

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICE CONSULTATIONS

### Executive Summary

Surrey County Council has launched five public consultations in respect of which response are required by 4 January 2019.

This report reproduces the text of each consultation and sets out a Draft Consultation Response which is designed to enable the Executive and Council to consider the consultations and determine its response on 6 December.

The Executive is requested to consider the report and recommend the Draft Consultation Response to Council.

### Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL That**

**the Draft Consultation Responses (as amended) be approved for submission to Surrey County Council.**

### Reasons for Decision

Reason: To enable a response to consultations being undertaken by Surrey County Council

The item above will need to be dealt with by way of a recommendation to Council.
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<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
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<b>Date Published:</b>	16 November 2018

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out in the sections below the areas of activity about which Surrey County Council is consulting. The full text of each consultation is included.
- 1.2 In each section a “Draft Consultation Response” has been prepared to aid discussion.

### 2.0 Family Resilience Consultation: Phase One - Children’s Centres

#### 2.1 Overview

“Surrey County Council believes that every child in Surrey should have the opportunity to reach their potential and that the best place for children to achieve this is within their own families. Whilst many children will do that without our support, some will need help. That might be because of extra needs they have, their family circumstances or problems they are dealing with. We want to help these children, and their families, as soon as we can.

We also know that we haven’t been doing this well enough. Ofsted inspected our children’s services earlier this year and told us they were ‘inadequate’. That means we haven’t been keeping some children and families safe and giving them the right help when they need it.

And we have financial problems. The Government is giving us less money even though more people need our help. So we need to make sure that the money we have makes the biggest difference to the children and families who need support the most.

We think the best way to do this is by helping families to become more resilient. That means they will be able to cope with change and bounce back when difficult things happen. Below is more information about how we would do this and the changes this would mean for children’s centres. After that there are questions we’d like you to answer to tell us what you think about our proposals.

#### **How will we help families become more resilient?**

We will work with families, children and young people to try and keep them together by giving four types of support:

- **Universal** – advice and help for all families on things like parenting, health and education.
- **Additional** – for families who could use some extra help with something they are finding difficult. It could something like managing money, relationships or coping with the loss of a loved one.
- **Intensive** – for families who want help in quite a few areas of their lives or have really tough problems to cope with. They could be looking after someone with a disability or whose behaviour is hard to handle. They could have been out of work for a long time or the children haven’t been going to school.
- **Specialist** – for the small number of families who legally must receive help, so we put together a statutory plan for them. That could be where children have been neglected or abused, or where families are involved in things like crime or drugs.

We believe that if families get additional or intensive support, things will get better for them and they won’t need specialist services. Everyone who works with them will come together to find the best way to help a family and try to stop problems before they happen. They’ll be there to help when and wherever it’s needed.

Doing things in this new way will mean changes to the services that children, young people and families use at the moment. We’ve looked first at children’s centres and then we’ll look at youth work and youth centres. So we’ll want your thoughts on that area when we do the phase two consultation next year.

### How would children's centres change?

Currently there are 58 children's centres across Surrey mainly helping families with children aged 0-5 years.

They welcome all families in their area but have already started to offer services that help families who are most in need.

To build on this, we think that children's centres should give more help to the children that need it the most and also offer support to the whole family, particularly families with children aged 0 – 11. This would mainly be the additional or intensive support that we mentioned earlier. We also think that children's centres should also be the place where families can get support from other services such as health visiting, midwifery, citizen's advice and support with housing and employment.

To make sure we spend money on those who need it the most, we think we should have centres in areas with the highest number of children living in homes where no-one works or there isn't much money coming in.

This will mean having 21 main centres with at least one in each of the 11 districts or boroughs in Surrey. There will also be smaller centres that will offer fewer services but there will be places where workers who are supporting families can meet with them.

We don't think we should have mobile centres any more as they are expensive to keep on the road. But outreach workers will still support families either in their homes or through various group activities or courses. They will also support any families in need who don't live near a centre.

For this new plan to work it's likely that some of the universal support mentioned earlier will no longer be offered by children's centres. So we want to know how you think the centres could help create more resilient communities where families support one another through the normal challenges of parenting and family life.

We also think it would make sense to have a new name for children's centres as they'll now offer help to families with older children too. We have some ideas and would like to know what you think about them or if you have any other ideas.

