Children’s Centres Strategy Proposal

Consultation Findings: Service User Events

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Introduction
As part of the wider consultation on the Children’s Centres strategy proposal a series of events were held between July and September. The events were primarily aimed at children’s centre users, although some events involved staff from children's centres and Councillors.

Initially four events were organised and promoted via the children's centres and Council’s website. In response to demand from parents, additional events were organised in order to ensure as many people as possible could participate. Events organised were:

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Most events followed a similar format (appendix 1), although the final event at Kensington Town Hall provided stakeholders with the opportunity to make comment and ask questions of senior Council officers and Councillors.

Summary of feedback
Below is a summary of the feedback from the events, more detail on the feedback from each event can be found in the main body of the report.

Reorganisation of the children’s centres (two lead and six satellite centres)
Parents were generally not against moving to this model, if it contributed to the savings that needed to be made. For most this was not the biggest issue of the consultation and therefore wasn’t seen as a major area of concern. Parents understood that it would lead to less inspection burden from Ofsted and some could see that this might stop duplication of services across sites.

However, a number of parents were keen to understand how this would lead to savings and how much would be saved. There was particular concern that the new model could have a bigger impact on ‘satellite’ centres, with either less services or reduced funding available to them.

There were also concerns about the relationship between the services on offer in children's centres and childcare, if childcare is outsourced. A number of stakeholders praised the current relationships between services and childcare staff and felt that if childcare is outsourced less referrals to services would take place. Parents were keen to see these links maintained.

Services on offer in the children's centres
Many parents value the wide range of quality services that are currently on offer. Many parents praised these services and make full use of the services on offer. However, there were a number of parents using childcare that don’t or are unable (as they are out at work) to use other services provided in children’s centres. Some of these feel that the emphasis of provision should be on childcare.
Parents reported that some services were in high demand, while others not so much. Parents felt that more could be done to promote and publicise services and courses and some suggested looking at attendance figures to see which were no longer worth continuing. Parents that use the services explained the important role that they have played in their children’s development and the social benefits that had been enjoyed by the parents and children alike. A number of parents had benefitted from the courses teaching them skills which both boosted parents’ confidence and enabled some to get back into the workplace.

Most parents appeared in favour of introducing charging for ‘non-core’ services and felt that people would be happy to pay for or contribute to the cost of these. Some felt this should be means tested or that voluntary contributions should be asked for in order not to exclude those that may most need them.

Childcare
The childcare element of the proposals was the area of biggest concern to most parents. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the service they currently receive, feeling the service is of a high quality.

Parents are concerned about the impact of outsourcing on the fees they pay. They felt private childcare prices offered elsewhere in the borough are unaffordable to many current children’s centres users. There was particular concern for ‘middle income’ families as the consultation mentioned free spaces for ‘the most disadvantaged’ and support for ‘low income families’ (parents were keen to see these terms defined). There was concern that fee increases would lead to some parents having to give up their job as they would no longer be able to meet the cost of childcare.

Parents are also concerned about the quality of service that may be offered by an alternative provider. Many feel a private provider’s focus would be on profit and therefore the quality of provision may diminish. Some expressed fears that a private organisation might be more likely to fail and be at risk of going bankrupt.

Continuity of care was also an issue for parents and there were concerns for staff and what would happen to them. They were concerned another organisation would be looking to save money with less experienced or less qualified staff. Although they understood staff would be transferred across to any new organisation, they felt it would de-motivate staff and lead them to look for other positions elsewhere.

Many parents are keen to explore other possibilities to generate income or reduce costs in order to retain Council run childcare. Suggestions included:
- Means testing fees,
- Increasing fees by £8 per day,
- Increasing the number of childcare spaces that can be sold,
- Hiring out the centres for other purposes (e.g. birthday parties),
- Making savings in other areas.

There is also a desire for parents to be involved in drawing up any tender document, should childcare be outsourced.

For more information
For information on the results please contact Gary Wilson, Consultation Officer on 020 7361 3616 or e-mail on gary.wilson@rbkc.gov.uk
Introduction
This report contains the findings from a series of service user consultation events, held between July and September 2012, designed to gather feedback on the Council’s proposed children’s centre strategy. The events were part of a wider consultation exercise to gather feedback from stakeholders, activities included:

- Children’s centre survey (distributed via the children’s centres and available online)
- Residents’ Panel survey
- Service User events
- Practitioners event
- Feedback from staff

As part of the wider consultation on the Children’s Centres strategy proposal a series of events were held between July and September. The events were aimed at children’s centre users and were an opportunity to discuss in more detail the proposals and seek the views of service users.

Background to the strategy
The Council as a whole has lost about £22 million from its budget in just two years alone (2010/11 to 2011/12) and there is more to come. Children’s centres are being asked to contribute about £800,000 in savings.

Such a saving won’t be achieved without major reorganisation and it is against this background that the Council has devised its children’s centre strategy.

Key features of the strategy
At the heart of the strategy is the fact that the Council needs to ensure the Council’s limited resources support the most vulnerable families in the community.

The key features are as follows:
- No children’s centres will close
- There will be a place for every child in need
- Children’s centres will continue to offer high quality services and services for the most disadvantaged families will be preserved
- Low income families will be cushioned from the financial impact
- A new structure will simplify management and reduce management costs
- The Ofsted inspection burden will be dramatically reduced
- The Council will no longer provide the childcare element of children’s centres directly but instead rely on private and voluntary sector partners with proven capacity to provide a high quality service
- Royal Borough residents will have an Early Years Service that is comparatively more generous than elsewhere in the capital.

Objectives
Therefore the overall objectives of the consultation exercise were:

- To consult key stakeholders on the proposed draft strategy (including feedback on the proposed hub and satellite model and potential changes to childcare provision).
- To generate feedback on the range of services offered in the borough’s children’s centres.
Introduction

- To give opportunity for suggestions of alternative ideas of how services could be delivered or alternative ideas for savings.

Service user events - methodology
As part of the wider consultation on the Children’s Centres strategy proposal a series of events were held between July and September. The events were primarily aimed at children’s centre users, although some events involved staff from children’s centres and Councillors.

Initially four events were organised and promoted via the children’s centres and Council’s website. But, in response to demand from parents, additional events were organised in order to ensure as many people as possible could participate. Events organised were:

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Most events followed a similar format (appendix 1), although the final event at Kensington Town Hall provided stakeholders with the opportunity to make comment and ask questions of senior Council officers and Councillors.

