

Children's Centres Consultation Response

Overview

We asked for your views on proposals for remodelling our Children's Centre Services as increased budget pressures mean we need to look at delivering services differently.

Government cuts in funding at a time when demand for services is increasing means we still need to make over £40 million of savings across the council over the next three years. This is on top of the £70 million of savings identified or agreed since 2010. All Council services need to contribute to that savings total and a £400,000 saving needs to be made in the Children's Centre budget.

There was general agreement from your responses that the reduced resources available to Children's Centre Services should be directed at the most vulnerable families through offering a more targeted service.

Proposed Children's Centre Hubs

You Said	Our Response
There is particular concern for the lack of provision in North Reading.	Caversham Children's Centre will feature heavily in the Children's Centre Offer. We aim to provide a flexible offer across all hubs in the new model.

Targeted Support

You Said	Our Response
There is concern that the identification of need would be missed, with an escalation of social isolation and mental health and well-being issues.	We will include a new open access service for new parents and babies in the Children's Centre Offer. Health Visitors will provide a service for everyone.

Focus on Pre-birth to Three Years Olds

You Said	Our Response
There was concern raised over supporting children over three years old with additional needs.	The targeted offer will extend to SEND children under 5 years old.

The Impacts if this Proposal is Adopted

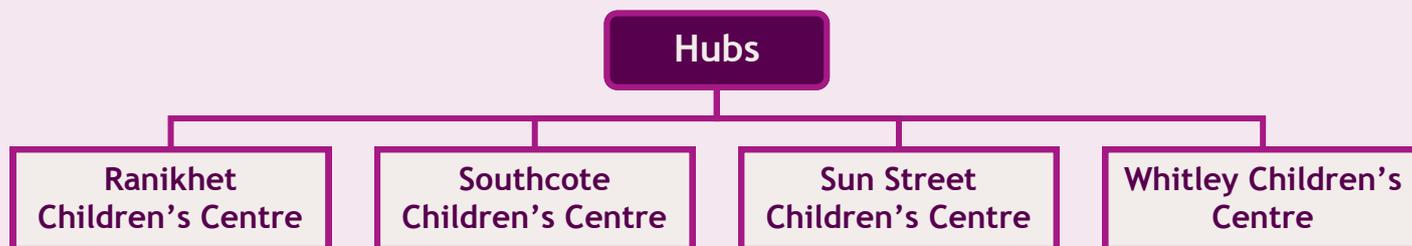
You Said	Our Response
Improve the efficiencies of the service, exploring co-delivery, income generation/charging, and clear communication of changes.	We are collaborating with health and maternity services, voluntary groups, libraries and sharing space in community centres. There is a commitment for Children's Centres to deliver universal services where appropriate.

The Future

Based on the consultation response, we have come up with a delivery model that offers families a more targeted and responsive Early Help service, within the current financial constraints. The priority outcomes of the Children's Centre Offer are as follows:

- ◆ Positive family relationships and attachment to enable children to become relatively independent
- ◆ Parents' have the physical health and emotional wellbeing to support children
- ◆ Children are safe and have family routines and boundaries
- ◆ Children have a healthy physical and emotional wellbeing
- ◆ Reduce child poverty and prevent homelessness
- ◆ Children have strong social skills

The Hub and Satellite Model



The hubs are in areas that have been identified as having the highest need. Health visitors will be sited in hubs or satellite buildings, along with midwifery services so they are accessible to families.



These satellite buildings will provide access to Universal Health Services and targeted support activities. There will be continued services delivered by the voluntary sector.

Working Together

Priority spending will go towards targeted group and 1:1 support, however, the offer will include universal provision for supporting babies and new parents. The Council will work with partners, agencies, faith groups and the community to explore how we can work together to provide services from our buildings.

Improved Information and Communication

The Council will explore the development of an app for communicating the Children's Centre Offer. We will also look to improve our overall digital plan for Children's Centres, including an improved social media presence and an updated offer through the Family Information Service.

Right Service for the Right Children and Families

Children's Centres will support the voluntary sector to help families with the right kind of support. To meet this the Council will:

- ◆ Support vulnerable, pregnant women and unborn children; new parents and young babies; children with undiagnosed/emerging additional needs and offer targeted support to families who may need extra help.
- ◆ Enable eligible 2 year old children to access early education.
- ◆ Provide adult education classes with a dedicated crèche.
- ◆ Support vulnerable children to be ready for nursery.

Preparing for the 30 Hours Early Entitlement

Reading has good and sufficient provision for two, three and four-year-olds. The introduction of 30 hours early entitlement for three-year-olds from September is expected to result in a reduction in demand for universal activities at children's centres.

What happens next?

These changes are expected to begin from Autumn 2017.