

Family Resilience Consultation: Phase 1, Children's Centres

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Summary findings- the closed questions

1. Over four fifths (81%) agreed with the idea of “*investing more in services that help families earlier?*”
2. Only one fifth of people (21%) agreed with the idea of closing mobile children’s centres.
3. Two fifths of the sample (38%) agreed with the proposal to allocate funding to children’s centres in areas where there are more families on low incomes.
4. Nearly two thirds of respondents (61%) agreed with the proposal that “families who can afford it should pay a fixed charge for certain activities”.
5. Nearly three quarters (73%) agreed with the proposal that children’s centres could play a role in supporting local communities to take part in volunteering to help children and their families.
6. Nearly two thirds (61%) supported the proposal that “*children’s centres should encourage more people to volunteer to run activities and help in the children’s centres.*”
7. When asked if they would volunteer themselves, over two fifths (43%) said they would.
8. When asked to select a name for a new service from a list of three, nearly a third of respondents didn’t have a view on this. A quarter (25%) preferred *Family Centres* followed by 23% preferring *Child and Family centres*.
9. There was strong *disagreement* (86%) that “*children’s centres are an appropriate area to make savings*” and strong *agreement* (79%) that “*Savings should be made from other county council services before making any savings from children’s centres?*”
10. When asked about specific borough plans only a fifth to a third in each borough thought the right locations were chosen. Epsom and Ewell registered the highest level of agreement (39%) whereas Surrey Heath and Tandridge registered the lowest levels of agreement (17%).
11. If Surrey County Council were unable to use the current children’s centre buildings, about a third to a half of residents agreed that the council should endeavour to find a local alternative. Spelthorne recorded the highest level of agreement (53%) and Guildford the lowest level (21%).

Summary of the qualitative responses.

Whilst many agreed that it was right to target Children's Centres at those most in need, there was concern that although a parent may not be on a low income they still have needs and require support to help them through the first years of parenting. For example, the issues mentioned most often included help for women with post-natal depression and help to alleviate isolation and the lack of local family support - which affect people from all social classes. There was also concern that deprivation indicators do not always take account of the pockets of deprivation in affluent areas.

Residents and practitioners praised the work of Children's Centres, supporting their views with personal experiences describing how the centres had helped them through difficult times. Many viewed the centres as a community asset and believed their closure would be "taking part of the community away" leaving some areas struggling to cope. People were particularly concerned about the increasing isolation that will be felt by some new parents and the mental health problems that will result.

Some respondents felt that closing centres and stopping some universal activities would undermine the principle of early intervention, with vulnerable children and families not being spotted early enough, resulting in more costly intervention further down the line.

The issue of access to the remaining services - whether that be direct access to the centres or the provision of sufficient outreach services - was mentioned by significant number of residents. It was believed that closing centres in some semi-rural areas with poor public transport could result in further isolation for vulnerable families. When commenting on the borough specific plans, some people observed that the centres selected to stay open were too geographically close together, leaving large areas without reasonable access to the service.

Some respondents reported that currently several centres are oversubscribed with queues for basic services albeit the majority of these could be described as universal services. There was a belief that closing centres could only make this situation worse.

People made various suggestions as to how to minimise some of the negative consequences of the closures.

- Increasing outreach and mobile services to reach isolated families
- Charging those who can afford to pay for services
- Encouraging more volunteering
- Pooling resources from different sectors e.g. health and council services
- Make better use of other services and buildings
- Supply more information about other services
- Keeping more centres open but reducing opening hours

Introduction

The consultations have followed a rigorous and robust method to analysing, interpreting and synthesising large amounts of data. Specifically, a series of analytical workshops have ensured that each consultation working group has collaborated to co-design a user-centred framework and analysis process to ensure that the user's voice is reported in a clear and digestible fashion. All data in this section is directly reported from the user and should inform evidence based discussions and decision making for the future. **The Family Resilience Consultation included specific plans for each borough identifying which children's centres would stay open and which may close. The analysis will pay particular attention to the variation in response by borough.**

The report is divided into 4 sections

- Section 1: The quantitative analysis of the closed questions from Surrey Says
- Section 2: The qualitative analysis of the free text questions from Surrey Says
- Section 3: The qualitative analysis on the specific D&B plans
- Section 4: Analysis of the email responses to the consultation

1. The quantitative analysis of the closed questions on Surrey Says

Final count

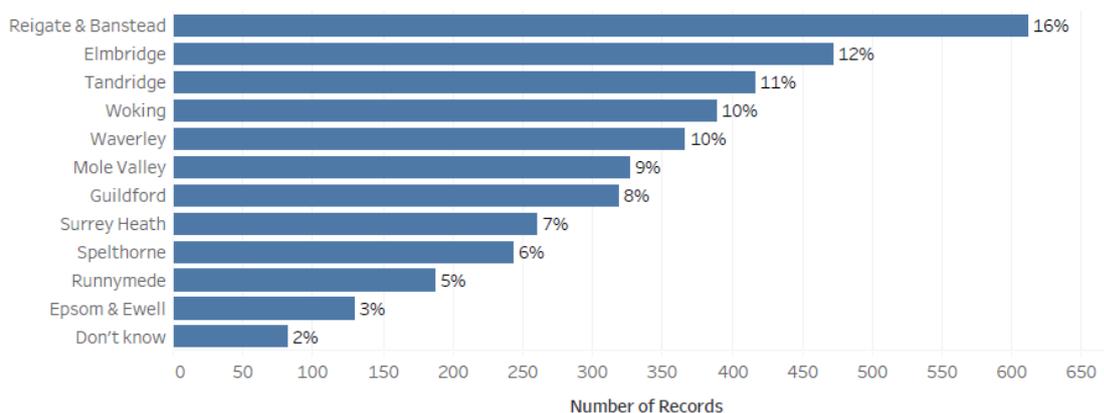
Source	Number
	Total response = 3797
Surrey Says	Surrey Says = 3659 Easy Read paper questionnaires = 11 General population questionnaires = 127
Email responses	19

99.9% of responses were from people who live, work or study in Surrey. Of these 4% were responding on behalf of a children's centre or other organisation and many of these were also current and past users of children's centres.

The Surrey Says Analysis – Demographics

The total number of responses was 3797. The demographics of the sample are as follows:

D&B profile

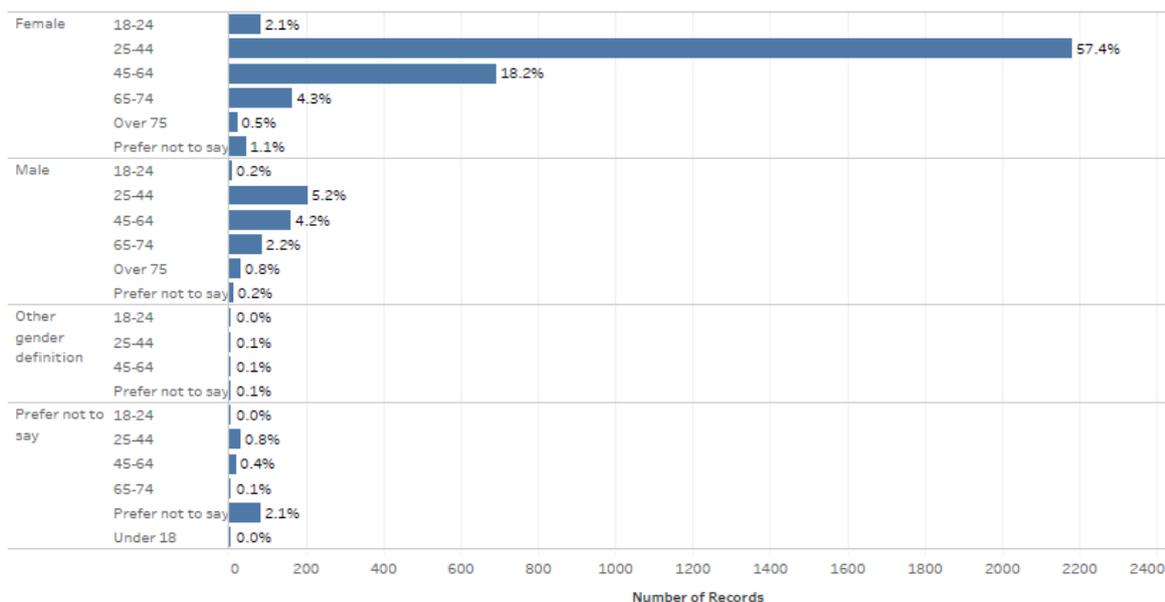


Reigate and Banstead registered the largest response with 611 respondents whereas Epsom and Ewell registered the smallest response with 129 respondents.