Here's an example of how a future model can help families become more resilient and the role of childrens' centres in supporting a family:

## Targeted offer

**A** Main centre A site is based on a primary school site.

- This is in an area of high need.
- Health outcomes for families in the area are poor.
- Families often don't travel for services.
- Health and wellbeing activities focus on supporting families in the community.

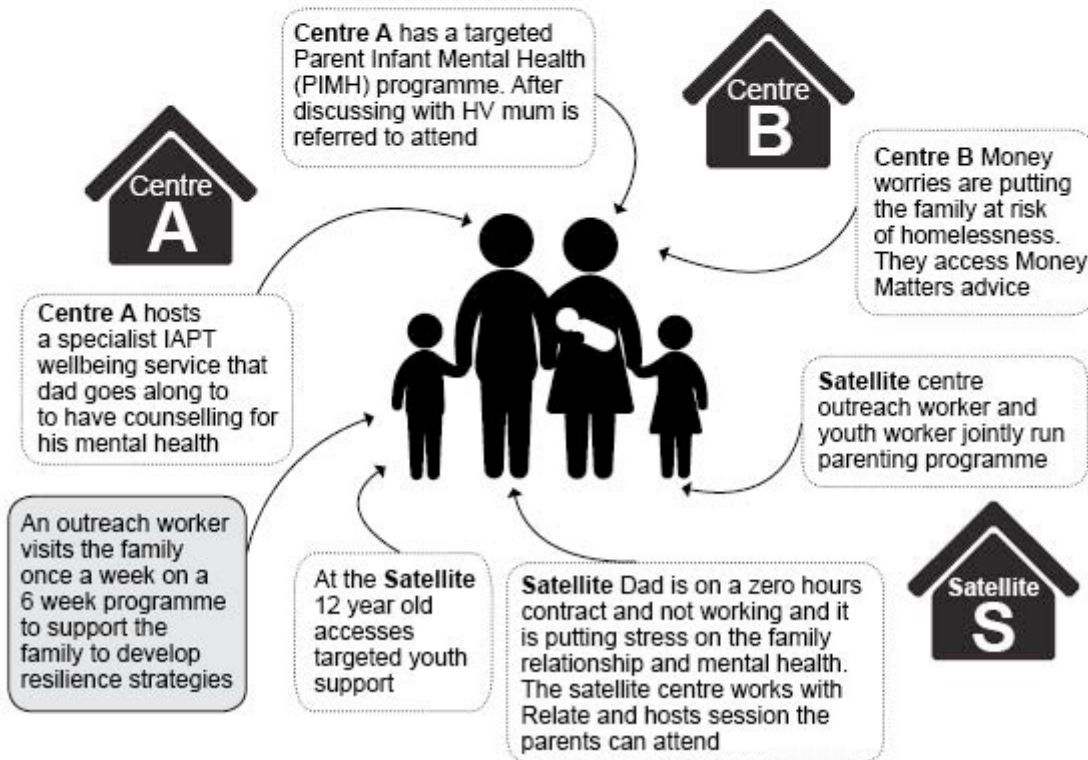
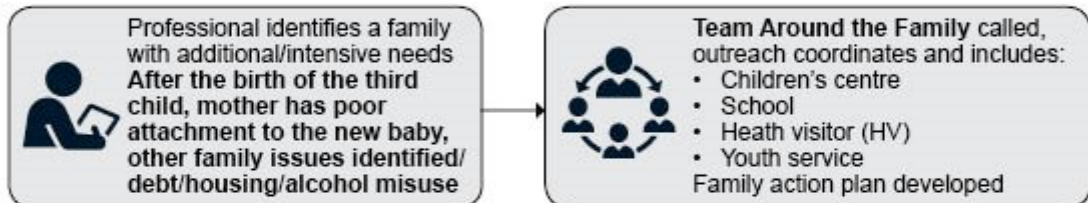
**B** Main centre B is based in a community run venue in the town centre

- The centre focuses on services that help families out of poverty.
- There is a food bank supported by local churches, this is open to all families in the borough.
- There are good links with other charities locally.
- The centre, is close to the main town, there are good bus and train routes to and from this centre.

**S** Satellite is in the local youth centre

- Space is maximised to provide services to the whole family.
- Because it is a SCC building desks are available for social workers between visits.
- Large numbers of temporary housing families are encouraged to go to the centre to reduce isolation.

Outreach workers work at all the centres and in the family home on an individual basis.



