

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 16/17 Phase Two: Children's Centre		Avril Allenby – School Improvement Advisor	24 March 2016 Version 2 (Executive/Council)
Proposal:	In addition to the proposals outlined in Phase One, it is proposed to reduce the number of buildings identified in each Family & Wellbeing Delivery Area from one rural and one urban site, to a single Hub.		
Total budget 15/16:	£1,226,000	Recommended officer saving 16/17:	£450,000 (37%)
Initial proposed saving 16/17 (incl. Phase One and Two):	£450,000 (37%) (Phase One - £300,000)	Final recommendation to Executive/Council:	To proceed with this savings proposal, but make £50,000 of transitional funding available in 2016/17
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 384 responses were received, 309 of which included comments. Of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 267 were individuals • 14 were groups/organisations • Three were Town/Parish Councils <p>65 responses were from non-users of the service.</p> <p>We received two petitions.</p>		
Key issues raised:	Responses to the proposal focused upon the closure of centres and the loss to the community a particular centre currently serves. This was linked to concerns about the impact upon particular services users and vulnerable groups. The loss of service to rural communities was highlighted and the associated isolation for families, particularly those without their own transport.		
Equality issues:	No issues were raised during the consultation, that weren't already included in the EqIA stage one.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Keep the centres as they are.	<p>In the consultation we propose that:</p> <p>We will build upon the current good practice identifying community venues so that we can embed services at the heart of the community making better use of community buildings and facilities like schools, leisure centres, and community centres for the delivery of services to</p>	

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		<p>support children and families. This would mean that services would be available from more venues which are closer to families, bringing together local support and resources in a joined-up way. Working closely with parents, carers, our partners, health and the wider community, using restorative practices and resources to the best effect so that more children and families in West Berkshire are healthier, happier and more resilient.</p> <p>There will be work to ensure that we are mindful of the issues raised for particular groups and communities in West Berkshire. We will work with partners and communities to identify access delivery points where services can be provided in localities where there is the greatest need. We plan to build upon this pattern of working, learning from the excellent examples already established so that overtime there is a network of localities where families can get support and advice.</p>	
	To keep specifically valued groups which have been providing a service which is having a clear impact upon users, for example twins club.	There will be work to evaluate all services and activities currently provided and the impact they have for users particularly those in the most vulnerable groups. Then there will be work to map these services and activities and look at ways to sustain those with the greatest impact and/or level of need.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Although there was no direct alternative put forward there were a number of useful suggestions of ways in which to support the sustainability of services.	Careful consideration will be made of the useful suggestions put forward. Many are of a similar nature to those already in place or explored in the Phase One consultation. There will be further work to make the building viable, charging for spaces and work to ensure full occupation. There will also be work through parent and users forums to initiate fund raising opportunities and we will continue to explore changing for some types of activity to cover the cost.	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	<p>There were a number of useful suggestions both of how others may help and ways in which to make the individual centres and services more sustainable. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund raising events such as car boot sales, family fun days and barbeques. • Working with local communities to develop usage of a building by letting to individuals and community based 		

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	<p>groups. Diversify the use of the buildings so that full occupation is achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donations from users, increased voluntary contributions for 'stay and play' and 'messy play' and payment for some activities which are at cost rather than subsidised. • Use of volunteers for running sessions, manning buildings and to support regular activities. • Hire local cheaper venues for use only when activities are taking place. • Make the savings from other areas and services. • Approach universities offering social work, occupational therapy, teacher training and other related professions and offer student placements to gain funding streams. 	
<p>Officer conclusion:</p>	<p>There is a high level of anxiety about change, but there were also many helpful suggestions and a feeling that communities would like to work with the council to secure and sustain a service.</p> <p>While there are strong feelings about the loss of individual centres and about the impact upon families and the most vulnerable, there was no viable alternative suggestion put forward.</p> <p>The service has already moved and changed some of the working practice and there are strong models on which to build. The level of saving required needs the service to look carefully at developing and transforming and the model proposed gives the scope and opportunity to do this.</p> <p>Feedback from the consultation process has not resulted in any issue being raised which would prevent the council from proceeding with the proposal. The feedback has also not generated any viable counter-proposal which would mitigate the proposal.</p> <p>However, in order to enable community access points to be developed, it is suggested that transition funding should be considered for this proposal.</p>	

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