Gender

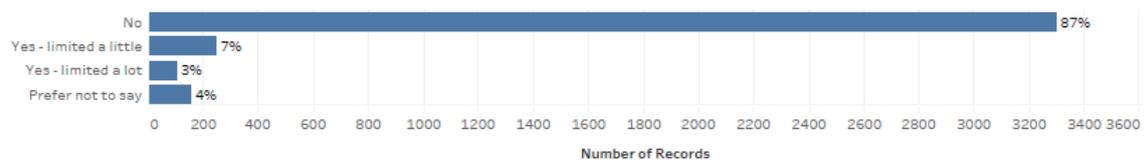
The majority of responses were from women aged 25-44 years old (2,178 – 57%)

GENDER AGE profile



Health problem or disability

DISABILITY profile

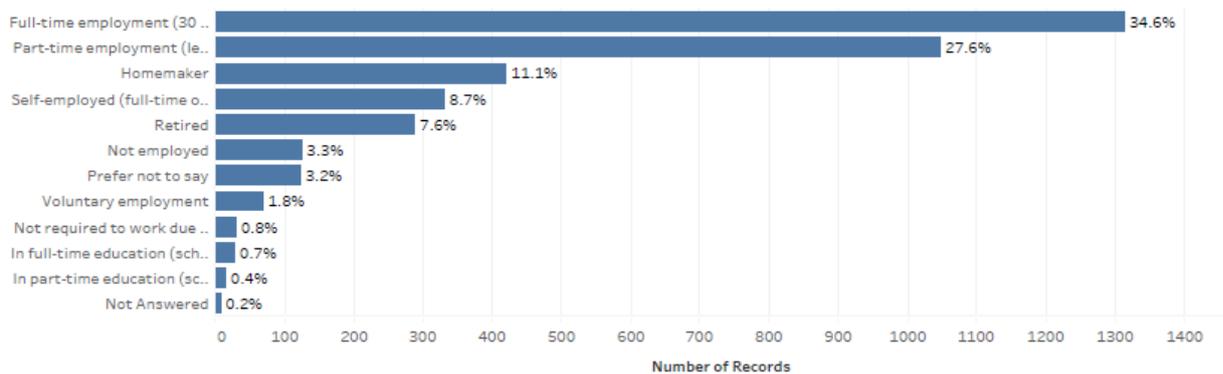


When asked if their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted or is expected to last 12 months, the majority (87%) reported no health problem or disability.

Employment

A third of respondents were in full time employment and a third in part time employment. Just over 11% were homemakers.

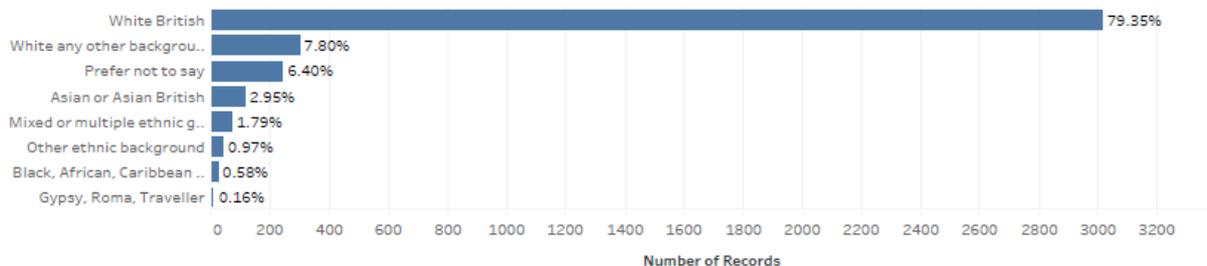
EMPLOYMENT profile



Ethnicity

Over 79% of respondents identified as White British. The number of BME groups in the sample under-represents their prevalence in the Surrey population.

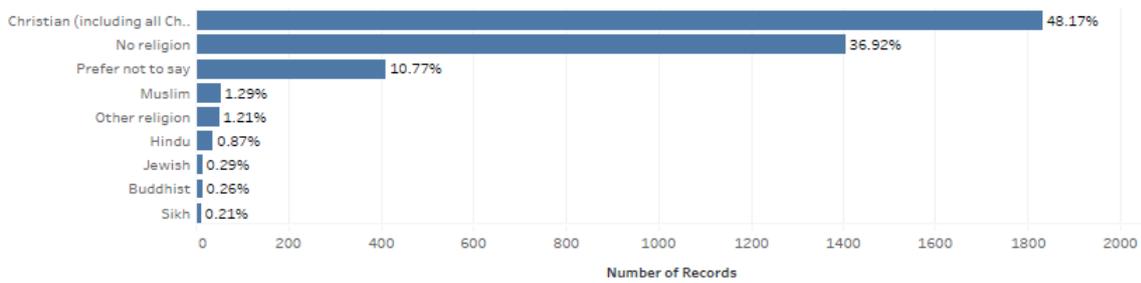
ETHNICITY Profile



Religion

Nearly half of the sample reported they were Christian and 37% said they had no religion.

RELIGION Profile



Response to specific closed questions

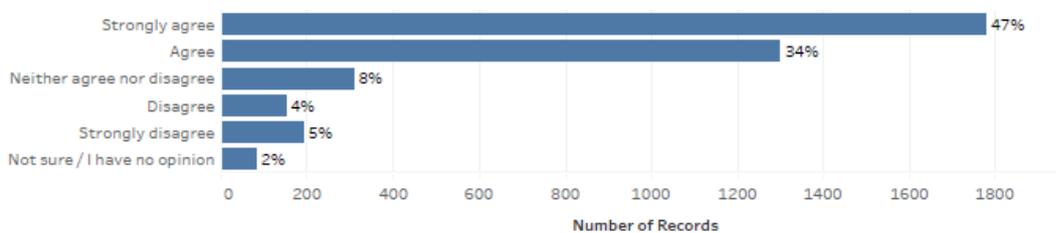
Respondents were asked a number of questions on the overall family resilience approach: targeting of resources; the use of mobile centres and charging for services and volunteering. Each of these questions were analysed by all the key demographics and over a 100 tables of analysis are available. For ease of presentation, the overall response to each question will be displayed and any significant variation by region reported in the narrative description under each chart.

Investing earlier

Respondents were asked ***"To what extent do you agree or disagree with our aim to invest more in services that help families earlier?"***

Over 81% agreed with this idea. This level of agreement was observed across all boroughs and all demographic sub groups

Invest earlier

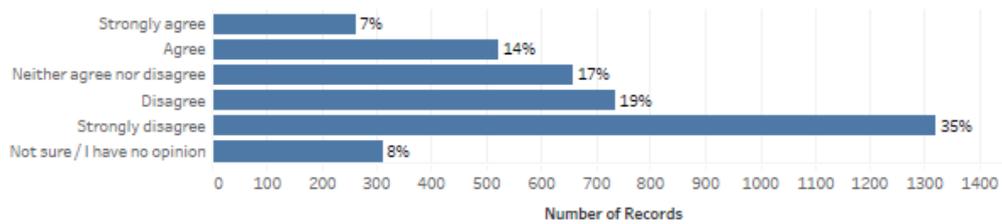


Mobile Children's centres

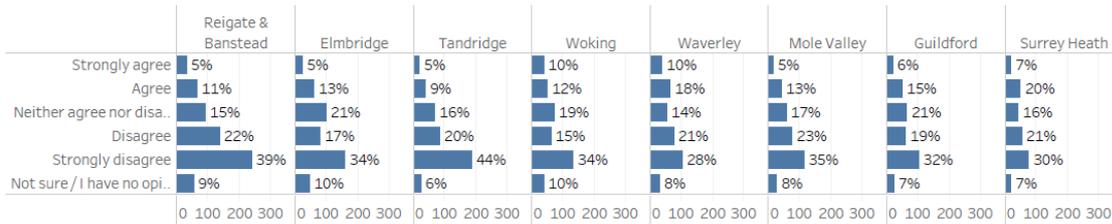
Respondents were asked ***"To what extent do you agree or disagree with Surrey County Council's proposal to withdraw the mobile children's centres from service?"***

One fifth of people agreed with this idea. Over a third *strongly disagreed* (35%). All boroughs exhibited a similar response but some, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge exhibited noticeably higher disagreement with this proposal (39% and 44% strongly disagreed)

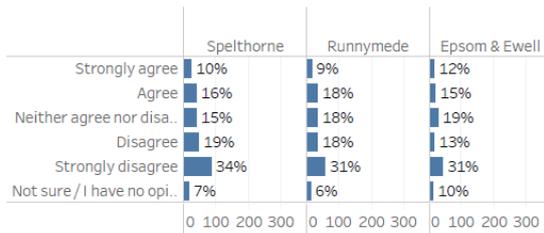
Withdraw mobile centres - total sample



Withdraw mobile centres



Withdraw mobile centres

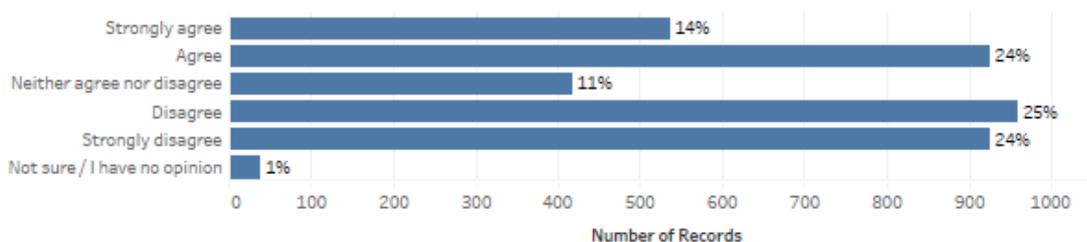


Targeting those in need

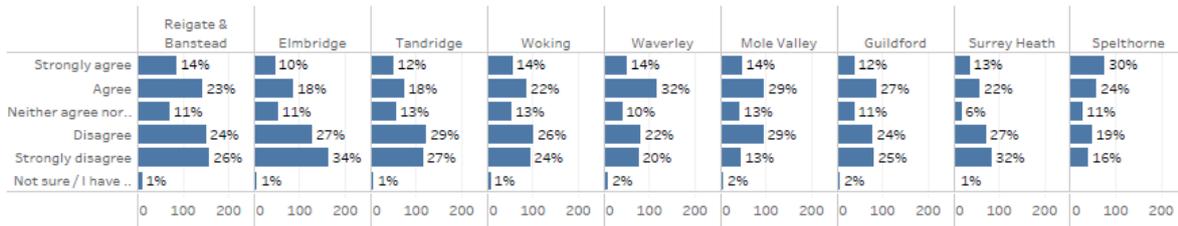
Respondents were asked ***“We are proposing to allocate funding to children’s centres in areas where there are more families on low incomes. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?”***

