

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

30th September 2014

Report of the Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

Report on the Findings of the Consultation Undertaken on the Changes to the Way Children's Centre Services are Delivered – (Children and Young People)

1. Purpose of Report

To inform Cabinet of the results of the consultation on the delivery of Children's Centre Services and to seek permission to consult on detailed proposals as outlined below:

- I. The closure of two Children's Centres and the associated services
- II. The closure of two Children's Centres, where the buildings are not fit for purpose, and transfer of services to other sites
- III. The relocation of one Children's Centre's services to another site to promote more engagement of service users in a high area of need
- IV. The reduction of opening hours and associated services of ten phase three centres

2. Information and Analysis

Derbyshire currently has 54 Children's Centres, organised in groups, who work together to deliver services from a range of venues. The services include early education and childcare, health services and parenting & family support, and are delivered to support the needs of the local community they serve.

The centres were originally established to meet different levels of need. Phase one centres serve communities where a high area of need was identified and phase three the lowest.

There are currently 215 staff working in the children's centre workforce, delivering services not only from purpose-built Children's Centres but also in a range of settings including in a family's home, at a local community venue or in a location

where partnerships with other agencies such as schools or health can strengthen the support to a family or child and deliver an integrated early offer of help.

Throughout Derbyshire, 80.2% of 0-5 year olds in the population have registered with a Children's Centre, and of those, 74.1% have participated within the last 12 months (July 2013 to July 2014). There is a continuous drive by the workforce to improve these figures in the knowledge that early intervention is paramount to improve a child's outcomes in later life. Research evidences that we can improve outcomes most effectively by supporting the child within its first three years

A Cabinet paper was considered & approved on 6 May 2014, which sought permission to consult with the public on:

2.i) options for reducing the Children's Centre budget; and

2.ii) criteria that would be applied to identify Children's Centres for more in-depth impact assessment work.

The report made clear that this initial consultation would seek to review the quality of the service to maintain good practice and identify ways of improving service delivery.

The report also made clear that any proposals which were developed as a result to close individual centres or to relocate services would then be subject to a full consultation and equality analysis process having regard to the requirements of the Department for Education Sure Start Children's Centres: statutory guidance - April 2013. The guidance states that local authorities should 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

Details of the methodology for the initial consultation process, the responses and how the responses have been considered are contained within the first stage Equality Impact Analysis. In summary, the consultation was promoted widely through posters, leaflets and the Children's Centres workforce. People were given the opportunity to respond to a paper-based questionnaire, an online questionnaire, phone Call Derbyshire or to attend one of the focus groups that were arranged in each Locality.

Over the 5 week consultation period, 2,200 people responded to the consultation questionnaire and 100 attended the focus groups.

2.1 Options for reducing the children's centre budget and providing services more cost effectively

The options that were consulted on, and people's responses, were as follows:

- i) Charging for specific services at children's centres such as early education (37.2% of respondents prioritised this criteria)
- ii) Reducing the opening hours of Children's Centres (23% of respondents prioritised this criteria)
- iii) Reducing the range of services available at children's centres (17.9% prioritised this)
- iv) Reducing the number of staff at children's centres (3.3% prioritised this)
- v) Limiting access to children's centres to families most in need (10.9% prioritised this)
- vi) Closing some children's centres (with alternative provision available elsewhere for those who require it) (7.4% prioritised this)

The first phase Equality Impact Analysis sets out in detail how these responses have been considered, and how they have informed the recommendations in this report. Where the feedback from consultation has not been fully taken on board, the EIA explains the reasons, logic and rationale.

Overall, the proposals in this report take account of the preference expressed during the initial consultation for reducing the opening hours of centres in preference to fully closing centres (the proposals would result in the full closure of only two centres and would reduce opening hours at a further ten). Consideration has been given to charging for services, which was the most widely supported option in the consultation, however this is not recommended due to (a) the complexity and cost of administering payments, (b) the amounts that would need to be charged and (c) concern that this would make the service inaccessible for those

in greatest need. Consideration was also given to reducing the range of services available at Children's Centres, although this option has also not been recommended due to the need to continue to provide a range of services in order to comply with statutory guidance, and to maintain the appeal and interest of the centres to families with different needs and interests.

2.2 Criteria to Determine the Future of Individual Centres in Derbyshire

The consultation questionnaire also sought views on seven criteria that the Council could use to determine the future of individual centres in Derbyshire. These criteria are listed below, in the order in which they were ranked by respondents:

- a) Quality of services provided/outcomes achieved by the centre
- b) Range of services provided by the centre
- c) Location/ease of accessing the centre
- d) Needs of the centre's population
- e) Number of people using the centre
- f) Availability of alternative services near to the centre
- g) Financial bottom line of the centre (running costs and income)

The consultation has been used to review and develop the proposed criteria and it is proposed to utilise the following to look at individual centres:

- Needs of the centre's local population
- Number of people using the centre
- Financial bottom line of the centre
- Ease of access to a children's centre
- Availability of alternative local services

The rationale for preferring these factors in preference to other possible criteria is laid out in the attached Equality Impact Analysis. Although quality and the range of services available were the most widely supported criteria, and are clearly of critical importance, it is not proposed to apply these as criteria because closing or reducing a service would not seem an appropriate response to concerns about quality if there continued to be a local need. It would seem more appropriate to provide services where there is the greatest need for them, and to work to ensure high quality in all centres. For this reason, it is proposed that the criteria focus on the needs of the local population, centre usage, cost and availability of alternative services.

2.3 Proposals to go forward for consultation

The first three of the proposed criteria were applied on an equal basis to the current 54 Children's Centres in order to rank them and identify the centres with:

- i) Relatively lowest level of need/deprivation;
- ii) Relatively low engagement of the 0-5 population;
- iii) Relatively high level of centre running costs.

This process has generated the recommendations in this report for further consultation and analysis. It was not considered feasible to develop a system of ranking or scoring for the two remaining criteria – ease of access and availability of other local services – and these will be explored further as part of the ongoing development of the Equality Impact Analysis and through the consultation.

i) Full closure of centres which are situated in areas of least deprivation, with lower contact figures and which have relatively high running costs (Duffield and Ashbourne)

It is proposed to consult on the closure of Duffield and Ashbourne Children's Centres as these are two centres which rank most poorly when measured against each of the three criteria applied. Duffield ranks 53rd out of 54 for least deprivation, 5th most expensive for running costs and 49th out of 54 for engagement of the 0-5 population. Ashbourne ranks 47th for least deprivation, 4th most expensive for running costs and 54th for engagement.