An event for service professionals was held on 1 August with the event following a similar format to that of the above events, this has been written up separately.

For more information
For information on the results please contact Gary Wilson, Consultation and Research Officer on 020 7361 3616 or e-mail on gary.wilson@rbkc.gov.uk
St Quintin Children’s Centre – 9 July 2012

A total of 11 parents and centre users attended the event, nine of which were there for the majority of the session and two of which joined at the end in time to hear feedback from the session and to add their own thoughts.

Questions and comments posed by those attending
During, and following, a presentation on the proposals attendees asked a number of questions and raised comments or concerns about the proposals. Where it was possible staff gave answers to the questions raised, although in some cases some of the answers to the questions are not yet known. Questions included:

Reorganisation of the Children’s Centres
- How does reorganisation of the centres into two hubs and other satellite centres, save money?

Childcare
- What is the current gap between the cost of childcare to the borough and the cost to parents?
- Clarity was sought over possible use of the voluntary sector and whether this meant volunteers could be caring for their children in future.
- There was some concern over continuity of staff if another organisation took over. Would staff be kept on? Would their contracts be worse and therefore they may choose to leave.
- Some were concerned about the quality of any future provision and whether it would be as good from an organisation focused on profit (especially as centres had outstanding Ofsted inspection results).
- Some attendees were concerned about meeting any fee increase, especially if they had more than one child and one commented on a previous fee increase that has already been hard to bear.
- Raising childcare costs may lead to some parents having to give up work in order to look after their children instead and this could in turn make more families disadvantaged and therefore needing help. One parent suggested that increasing charges would create ‘parents in need’.

Savings
- Some parents wanted to understand how much Children’s Centres needed to save and why this had to come from Children’s Services.

Group discussions
The participants were then split into two groups for a more in depth discussion on their views of the proposals.

Group 1
Reorganisation of the children’s centres
Parents expressed concern in reducing the number of children’s centres Ofsted inspections through a hub and spoke configuration as they thought this included childcare, but were reassured that the childcare inspections would be carried out separately at each childcare
venue, and that Ofsted would still have the responsibility of inspecting every childcare establishment once every three years.

**Childcare**

**Concerns expressed about the private and voluntary sector:**
The bulk of the discussion was focused around the outsourcing of the childcare. There was opposition to the private sector taking over, in terms of fears of fee increases and previous experience of using private nurseries in other boroughs. The group expressed concerns for staff morale while this process is on-going and the impact on their future roles.

**The cost of fee increases**
While everyone agreed that the most disadvantaged should get places, there was a real concern that less disadvantaged, but working parents, on low or fixed incomes, could be priced out of the market. One parent talked about the positive experience her child had through integrating with different ethnicities, social groups etc. that may not be afforded to her if she couldn’t pay fee increases.

**Means testing**
There were also concerns about determining who could afford to pay, how would an assessment be made? Recent changes to working tax credit thresholds mean fewer parents will qualify if this was what an assessment would be based on. Parents want a definition of what the borough classes as ‘low-income’.

**The tendering process**
Parents want to be consulted on the future options for childcare and the tendering process. They commented that Q14 of the questionnaire (questions on charging for childcare) does not have a qualitative box to respond in, participants were encouraged to use Q15 for this purpose.

Parents also expressed an interest in starting a petition for all parents at St Quintin to prevent the outsourcing of the childcare.

**Group 2**

**Reorganisation of the children’s centres**
**What would the re-structure look like?**
Participants were asked for their views on the proposed restructure. Members of the group felt that the information on the restructure could be clearer in the leaflet as some had previously found it difficult to understand, with one asking if all the children centres will become nurseries/day care centres.

**How would the re-registration of children’s centres save money?**
Some had not understood how this would save the Council money and one participant had been concerned it might lead to a reduction in the number of inspections on the childcare element, which is important. When these aspects were clarified participants did not feel it was a big issue and did not seem that concerned about this element of the proposals.

**Would funding be reduced for satellite centres?**
One participant, who worked at a children’s centre, said that some parents were concerned about being a satellite centre. Parents had asked what this meant and were concerned that this would mean there would be less services and less funding available to them. This led some of
the other participants to question the implications of being a satellite centre and generally the group would have liked more clarity on this.

There was also some concern expressed about the implications of splitting day care from children’s centre services, as currently staff offer an element of both. Participants felt this may disappear with a separate organisation delivering day care.

**Services**

**The value of services**

Attendees in this group did not currently use other services provided by the children’s centres. Some commented that they would like to use them, but most were in full time employment and therefore could not. One commented that she is pregnant and hoped to use the services when she is on maternity leave and some said they had used the services when on maternity leave in the past. One of the participants also commented that she had recommended some of the services to friends and neighbours.

**Request for better publicity about the services**

Members of the group felt the services were important especially to those who were out of work or on maternity leave, they felt that parenting groups/classes were a good idea. They also felt they could be better publicised, information about the activities is good, but they did not think all knew they were on offer. One commented that often they find out about things because of good personal relationships with staff, “I hear a lot of information from midwives; they make me aware of what is happening”.

One of the participants commented that the amount of forms you need to complete was off putting, saying “If English was not my first language I would be put off”.

**Childcare**

**Concern for potential fee increases in the future**

This was the area of greatest concern to participants and they re-iterated many of the points that had been raised in response to the presentation. They were particularly concerned about the likely increase in fees and wanted to better understand what the charges might be in the future, with one participant feeling charges could be anything up to twice as high. One participant felt that it would be helpful if any increase could be phased in over time to help families cope with the increase.

**Affordability is high on the agenda**

They felt, dependant on what the cost increase would be, it may force some mothers to give up work, which could then cause a spiral effect sending more families into a disadvantaged situation. One said “It would become unaffordable. I looked around including Kids Unlimited; it is £80 to £90 a day. I cannot afford it and would therefore have to leave my job. There should be more clarity on how the Council will be saving money, more transparency.” Another said “It is subjective; people here who can afford to are paying the maximum they can pay. There is no second sibling rate.”

**Continuity for staff employment**

There were again concerns about the continuity of staff, as they felt comfortable with the staff currently employed. They were worried that staff would leave if someone else took over or that their conditions could be changed after a year and this might force them to leave. For one
parent price comes second to the wellbeing of their child. “The staff at the centre is why we have the confidence in the service”.