Two fifths of the sample (38%) agreed with this proposal. This was highest in Spelthorne (54%) and lowest in Elmbridge (28%).

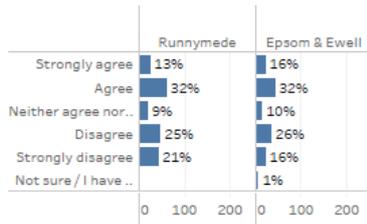
Targeting - total sample



Targeting by D&B



Targeting by D&B

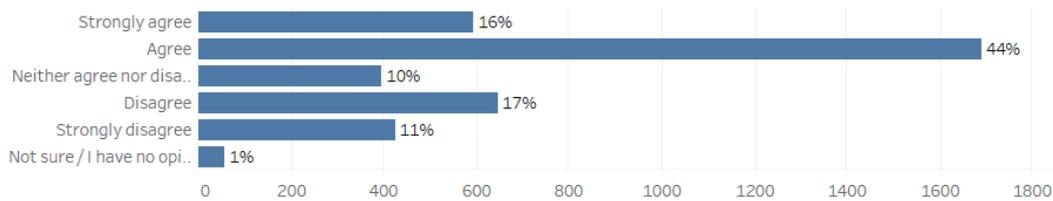


Charging for certain activities

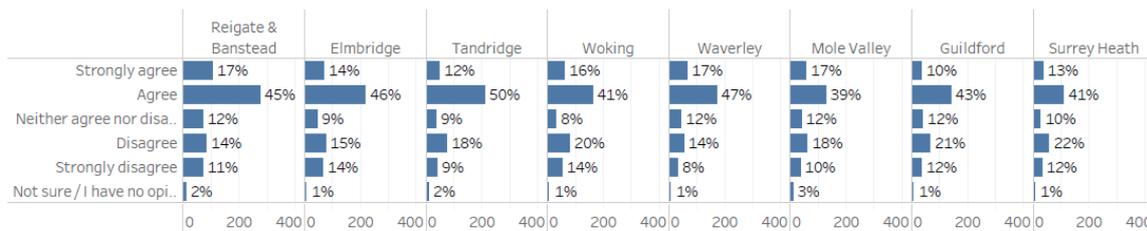
Respondents were asked ***“To what extent do you agree or disagree that families who can afford it should pay a fixed charge for certain activities?”***

Nearly two thirds of respondents (60%) agreed with this proposal. Agreement was highest in Epsom and Ewell (70%) and lowest in Guildford (53%).

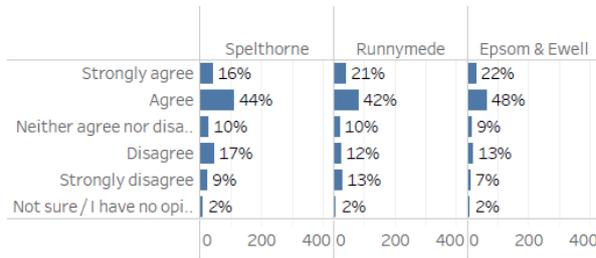
Fixed Charge - Total Sample



Fixed Charge - by D&B



Fixed Charge - by D&B

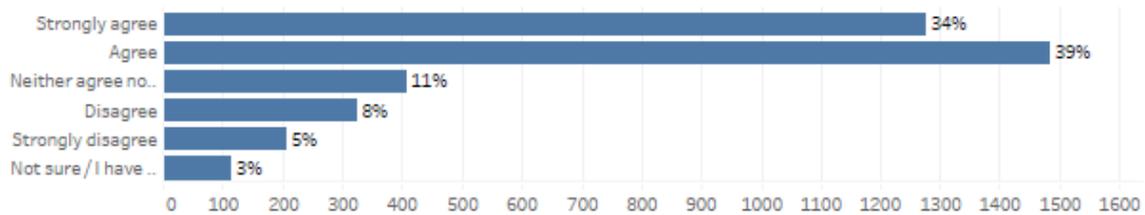


Children’s centres should support local communities

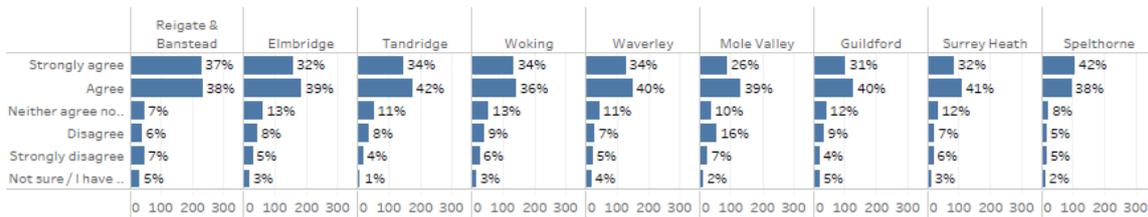
Respondents were asked ***“The county council has a vision to develop stronger communities. To what extent do you agree or disagree that children’s centres could play a role in supporting local communities to take part in volunteering to help children and their families?”***

Nearly three quarters (73%) agreed with this proposal. Agreement was highest in Spelthorne (80%) and lowest in Mole Valley (65%).

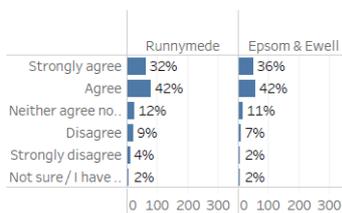
Children’s Centres to support local communities - total sample



Children’s Centres to support local communities by D&B



Children’s Centres to support local communities by D&B

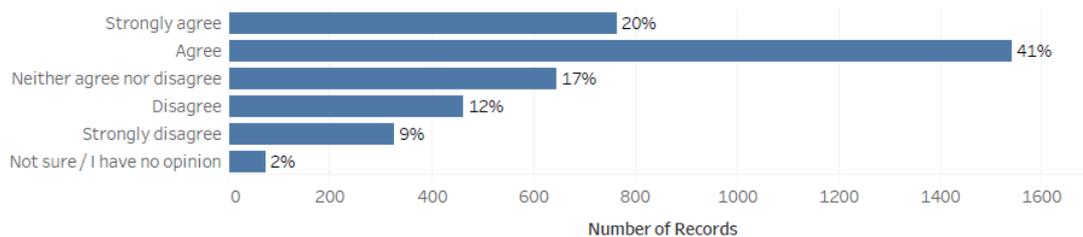


Volunteering

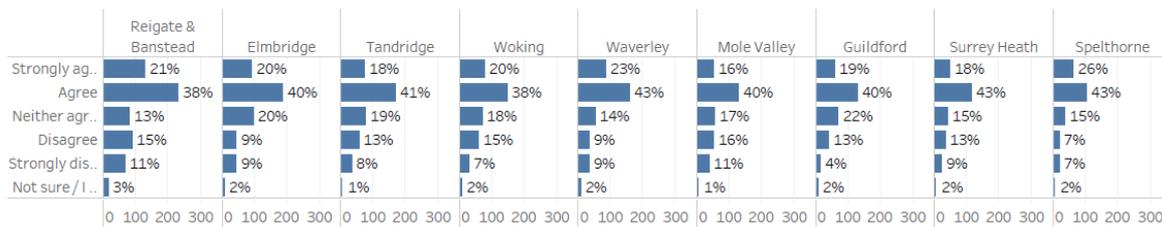
Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement **“Children’s centres should encourage more people to volunteer to run activities and help in the children’s centres.”**

Nearly two thirds (61%) supported this proposal. Spelthorne registered the largest support with 69% agreeing with this approach.