Duffield Children's Centre Building

The potential savings for these closures would total £203,000 (Duffield £113,000 and Ashbourne £90,000). The relevant data is set out in Appendix 2.

ii) Part time opening of Phase Three Centres

As with the previous proposals, we have applied the criteria to consider local need. In response to consultation, we have also considered the preference that was expressed for reducing opening hours rather than closing centres. Phase three

centres were the last Children's Centres to be registered and are generally located in areas where the level of need is lower.

The proposal is to reduce opening from five days to two days per week, which would reduce costs. Where the authority maintains the buildings, this may also promote income generation on the days the buildings are not being utilised by the Children's Centre as they could be leased to other organisations.

This would affect the following centres:

Bakewell (54th least deprived area, out of 54)

Crich (49th least deprived area)

Chapel en le Frith (48th least deprived area)

Wirksworth (41st least deprived area)

Arkwright (27th least deprived area)

Killamarsh (40th least deprived area)

Tupton (50th least deprived area)

Sandiacre (35th least deprived area)

West Hallam (45th least deprived area)

Coton-in-the-Elms (43rd least deprived area)

Total Savings achieved would be £705,000.

iii) Closure of buildings not fit for purpose but with service delivery continuing from a different location (Castle Gresley and Langwith)

There is a need to provide Children's Centres that are safe and fit for purpose. As part of the review, the following centres have been identified in areas where there is a relatively high level of need for services, but there are issues relating to the building. It is proposed, in these two cases, to re-locate the existing services.

Unlike the proposed closures at Ashbourne and Duffield, no corresponding

reduction would be applied to the Children's Centres staffing budget so that services could continue to be provided in families' homes, community venues and out of other nearby Children's Centres.

Castle Gresley Children's Centre is currently experiencing subsidence to the wall at the rear of the Centre. A structural engineer has inspected the wall and confirmed that it is in a poor condition and requires demolition and rebuild. An estimated cost for these works is £150,000+. It is unsafe for use in its current state and services have already had to be withdrawn from the site and relocated to other community bases.

Langwith Children's Centre is sited within Stubbin Wood school utilising a community room which had capacity. An agreement was made with the school for its use. The school now needs more space for nursery provision and other teaching space and has asked the County Council to vacate the space. The attendance at Langwith Junction is high and services would continue to run in community settings and at Shirebrook and Whaley Thorns Children's Centres which are nearby.

There is still a need to provide a service in Castle Gresley and Langwith and the service would remain in place but savings of £24,000 would be made by closing the buildings.

iv)Relocation of Gamesley Children's Centre

Gamesley Children's Centre's reach area has the fourth-highest level of deprivation in the county and this demonstrates the need for a Children's Centre service delivery site. However, current engagement of the 0-5s population within the area could be improved (Gamesley ranks 27th out of 54 centres for engagement). There is currently an Early Excellence provision in Gamesley and there is potential to accommodate children's centre services within a building which is already being accessed by families for childcare and other children's services. It may benefit the

community to be able to access children's centre services on the same site and this may also improve engagement with children's centre services, as it would cease duplication and avoid confusion as to where children's services are provided for the community. It is therefore proposed to consult on the relocation of Gamesley Children's Centre.

The savings of the closure of the current Gamesley site would be up to £12,000 but this is dependent on the costs of the relocation site.

2.4 Methods of consultation

The initial consultation was successful in reaching a wide audience and generating a high level of responses. It is proposed to adopt a similar approach to the next phase of consultation. This would include:

- Online and paper questionnaires, available in a wide range of community settings including Children's Centres, schools, libraries, GP surgeries;
- 'Drop-in' consultation sessions at or near each Children's Centre that would be affected;
- Letters to all registered users of Children's Centres that would be affected by the proposals;
- Asking the Derbyshire workforce to promote the consultation to existing service users, prospective service users, the wider public and professionals.

3. Financial Considerations

The proposals to close Ashbourne and Duffield Children's Centres, and re-locate the services at Castle Gresley, Langwith and Gamesley would generate savings of £81,000 in building running costs, and the closure of Ashbourne and Duffield would enable a further reduction of £158,000 in staffing costs.

Reducing opening hours at the remaining 10 Phase three centres from 5 days per week to 2 days per week would enable savings of £94,000 relating to the running of the buildings and £611,000 relating to staffing costs.

Alongside the proposals in this report, it is proposed to develop a formula to ensure that the Children's Centre staffing budget is allocated fairly between Localities according to need. The budget reductions detailed in this report would be applied to the total available budget for staff across the whole county. This budget would then be allocated across the county based on the new formula (details of which are within the "Integrating Early Help and Safeguarding Services for Children, Young People and their Families" paper also being presented to this Cabinet meeting).

If all of the above changes were implemented, the total savings from these proposals would be £944,000.

Much of the initial investment in Children's Centres was funded by Capital grants from Central Government and terms and conditions were attached to that funding. The grants had conditions relating to changes in future use of capital assets funded by the grant. There is some risk of clawback of these grants if the Local Authority does not continue to comply fully with the original terms and conditions. In the proposals we would be consulting on, this risk is considered to be minimal by virtue of:

- Low level of original grant funded capital investment
 - The proposals are mainly to reduce opening hours and not close centres completely
- The passage of time and use of centres should be offset against any original investment.

4. Equality Consideration

In addition to the initial Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) appended to this report, further work will be undertaken in order that the Council may have regard to its equality and human rights obligations when making a final decision in the light of the consultation process. Information gathered during consultation will inform the development of the EIA. The final EIA will identify any adverse impact and explain how any adverse impact identified will, as far as possible, be mitigated.

5. Human Resources Considerations

The Cabinet report: "Integrating Early Help and Safeguarding Services for Children, Young People and their Families", provides details of the staffing requirements in terms of equitable resource allocation and revised roles in Children's Centres. The changes required to support a more focused service have been addressed in the aforementioned report. All changes will be subject to consultation with the relevant trades unions and employees.