The future of Golborne’s Daycare
One participant questioned why child care at Golborne children’s centre was not included in the questionnaire and also whether after and before school clubs were included in the potential changes. More clarity was sought on this.

Participants wanted more detail on funding models
Some participants felt that other ways to save money could be explored, rather than looking at fee increases to save money. They were keen to understand the funding gap and the savings that needed to be made.

When asked about support for low income families the group again wanted to seek further clarification. What does being on a low income mean? And if you were on a low income some felt it wasn’t necessarily fair that you were supported, whilst others were struggling to meet the cost of childcare on moderate incomes. One member of the group wanted to know what support would be offered, would it be financial or just advice, saying “Clarity about what support to families should be.”

Other comments
Some members of the group felt the timing of the consultation was poor, going through the summer months when many are away.

Group feedback
Following the group discussions the groups reconvened and received feedback from the other group. At this point two further parents joined the session and added their feedback to the discussion.

Childcare charges high on the agenda
One parent was again concerned about the potential rise in childcare charges. The other parent felt there were many in the local area that would be able to pay an additional £75 per week to keep the current service and particularly so if the hours could be extended later into the evening to say 6.30pm.
Violet Melchett Children’s Centre – 11 July 2012

A total of 26 parents and centre users attended the event.

Questions posed and comments made by those attending
Following, a presentation on the proposals attendees asked a number of questions and raised comments or concerns about the proposals. Where it was possible staff gave answers to the questions raised, although in some cases some of the answers to the questions are not yet known. Questions included:

Children’s centres and services
- Attendees felt the children’s centre was amazing and offered good services.
- Questions were raised about the cost of certain services on offer in children’s centres.
- It was also asked if services are statutory and whether or not there is duplication of other agencies’ work.

Childcare
- Concerns were expressed about outsourcing childcare.
- Some wanted to see other options looked at instead of outsourcing. Ideas included:
  - Selling extra spaces to increase revenue
  - Means testing parents to ensure fees are fair
  - Increasing the fees for new service users
- If childcare is to be outsourced there were concerns about the cost, with one quoting an average of £100 per day in the private sector (double the current cost).
- Concern that this would cause one parent in a family to have to give up work. Could fees be capped in any contract if the childcare were outsourced?
- The Council should have shared information about potential costs to parents in the consultation so that parents could be making serious comment on realistic options.
- There was concern about the model of outsourcing centres and parents felt we should look at other organisations that had gone through this process, three to five years ago so that we could learn from their mistakes.
- Demand for childcare is high and one parent felt a social enterprise would not be able to compete with private bidders.
- There were concerns expressed about private nurseries going bankrupt as had happened in Westminster.

Consultation
- Concern was expressed about the timing of the meetings (during the day when people are at work) and also through the summer period.
- Clarity was sought on how the consultation information will be used and how it will influence decision makers.
- One attendee was keen to see senior Council staff at meetings.

Group discussions
The participants were then split into three groups for a more in depth discussion on their views of the proposals.
Group 1

Reorganisation of the children’s centres
Participants wanted to know how much it costs to run the centre, how much is met by the universal fund run by Children In Need, the gap and how the costs would be met.

One wanted to know how £800,000 in savings was determined; they asked what other proposals there were. Another felt there was a need for a proposal that is relevant “A plan with numbers and evidence”.

One participant did not think the new model of two hubs, to limit Ofsted inspections, was relevant and stated ‘inspections need to be done’. Some felt the ‘Hubs’ were minor savings.

Services
In reaction to the service menu
The group were not keen to focus the discussion on services provided by the centre. Two of the group of six had never used the services. All stated that “baby massage is a luxury” and “people should pay for it”. They did not see the need for speech and language courses with one stating, “What is the point and there is no need for it”. One participant mentioned how some services/courses were helpful to her, “Some courses are useful. I suffered from depression and coming here every day helped”.

The possibility of service duplication
Participants questioned why services such as health care and midwifery were being paid for by the Council and not the NHS, when they are provided by and should be funded by the NHS. “Why does healthcare have to be paid for by the Council?”

A clearer understanding of the duties of the core purpose of children’s centres was requested
One participant stated what should be a core service or not should be established. “You need to realise what is core or not. No baby massage, speech and language or nail courses. The core [service] is to have a child, who is well cared for and for us to have a career in order to live”.

Childcare
The main focus of the majority of those parents present was childcare
Participants main concerns were how changes proposed would affect their childcare needs. They reported that they needed and valued the service, “I need to work, without it I can’t”.

The quality of the current childcare service
Participants were concerned that the Council doesn’t have a statutory responsibility for the provision of childcare. When asked about their thoughts on other organisations providing childcare. They all wanted clarification about the difference, in particular between quality and qualifications of staff. One participant stated in a private setting only two staff would need qualifications, whereas in the centre everyone holds one. The individual also questioned the ‘quality of care’, “How can we ensure quality when the staff aren’t qualified?”

The risk of childcare failing in the private or voluntary sector
Another spoke of their previous experience with a private nursery which had gone bankrupt after they had paid fees. They questioned why the Council would want to privatise childcare.
Another reiterated the point, “You are taking away the opportunity to provide quality and happiness from our children”. This parent had taken their child out of a private nursery.

The potential negative effect on staff
Participants were also anxious about how the changes would affect staff. They felt staff members were a fundamental part of their experience with the centre. “Staff here are outstanding. You can't go in and change the fundamental character of this centre”. Others commented: “There are parents in need; I need to work and can't leave children with people I don’t trust” and “I received a lot of support here. I am very happy in England because of the centre; they provided support and comfort”.

The danger of fee increases and suggestions for new ways of working in partnership
Participants also felt having another organisation providing childcare would lead to a great increase in costs. They suggested a number of solutions including selling unused places to people, means testing and other uses for the centre and commented “Hire the place for birthday parties” and “Charge people from other boroughs”. They also suggested charging other providers of childcare, such as childminders, who use free services whilst being paid to care for children.

The financial offer in the strategy for families on low incomes
They were asked about support for people on low incomes. They felt people who need help should receive it if services were means tested. “It should be free for parents who are in need”. But they were concerned for the middle income earners who may not get assistance but would struggle to cope with price increases, for example: “There are people in between who can't afford private fees” and “Middle income people will suffer. How will they get a head start?”

Group 2
Participants in this group were mainly users of Violet Melchett Children’s Centre, with some also using services at Cheyne Children’s Centre. All used childcare and most had benefited from some services such as the weaning sessions, boot camp and ‘get fit’.