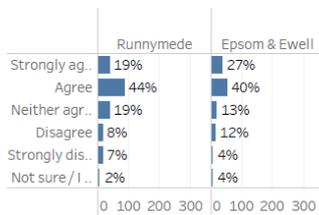
Children’s Centres should encourage more people to volunteer



Children’s Centres should encourage more people to volunteer

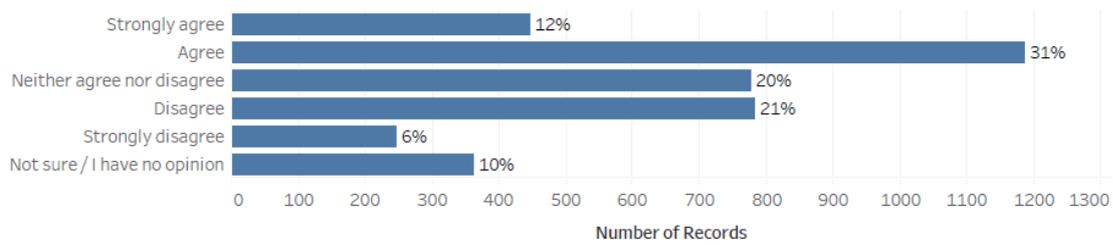


Children’s Centres should encourage more people to volunteer

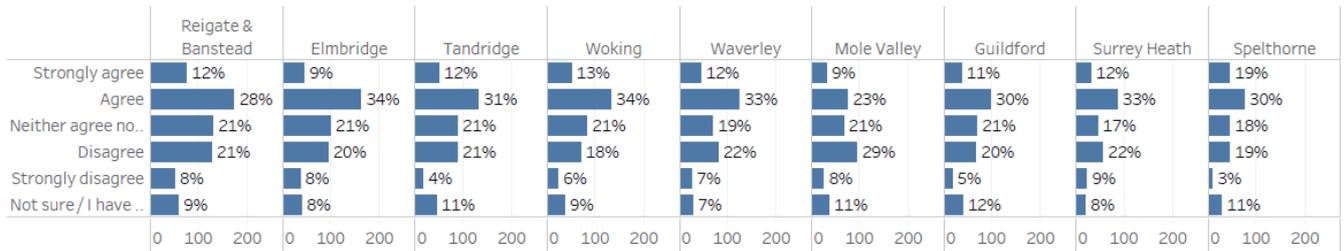


When asked if **they would volunteer** to help in a children’s centres nearly half (43%) said they would. This was highest in Spelthorne and Runnymede (49%) and lowest in Mole Valley (32%).

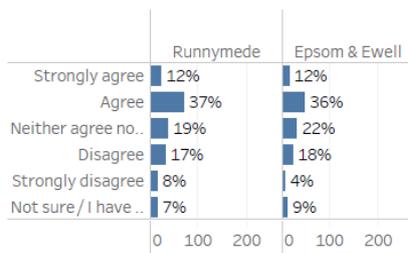
They would volunteer - Total Sample



They would volunteer by D&B



They would volunteer by D&B

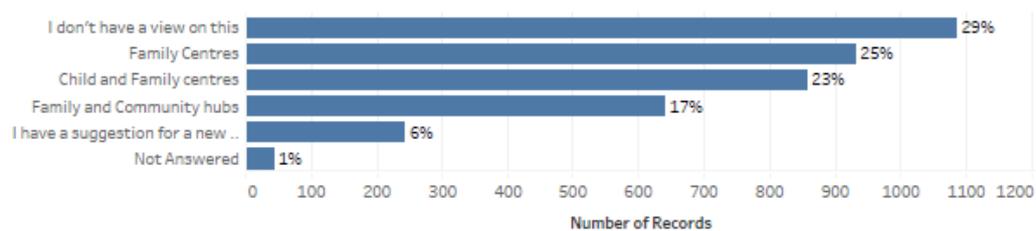


What should we call the new service?

Respondents were asked to select a name for a new service from a list of three or suggest a new name.

Nearly a third of respondents didn't have a view on this. A quarter (25%) preferred *Family Centres* followed by 23% preferring *Child and Family centres*.

Name of the new service - Total Sample



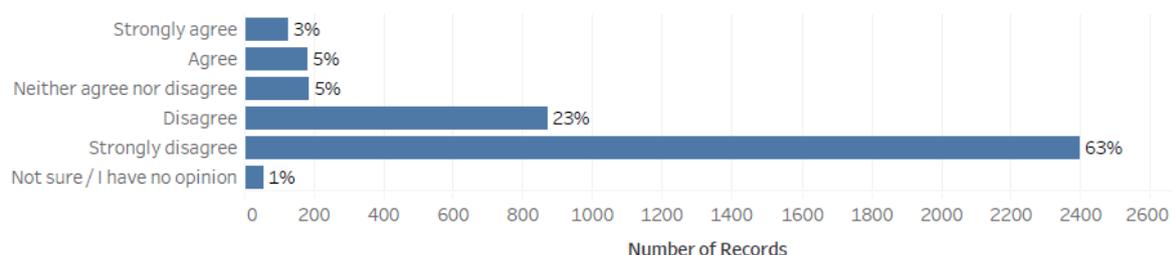
Where should the County Council make savings?

Respondents we asked ***“To what extent do you agree or disagree that children’s centres are an appropriate area for the county council to make savings?”***

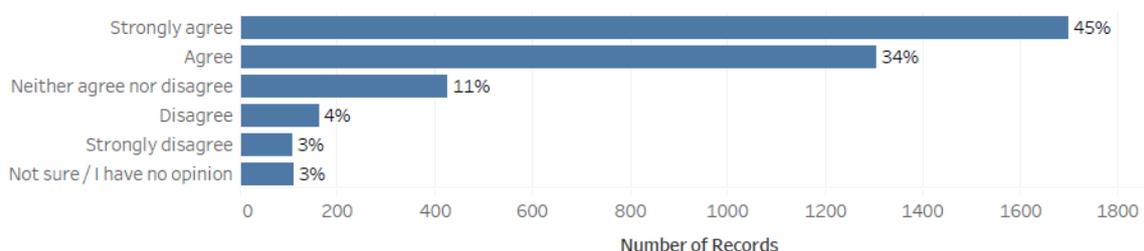
There was strong *disagreement* (86%) that children’s centres are an appropriate area to make savings and strong *agreement* (79%) that ***“Savings should be made from other county council services before making any savings from children’s centres?”***

These findings were reflected across all boroughs.

Children’s Centre’s are an appropriate area for savings - Total sample



Make savings from elsewhere - Total Sample



District and Borough specific plans - have we chosen the right locations?

Respondents were presented with the plans for each district and borough and asked whether the right locations were chosen for the centres within their borough.

They were also given the opportunity to comment on the plans for other boroughs which a small percentage of respondents chose to do.

The question asked was as follows:

“Given that we have to make these reductions and are committed to targeting funding at the areas of highest need; to what extent do you agree or disagree that we have chosen the right locations for these services?”

Below is the analysis for each borough indicating the strength of agreement.

In summary, a fifth to a third in each borough thought the right locations were chosen. Epsom and Ewell registered the highest level of agreement (39%) whereas Surrey Heath and Tandridge registered the lowest level of agreement (17%).

D&B	% agreement
Elmbridge	20%
Epsom & Ewell	39%
Guildford	21%
Mole Valley	18%
Reigate & Banstead	28%
Runnymede	25%
Spelthorne	27%
Surrey Heath	17%
Tandridge	17%
Waverley	26%
Woking	23%

Find local alternatives

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statement;

“If we are unable to use the current Children’s Centre buildings we will endeavour to find a local alternative”

In summary about a fifth to a half of residents agreed that the council should endeavour to find a local alternative. Spelthorne recorded the highest level of agreement (53%) and Guildford the lowest level of agreement (21%).

D&B	% agreement
Elmbridge	36%
Epsom & Ewell	42%
Guildford	21%
Mole Valley	47%
Reigate & Banstead	28%
Runnymede	50%
Spelthorne	53%
Surrey Heath	42%
Tandridge	39%
Waverley	49%
Woking	45%

2. The qualitative analysis

Within the Family Resilience Consultation respondents could answer up to two free text questions in the general questionnaire and one free text question for each district and borough. The average word length per response was approximately 50 words. Each of these responses were tagged drawing on 49 possible tags. In the final analysis this was reduced to 43 as 6 tags registered less than 0.1% response. Most responses had three or four tags attached. The overall frequencies of each of the tags provided an indicator of residents' main concerns with the proposals. The tags for the two main free text questions are analysed below. Later in the questionnaire residents were asked for their views on specific district and borough plans. These have been analysed qualitatively and reported for each D&B in Section 3.

The frequency counts for all the tags:

The responses to the two main the open ended questions were tagged with the same 43 tags.

The free text questions were:

“Do you have any comments on the new family resilience approach?”

“Is there anything else we should think about/ be aware of when making changes to the children’s centres? For example, do you have any ideas about how we can make sure that all children and families who need help and support get the services they need when they need them within the funding available?”

For both questions the vast majority of respondents focussed on the proposed closure of children’s centres and the responses followed a very similar profile. For this reason the overall response to both questions has been summarised in one overall tag analysis.

The highest percentage recorded for a tag (on either question) is listed below.