6. Legal Considerations

Legislation about children's centres is contained in the Childcare Act 2006 (the Act)

Under the Act (Section 5A) Local authorities have a duty to make arrangements to ensure that there are sufficient children's centres, so far as is reasonably practicable, to meet local need.

A Sure Start children's centre is defined in the Act 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.

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.

Under Section 5(D) of the Act local authorities must ensure that there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children's centre provision in their area

In relation to this consultation, the Circular (which is statutory guidance), states as follows;

Significant changes to children's centre provision and the duty to consult

Local authorities **must** ensure there is consultation before:

- ☐ opening a new children's centre;
- ☐ 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
- ☐ 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.

Local authorities (or a third party acting on the authority's behalf) 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.

It will be extremely important therefore that any emerging proposals are subject to full consultation with all those who may be affected. Further details for the proposed consultation are set out in the report. The proposals would be subject to a three month period of consultation after which a final report would be submitted to Cabinet which would include a full equality analysis of the proposals, any adverse impact identified and information as to how such adverse impact will be mitigated.

Even though potential criteria were the subject of the first stage of consultation this consultation should also allow consultees, even at this second stage, to comment on the criteria proposed to be applied and to proposed alternative criteria if they so wish as well as to comment on the consequences of implementation of the preferred criteria.

7. Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime & disorder; and environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

8. Background Papers

1. Cabinet Report – May 6th 2014
2. Department for Education Sure Start Children's Centres: statutory guidance- April 2013
3. Child Poverty Strategy 2014-2017
4. Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Analysis containing stage one consultation results
5. Appendix 2 - Financial table showing implications of cost reductions
6. Appendix 3 - Timeline

9. Key Decision

No

10. Call-In

Is it required that the Call-in period be waived in respect of the decisions being proposed within this report?

No.

11. Strategic Director's Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) Notes the findings from the Children's Centre review;
- ii) Agrees the proposed timetable for the continuation of the review, including a three month period of consultation and Equality Impact Assessments on:
 - a) the proposed full closures of two centres at Ashbourne and Duffield;
 - b) the transfer of services at Castle Gresley and Langwith to two new sites where the current centres are not fit for purpose;
 - c) the transfer of service from a site at Gamesley where user engagement needs to improve, and
 - d) the reduction of opening hours for phase three centres from full time to two days a week
- iii) Receives a further report following the consultation.

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for Children & Younger Adults

Appendix 1- Equality Impact Analysis

Department	CAYA
Service Area	Children's Centres
Changes or proposals	The future provision of Children's Centres
Chair of Analysis Team	Commissioning Manager
Date of Analysis	22 nd August 2014
Version	1

1. Prioritising what is being analysed

a. Description of current service arrangements

a) Why has the policy, practice, service or function been chosen?

Derbyshire currently has 54 Children's Centres that offer a range of services suited to the area they are in which includes early education and childcare, health services and parenting and family support.

The Children's Centres work in partnership with health, education, childcare providers, social care and voluntary sector organisations to support families and try to close the gap between the children who are underachieving and those who are reaching their developmental milestones. Other organisations signpost and work in partnership with this targeted work to meet local need.

Each Centre provides a service to a defined reach area and its services are informed by local need and subject to Ofsted inspection. Services may include such things as support to families in relation to parenting, support with their child's development (for example speech delay or social development.). There are a broad range of reasons as to why a family may access a Children's Centre and Children's Centres also provide a universal service for parents/carers and children to access.

The Centres provide services to families with children aged 0-5 and are currently open five days a week (Monday to Friday). The Centres are managed by Children Centre Coordinators and have a team of three children's centre workers to deliver the service.

b. Details of proposals or changes

b) What, if any, proposals have been made to alter the policy, service or

function?

The proposals are to review the service delivery of Children's Centres by examining more closely each provision in relation to local need, suitability and to look at any possible impacts this may have to ensure there is fairness in any changes made across the county. The review and subsequent public consultations may inform suggested proposals to effect change with the service delivery of centres

A paper was submitted to cabinet on 6 May to seek permission to consult with the public on what they considered should be prioritised as criteria to apply to each individual Centre during the review. The purpose of the consultation was also to seek views on options for reducing the amount of money spent by the local authority on the delivery of the Children's Centre Service. The consultation would also be used to obtain feedback by service users on the quality of children's centre services and to gather opinions on ways to improve service delivery.

The analysis contained within this Equality Impact Analysis examines a range of proposals including the decisions of the options and criteria to be applied

This analysis will help inform the attached cabinet paper for submission on 30th September, of proposed changes to children's centres. If accepted by cabinet a further three month consultation and more in depth Equality Impact Analysis to mitigate against any change would be required.

C. Rationale for proposed changes

The Department for Education Sure Start children's centre statutory guidance (April 2013) clarifies what local authorities and statutory partners must do because it is required by legislation, and what local authorities and partners should do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. Section 1 of the guidance places a duty of Local Authority to "improve the well-being of young children in their area and reduce inequalities between them". It also has a duty to deliver a needs led and quality service and is subject to an Ofsted inspection to adhere to this.

Due to pressures placed on the County Council to make budget cuts a full review of the children's centre future provision is taking place and within this a full comprehensive consultation with users, stakeholders and the wider public.

The consultation and further impact analysis will help identify those members of the public for whom the review may have an adverse impact.

2. The team carrying out the analysis

<i>Name</i>	<i>Area of expertise/ role</i>
(Chair) Tracy Marsh	Previously Children's Centre Coordinator/ Multi Agency Team Manager (Early Years lead- Chesterfield.) Seconded to lead the review
Jayne Straw	Derbyshire Management Information team
John Cowings	Senior Policy Officer-critical friend
Louis Hughes	Locality Manager(Lead on Early Years)
Val Jackson	Quality Improvement- Children's Centres
Jane Hicken	Public Health
Barbara Ackrill	Research and Information- support to the Children's Centre Review consultation

3. Existing information and consultation based feedback

a. Sources of data and consultation used

<i>Source</i>	<i>Reason for using</i>
Service User information- Management Information	To identify groups using the children's centre

Source	Reason for using
Service User information- Management Information	To identify groups using the children's centre
Deprivation Data- Management Information	Identify communities of high need
Participation of the population in the centres	% of 0-5 population accessing centres
Ofsted Data/Grades/Reports	Assess quality and relevance of service provision in relation to local need
Property Services(Buildings controllable uncontrollable costs/ suitability for purpose)	Examine suitability(location, health and safety) and running costs of buildings
Public Consultation May 2013-June 2013	Public opinion obtained on criteria to be applied to each centre to consider if further more detailed work needs to be considered and options for reducing budget
Child Poverty Strategy (2014-2017)	Identifies the importance of supporting children in the early years as a critical and cost effective investment
Sure Start Statutory Guidance- April 2014	Defines the duties on local authorities to deliver an appropriate Children's Centre Service

4. Known impact on different protected characteristic groups

- a. From existing data and information – who is likely to be adversely affected, how, and to what degree? Will anyone gain or benefit from the proposals?