The professionals have had worries about the family but the coordinated intervention means that haven't had to refer the family to children's services.

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### Draft Consultation Response

- 2.2 The Council considers that Children Centres are a critical part of the infrastructure necessary to support families and young people and, whilst recognising the financial challenges SCC face, regrets the loss of provision across the Borough.
- 2.3 The Council welcomes SCC's proposals to maintain the Sheerwater and Sythwood Children Centres as "Main Centres".
- 2.4 The Council seeks assurance that there will be strong and effective coordination between other services operated by or influenced by SCC to ensure that where there is no dedicated centre there remains effective support for families and young people.
- 2.5 The Council is concerned that there is no formal recognition of the important role played by the Family Support Service operated by the Borough Council and seeks assurance that this important local provision, and other services operated by the Borough, is taken into account when finalising its proposals and that a co-design approach is taken at the local level.

### **3.0 Concessionary Bus Travel Funding Consultation**

#### 3.1 Overview

"Like most councils across the country we're facing massive financial challenges. Rising demand for services – particularly those supporting children, older people and our most vulnerable residents – and reducing government grant means we need to make some very difficult decisions about the way we deliver services across Surrey.

We have worked hard over the past few years to find savings in areas which will have the least impact on residents – such as being more efficient and modernising our support services, using technology more effectively and being more joined up – and since 2010 we've saved £540 million.

But over the next year we need to save a further £85 million to make sure we're financially robust, able to meet the future with confidence and can deliver the best possible services to the people who need them most.

This means we will have to stop providing some services we know Surrey people value and rely on. We're committed to doing this as honestly and openly as possible and we will be consulting residents, partners and businesses to get their views on a range of proposals and options for the future of these services.

One of the areas of funding which we will need to make some difficult decisions about is our support for concessionary bus travel across the county.

Central government provides councils with some funding so that qualifying older and disabled people can travel for free on buses after 9.30am and before 11pm during the week and all day at weekends and on public holidays. This is known as the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).

In Surrey we provide just under £400,000 of extra funding for residents so that people with a disabled person's bus pass can travel free at any time. We also provide companion bus passes so that any qualifying older or disabled bus pass holders who need help to travel can take someone with them who can travel for free as well. Many councils don't provide this extra funding to support their concessionary travel schemes.

### Why We Are Consulting

We are proposing to reduce this extra funding to bring us in line with other councils who offer the statutory scheme. Disabled pass holders travelling before 9.30am and after 11pm on weekdays would then need to pay. Bus travel would still be free between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays and all day at weekends and public holidays. As well as this we are proposing to no longer provide companion bus passes. The pass holder will still travel for free but anyone travelling with them would need to pay.

Ahead of making any final decisions about the future of funding for concessionary bus travel in the county we want to seek your views and understand the impact of our proposals.

This consultation questionnaire asks you a series of questions about the way you and others use bus services in Surrey and how you and others may be affected by the proposals we are making.

The proposal for disabled bus pass holders is to:

– Move to the national statutory level for free travel between 9.30am and 11pm on weekdays and free travel at weekends and on public holidays.

The proposal for companion bus pass holders is to:

– Move to the national statutory level and withdraw free travel for companions.

We will analyse all the responses we receive and present the analysis to members of the council's Cabinet early next year when they will make final decisions about concessionary bus travel. If they decide to go ahead with the proposals the extra funding we provide for free concessionary travel would end on Monday 1 April 2019."

### Draft Consultation Response

- 3.2 The Council considers that Concessionary Fares play an important role in reducing isolation of elderly and disabled people in the Borough.
- 3.3 The Council recognises that the proposed change of hours is in line with the national statutory level. However it considers that removing the ability for disabled people to use a Bus Pass before 9.30am and after 11.00pm may disadvantage those disabled people who rely upon public transport to access work (pre 9.30am travel) and limit the ability to access town centre cultural facilities (post 11.00pm travel). The Council requests that prior to finalising its decision SCC undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to assess the level of adverse impact amongst existing bus pass holders.
- 3.4 The Council recognises that the proposed removal of free travel for companions is in line with the national statutory level. The Council requests that prior to finalising its decision SCC undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to assess the level of adverse impact amongst existing bus pass holders.
- 3.5 The Council considers it is difficult to provide a comprehensive response about the revisions to Concessionary Fare arrangements in isolation from any information about proposals arising from the review of Bus Subsidies and/or Community Transport and requests that when making its decision about Concessionary Fare SCC has regard to what it may be proposing for its other transport activities.