<u>Tag descriptions for the open ended free text questions:</u>	% of the total sample	Approximate number of residents
DO NOT SUPPORT the proposals	26.20%	995
CCs should be available to everyone - ALL families need help	13.60%	516
How they have personally benefited from Children’s centres	13.50%	513
Plans will result in ISOLATION	12.00%	456
BIG MISTAKE -makes no sense to close CCs	11.10%	421
LOCATIONS- Remaining centres will be too far away/too expensive to get to	8.70%	330
SPECIFIC BOROUGH comments	8.70%	330
Access issues	8.10%	308
Community Benefits of Children’s Centres	7.00%	266
Better off families will lose out ; Non-poverty related issues have not been taken into account	6.60%	251
Taking part of the community away	4.60%	175
SUPPORT for the proposals (EARLY IINTERVENTION)	4.20%	159
Negative language (Evil, Shocking, Ridiculous)	4.10%	156

The whole COMMUNITY will suffer	4.00%	152
LOCATIONS of CCs- need to rethink these	3.90%	148
Has the variation in NEED been taken into account?	3.70%	140
Contradiction between SCC Early Help vision and closing Children's centres	3.50%	133
SUGGESTION - Charge for specific services	3.20%	122
Undermines Early Intervention	3.10%	118
Positive response	3.00%	114
The most vulnerable will be affected	3.00%	114
SUGGESTION- supply more information on services provided by schools and health centres	2.90%	110
Remaining centres will be stretched	1.60%	61
SUGGESTIONS - Other	1.60%	61
We will LOSE SERVICES and specialism	1.60%	61
Creates stigma for poor people	1.10%	42
SUGGESTION - Provide outreach services/Mobile centres	1.00%	38
SUGGESTION- More volunteers	1.00%	38
SUGGESTION- Make use of other services and BUILDINGS	0.90%	34
SUGGESTION - Provide free/cheap transport to the centres	0.90%	34
There are very limited other SERVICES in the area	0.80%	30
Surrey are "Inadequate" and not up to the job	0.70%	27
Find Funding cuts from somewhere else	0.60%	23
Misleading/Leading questionnaire	0.60%	23
SUPPORT for the proposals (BOROUGH PLANS)	0.60%	23
LOCATIONS- RURAL areas will be even more isolated	0.50%	19
Would pay more tax to keep them open	0.50%	19
Military Families	0.30%	11
Where is the evidence of high need in these areas	0.30%	11
SUGGESTION- Reduce opening hours	0.30%	11
We already pay enough tax - we should keep our Children's centres open	0.10%	4

Reading the qualitative report

The 43 tags have been grouped into themes in the sections below.

The frequency counts for each tag are followed by a qualitative description of the findings.

For ease of reading the % prevalence for each tag has been included rather than the actual number of responses. To get a sense of the actual numbers involved, the typical numbers of people for each percentage of the total sample is as follows:

%	Number
0.20%	8
0.50%	19
1%	38
3%	114
5%	190
10%	380
20%	760
30%	1140

Unless stated otherwise, all the quotes are from residents who currently make use of children's centres or have made use of children's centres in the past. *PGC of 0-4 year old* means *Parent, Grandparent or Carer of a 0-4 year old*

Within this consultation there were specific plans outlined for each D&B. Separate reports for each D&B can be found in section 3.

The Findings

Strengthening/Undermining communities

Tags included under this heading	%
CCs should be available to everyone - ALL families need help	13.60%
How they have personally benefited from children's centres	13.50%
Plans will result in ISOLATION	12.00%
BIG MISTAKE -makes no sense to close CCs	11.10%
Community Benefits of children's centres	7.00%
Better off families will lose out ; Non-poverty related issues have not been taken into account	6.60%
Taking part of the community away	4.60%
The whole COMMUNITY will suffer	4.00%
Contradiction between SCC Early Help vision and closing children's centres	3.50%
Undermines Early Intervention	3.10%

The most vulnerable will be affected	3.00%
Creates stigma for poor people	1.10%
Military Families	0.30%

Positive views of children’s centres.

Many residents reported a positive view of children’s centres and the impact they have had on families and the community.

Some residents supported their response by describing how they had benefited from children’s centres, usually during a difficult time as first time parents (13.5%). Others described what they believe to be the important opportunity children’s centres bring for parents from different backgrounds to meet and support each other.

Part of the opportunity here is to ensure that all families, including and inclusive of those in most need, have access to the facilities, otherwise this is another form of discrimination. To make strong communities, families from all income spectrums should be able to interact and make use of a service which could be a great leveller.

Mole Valley

When we had our son, it was a vital resource. The Dad's Group was fantastic and meant that I had somewhere to go to speak to other new dads and let my wife have some time on her own for a while. Both things were vital when dealing with a new baby and helping my son and I to bond. In closing the centre, you would be denying parents something incredibly important.

Reigate & Banstead

Children’s centres are vital. As a new mum I felt very isolated and didn’t have many friends in the area where I live due to spending all my weekday time in the city at work. Having a chance to visit children’s centre gave me a sense of belonging and help grasp such a massive change in life as having a baby. Services should be free for everyone or there should be a fee for everyone as any different would create a further division in communities.

Elmbridge PGC of 0-4 year old

Respondents agreed that investing earlier is a good idea but the current plans undermine the objectives of early intervention

There was strong support for this idea of “investing more in services that help families earlier?” with over 81% agreeing (closed question), however, several respondents felt that

there was a contradiction between SCC Early Help vision and closing children's centres (3.5%) stating that closing children's centres will undermine this objective (3.1%).

Transferring all the families to one centre in the area will not help as vulnerable families will not venture into a place they don't know with people they don't know. These families will go under the radar and issues will not be picked up until the children start school.

Reigate & Banstead PGC of 0-4 year old

It makes sense to keep the centres in the areas of highest need. However by reducing universal services I feel families may end up needing more specialist help in the long run.

Woking PGC of 0-4 year old

Please reconsider the closure of the centres proposed. They are vital to new parents and children, I will guarantee that more mums will end up hospitalised with postnatal mental health issues if these support centres go. I was one of them and yes I would have been hospitalised had it not been for the support of my local health visitors and children's centre workers. The withdrawal of this universal support will mean more strain on NHS services in the long run. I would be more than welcome to pay money for some services or volunteer.

Waverley PGC of 0-4 year old

There is no doubt that this reshuffle is a cut to services, I understand Surrey is over a barrel, but a group of really motivated staff are going to be needed to stop families falling through the net and being a financial drain further down the line.

Elmbridge

Targeting services at those who need them most

Two fifths of the sample (38%) agreed with the proposal to allocate funding to children's centres in areas where there are more families on low incomes (closed question). This response was supported with some respondents stating that children's centres should be available to everyone because all families, and particularly first time parents, need the help and the support of other mothers – no matter what their circumstances (13.6%). Some were concerned that better off families would lose out and that not enough consideration had been given to non- poverty related issues affecting all social classes e.g. mental health issues. Furthermore, some believed targeting may result in the stigmatisation of the poor (1.1%).

Don't forget that perceived wealth doesn't equal good parenting. Don't forget that figures/statistics for a total area may not represent the smaller areas within it. Don't forget early intervention is for all. Early intervention and services provided by the children's centres have had life changing effects on families and must continue for all not just for those in deprived areas (assessed by way too simple means).

Waverley

Please don't assume that better off families don't need help. We are as likely to have difficulties with any aspect of parenting, from breastfeeding through to the teen years, as any other family, and there is little to no other help out there, free or paid for.

Surrey Heath

Having centres in all types of areas of the borough will attract a mixture of families encouraging a diverse mix of people attending. Some lonely parents are put off going if have a reputation of only be able to attend if low income. Also if working part time can have a choice of days if activities are run on different days at different centres.

Epsom and Ewell

Isolation and health

Whilst the benefits (health and social) of children's centres to children were clear to respondents, some believed that the role centres play in maintaining the mental health of mothers, particularly single mothers is underestimated (12%). In particular they felt that, the isolation experienced by mothers, especially new mothers can result in serious mental health problems; they felt that children's centres help to alleviate the isolation and support people through what could be a potentially difficult time. This issue and many others contributed to their overall view that closing centres would be a "serious mistake and misjudgement" (11.1%)

The only way that you can make sure that ALL families get support and help (which let's face it we will ALL need at some point) is by NOT closing centres. They are vital to provide advice, health, activities and so much more. Distance will mean that people are far less likely to access them and therefore this will put more pressure on an already strained NHS and other services. What about disabled parents or those who do not have/cannot afford cars or public transport? You are also totally missing the point that this is how parents and children make friends - this can be a vital link for new parents, those who feel isolated and youngsters making connections.

Guilford

I was very thankful for the local Sure Start centre at St Piers in Lingfield. As a single mother who suffered abuse, and felt had isolated moving to a new area, the staff and parents were amazing at making us feels welcome and allowing my daughter to have positive social interactions with her peers from a young age.

Tandridge PGC of 5-11 year old

Community impact

Some respondents (4%) that the whole community would suffer if children's centres were to close, and that an important part of the community was being "taken away" (4.6%). There was a belief that specialist services would no longer be available; in particular, isolated vulnerable people in remote areas unable to afford public transport would suffer most (3%).