Protected Group	Findings
Age including	Children's Centres target families where there are

children and families, older people	<p>children aged 0-5. Throughout Derbyshire 80.2% of under 5s in the population have registered with a centre and of those 74.1% have used the service within the last 12 months(July 2013 to July 2014)</p> <p>Table to show numbers of age groups attending centres</p> <table><tr><th>Target Group</th><th>Pop</th><th>Reg #</th><th>Reg %</th></tr><tr><td>U1</td><td>7405</td><td>4868</td><td>65.7</td></tr><tr><td>U2</td><td>15820</td><td>11460</td><td>72.4</td></tr><tr><td>U3</td><td>24397</td><td>18803</td><td>77.1</td></tr><tr><td>U4</td><td>32770</td><td>26080</td><td>79.6</td></tr><tr><td>U5</td><td>41172</td><td>32933</td><td>80.0</td></tr></table> <p>The highest group of children accessing the service are aged between 4 and 5 years old.</p> <p>Closure or reduction in opening hours of a centre would mean centre based activities would need to be moved to a nearby site such as a community hall or other provision, or continue in an alternative venue where they are already established. The support offered via the home however could continue</p>	Target Group	Pop	Reg #	Reg %	U1	7405	4868	65.7	U2	15820	11460	72.4	U3	24397	18803	77.1	U4	32770	26080	79.6	U5	41172	32933	80.0
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Disabled people including mobility, sensory, learning, mental health, HIV, and also include carers and relatives	<p>There are currently 243 disabled children under 5 years old registered with the children’s centres in Derbyshire. Disabled children who do not meet the criteria for support from the county’s disability team, based on their level of disability, may be signposted to a children’s centre for support. They may attend as part of a universal group, as a targeted group for children with a similar disability (and access such groups as Positive Play), or receive home support.</p> <p>There are 679 over 18 years old who are disabled and registered who may be parents or carers of under-fives. Parents who have a disability may receive support from a children’s centre to help them with their parenting There may also be a need for the children’s centre to be alerted to the fact that, in some cases, the children are the “young carers” for their parents.</p> <p>It is important that this service remains accessible to young children with disabilities and parents with disabilities.</p>																								

Gender (Sex) including men and women, boys and girls	<p>There are currently 16,892 boys aged under 5 accessing children's centres in Derbyshire and 16,111 girls. Gender is not a key factor affecting the delivery of the service. Children's centres use Early Years information to inform them of local need and they may identify that a certain gender is underachieving in reaching its developmental milestones and, therefore want to capture and increase the participation of that gender, but the centre is accessible to all.</p> <p>Of parents and carers that attend 43,166 are men and 71,979 are women.</p>
Gender reassignment – including impact if any on Transgender people	<p>This would not be relevant to this analysis as gender re-assignment is not a key factor affecting the delivery of this service.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership – also include impacts on lone parents and unmarried couples	<p>Services are not delivered on the basis of marital status. It is relevant however to note that across the county 4,269 of parents/carers who are registered are registered as lone parents. However this figure may be higher as the option to register as such is via a self-completed registration form and some users may find this a sensitive issue and do not want to be recognised as such.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity – including new mothers/ parents	<p>The data for mothers accessing ante natal support through children's centres is not collected.</p> <p>Going forward there is a need to start collecting this data to understand what percentage of ante natal parents use a children's centre</p>
Race – including all racial groups, including impact if any on Gypsies and Travellers	<p>Most residents in Derbyshire belong to the White British Group (96%)</p> <p>22,566 of children under 5 and 59,929 parents who have registered with the children's centres are White British which represents the ethnicity of the highest number of users</p> <p>There are 11 under 5 and 16 traveller parents of Irish heritage registered parents registered which represents the lowest number of users.</p> <p>Going forward for the purpose of the more in depth analysis this data would need to be targeted as to how they apply to the communities that would be affected to mitigate against any language issues or other issues would form a barrier to access.</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief,	<p>No collection of this data is currently available but it would be useful to collect this information for more</p>

including religious minority communities, Humanists	detailed assessments relating to the communities that may be affected if the proposals go forward Children's centres have access to interpreters to communicate with parents and multi-cultural reading material and toys are provided for children
Sexual orientation – including the impact if any on LGB people	The sexual orientation of parents is not a determining factor in the delivery of all services. All families can access children's centres irrespective of sexual orientation

Non-statutory

Poorer and disadvantaged communities and groups, including people who experience financial exclusion	Derbyshire data shows varying levels of deprivation which can be ranked and applied to each children's centre reach area. The more deprived the area is the more likely families are to require support from children's centres to help their children reach their full potential. Within the further Impact analysis the data can be applied to ensure we are working against a reduction in services to those families who need it most. Phase three centres are <u>generally</u> located in areas of least deprivation.
Rural communities	Across the county are pockets of rurality where each community has different levels of need. With the Peak District National Park covering more than a third of Derbyshire's total land area, and with only a few densely populated towns, the county may be described as largely rural. According to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) six of the county's districts are classified as rural with only Erewash and Chesterfield classified as urban. Amber Valley and South Derbyshire are described as significantly rural and High Peak is classified as rural. The level of need in these areas and how well they are used by families would need to be a consideration.