### 4.0 Special Educations Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy Consultation

#### 4.1 Overview

“The county council is consulting on how to strengthen support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), at a time when the amount of funding available is not keeping pace with the growing levels of need, such as autism.

Although Surrey County Council spends more on SEND than other similar councils, too many children and young people with SEND and their families are disappointed with the support they receive.

This indicates a mis-match between how the council invests in SEND services and the expectations and outcomes for SEND families.

The council is consulting on a strategy to shift resources more towards early identification of children's and young people's needs, and providing more early support closer to home and wherever possible in mainstream schools and settings.

That means fewer children will need to have statutory Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to get the support they need, and with the right services in place locally they will not have to travel further distances or go to high-cost placements in independent schools and institutions (known as Non-Maintained Institutions).

The aim of the strategy is to improve outcomes for families and help raise the achievement of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities so that they can fulfil their potential.

Most children have their special educational needs met in Surrey maintained schools. There are approximately 200,000 pupils in total, and of these around 23,000 have special educational needs (SEN) support.

For further information, please refer to the SEND strategy document, which explains the approach in greater detail.

Families have told us that they have to wait a long time to access services and this can make things worse. They feel that problems are not identified early enough and that there is not enough support or provision for lower level needs and thresholds are too high. Families have said that they have to wait a long time to access services, which can lead to a lack of trust. Families have also said that they feel some providers are not knowledgeable about their needs and that they want to be engaged in the design and management of services that their children receive. Families also don't feel they have a choice of provision and haven't had a clear explanation about why decisions have been made.

Listening to their feedback, we are developing a strategy based on five key principles:

1. Children with special educational needs are identified earlier and supported in a timely and effective way in order to improve their outcomes and wellbeing.
2. There is an increased focus on earlier intervention and prevention to offer help and meet needs at the earliest opportunity, reducing the demand on high cost, high need interventions.
3. Children and young people are helped to become resilient and independent so that they can lead independent and fulfilling lives in their own communities.

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4. The voices of our children, young people and families are heard so they can shape and inform how we work together to get the best results.

5. Surrey's early years settings, schools, colleges and other providers are able to support children to live, learn and grow up locally and achieve their full potential."

### Draft Consultation Response

- 4.2 The Council welcomes a greater focus on supporting children with special educational needs locally. The Council has made available to SCC a site at Brookwood Farm for the provision of a special educational need school to avoid sending children out of the County.

## **5.0 Transforming Libraries and Cultural Services in Surrey Consultation**

### 5.1 Overview

"Libraries and cultural services are an integral part of community life across Surrey and sit at the heart of lifelong learning. We know that to sustain our libraries and cultural services into the future, with the resources that we have, we need to think differently and creatively about how those services are provided.

To do this, we are asking for your views on the following five principles that form a strategy which we believe could inform proposals for transforming libraries and cultural services in Surrey:

1. Libraries and cultural services provide and enable opportunities for everyone to learn, access information, acquire new skills, improve literacy and be involved in their communities.
2. There is a focus on the wellbeing and strengthening of communities, particularly the most vulnerable, to enable them to be resilient.
3. Libraries and cultural services are most effective and efficient when they work in partnership with the public, voluntary, community and private sectors, including through the creation of shared spaces.
4. New technologies, including digital, enable libraries and cultural services to reach new audiences, and existing audiences in new ways, and offer 24/7 access.
5. Volunteers are crucial community advocates and assets in libraries and cultural services, who also gain valuable skills and relationships through the work they do.

Our intention is to develop proposals that deliver against this strategy and create libraries and cultural services that are fit for the future and sustainable in the long term. It is also our intention to get close to the national average spend of county councils on library services.

### **Where are we now?**

In Surrey, there are 52 libraries based across the county including 10 Community Partnered Libraries (CPLs). The top 18 libraries account for 65% of the total visits, and 18 others for only 11.6% of business. Some libraries are co-located with other services, such as the recently reopened Merstham Library, where we have seen a 300% increase in library membership.



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The digital library offer is valued by many residents, with 1.32 million items borrowed using the online catalogue. Residents, particularly vulnerable ones, tell us they value the access to public computers and Wi-Fi which libraries provide.

Volunteering is a strong feature of Surrey libraries. 680 volunteers give 21,000 hours per annum.