I think the children centre play an invaluable part in the community. They need to be kept and provide the services they currently offer. New mothers irrelevant of income require this support locally. It is hugely informative, supportive and provides a place to meet at difficult emotional times. I really ask that the county council reassess what they are trying to do and find other ways to provide funding to these centres.

Surrey Heath

I am concerned that if you remove children's centres from some areas there will be even more strain on the local nurseries and schools as well as Children's Services. Schools cannot cope as it is and currently children's centres help to support many families at the Early Help stage or before and if this was not in place I believe referrals to the MASH would increase. By removing children's centres in some areas you will be losing the heart of some towns, support will be lost and families and schools will suffer as a result. I strongly urge you to reconsider, children's centres do make a difference and from personal experience I can vouch for the excellent service Weybridge provides.

Runnymede; PCG of a child aged 12-15years and a community representative

Geography and Access

Tags included under this heading	%
LOCATIONS- Remaining centres will be too far away/too expensive to get to	8.70%
SPECIFIC BOROUGH comments	8.70%
Access issues	8.10%
LOCATIONS of CCs- need to rethink these	3.90%
LOCATIONS- RURAL areas will be even more isolated	0.50%

When asked a closed question about specific borough plans, a fifth to a third in each borough thought the right locations were chosen. Epsom and Ewell registered the highest

level of agreement (39%) whereas Surrey Heath registered the lowest level of agreement (17%).

Access issues were highlighted in the free text responses, with people concerned that the remaining centres would be too far away for some families to walk to or too expensive to get to by public transport (8.7%). There was some mention of the semi-rural geography of some parts of Surrey and how closing centres would exacerbate the access problems (0.5%). There was a general sense that Surrey CC needed to rethink the location for many of the remaining centres (3.9%) with the observation that in some boroughs the remaining centres will be too close together leaving huge areas of the boroughs with no accessible centres. Some stated that the current and planned provision for outreach services would not be sufficient to address these access issues.

More on this issue and a discussion of the choice of the remaining centres can be found in the section 3, “*Response to the specific D&B plans*”.

I believe that smaller hubs would be more beneficial than fewer larger ones. Services need to be embedded within local communities in order to make them accessible to those without transport - public transport with young children isn't easy!

Mole Valley

Part of the opportunity here is to ensure that all families, including and inclusive of those in most need, have access to the facilities, otherwise this is another form of discrimination. To make strong communities, families from all income spectrums should be able to interact and make use of a service which could be a great leveller.

Mole Valley

My local children's centre is Boxgrove primary school, and their play group is nearby, I can walk there, I would not like see any closures resulting in having to go to town to a children's centre or group as it would cost money that I do not have spare so would make me and my child secluded resulting in my anxiety getting worse

Guildford

I strongly disagree on taking the mobile children centres away as they help families that are unable to attend the centres.

Reigate and Banstead

Closing down so many centres will mean that the available services are too far away for some families in need to access. Also care will need to be taken in how the services are presented so that it doesn't seem that they are only for low income

families or those who are already known to children's services. It would be easy for people to feel excluded.

Woking

Resource constraints

Tags included under this heading	%
Remaining centres will be stretched	1.60%
We will LOSE SERVICES and specialism	1.60%
There are very limited other SERVICES in the area	0.80%
Find Funding cuts from somewhere else	0.60%
Would pay more tax to keep them open	0.50%
We already pay enough tax - we should keep our Children's centres open	0.10%

Financial/ funding issues

When asked directly there was strong *disagreement* (86%) that “*children’s centres are an appropriate area to make savings*” and strong *agreement* (82%) that “*Savings should be made from other county council services before making any savings from children’s centres?*” These findings were developed further with discussion of tax issues. A small number of people stated that “they would pay more tax to keep them open” (0.5%), whilst a few stated that they already pay enough tax and this should be used to keep the centres open (0.1%)

I think that supporting families and children in their early years is a vital service which the county council should provide, as it may well prevent problems from developing in the future for those families and children and so is valuable for all of society. Consequently it would be better to increase the Council tax rather than cut back on these children's services.

Runnymede

As someone who is not on low income, I would gladly pay more of a fee to use services to support a lower/free fee for those on low incomes.

Spelthorne

The funding should be cut from elsewhere... like salaries of those higher up who propose these cuts

Tandridge

Remaining services will be overstretched and some existing services will be lost

Children’s centres are seen as a community asset providing universal service to all sections of the community rich and poor. Many respondents report a positive experience of children’s centres and wish for that experience to be available to future generations. One of the reasons given is that respondents felt there are very few, if any, similar services available to families – or at least they are not aware of them (0.8%). There was a concern that specialist services will be lost and access to universal services will be eroded (1.6%). Furthermore, they felt that many of the remaining centres will be overstretched having to absorb many more users (1.6%)

You're overlooking the other advantages that the children's centres offer, they offered me a lot of support when I felt depressed after my first child, and I had no other support. They also run play sessions that you don't have to pre-book in weekly iterations. For many working parents who do not work a set shift pattern that I know these are the only activities they can take their children to. You just need to charge more for them to those who can afford it. £1/session is too low, charge more (e.g. £4-5) to those who can afford it and people would still come and as I said previously it's one of very few places that encourage different social classes of parents to mix. Plus they are the only providers of any kind in Surrey offering a dad's club at weekends. My husband has found these invaluable to meet other fathers. He wouldn't know any other dad's otherwise. Parenting can be very lonely for both sexes, local children's services are essential to alleviate this.

Reigate & Banstead

There are many families which need support which live in so called affluent areas - the distribution of FEET children in central Godalming would support this. It is undermining the work of highly skilled professional staff to think they can simply be replaced by volunteers. Families cannot necessarily be "turned around" with a short period of intervention. Many of our families require years of support and the withdrawal of this level of support will require more social service intervention. This will ultimately be more expensive for the County. Primary schools are already overstretched and unable to cope with the level of special educational needs and issues such as toilet training. The withdrawal of local services in the centre of Godalming will not assist such concerns.

Guildford

Innovation and suggestions

Tags included under this heading	%
SUGGESTION - Charge for specific services	3.20%
SUGGESTION- supply more information on services provided by schools and health centres	2.90%
SUGGESTION - Provide outreach services/Mobile centres	1.00%
SUGGESTION- More volunteers	1.00%
SUGGESTION- Make use of other services and BUILDINGS	0.90%
SUGGESTION - Provide free/cheap transport to the centres	0.90%
SUGGESTION- Reduce opening hours	0.30%

Respondents were encouraged to suggest ideas for how Surrey CC could make sure that all children and families requiring support can get the services they need within the funding available. Below is a sample of the responses. In the D&B reports there are more detailed responses to the specific D&B plans.

Charging

A few people did provide some helpful suggestions as to how Surrey CC can keep more centres open or direct people to other services.

Responding to a closed question nearly two thirds of respondents (61%) agreed with the proposal that “families who can afford it should pay a fixed charge for certain activities and this was reflected in the open responses with “charging for specific services” the most commonly suggested idea (3.2%).

I think that people could pay a donation or say £1 per visit to help keep the local centres open

Reigate & Banstead

Do not take away small centres which are easily accessible. Do more fundraising events. Charge for activities. ...means-tested. Families pay hundreds for a soft play...why not harness some of that esp if kept local. Do bigger one off events.

Woking

Supply more information about other services

The second most mentioned suggestion was that SCC supply more information on services provided by schools and health centres (2.9%).

Probably more information on the service given when you are pregnant and possibly having a midwife appointment held at the centre so that people can see them and realise they are offering a service to help (I work within the children's education sector and often the people who need the service the most are afraid that they will be judged by the staff or at unwilling to visit and see what is on offer)

Epsom & Ewell, PGC of 0-4 year old and practitioner

Have staff out in the community more and make sure other health care professionals know what is available so that they can inform families

Reigate and Banstead

Making children's centres more accessible to vulnerable families by supplying information on services provided at schools and health centres - this will encourage those less inclined to ask for support to feel more comfortable and will also be of support to social service dept before a more serious issue arises.

Spelthorne

Volunteers

When asked a direct question, 75% agreed with the proposal that children's centres could play a role in supporting local communities to take part in volunteering to help children and their families. This was also suggested by a small number of people in their open ended responses (1%)

Some, however, cautioned against taking this idea too far and replacing a trained children's centre professional workforce with increasing numbers of volunteers.

If you are going to seek volunteers, do it properly. There is a huge amount of spare parenting capacity in our area and a huge demand for it. With appropriate training and support (which requires MONEY) you could establish a mentoring approach with earlier, gentler interventions. It will not work unless the volunteers trust you not to try to do it on the cheap.

Reigate & Banstead

Don't make people feel worried about not being able to contribute. For activities get people to bring the stuff they need or pay towards the cost of materials. Not all families are able to contribute financially so offer different methods i.e. volunteering. More confidence and self-esteem courses and help with integrating into the community

Mole Valley

I believe that people should be able to volunteer if they would like to but the service should still have a core team who are qualified in the field to provide the appropriate support, expertise and training of these voluntary staff to make sure everyone is being treated appropriately and safely.