Impact on employees of Derbyshire County Council or prospective employees

This is part of a separate review involving Trade Unions and Staff who may be affected and will be detailed in the Integrating Early Help and Safeguarding Services for Children, Young People and their Families Cabinet report submitted on September 30
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The profile of the respondents to the Children's Centre Review Questionnaire

Protected Group	Findings
Age	The average age of the consultation respondent was 34 Of the respondents 286 had no children; 797 had one child aged five and under; 428 had two children aged five and under; 55 had three children aged five and under and twenty six had more than three children in this age range. This reflects a fair response from the target population of parents/carers with children under five years old and therefore those within the community for whom changes to the service delivery would have the biggest impact.
Disability	4.7% of respondents to the first stage consultation (parents/carers) had a disability.
Gender (Sex)	91.2% of the population who responded to the consultation were female adults and 8.8% were male.
Gender reassignment	Not identified in the consultation questionnaire
Marriage and civil partnership	Not identified in the consultation questionnaire
Pregnancy and maternity	Data has not been collected for prospective parents but it is key that further impact assessments ensure that this group can access health services and support which may have been delivered from a children's centre site.
Race	97% of respondents were white; 0.4% Asian/Asian British; 0.3% Black/Black British; 1.1% mixed; 0.3% Chinese; 0.8%. If service delivery points are changed further impact assessment work will need to identify race in a community to ensure the messages of where the service is being delivered from are communicated so they do not miss out on an opportunity to engage with the service.
Religion and belief including non-belief	Not asked in questionnaire

Sexual orientation	Not asked in questionnaire
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Non-statutory

Poorer and disadvantaged communities	Not asked in the questionnaire but a duty to ensure that families living in areas of disadvantage can still access the children's centre services.
Rural	Not asked in the questionnaire but families living in rural areas where there is deprivation would still need to be able to access a service and this would be explored through more analysis

Employees or prospective employees

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b. Are there any *other* groups of people who may experience an adverse impact because of the proposals?

There is a need to mitigate against the possibility of some families having poor literacy skills and therefore unable to receive the communication of proposed changes. Communication of any changes to services will need to be thought out so that this group within the community will not lose the opportunity to engage with services.

c. Gaps in data

What are your main gaps in information and understanding of the impact of your policy and services? Please indicate whether you have identified ways of filling these gaps.

Gaps in data	Action to deal with this
Ante – natal data	Partnership links with health(midwives/Health visitors) to

	collect the data
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6. From the consultation you have carried out specifically in relation to proposed changes, what views or issues have been raised by those who have responded? (Include both their views and any issues they have raised which alludes to the likely impact)

a) Please summarise the consultation which has been carried out

Children's Centre Review Consultation on initial proposals

The consultation occurred over a five week period from 14 May 2014 concluding on the 17 June 2014

It was structured to recognise that all age groups of the public, professionals and children's centre workers would want to access the consultation. Therefore an opportunity was afforded to;

1. Allow for respondents to feed back their views as to what was working well within children's centres and the services they valued
2. Allow for respondents to feed back their views on any part of the service that was less effective and suggest any additional services they felt should be provided by the children's centre
3. Express opinions on what should be prioritised when reducing the budgets for Children's Centres

Consultation process

The Children's Centre consultation was promoted through:

1. Posters, leaflets and publicity material displayed across the county through distribution to libraries, school, health centres and key partner organisations.
2. Articles in the local press
3. Derbyshire County Council website online questionnaire

4. Three thousand paper questionnaires available throughout children's centres across the county
5. Call Derbyshire Budget Line
6. Eight focus groups across the county
7. Meeting with county children's centre coordinators and key stakeholders to encourage the workforce and partners at Advisory groups to promote the consultation

8. Inclusion in the DCC team brief to raise awareness

Focus Groups

During the consultation period eight focus group opportunities were provided with a target group of twenty service users in each locality (an additional session was held in the High Peak).

Morning, afternoon and evening time slots with a supporting crèche were offered to support with work commitments and childcare. Workers offered transport support to those parents with accessibility difficulties.

Attendees at the focus groups were invited by an offer being made to all service users at children's centres who had expressed an interest.

The total number of attendees was 100 parents from across the County.

DATE	TIME	VENUE	# of Attendees
23 rd May 14	1pm-3pm	Fairfield CC Buxton (High Peak/Dales)	20
9 th June 14	1pm-3pm	Swadlincote Adult and Community Education Centre Rink Drive Swadlincote DE11 8JL	2
10 th June 14	5.30-7.30pm	Alices View CC North Wingfield	10
11 th June 14	10:30-12:30	Community Room, Ripley (Amber Valley)	16

12 th June 14	9.30-11.30	Kirk Hallam	10
12 th June 14	1pm-3pm	Gladys Buxton, Dronfield (Ne/Bolsover)	6
13 th June 14	12:30-2.30	Chesterfield Library	25
13 th June 14	1.30-3.30	Wirksworth CC	11

Each group focused on the same themes to ensure consistency in the questions across the county.

- b) Please summarise the feedback received. This should make clear where those who have responded have highlighted any potential adverse impact as well as their opinions on the proposals.**

Although there were a range of responses there were a number of common themes across the county from each group.

I. What do you most value about children's centres?

- Support
- Parent/child socialisation
- Groups/Range of activities

II. Is there anything missing from the children's centres?

- Poor promotion
- Open longer hours
- Stigma attached
- A preference for universal groups rather than targeted
- Car parking

III. What is a Children's Centre to you?

- Safe haven
- Supportive staff- (more about the staff than the building)
- Family friendly
- Signposting service

- Groups/socialisation/networks
- Building has to be right- environment warm/welcoming

IV. Can you think of ways to run children's centres more cost effectively?

- Utilise buildings on school sites
- Fundraising
- Charge (businesses to use space/parents for groups)
- Look at different Children's Centre boundaries
- Partnership working
- Reduce opening hours- reduce services on quieter days
- Recycle Children's Centre equipment such as toys
- Reduce staff travel
- More volunteering
- Profits from cafe

V. How important is accessibility to you?

- Better to walk or one bus journey(20 mins by car; 10-15 mins walking)
- Central location
- Sessions at least 2 hours to make the journey worthwhile
- Consider cost of public transport and bus routes
- Open different hours/different centres- shut centres on days when groups not running
- Local need- take into account shift working
- Weekend/evening opening for whole family
- Mobile service

VI. What services should a children's centre offer?

- Targeted and universal- everyone needs something
- Accessible to everyone
- Work as clusters
- Prevention

Other Services in Locality that Charge for Groups

1. Mums and Toddlers
2. Music groups
3. Baby Yoga
4. Library sessions
5. Church groups
6. Gym tots
7. Baby sensory

Headline Findings from Online/Paper Consultation

A total of 2,200 people responded to the online and paper consultation of which 1,451 currently use a children's centre; 273 currently work at one, 324 have used one in the past and 138 have never used one. The respondents are mapped at Appendix 1

Of the respondents 286 had no children; 797 had one child aged five and under; 428 had two children aged five and under; 55 had three children aged five and under and twenty six had more than three children in this age range.