Our broader cultural services offer covers arts, a music service, heritage and archaeology, adult and community learning and the registration and citizenship service.

### What is happening elsewhere?

There are lots of innovative examples and initiatives in place in other parts of the UK and around the world that could help shape our proposals. For example the Hive in Worcestershire combines a university/public library, an archive and archaeology centre, Worcester City Council's customer services hub, a studio theatre, a lifelong learning centre and a business centre in a single building.

Peterborough and Milton Keynes libraries have taken the use of technology to the next level with their new digitally-led libraries that are accessible 24 hours a day.

Meanwhile the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has examples from across the world of libraries promoting health and wellbeing, digital literacy and local businesses - further details can be found by searching for Global Libraries at [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org).

### What happens now?

We are inviting you to give your views on our strategy made up of the principles shown above and to share your ideas for shaping the proposals which will transform our libraries and cultural services."

### Draft Consultation Response

- 5.2 The Council considers that enhancing the role of Libraries and Cultural centres to make them more diverse places to support the wider health and well being of residents is welcomed and recognises that this approach will inevitably lead to fewer larger directly operated centres with centres either closing or providing access channels through other partner locations. For the Borough it is considered that the easily accessible town centre provision should be maintained as a location albeit it could be diversified to meet a wider range of service need.
- 5.3 The Council has been working with a new voluntary organisation which understood it was being asked to take over the Performing Arts Library Service and is supportive of relocating it to a site in Woking town centre.

## 6.0 Shaping Surrey's Community Recycling Centres (CRCs)

### 6.1 Overview

"The following changes are proposed to the CRC service:

- 1. Permanently closing a number of smaller, less effective CRCs, whilst increasing the opening hours at some CRCs. The sites under consideration for closure are: Bagshot, Cranleigh, Dorking, Farnham, Lyne (Chertsey) and Warlingham.

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2. Introducing a charge to dispose of construction wood and roofing felt.
3. Increasing the cost of disposing of items we already charge for.
4. Charging an annual application fee for van, pickup and trailer permits.

### Why We Are Consulting

Like most councils across the country we're facing massive financial challenges. Rising demand for services – particularly those supporting children, older people and our most vulnerable residents – and reducing government grant means we need to make some very difficult decisions about the way we deliver services across Surrey.

We have worked hard over the past few years to find savings in areas which will have the least impact on residents - such as modernising our support services, using technology more effectively and being more joined up – and since 2010 we've saved £540 million.

But over the next year we need to save a further £85 million to make sure we're financially robust, able to meet the future with confidence and can deliver the best possible services to the people who need them most.

This means we will have to stop providing some services we know Surrey people value and rely on. We're committed to doing this as honestly and openly as possible and we will be consulting residents, partners and businesses to get their views on a range of proposals and options for the future of these services.

One of the areas where we will need to make some difficult decisions and changes is to our Community Recycling Centres (CRCs).

We have looked at the following principles when considering the changes we could make:

- The location of CRCs including how close they are to other CRCs and highly populated areas.
- How much waste is managed at each CRC.
- The running costs of CRCs and how easy they are for residents to get into and use, including having containers you can reach without steps.
- Each CRC's ability to cope with more waste and visitors and longer opening hours.
- Focussing the CRC service on recycling household waste and reusable materials.

The introduction of the proposed changes listed above will help the council to re-focus its attention and resources on the most critical priorities and services while maintaining a comprehensive countywide network of CRCs that also provides value for money.”

### Draft Consultation Response

- 6.2 The Council welcomes the retention of the Martyrs Lane Community Recycling Centre (CRC).
- 6.3 The Council remains concerned about the risk that any significant increase in charges may discourage the use of the CRC and result in an increase in Fly Tipping and requests that the

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introduction of charges is well communicated to residents so as to minimise the risk of residents, particularly those undertaking “DIY” from thinking that they can not use the CRC.

### 7.0 Implications

7.1 There are no implications arising from this report, however there may be implications arising from the decisions to be taken in due course by Surrey County Council.

#### Financial

7.2 None.

#### Human Resource/Training and Development

7.3 None.

#### Community Safety

7.4 None.

#### Risk Management

7.5 None.

#### Sustainability

7.6 None.

#### Equalities

7.7 None.

#### Safeguarding

7.8 None.

### 8.0 Consultations

8.1 No consultations have been undertaken in preparing this report.

REPORT ENDS