Reorganisation of the children's centres
When asked their opinion on the possible restructure the group wanted to understand the advantages more. Generally they did not feel that fewer Ofsted inspections would make a huge financial difference and therefore, questioned the value in changing.

The outcomes of the hub and spokes model
Some parents were concerned about how the hub centre would effectively coordinate the management of the other centres. Also they asked if the reorganisation into ‘hub and spoke’ meant that there would be potential staff redundancies in the spoke centres should this proposal proceed.

Services
Many of the group had used services on offer at this and other children’s centres. Services used included stay and play, keep fit and weaning advice. They reported that some services are in high demand whilst others not so. They felt that attendance and benefit of some services should be looked at to assess the value. One participant reported that they had previously attended a Pilates class and there were only two women using it, which seemed an excessive cost for such a service. They didn’t want to see services go as they felt there was an important social element to them too, especially to new mothers.
Event Feedback

The possibility of charging for children's centre services
When asked about charging the group felt the core services should be free, but they had no problem to see charging brought in for others. The group felt that users of the services that came from outside the borough should be charged, which would bring in extra revenue.

Childcare
Childcare their number one priority
They felt that childcare was the number one priority. When asked about additional services they just wanted to see extra childcare places offered due to the long waiting lists (over two years at Violet Melchett).

The dangers of privatisation of childcare
Parents were very concerned about the ‘privatisation’ of childcare mainly in regards to cost and quality. They understood that childcare costs in the private sector often covers the childcare fees only and everything else is extra e.g. lunch, some equipment. The parents felt that quality and care could be compromised because these private organisations are more focussed on making a profit. They felt that at Violet Melchett staff are genuinely concerned about their children and the parents don’t want to lose that.

They were worried about price increases and their ability to afford them with a private contractor. They were keen to see alternative options considered prior to outsourcing.

The outcome for current staff
They also expressed concern about the staff, initially that they would lose their jobs, so asked how much notice they would need to give. Once officers assured parents that TUPE arrangements would be in place, parents still felt that the staffing disruption would create feelings of de-motivation, potential reduction in salaries, new terms of contracts etc. and this will also impact on the quality of the provision. They were also concerned that the private sector would be more interested in profit and that might mean there are less qualified staff employed.

The potential division of roles and responsibilities in the centres
Participants commented on central management of the service and were worried this would not work. There was also some concern about the separation of children’s centre management and childcare and whether there would be liaison between the two sides.

Proposals and ideas for savings
Need for current financial breakdown of childcare and children's centre funding
Some parents expressed, and all agreed, that they wanted a financial breakdown of how the savings of £800,000 would be made by outsourcing childcare. They felt that this information should have been made available even before consultation. Participants asked about case studies for other local authorities and how they had saved money.

The group were keen for other proposals to be considered and suggested means testing childcare to bring in more money, better use of the facilities (hiring out in the evenings and weekends, e.g. for birthday parties), providing other services for a cost e.g. baby scans. Some also would prefer for childcare fees to increase to meet the shortfall rather than seeing privatisation of childcare.
Group 3
Participants in this group had used both Violet Melchett and Cheyne Children’s Centres

Services
Participants had used the following services in the centres: first aid, stay and play, ante-natal support, breastfeeding café, family therapy and childcare.

Childcare
Affordable, high quality and trusting
They valued childcare at the centres and felt childcare is currently local, affordable and high quality. They trust the staff and thereby the quality. Violet Melchett provides consistency in the children’s life. They were not convinced that the private or voluntary sector can provide the same level of quality.

Private and voluntary sector could threaten the quality of staffing
Participants were concerned about staff under any new arrangements and what would their new terms and conditions be like. If staff are feeling undervalued that may reflect on the way they work and staff retention may be an issue. There was a perception that commitment of staff in the private and or voluntary sector is not the same as of those in the public sector and they also felt there is higher staff turnover in the private sector.

The fear of cost increases in the long-term
There were concerns about cost increases and they wanted assurance that fee increases will be capped and that any increases are phased in over a period of time. There were concerns that if the provision was taken over by a new provider that fees would be unaffordable and that parents would have to leave work and go on benefits.

Parents questioned the use of terminology – advantaged and disadvantaged
When asked whether the most disadvantaged should get free places, they felt this question was loaded and unfair. They also felt that the question suggests there are two options disadvantaged and advantaged – the group felt there were many stages in this spectrum and felt that fee increases would push them further into the disadvantaged sphere.

The risks of private and voluntary sector organisations going bankrupt
Participants felt that the Council was being lobbied by the private sector and some would be happier if the service was taken over by a voluntary sector provider. There was also some concern that the new provider could go bankrupt.

Participants commented that UK is the only country in the EU where delivery of childcare is not statutory.

Consultation
Parents felt that there were many more questions to answer and that there should be an evening meeting where working parents were able to attend

Other ways to generate income
Parents suggested opening centres for private functions to generate revenue.
Questions posed and comments made by those attending
The event started with a presentation on the proposals, but unlike other events attendees elected not to split into smaller groups to discuss the issues. Instead they wanted to remain together in order to hear everyone’s point of view.

Those attending were primarily concerned with the childcare aspects of the proposals. They asked the following questions or raised the following points in relation to the proposals.

Consultation and proposals

The process
There were concerns about the consultation process and in particular the amount of information that had been made available. A number of parents felt that the leaflet on its own did not give enough information for parents to be able to respond and wanted to see better signposting to documents that would assist parents to respond (e.g. Every Child Matters white paper, Day Care Trust Report, Cabinet papers). One parent commented that there was mistrust about the consultation process and some felt the Council had already made up its mind on the outcome.

Parents were frustrated by having taken the time to send letters to Councillors and the Chief Executive and not received any kind of reply.

One parent asked that the Council consult the Parent Advisory Boards at each of the Children’s Centres. Clarity was also sought over the decision making arrangements and the role of Councillors and officers.

There was also a feeling that scenarios and examples from other boroughs were required to inform both decision making and responses to the consultation.

More detailed information
One parent asked that a list of relevant documents be prepared and given to parents, in order to help them give an informed response to the consultation, after the meeting they gave over a list of documents they would find useful. These included Cabinet minutes and reports, the Day Care Trust review, risk analysis, fee ranges for other boroughs and any other documents used in putting proposals together. The point was also made that a Freedom of Information request had had to be made in order to obtain relevant information and that information should be more readily available.