Of the respondents the majority were parents. The next highest rate of respondents was professionals.

I. Use of Children's Centre

Analysis of the information from the consultation shows that 35% of respondents used or had previously used more than one children's centre. Of those who did

use a centre 184 used it every week day, 400 people used it a few times a week; 454 used it once a week; 129 used it once a fortnight and 152 used it once a month.

ii Quality of Children's Centre

This question examined the following aspects of the centre;

- Its location
- Ease of access using public transport
- Ease of car parking
- Its facilities
- Its range of services
- Its quality of services

All aspects were recorded with the majority of each category's ratings being "excellent" with "quality of services" receiving the highest score. This was followed by its facilities and range of services.

The highest numbers of poor and satisfactory responses related to "ease of car parking"

The services most valued at the centres were "Early Education" and "Family Support"

Options for reducing the children's centre budget and providing services more cost effectively

The list below indicates the responses to the options provided in the consultation

Below each option the reasons, logic and rationale for whether this option has been used to inform the recommendations in this report is set out

i) Charge for specific services at children's centres such as early education

37.2% of respondents chose this option as a priority in the survey. This was also discussed within the focus groups where the proposals to pay for services and generate an income were proposed by the groups as an alternative to the closure of centres.

This option has been considered but there are a number of findings which have shown that charging would not make sufficient savings for the following reasons;

- The cost of administering the charge and the financial management would be high in relation to the level of charges that could be made

for individual group sessions

- To achieve the level of savings required each family would have to pay a sizeable annual figure (ranging from £266 to £1020 per child per year) to access the service to cover the cost of staffing and buildings

Further concerns would be detrimental effect this would have on the delivery of the Core offer of Children's Centres as charging may limit who can access the service. As such, the following points have been considered;

- Means testing could be applied but would be complex to administer and disproportionate for people wanting to access a group activity
- There is a risk that we would be making decisions around refusing the service to those who couldn't meet the payment. This option would undermine the Ofsted targeted work in relation to worklessness and the Child Poverty Strategy
- There would be a concern as to making the service inaccessible to those who would need it the most due to their inability to pay

It has been decided that this would not be a suitable option.

ii) Reduce the opening hours of Children's Centres

23% of respondents of the consultation selected this option as a priority. This would be a viable option with a preference that it responds to local need. It would need to apply to centres where the level of deprivation was low and the subsequent level of need and demand was not as high as other centres. Staggered openings of centres across localities to ensure service delivery suits the needs of service users could be considered.

iii) Reduce the range of services available at children's centres-

This option refers to limiting services delivered from a centre and was selected as a priority by 17.9% of the respondents to the consultation

As Children's Centre services are tailored to meet local need this may reduce or exclude groups of people wanting to access the service. The Children's Centre Services should be targeted and universal as stipulated by Ofsted.

Ofsted inspect the suitability of a Centre to achieve the right outcomes for children based on services reflecting the need in a specific reach area. For this reason it would be inappropriate to apply this option.

iv) Reduce the number of staff at children's centres

3.3% of consultation respondents placed this option as a priority for consideration. It is therefore important to include what is under consideration in

terms of staffing.

Prior to the consultation reference groups consisting of the children's centre workforce, workforce development, Human Resources and union representation have been meeting to look at the functions of the children's centre current profiles in line with the Sure Start Statutory Guidance. The purpose of these groups is to ensure a more integrated and appropriately trained workforce with the skills to meet the needs of the service.

The outcome of the reference group meetings is the formation of new job profiles with clearer functions and more suitable to raise the standard of the delivery of service. These will be introduced subject to cabinet approval (Integrating Early Help and Safeguarding Services for Children, Young People and their Families). In addition to this is a consideration of how many of the new job roles, (if approved by cabinet) will be needed in each area of the county. A new resource allocation formula to address this has been developed based on need, demand and early years data.

Feedback from the consultation focus groups raised the issue that access to services is sometimes limited by centre opening hours not fitting in with parents/carers working patterns. It is relevant to consider contracts to be in line with Children's Centre opening to support a seven day a week service if required.

v) Limit access to children's centres to families most in need

This option was to seek opinions on which families would be able to access the service. Families "most in need" may be signposted by other services for support or may reside in communities where there is high need and may themselves request support. 10.9% of respondents to the consultation placed this as a priority. The Sure Start Statutory Guidance states we should deliver both universal and targeted services but that the core purpose relates directly to the wider duties local authorities have (under section 1 of the Act) *to improve the well-being of young children and reduce inequalities between young children in the area*. For the reasons set out by the guidance local need would need to be part of the review of the centres

vi) Close some children's centres (with alternative provision available elsewhere for those that require it)-

7.4% of respondents chose this option as a priority

This would be a consideration and it is appropriate to look at Children's centre buildings not fit for purpose. The health and Safety of our service users whilst they occupy a building is paramount and buildings in poor condition would be part of the review

The process of closing a building would be subject to consultation and integral to that would be an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure alternative service provision would be accessible.

Criteria to Determine the Future of Individual Centres in Derbyshire

The consultation questionnaire supplied a list of seven criteria that the council could use to determine the future of individual centres in Derbyshire;

- Location/ease of accessing the centre
- Number of people using the centre
- Range of services provided by the centre
- Quality of services provided/outcomes achieved by the centre
- Financial bottom line of the centre (running costs and income)
- Needs of the centre's population
- Availability of alternative services near to the centre

Respondents were asked to consider the criteria and rank them from most preferred option to least preferred.

The list below indicates the priority of the response (1= most popular choice; 7= least popular choice)

1. Quality of services provided/outcomes achieved by the centre (most popular choice)

The consultation response was to consider the quality and outcomes of the centre as a priority when determining the future of individual centres.