Spelthorne

Mobile and outreach services

When asked a direct question, the majority supported keeping mobile centres open (one fifth of people agreed with the proposal to close them) with some suggesting, that opening more mobile centres would alleviate some of the access issues described above (1%).

Keep outreach workers and groups run for families these are valuable and provide amazing services

Runnymede

I feel every centre should have support outreach worker who is free to link up with the have midwife and to tell people more what these centres do. A lot of the support workers cannot get out to see the people due to added paperwork and of five duties these should be down to office staff. I think travel should be offered and to keep the outreach bus as often people cannot drive and get to these places a paid mini bus could offer this or a weekly visit from the support worker.

Tandridge

Yes, any of the centres that have the ability to mentor best practice for other centres should be retained. Their ability to support a broader geographical population should be resourced and augmented by elements like the mobile service.

Elmbridge

Provide free /cheap transport to the centres

Providing free transport to the centres was suggested by only a few respondents (0.9%)

Availability of transport to centres. Not everyone drives and arguably those who most need help are less likely to drive. Given the location of my borough (Tandridge) people living in the more out of the way places would face an unreasonable journey to the proposed centre at Marden Lodge because of the public transport layout.

Tandridge

Availability of services to those families who have difficulty in accessing/ commuting to new areas - free shuttle buses?

Spelthorne- Practitioner

Make use of other services and buildings

There were some suggestions to make use of other buildings and community assets (0.9%)

Children's centres could be run as outreach in other venues: churches and community centres. Mobile workers and play and learn sessions do not need their own centres- services should share spaces. Better to keep the service in an area via outreach workers using other venues.

Runnymede

Dealing with cuts is not easy so I understand that the service needs to adapt, but all parents need support adapting to their new role regardless of their financial income. For example, if it is not financially viable to keep a centre open then why not use other venues to offer services from. For example a church or village hall. Or a community room, such is available in Addlestone Tesco. What matters is the access to support, not where it is provided.

Runnymede

I believe that smaller hubs would be more beneficial than fewer larger ones. Services need to be embedded within local communities in order to make them accessible to those without transport - public transport with young children isn't easy!

Mole Valley

I am concerned that the number of local places for the most needy in our society may be cut. I think the five cost saving consultations should be considered in the round and prioritised accordingly. I support proposals to reduce management costs by establishing satellite centres, but not a reduction in front line staff or services- we should make the needed cuts elsewhere in areas such as library's which have a majority of users of greater means to help themselves or travel to alternatives. Preston in particular is one of the most disadvantaged areas of Surrey and should be prioritised.

Reigate and Banstead

Reduce opening hours

There were suggestions that more centres could be kept open if the opening hours were reduced (0.3%). This idea was revisited in response to some of the D&B plans.

Instead of closing carte blanche do a rolling timetable for the centres. Keep them all open but on a reduced timetable , the way you have done with the libraries.

Woking

Keep as many children's Centres open as possible. Reduce opening to 4 days per week if you have to for budget purposes. Offer more services for older children

(rather than aiming at 0-5 year olds). Advertise at all local schools, primary and secondary and at health centres. Run topical events such as guidance for parents on social media and online gaming.

Elmbridge

Local centres spread out in Surrey are important as not all families have cars. If smaller centres are shut families would have to rely on the infrequent bus services. Maybe the smaller centres could be open for fewer hours/days to stay open.

Elmbridge

Perception of Surrey CC and the proposals in general

Tags included under this heading	%
DO NOT SUPPORT the proposals	26.2%
BIG MISTAKE -makes no sense to close CCs	11.10%
Negative Language (Evil, Shocking, Ridiculous)	4.10%
Has the variation in NEED been taken into account?	3.70%
Surrey are "Inadequate" and not up to the job	0.70%
Misleading/Leading questionnaire	0.60%
Where is the evidence of high need in these areas	0.30%
Positive response	3.00%

Some questioned whether the areas identified as having higher need were correct (0.3%) or whether the variation in need had indeed been taken into account (3.7%) usually with reference to the needs of those not on a low income. Many respondents clearly stated they did not support the proposals (26.2%) and thought closing children centres “made no sense”. (11.1%)

Closing so many centres is only going to have a negative impact. How will less centres serve more people? Only having centres in areas of high need is dangerous. It will create a divide in the community and create a stigma around the use of children’s centres.

Issues like post-natal depression, domestic violence & SEN don't discriminate between rich & poor. Even the wealthiest parents can experience these problems so why should they be cut off from support? Why should it be harder for them in their time of need?

I encourage you to read the Sutton Trust STOP START report.

Elmbridge

Mental health, disability and family issues don't discriminate against financial status, background or where you live. Changing the centres to only help those with measurable issues that fit nicely into a box on a form will attach a stigma to those that use the service. This will further alienate those very people you are trying to help. If the centre is only seen to be for "those" families, no one will want to be seen going into it!

In my opinion this would be a catastrophic disaster for all families - please speak to people who will be affected by this and not just those who hold the purse strings.

Waverley

More funding for early years children's centres to continue the brilliant work they do. Cut back on high wages in Surrey cc. Surrey are failing children now, this will only lead to more failings and children slipping through the net!

Surrey Heath

To only have children's centres in what is deemed more deprived areas is stupid and excluding hundreds of families. There are pockets of deprivation in all areas of villages or towns, what about people that can't drive or afford public transport. As usual this decision has been rushed to 'save money' and no consideration to families has been thought through.

Good luck with your next Ofsted I've a feeling you will most certainly need it!

Waverley

The proposal is contradicting itself. If you look at data and this is supposed to be based on deprivation. Please explain how Ashford and Shepperton are more deprived than Sunbury Cross? This is not preventative work and families will suffer. Even with satellite centres families from Sunbury won't be able to access Clarendon or Saxon most families don't drive. Kenyngton Manor Children's Centre has always been offered services to the community like the Work Club helping people back into employment. OFSTED may have said Children Services were Inadequate but I know Kenyngton Manor Children's Centre was rated GOOD.

Spelthorne

3. Response to specific D&B plans

Respondents were given a brief description of the plans for their district and borough which included a list of which centres would remain open and which would close or remain as a satellite centre. For each borough the free text responses were analysed and the key issues summarised and supported by quotes from respondents.

3.1 Elmbridge

Many respondents thought children's centres were a valuable community asset and many people shared their personal testimonies of how the centres have helped them

With a new baby or young children, having to travel to a different town is a barrier to accessing services. Children's centres offer the informal help and advice which allows a new mum to navigate the significant shift in life. Drop in services within my local town have allowed me to ask for help before I knew I needed it and meet other local mums.

I can't speak highly enough how valuable I found the Weybridge children centre when I had my baby. The services provided by the team gave me a sense of belonging and helped my make other mum friends and supported my mental health.

My children's centre has made a massive difference to my life. I was a new mum, i had no mum friends and i felt very isolated. If it hadn't been for the centre I would not have made friends, I wouldn't have developed confidence. They supported me through a tough time. I can't thank them enough. If it wasn't for the centre I know i would be putting a strain on the NHS with postnatal depression.

Three Rivers is fantastic - please keep its services. Invaluable to families and communities in Molesey over a wide demographic.

Please don't close the Burhill centre. They are amazing and I needed it so badly we I had my baby. It's an amazing place for my baby to learn and I can't imagine what I'll do if it goes and I have another one. It's invaluable.

Children's centres offer the opportunity for early intervention to prevent problems getting worse

'Nipping in the bud' simpler issues, earlier PREVENTS abuse, poverty etc. etc. PREVENTION is AS crucial as CURE!!

I think this huge reduction in services directly contradicts the changes in the Elmbridge population and demographic. Increasing numbers of families are moving

to the area and risk being left with no access to facilities helping to develop children ready for school

Issues about access were mentioned by many residents. Poor public transport and unaffordable fares were cited as key barriers to access.

The locations would stop me attending any sessions. There is limited public transport and the cost is £6.60 -£8 for me to attend the proposed areas. I do not have access to a car. My anxiety would stop me travelling. I think Burhill should remain open then there would be cover at the top and bottom of the area that everyone could access. I use Burhill as a garden as I do not have one. I use the sensory room as my son has emerging needs. I can walk and access the friendly, supportive centre and meet friends I have made. Without the centre I would be lonely and isolated with my children.

Public transport in Surrey is extremely poor and costly so those most in need of support are less likely to travel. There are very few community resources in the areas affected, closing the centres will affect the whole community

The coverage is too sparse. I understand the need to prioritise low income families but the removal of so many centres - specifically the one in Weybridge which is already well attended and in a perfect town centre locations feels a step too far.

Also by closing centres and expecting people to travel you are discriminating people who don't have access to a car. Public transport is hard to navigate with a buggy and can be unreliable and expensive.

For families that are isolated, and that do not have access to a car the transport links are sparse and expensive. There needs to be a provision in each area for play sessions to enable children to mix with their peers and the parents to also mix with other parents to stop them becoming further isolated

Closing five centres and leaving two to service 11 villages was seen as insufficient for the borough.