There was also a desire to understand the financial savings that needed to be made and how much of the £800,000 savings needed to come from day care.

Evidence base
One parent did not feel the proposals were evidence based and was keen to see evidence for aspects of the proposal. For example, the leaflet indicates there is a thriving private sector, which she wanted to see evidence to support this. Another, commented that they would like to see “clear business reasons” for the proposals.
Children's centres

One parent did not feel that re-registering the Children's Centres into two registrations, and therefore two Ofsted inspections, would bring in much of a saving and there was a question asked about quantifying the saving. There was also some confusion in the room over the difference between children's centre registrations and Ofsted inspections required for the childcare aspects.

With a new 'hub and spoke' model one parent was concerned there would be a cut in management and therefore that this would impact on quality.

Childcare

The two main concerns of parents attending was the impact on cost and quality if the service was to be outsourced. One parent summed up the feeling in the room when he commented that he was concerned about “continuity, quality and price”.

Parents were keen to see the risk analysis that was associated with the potential outsourcing of childcare.

Cost

One parent raised the point that it is not just local authorities that were in difficulty and that parents were in difficulty too. If costs were to rise then it would make life difficult for many parents. A Councillor commented that families are concerned about the costs and are hard pressed at the moment. A comment was made that the Government wants parents to go out and work, but this is difficult without affordable childcare. A parent stated that private nurseries were £92 to £100 a day, and that in most cases there were no free or full time nursery palaces available in 2012/13.

Parents were keen to understand what the cost might be per day, if childcare was outsourced and to see information on childcare costs in other boroughs.

Quality

There was a feeling amongst parents that the private sector especially would clamour to run nurseries in Kensington and Chelsea. There was a general concern that quality would diminish if the private or voluntary sector took over childcare. Some felt that they would be more cost driven and quality would suffer.

Staff

Some parents were concerned about what would happen to staff and would they keep their jobs (they were assured that TUPE would apply if the Council went down this route). However, some were still concerned, with the current uncertainty, that staff may start to look for jobs elsewhere.

Some parents were keen to understand the views of staff and were keen to understand how staff and their unions were being consulted on the proposals.

Tender document and contract

One parent asked if the tender document had been written yet, and after being told that it had not, asked that parents be involved in the drawing up of this (should the Council go down this route) other parents agreed that parents should be involved; as there was some concern the
Council may not get the document right. (There had been some concern that they would not be told when a tender document was available).

Parents were keen to see that the contract took into account cost and quality of childcare. Although one was concerned that contracts don’t protect companies from going bust.

**Other suggestions for delivering childcare**

One parent felt that other routes should be explored and felt the Parent Advisory Boards would have a role to play in this. Perhaps a representative group made up of children’s centre advisory boards/governing bodies and staff to work together to find genuine solutions.

One parent suggested savings could be achieved by partnering or sponsorship with private businesses (e.g. Barclays or Proctor and Gamble). Another suggested asking more parents to volunteer in the centres to save money and perhaps form a co-operative alliance to assist.
Holmfield House Children’s Centre – 26 July 2012

A total of 15 people attended the event. This included parents who used services at Holmfield House and Golborne Children’s Centre, a Councillor and governors from Golborne Children’s Centre.

Questions posed and comments made by those attending
Following a presentation on the proposals attendees asked a number of questions and raised comments or concerns about the proposals. Where it was possible staff gave answers to the questions raised. Questions and comments included:

Childcare
- Concern was expressed about the cost of private day care and how parents would be able to afford any increase.
- There was also concern that it would make it difficult for parents to afford to go back to work, even with Tax Credit assistance that didn’t cover the full cost.
- One parent commented that it was good to see the proposals focused on quality, but was keen to understand how savings could be made whilst maintaining quality. One parent wanted to see evidence that the private sector would be able to do it cheaper and still maintain quality.
- One participant commented that other boroughs continue to offer a subsidy, including Lambeth.

Consultation
- One person commented that there should be a more focused event with centres’ governing bodies.

Contract and tendering process
- Those attending felt that parents should be involved in drawing up the tendering document and contract.

Group discussions
The participants were then split into two groups for a more in depth discussion on their views of the proposals.

Group 1

Reorganisation of children’s centres
They wanted to understand the purpose of formally reorganising them, as they didn’t understand the difference. When this was explained, they felt as long as it didn’t mean that services would suffer it wouldn’t make any difference. They also felt it was right that Holmfield House was the ‘hub’ in the north locality.

Services
Good quality
The group felt both the range and quality of services on offer were excellent and one said “we love them”. They felt they got better support at the centre (e.g. midwifery) than elsewhere, with one parent giving examples of more frequent midwife checks than at a local health clinic.
Range
The range of services used by parents included: aromatherapy, outreach – sleep clinic – “my son now goes to sleep in his own bed/room”, D cup café, crèche, speech therapy, maths courses, ESOL (all levels), parenting group, beauty courses, healthy child information, postnatal exercise, financial support, dad’s club, travel club, first aid and cooking. One parent commented that they offered “everything and more”. They couldn’t think of anything else they wanted to see.

Better promotion
Some of the parents felt that the courses and activities could be better promoted and that some courses are not always well attended (for example a recent first aid course had just four parents). They felt more could be done to promote courses and not everyone always reads the leaflets (especially those whose first language is not English). One parent was keen to volunteer to help promote activities in the community and would be happy to work with outreach staff.

Charging
When asked about whether it was reasonable to ask people to pay for some services, the group indicated they would be happy to contribute to cost of courses, after all they were getting the crèche for free. They did feel that core courses such as numeracy and ESOL should remain free. They also felt it was right that they should be charged for materials, for example aromatherapy oils and to pay for the travel club.

One parent also asked whether parents volunteering would help keep costs down.

Childcare
Quality
One parent did not believe that the quality of childcare would drop if another provider took over, as the staff would remain; another was less sure. The group felt that parents should be involved in the tender process.

Golborne Children’s Centre
There was confusion amongst parents about whether childcare at Golborne was part of the proposals; and when explained that it wasn’t there was some concern that if other centres went private (e.g. Clare Gardens) and put up their costs that it would mean there was more demand for Golborne.

Cost
There was concern about the cost and some would have liked to know what the impact will be. The group felt that ‘most disadvantaged’ needed to be defined as this wasn’t clear and the group felt it was unfair that those on benefits may get free or lower cost places and those on low incomes who were struggling may not. They felt this may encourage people not to work. One parent commented that between her and her partner they had three jobs to try and make ends meet. They felt the government doesn’t help working parents, but does help lone unemployed parents, yet working families have higher outgoings e.g. childcare.