An analysis of the responses of the consultation as a whole makes this a difficult task as all responses to the quality of the services across the Derbyshire Children's Centres were 60% Excellent and 20% good

In addition to this feedback regular Children's Centre customer satisfaction feedback reports referring to the services offered have an 88% response rate of "very satisfied". This would make it difficult to use this criteria to separate individual centres.

Ofsted inspections of Children's Centres assess quality of services and promote working towards improvement, to meet the needs of the community, rather than closure of a centre.

It has not therefore been used as criteria to determine which centres need to be reviewed.

2 Range of services provided by the centre

The respondents to the consultation considered the range of services at the Children's Centres offered to a family to be important as part of the criteria to be

applied to each centre under consideration. However these are already measured under quality and access to services in Ofsted, therefore they are not to be discounted but are an integral part of Children's Centre Service delivery and as such have not been used to determine children's centres to be reviewed

3. Location /ease of accessing the centre

The consultation and focus groups have highlighted the preference of service users being able to access a centre. This is an important consideration and ease of accessing a centre can be measured, in some part by current footfall and contacts of the current 0-5 population

As part of the second consultation process Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken to analyse the accessibility of the service to those in greatest need.

4. Needs of the centres local population-

The consultation response has referred to responding to the needs of the local population.

Children's Centres shape their services in response to the needs of their reach area and are judged on their ability to be successful in this and improve outcomes for children and their families through an Ofsted inspection process

There is also an obligation to work within the Sure Start Statutory Guidance to provide universal and targeted work "*reduce inequalities between families in greatest needs and their peers*"

This would form part of the consideration.

5. Number of people using the centre

This would be a useful consideration as it would appear to capture a number of preferred criteria

An analysis of the usage of each centre in relation to its 0-5 population could be seen to encompass other criteria's such as its accessibility, the quality and range of services and an indication that it was responding to local need. It would, therefore, be an appropriate and relevant consideration

5. Availability of alternative services near to the centre

Respondents in the consultation focus groups showed an awareness of other services available for children and families in their communities. It is important that alternative provisions are considered.

After the initial criteria's have been applied to determine the centres for further work this would form an essential part of the Equality Impact Analysis.

6. Financial bottom line of the centre (running costs and income)

There is a need to review the children's centre budget and provide services more cost effectively. It is for this reason that the running costs and income, although least favoured by the consultation, would form a final part of the consideration

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7. Are there any ways of avoiding or reducing likely possible adverse impact on any groups of people, what are those actions, and how will they assist?

Further impact analyses in the communities affected by Children's Centre closures or reduction in opening hours will be completed to ensure there are suitable local provisions for the children and their families to access

As the Sure Start statutory guidance needs to be applied we would need to mitigate against families living in areas of highest deprivation not being able to access a service.

8. Main conclusions and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analysis the following is believed to be of importance and should be noted by decision-makers:

The public consultation (stage1) has been a thorough and fair consultation. There have been key findings from the EIA to form proposals. From the consultation and information known at this stage no specific discrimination or additional adverse impact is anticipated based on the age, disability, gender or ethnic origin of children or parents and in the next detailed EIAs these factors will be explored alongside the potential impact on poorer families of closing centres or cutting back opening hours. Following the Cabinet report on 30 September a further three months of more comprehensive consultation will take place in the locations where the residents will be directly affected and the detailed EIAs will form part of the process.

RECOMMENDATIONS (if any)

It is recommended that:

1. Three criteria are to be used to inform decision making;

- Lowest level of need and deprivation
- Low engagement of 0-5 population
- High level of Centre running costs

The Cabinet report will seek approval for further consultation and EIAs on the proposed changes to service delivery points.

The Equality Impact Analysis will explore accessibility issues such as the

availability of alternative services in each reach area.

9. Action planning in response to the completed analysis

<i>Objective</i>	<i>Planned action</i>	<i>Who</i>	<i>When</i>	<i>How will this be monitored?</i>
What you want to achieve	What you intend to do	Responsible person or department	Timing of action	Monitoring and review arrangements
Further detailed consultation on the proposals to close some children's centre buildings and transfer service delivery points and reduce opening hours in other centres	Drop -in groups in centres which will be affected. Questionnaires and letters sent to each current service user. Involve existing users, prospective users, wider public and professionals. Raise alternatives in consultation	Lead officer- Tracy Marsh Locality/MAT Managers affected by closure	October 2014 to January 2015 for consultation	Through regular meetings with B Ackrill and Policy team And mapping of responses
Examine consultation findings and inform policy of decision by report to cabinet in March explaining communication of any changes, implementation and transfer of any services if required	Submit further report to cabinet post consultation with specific proposals subject to separate assessments	Tracy Marsh	March 2015	
Further detailed EIAs to understand who would be directly affected by changes	To carry out more detailed EIAs to inform March Cabinet decision of final proposals	Tracy Marsh/Public Health	March 2015	
Communicate findings and possible alternative	Ensure communication reaches all those who will and	Children's centre workforce.	March 2015	

PUBLIC

provision of services to those who will be affected	may (in the future) be affected	Partners in Health, Education and the Voluntary Sector		
Implement action plan-ensuring any action needed to reduce impact of closures			October 2014- March 2015	

10. Monitoring and review arrangements

Please outline what steps will be taken to monitor and review the implementation of proposals if they are agreed here:

Further 15 week consultation followed by final proposals to Cabinet in March 2015. This will include any implementation processes, if required , for any change to service delivery

11. Confirmation that equality impact analysis (EIA) completed and read

Name of officer signing off EIA as completed

Date:

This Equality Impact Analysis has been read by

Name	Date	Position

Where and when published e.g. with Cabinet Report, on DCC website

With Cabinet Report (Children's Centre Review) 30th September 2014

Decision-making processes

Attached to report (title): Findings of the Consultation undertaken on the changes to the way we deliver Children's Centre Services

Date of report: 22nd August 2014

Author of report: Tracy Marsh

Audience for report e.g. Cabinet: Cabinet 30th September 2014

Web location of report:

