

8.4.6 The potential risks and negative impact of de-designating centres needs to be balanced against the proposal's intention to enhance overall access to children's centre services. The new delivery model will improve access to services through increased outreach, alignment of other commissioned services to children's centres and the use of other community buildings, including libraries, leisure centres and health centres, as appropriate. The locality model will encourage diversity of provision, support the development of local solutions and will draw on a range of data sources, effective practice and expert knowledge and experience to identify and meet the needs of the locality. This will take into account the different profiles and characteristics of residents in these localities. All groups of residents with young children, regardless of their characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, sex, religion, age), will still have the opportunity to access universal Children's Centre services in Haringey.

8.4.7 Haringey's Children's Centre Performance Framework will include the quarterly monitoring of the take-up of services across children's centres in the borough. This will help us to identify any changing patterns of usage and wider activity, in particular by protected groups which may disengage, and which can be reported to the Strategic (Best Start in Life) Priority Board as appropriate. The Cabinet Member sits on the Strategic Priority Board and will receive regular reports from this process.

8.4.8 Performance management of children's centres in Haringey will continue to set out a range of targets which must be met by designated children's centres and include a specific focus upon the inclusion of priority and excluded groups.

8.4.9 Children's centres will report qualitative and quantitative data about engaging with the following groups of people:

- Lone parents, teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers
- Children from low income backgrounds
- Children living with domestic abuse, adult mental health issues and substance abuse
- Children 'in need' or with a child protection plan
- Children who are offenders and/or those in custody
- Fathers, particularly those with any other identified need, for example, teenage fathers and those in custody
- Those with protected characteristics as defined by the Equalities Act 2010 – these may include those for whom English is an additional language, those from minority ethnic groups, those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, and those from lesbian, gay and transgender families
- Adopted children and adopter families
- Looked after children
- Children who are being cared for by members of their extended family such as a grandparent, aunt or older sibling
- Families identified by the Local Authority as a 'troubled family' who have children under the age of 5
- Families who move in and out of the area relatively quickly (transient families) such as asylum seekers, armed forces personnel and those who move in to the areas seeking employment or taking up seasonal work
- Any other vulnerable group or individual families

8.4.10 Reporting arrangements will mean that a good overview of the effect of these proposed changes on our most disadvantaged children will be maintained.

8.4.11 The findings and mitigating actions have been summarised in section 6 of this report, and described in more detail in the EqlAs in **Appendix II**.

9. Use of Appendices

9.1 Changes to Haringey's Children's Centres: Summary report of responses (Appendix I)

9.2 Equality Impact Assessment _Updated (Appendix II)

9.3 Children's Centre Statutory Guidance _April 2013 (Appendix III)

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

10.1 Equalities Impact Assessment – May 2015

http://www.minutes.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s79043/20150422_EqIA%20Childrens%20Centres%20%20Appendix%20VII.pdf

10.2 Cabinet report: Delivering Children's Centre in Haringey 2015-2018 – June 2015

http://minutes.harinet.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s79041/Childrens%20Centre%20Release%20Consultation%20Paper_Final.pdf

<http://minutes.harinet.haringey.gov.uk/documents/s79042/Annexes%20for%20June%20Cabinet%20paper%20v0%203.pdf>

10.3 Children's Centre Statutory Guidance April 2013

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273768/childrens_centre_stat_guidance_april_2013.pdf