They were in favour of support for low income families and of means testing, with one parent suggesting that everyone should pay a percentage of their income. They were also in favour of the most disadvantaged receiving free places.

One parent was concerned those on higher incomes were already being hit as they were paying higher tax levels.
Consultation process
Some felt the community were not well informed about the process and that the consultation was confusing. They felt there were mixed messages going out from parents and the centres and that there was a lot of incorrect information. They felt the publicity was unclear and the document was not helpful to speakers of other languages.

Parents were keen to understand the next stage of the process and how they would be informed of the outcome of the consultation.

Group 2

Reorganisation of children’s centres
Participants generally agreed with the principles of the change, felt it made sense and could see that it would lead to cost savings. Some felt that the way that Holmfield House and Golborne were referred to in the consultation, and the relationship between the two, was confusing and not the way in which the service users access the services.

Children's Centre Services
Importance
Parents value the courses that are on offer at the centre as a way of equipping themselves for employment. For example; the SAGE course at the centre which is a requirement of a number of jobs was useful. All the courses and the back to work programme are a boost to parents’ confidence. Staff at the centres help them look at their long and short term goals.

One user commented that when she was pregnant she met her health visitor at Holmfield House. She was given invaluable support throughout her pregnancy and it also meant that she was introduced to all the services in the children’s centre.

Parents value the drop in sessions for the social development aspect for their children, as well as the opportunity for the adults to share their experiences and challenges as parents.

They felt that the children’s centre, staff and services, are a great way for parents who are new to the country to find out what type of services they can access in this country and also understand the education system.

Charging
Parents in the centres have already started to pay for some of the activities (Travel Club) and the courses (aromatherapy) and would be willing to expand on this. As many are on budgets, they would like plenty of notice in order that they could save for a contribution to courses in their budgeting.

Childcare
The main concerns for participants were the quality and affordability of childcare.

Cost
They felt Golborne Children’s Centre offered an innovative way of delivering childcare at affordable prices. They were concerned that this will be lost. (Although to note this childcare is not the childcare being consulted on as part of this consultation).
Concern was expressed about accessing childcare due to affordability. It was noted by some that the courses to encourage parents back into work were all very good, but they became a bit pointless if there wasn't also affordable childcare to help them back into work. They saw childcare as going hand in hand with the provision of the courses. Feeling they need to have affordable childcare in order to be able to return to work using the courses they have completed.

In principal the parents agreed with the idea that parents who can afford it, should pay for their childcare places. Parents want to be involved in agreeing the sliding scale of payment if the childcare is outsourced. They were concerned that what the Council/government see as affordable is not affordable when parents take into account their housing and other bills. Also, what is affordable for parents in the South of the borough may not be the same as what is affordable for parents in the North of the borough.

Quality
There was some concern about quality, they were worried that quality would slip and asked whether making savings would mean employing less qualified staff, and whether staff wages would be lower.

Parents wanted to be involved in the tender process to help ensure continuing quality.
Clare Gardens Children’s Centre – 9 August 2012

This was an additional event organised at the request of parents. A total of eight parents attended the session and because of this, the group was not split into smaller groups.

Group discussion

Reorganisation of children’s centres

Quality and Ofsted inspections
The group felt uncomfortable with the Hub model, they were concerned that quality would be reduced.

Parents raised concerns that of Ofsted rating a Hub instead of individual centres, and that the Hub may pull down a higher rating that an individual centre may have. Other centres might damage the ‘outstanding’ Clare Gardens, one stated “Holmfield is not a welcoming place.” There was a general consensus was that it would be better to continue with individual inspections, “You lose granularity, one might be bad and you won’t be aware”.

Some were shocked that they aren’t inspected every year. One parent commented “It sounds like cutting corners and won’t be as thorough; more focus on hubs and not on centres”.

Travel
Parents expressed concerns about having to travel to ‘spoke’ centres to access services.

Positives
Parents felt there were potential positives to come from reorganisation including: allowing parents to see the service as a whole, avoids duplication of services (although services still need to meet the needs of the community) and allowing flexibility.

Services

Services on offer
Parents commented that they benefited immensely from the following services: Baby Massage, Stay and Play, Enjoy and Achieve, Midwifery, First Aid, Rhythm Time, Breastfeeding and First Aid courses.

One parent spoke about how specific services gave her a routine and brought stability at a difficult period in her life. “Yoga and baby massage seems superfluous but was very helpful to me and my baby”. One participant spoke about how she had accessed breastfeeding and weaning support and how it had helped her. Another mentioned how services helped her get back into work, “informal childcare helped with getting back to work.”

One parent felt that the services on offer were all important, “The services were put there because there was a need for it. They are all relevant and important for people”. The group felt that services are important even if many parents haven’t used them i.e. speech and language.
Support from centres
The Centre had provided parents with general support and they felt the comfort of attending the centre and feeling part of the community was invaluable. “There is a social network here; bringing outsiders will remove that”.

It was felt that being able to trust the staff and feel safe was very important.

Charging
The group had an extensive discussion regarding charges. There were concerns about charges preventing people from accessing services. The general consensus was that it would be better to ask for donations or voluntary contributions towards the services rather than a fixed charge. They felt that parents on statutory maternity pay would struggle to pay. Comments included:

“A lot of people are on statutory maternity. When you receive it you can’t afford it [childcare]. People will struggle as they do not fit into disadvantaged.”

“Give people a choice, if you can pay for it then do so.”

“People who can afford it, they should decide to contribute. Those who can’t, can’t.”

“Services aimed at babies, a lot of parents during maternity leave can’t afford it”

Childcare

Outsourcing and the tendering process
The group questioned the outsourcing of childcare, “Other services would not be outsourced, such as the Police, why would you outsource an important service for our children”. They feared that children’s centres would be gradually cut over time.

The group were keen to understand how often the tendering process would be, and the affect this would have on the childcare provision for families.

Cost
Parents’ main concern was cost and an increase in fees. One parent had left an outsourced nursery because she could not afford the increase in fees.

When asked whether they agreed that the most disadvantaged should get free spaces, they wanted more clarity on what ‘disadvantaged’ meant, “I would consider myself disadvantaged – but would the Council?” They felt Early Years is important and necessary for the development of all children.