Decision in relation to report

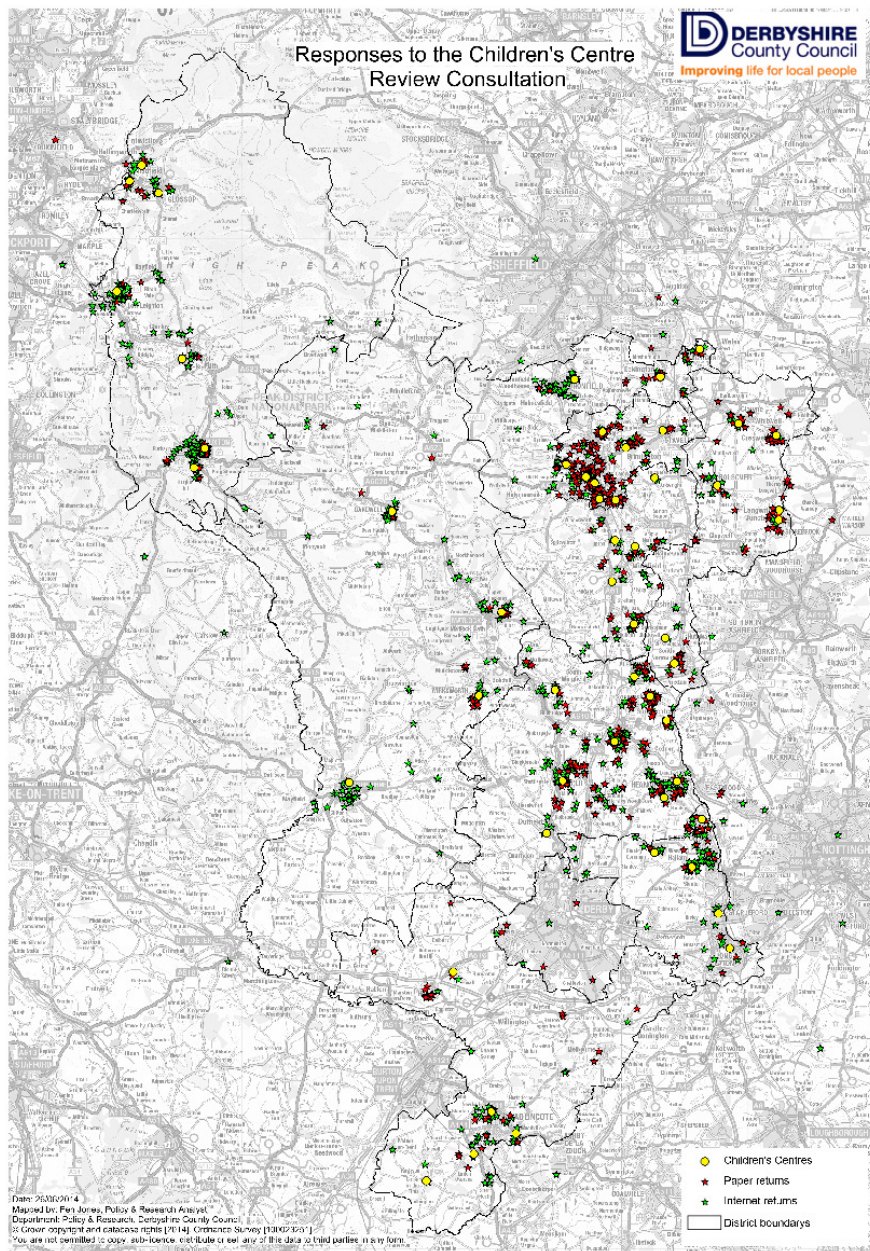
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Details of follow-up action or links to further EIAs

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Updated by:

Date:



Appendix 1

“RESTRICTED” status up to and including Informal Cabinet stage, then “PUBLIC” status thereafter

Appendix 2

Summary of Children’s Centre running costs

Figures based on 14/15 budget

Possible Closure of Site

	Fixed Property Costs	Variable Property Costs	Costs linked to Staff Activity	Staffing Costs	Total Centre Cost
Duffield CC	18,379	10,300	4,920	79,442	113,041
Ashbourne CC	-	7,607	3,504	79,006	90,117
Castle Gresley CC	9,547	14,782			24,329
Gamesley CC	8,000	3,935			11,935
Langwith CC *					-
	35,926	36,623	8,424	158,448	239,422

* Langwith Children’s Centre is in part of Stubbin Wood School. This arrangement was not formalised by way of a lease, the school loaned use of

“RESTRICTED” status up to and including Informal Cabinet stage, then “PUBLIC” status thereafter

Possible reduction to opening hours and to level of service for the area

	Fixed Property	Variable Property	Costs linked to		Total Centre	Anticipated sa
Children Centre	Costs	Costs	Staff Activity	Staffing Costs	Cost	Property cost saving
CCFJM10 - Bakewell CC	21,845	9,647	10,270	89,901	131,663	5,788
CCFJM11 - Chapel CC	2,906	9,270	6,880	81,558	100,614	5,562
CCFJM60 - Arkwright CC	4,350	11,157	2,710	107,641	125,858	6,694
CCFJM65 - Killamarsh CC	7,413	13,616	2,790	105,769	129,588	8,170
CCFJM69 - Tupton CC	3,950	10,419	3,060	79,207	96,636	6,251
CCFJM72 - Crich CC	6,100	7,555	4,520	92,197	110,372	4,533
CCFJM82 - Sandiacre CC	4,064	10,850	8,720	121,097	144,731	6,510
CCFJM86 - West Hallam CC	3,533	14,924	8,660	79,584	106,701	8,955
CCFJM97 - Wirksworth CC	25,917	7,960	2,757	107,205	143,839	4,776
CCFJM91 - Coton CC	4,274	9,085	2,251	153,825	169,436	5,451
Total	84,352	104,483	52,619	1,017,984	1,259,437	62,690

“RESTRICTED” status up to and including Informal Cabinet stage, then “PUBLIC” status thereafter

Appendix 3: Timescale

September 30 Report to Cabinet seeking permission to carry out consultation on proposals for Children’s Centres, and to commence Equality Impact Assessments on those centres with the public who live within the area and those who access the service.

8 October 2014 to 21 January 2015 (15 weeks including 1 week school holidays in October and 2 weeks at Christmas) – Formal Consultation on the proposals Work continues on detailed Equality Impact Assessments

22 January to 23 February 2015

Analyse consultation results and prepare findings for final Cabinet report to be submitted on 24 March 2015 (to be circulated on 23 February 2015).