Quality
Comments were made that quality would be affected as voluntary/private organisations would only deliver minimum requirements, i.e. staff qualifications would be the minimum requirement necessary. They felt a reduction in quality had been demonstrated by children centres in other boroughs that have already been outsourced.

Concerns were raised about the challenges and struggles that voluntary organisations are currently experiencing, and asked how they would be able to provide quality childcare.
Staff
The group were concerned that outsourcing would mean the loss of highly experienced and highly qualified staff, thereby reducing the quality of the provision. There were also concerns that staff rotation would increase, and therefore reduce consistency for the children.

Links in the community
Concerns were raised that the nursery would lose its link and feeling with the community.

Consultation process
Parents also commented on the consultation process. They felt the consultation literature is too vague to be able to make an informed decision on the proposals, the questionnaire was badly written and questions too directed.

They wanted to know if the Council had taken into consideration reports, such as the Day Care Trust report, before making these proposals, “feels like you started with ‘we need to make cuts’ to not think about how it will affect children”.

Clare Gardens Children’s Centre – 3 September 2012

Children’s Services are looking to set up a support group for parents of children with a disability. This was the first meeting of the group and it was seen as an opportunity to gather feedback from parents on the children's centres consultation.

Unfortunately only one parent attended so an informal discussion took place on her experiences of children's centres in the borough.

The parent’s feedback
The parent is a mother to a nine month old child with a physical disability. She currently uses services within Maxilla Children's Centre and Clare Gardens Children's Centre. She also has an Occupational Therapist who visits her regularly.

She values the services on offer in children's centres and thinks they are good quality. She particularly likes the sensory room and finds it very useful for her child. She feels it is important for services to be delivered locally.

She also values the social experience of attending children's centres both for her child and herself. She would particularly like to meet more parents of children with a disability.

She doesn’t currently use childcare at the children's centres, but would be interested in doing so in a few years when her child has undergone the necessary operations. She would like then to be able to return to her studies at university.
Kensington Town Hall – 5 September 2012

In response to requests from parents this additional event was organised in the evening to accommodate working parents and any other parents that had not been able to attend other sessions. A total of 58 attended the event, this consisted mainly of parents, but staff and Councillors were also in attendance.

Format of the meeting
The format for the event was also amended to suit the wishes of parents and consisted of a presentation on the children’s centres strategy proposals, followed by a whole room discussion on the proposals. A panel of senior Council officers and Councillors were present to listen to feedback and answer questions, the panel consisted of:

- Cllr Elizabeth Campbell, Cabinet Member for Family and Children’s Services
- Cllr Emma Will, Lead Member for Family and Children’s Services
- Andrew Christie, Tri-borough Director of Children’s Services
- Mike Potter, Head of Commissioning (Early Intervention and Workforce Development)
- Andrew Tagg, Head of Resources, Children’s Services

Discussion on the proposals
Following, a presentation on the proposals attendees raised the following comments and asked the following questions under the topic areas suggested by parents.

Questions arising from the presentation
- One parent wanted to know what questions had been asked of the Residents’ Panel and to understand more about the Residents’ Panel. They felt the same weight shouldn’t be placed on their responses as the majority would not be users of the children’s centres. Mike Potter agreed that the questions would be posted on the Council’s website. Andrew Christie also stated that the Residents’ Panel was important as it seeks the opinions of the wider community.
- One parent also raised concerns about the framing of the questions in the stakeholder survey and wanted to check that as much importance was being placed on the feedback from the events.

Children’s Centre Services
- One parent shared their experience of services they had received at Golborne Children’s Centre when they were new to the area. Their child had speech and language issues, but with the support of a Council funded therapist and support at the children’s centre staff, the concerns were addressed. They felt the children’s centre had helped where their GP couldn’t and that the valuable knowledge of staff had saved a burden on primary schools.
- A parent who is a member of the advisory board at Violet Melchett Children’s Centre reported that their board had not been consulted on the changes. The professionals on the advisory board were also concerned about the number of referrals that would take place between the childcare provider and service professionals that use the children’s centres if the daycare were to be outsourced. Currently there are many referrals to practitioners from the daycare staff, but the board were worried this will reduce if a private contractor takes over childcare. The parent referenced other boroughs where children’s centre delivery had been changed and feedback from professionals of the impact on referrals.
Event Feedback

- One participant felt that the 'outstanding' Ofsted results showed the system works well currently. They felt that there was significant concern amongst health visitors, dieticians and outreach workers and they needed their voice heard.
- One parent of two children at Cheyne Children's Centre praised the referral process and recounted how her children had been referred to speech and language therapy. They felt the close working relationship between children's centre staff and practitioners was important and saved costs in the long term.
- One parent wanted to know how a 'core purpose service' was defined.
- A parent commented on the definition of what constituted a 'disadvantaged family' and felt the definition should be wider than previous stereotypes and referenced the recent Daycare Trust report. They felt some parents are vulnerable, but this wouldn't be picked up by some definitions, particularly in these tough economic times.
- One parent commented that staff are gifted at identifying children that needed early intervention.
- A parent of a child that attends Cheyne Children's Centre added that they had been referred to a speech and language therapist and this wouldn't have happened at a private nursery. Although the Council isn't under a duty to deliver childcare, it's these things that make it really effective.
- One parent commented on how a number of her friends who don't use childcare, but use the 'Stay and Play' sessions value them as they provide a structured play environment for them and their children. They rate them very highly.
- A Councillor wanted to understand if children's centres were outsourced whether the provider of the 'hub' would also be the provider of the 'satellites'. Mike Potter confirmed the proposal is for the centres to continue to be run by the local authority.

Childcare provision

- A governor from Golborne Children's Centre questioned the childcare subsidy they receive. They are concerned that when the subsidy is removed as to how they will be able to provide affordable childcare. They were concerned that a private company would not be interested in running the service as they don't have that many places and may be of little interest to them. Andrew Tagg stated that the local authority would need to talk to all four Governing Bodies and look at economy of delivery of places in the sector.
- A Councillor commented that if fees were to go up it would be very difficult for parents trying to return to work, and those currently in work would have to give up their jobs. Children's centres have helped transform lives by getting people back to work. If they can't afford childcare what's the point. The Councillor felt the Council would be responsible for people having to give up their jobs.
- One parent reported that while on paper it looked as though she earns a reasonable salary, most of her income goes on childcare. If it goes up any more she would have to leave her job. She reported that since being on maternity leave she was proud to pay her Council Tax because of the services provided by children's centres. She felt the Council needed to look at the need of middle class families as well as low income families. A number of parents agreed.
- One participant commented that the Day Care Trust report had identified Kensington and Chelsea's private childcare costs as the second highest in London (£100 per day in some cases). They also felt that children in high need do better when placed in a universal setting, better socialising opportunities and less stigma, etc.
- A parent of a child at Cheyne Children's Centre emphasised that mid income families will be affected and was keen to see a fee cap. A small increase could make it very difficult.
They wanted to see graduated amounts/caps or grandfather rates to prevent people having to give up work.

- One parent questioned the example fees that had been posted on the website. She had phoned the closest nurseries to Cheyne Children's Centre and the charges were not in the same ball park as those on the list. They questioned why examples had been given for Newham and Dagenham, as they felt these were not realistic. They felt with a low income that parents be better off on benefits.

- One parent also questioned the data on Colville nursery and didn’t feel they had an ‘outstanding’ rating. The opposition is not just to cost, but also impact on quality. They felt that the Council had built up several centres of excellence as demonstrated from their Ofsted reports. They questioned why the Council would want to dismantle something so amazing and felt a voluntary organisation would not be able to deliver. They felt you couldn’t beat happy children and children from all backgrounds getting on together.

- A parent in a shared ownership property reported that she can barely pay the fees at Cheyne Children's Centre currently; if the fees go up she would need to sell. She feels trapped and would have to leave the area, but can’t sell her flat quickly enough and it is illegal to sub-let. She felt that affordability should not just be based on income, but also the area where people live. She cannot afford much more and her service charges are expensive.

Proposals from parents and financial issues

Some parents had previously worked up alternative proposals that they would like to see adopted in order to avoid the outsourcing of childcare.

- Having worked through the Cabinet report one parent reported that the Council needed to make £340,000 of savings in children's centres as opposed to the £800,000 that was being reported. They believed that by increasing childcare by £8 per day and increasing capacity that this would cover the savings that needed to be made. They felt that many parents would prefer to pay the extra money than see childcare outsourced. They did understand that £8 per day would not be affordable to all, so felt fees could be means tested – with some paying more than £8 extra and some less.

- Another parent praised the proposal and wanted to see it considered by the Council, as they wanted to ensure that children’s centres childcare were kept by the Council.

- One parent suggested that this proposal was piloted, to see if it would work.

- One parent wanted the Council to look carefully at the costs of dismantling the current system. He reported that research into early year’s education showed the critical success factors were quality (including good qualified staff) and duration. Staff at the children's centres are really good and the centres provide good integration. They are the best place for communities to come together, making stronger communities. These longer term non-financial costs should be borne in mind.

- Another commented that you can’t put a price on excellence and that childcare in the private sector was only satisfactory. The Council needs to think about the standard of service and think about the children.

- One parent whose child attends Violet Melchett Children’s Centre felt the Council was just interested in saving money, not quality. She said that she was working hard to pay for her child to go to nursery and commented if the Council cares about quality why not keep current experienced staff. If the service is privatised, there will be extra pressure on staff and they will be less focused on looking after the children.

- Another parent wanted the Council to consider other sources of income; other funding streams, renting of space to generate income, expand number of places on offer etc.
• One parent summed up the views of many in the room, he commented that parents are against change for the sake of it. He felt parents had made a big concession with many agreeing to pay £8 extra per day for childcare. He felt that if you looked to national examples in various sectors outsourcing failed on many occasions and that promises made failed to materialise and once the Council relinquishes control it would be very difficult to get it back. Parents are prepared to pay more, this could be means tested and fees could be link to the Retail Price Index to ensure it was sustainable. By doing this the Council would retain control and manage the service. The parent commented that we are all talking about the next generations lives so need to be sure about these decisions.

• One parent of a child from St Quintin Children's Centre felt that children are the future and we wouldn't want to spend a load of money helping children get over their childhood. Children are not just some commodity and what we do in the early years will have an impact latter on, for example; youth unemployment.

• One parent of a child at Violet Melchett Children's Centre shared her story. She had suffered from post natal depression and when at a private nursery, she had no connection to the staff team. When she started using Violet Melchett she felt the staff were professional and treated her like a human being. They noticed problems and picked up on fussy eating and child’s sleeping problems. Staff are like an extended family and she trusts them to look after her children. All her salary goes into childcare, but she feels she is a better mum if she is working, she sleeps better and feels happy that her children are being taken care of. She would struggle to pay extra £8 per day, but would make sacrifices for them.

• A governor from Golborne Children's Centre felt that a lot of parents would need help with an extra £8 per day, particularly in the Golborne area.

• One parent questioned the arrangements for overseeing private providers and inspection.

Staffing

• A parent whose child uses services at Violet Melchett Children's Centre and Cheyne Children’s Centre asked about the Council’s provision for staff retention. She felt that TUPE guidelines were not strict enough and staff could be terminated after three months and this was not very difficult. She felt that the Council could write something into the current contracts (quadruple their notice period) that would mean that it would cost a new provider more to make staff redundant.

• A parent wanted to know how the quality of the childcare would be monitored.

• Another parent questioned why the Council would risk losing the experience of people who have been there for years and years. It would lead to pressure on staff to keep their jobs and a new provider bringing in less experienced staff.

• One parent questioned the Council’s assumption behind privatisation and how this would save money. They asked how the centres would be run more efficiently and what would happen to the quality of the staff. They were concerned the proposal meant downgrading personnel and using volunteers and wanted to ensure they would be forced to have a minimum standard for staff.

Conclusion

• A parent closed the evening by thanking the panel and asked that parents would be able to continue to be involved in the process. They thanked the panel for their time and acknowledged that the Council and the panel really do care about the future of the children's centres.
## Appendix 1: Service User Events - Agenda

### Agenda Service User Consultation Meetings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Arrival and registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Presentation on proposed strategy and changes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presentation given on proposed strategy, mirroring information in leaflet. Giving context for the changes, reassurance and key features of the strategy. Focusing on three themes: - Reorganisation, services and childcare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>Questions from the floor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An opportunity to take brief questions on the presentation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>Group discussions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>An opportunity to explore the issues in more depth and give feedback in a small group setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>Brief feedback from each table</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitator asked to feedback from each of the topic areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>Summing up and close</td>
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