I think the reduction in the number of children centres will lead to much less support being available to new parents. I personally would struggle to travel to the proposed sites to use the services as much as I wished to and as much as I needed to for my child's requirements. I think this massive reduction in sites will lead to more issues with families as the opportunity to pick up problems and provide support will be vastly reduced

I think cutting down from 7 children centre's to 2 will have a massive impact on the support that families will receive. Outreach workers in both existing children's centres are going to be stretched over 11 different areas which will add on to their work load and travel. I believe that because of this change, there should be more outreach jobs in order to share the work load.

EVERY Centre serves its own Community and is an invaluable service. To cut from 7 to 2 centres is unreal! Get BIG companies to support their local Community!

Some thought the remaining centres were too close together leaving the rest of the borough poorly service

Walton and Molesey are in close proximity, so if you were needing to shut some, surely it would be better having two centres that served different areas, so it's easily accessed by all

The selected locations are only 2 miles apart which would disadvantage anyone living in Claygate, Oxshott and other areas of Elmbridge as they would have long and awkward journeys to access these facilities. Isn't it possible to find 2 locations that are not on top of one another?

Keeping two in such small proximity seems ludicrous. Personally I don't believe any should close these are vital parts of the community. Surely small changes and charges would mean they were sustainable.

Some thought the needs of those not on low incomes had not been given enough consideration

Regardless of financial stability all the women attending had one thing in common, they needed support within their community and the centre was able to provide this, without it, many of us would have either fallen to depression or felt inadequate in our roles as new parents.

I think it would be selfish to take any of these centres away. It provides parents with so much knowledge, support and it's a great place to meet other parents. If I didn't have the centre in Weybridge I wouldn't have the friends I have now and I would be sitting in all week with my anxiety and depression. It doesn't matter whether or not the area is wealthy or not, there are still people in need of knowledge, friendship and support

I think it's a real shame to close The Dittons centre. While I understand this is an affluent area families still need support. I used the breastfeeding clinic so much when my daughter was young and would have probably given up had I not gone to them.

Your proposal is confusing 'need' with 'low income'. They are not the same thing. Not by a long way. I could pay for a Children's Centre service but it doesn't exist privately.

I agree that in Elmbridge the CC should focus their work in and on areas that most need it. The issue is that these areas are not always the most obvious and the demographic in Elmbridge is an ever changing issue. When set up the CC did

support the most high need areas but this has changed significantly over time. Some areas of Elmbridge appear to have minimal need but this can be deceiving.

More consideration should be given to the pockets of poverty in affluent areas

Although Elmbridge is considered a wealthy borough there are pockets of extreme poverty. These families are often hard to reach and may find travelling to support challenging and costly.

If centres are being closed there needs to be very good signposting to help those in the area who need support easily find where to get it. Don't assume affluent areas don't have vulnerable families.

There was concern that expertise could be lost and replaced by untrained volunteers

Before you commit to any such plan I think you need to seriously think about retaining expertise and building from it.

Do not close any children's centres. Do not insult the professionals who work there that their vital position could be easily filled with a raft of volunteers.

The resulting pressure on the remaining centres and others local services was a concern for some residents.

You are asking families in desperate need of help and support who usually are on limited incomes to travel great distances to access the services they desperately need. Why close Hersham? It has great pockets of under privilege children and families - you will be putting greater pressure on the local schools to assist these families.

By closing so many centres services to those in need and without transport will become restricted. It may also mean that the remaining centres may have to turn people away from sessions/services due to them becoming oversubscribed.

There were suggestions as to how to fund services and distribute the available resources.

Weybridge children centre has been a lifeline for me as a new parent. It also offered great courses and opportunities to meet other parents. It should not be closed but should the centre need more funding introduce payable courses etc.

This whole scheme should be funded by central government, if felt necessary. Far too many people are only too keen to spend other people's money on schemes of perceived high morality, as previously stated this is not what local government should be for.

The council should work closely with neighbouring boroughs so that people can access services closest to them regardless of council - e.g. Thames Ditton to Surbiton/Kingston, Claygate to Chessington

I don't think that the council should close all the centres in Elmbridge, they should instead allocate some part-time centres in order to better serve the whole community of Elmbridge.

I would not want to have to travel to Walton on Thames or West Molesey for children's service. I'd be quite happy to pay for services if it meant the centre in Weybridge stayed open.

3.2 Epsom and Ewell

The proposals for Epsom received support from several respondents, most of them current or past users of the remaining centres.

I feel this is the best way forward to have two centres

This seems to be a reasonable approach. These centres are near areas which are currently not the most economically and socially favoured, as evidenced in social and census data in Surrey-I They are also accessible by public transport.

I think keeping the two larger centres open makes sense. Epsom is very central in the borough. Both centres are close to areas where there is higher deprivation, so it makes sense.

The only comment or suggestion I have on this is that the Stoneleigh Children's centre covers a whole other area and is not near any of the others. Whereas the St Martins' Children's Centre is located very near the Epsom Primary Centre. I would suggest closing only one - St Martin's but keeping the other three as they cover the borough in a fairer manner

Respondents expressed their support for St Martins and Meadow

St Martins is a popular highly used centre. The building would struggle to be used for anything else being on a school site. It is a wonderful purpose built setting. Do not lose the network - close youth centres close libraries but hands off the CC!

I agree that there is probably a degree of overlap between St Martin's and Pound Lane. It would be a real waste to have the room and garden at St Martin's stand empty, will it be used by the nursery, or could it be available for rent for community activities?

I don't think Meadow or St Martins should close. These centres are a great resource for the local community. The family days, dad's days, play and learn groups are all extremely well attended and help so many families. I know for sure that especially Meadow supports lots of families who feel isolated or who are suffering from lack of social support. They haven't got family nearby or no one to talk to for advice. English is also a second language for a lot of local families.

While targeting the more deprived areas was supported by many, some thought that the needs of others were not given enough consideration

Why only in low income areas - you can work part time and just making ends meet and still need access to activities. You could be a single parent living with parents.

I think is unfair to disregard the 'small amount of people living in a low income' in this part of the borough. The cost of living in this borough is high so those lone parents such as myself who are unable to access social housing because there is nothing available are struggling to survive financially which has an affect of all areas of family life. I would also say that families who are earning more money are also likely to struggle with other aspects of life such as parenting, relationship problems and mental health.

There were concerns that the plans could undermine the principle of early intervention

I feel that Epsom/ Ewell has more Low Budget families than you think some of which rely on these centres as they cannot afford £4-5 to let their child socialise elsewhere and a reduced or complete removal of services will be worse for the children's development.

There were, however, concerns that large areas of the borough would not have access to a remaining centres due to the distance required to travel by car or the distance and cost required to travel on a poor public transport system. There were requests to conduct a proposer feasibility study to assess these issues.

A large area with families, often isolated, has no access, very little public transport, the JAM's will be even more isolated!!

There is no easy parking at any of these centres - if you take the local provision away, people will drive for their appointments only, but not for the social groups/activities when parking is such an issue. These social groups are so important in helping the well-being of new parents, they shouldn't be under-estimated or devalued.

If you look at my address, XXXXXXXXXX, you'll see it's on the side of Cuddington furthest away from Meadow. You have to do a 10 minute drive as it is to get there. This would double for any of the other centres. I think if I had a second baby, I simply wouldn't bother with the weigh ins. I'd probably get my own scales and weigh my baby myself. If I was a new mum, I'd be tearing my hair out. Do a travel study? Just because I have a good household income does not preclude by baby from having a poor latch or me getting PND. I also pay huge taxes, it's not fair that I would be unable to access services.

There were concerns that the capacity of the remaining centres would not be sufficient. There was also a suggestion that more money should be sent on frontline outreach services with Riverview being the hub.

I live in Stoneleigh and the area has seen a big change in demographic in the 5yrs since I've lived here. A large number of older people have sold up and young families have replaced them. I know the area is independently wealthy on average and don't

disagree with focusing on areas with lower incomes but I think the volume and concentration of families in our area also needs consideration.

If cutting down on locations is the answer, will the opportunities to attend a session increase? At the moment some sessions held at Riverview are only once a month and then it's limited to xx spaces of which are prioritised to those who live nearest. Will this change!? The offering needs to be increased to ensure you can reach the now wider catchment area for each centre.

Concerned that two buildings will drain the reduced budget when I would prefer to see money spent on front line staff with Riverview being the hub. Front line staff would have a greater presence in the community using Surrey buildings to meet the needs of families in the borough.

3.3 Guildford

There was support for all the children's centres and a defence of those proposed for closure. People expressed their personal experience of using the centres. Boxgrove generated many comments and pleas to prevent its closure. To a lesser extent so did St Pauls and Ash Grange.

To take Boxgrove children centre and all the help support and play and learn groups away is not right Boxgrove has been a real life line to me and my family as a survivor of domestic abuse to now take this service away from me and isolate me is so wrong I am unable to travel to the other 2 children's Centres as I am on capped benefits

Closing Boxgrove Centre removes all help for the Bushy Hill area, which is highlighted as area of need. A lot of support is given to mothers with PND, this illness has nothing to do with income or social class. I used to take my foster children to Boxgrove Centre to and met local families. How can you have the aim to build local communities if you are shutting down where we meet? Make a charge for the service if you must but don't take away something so vital.

If you take out St Pauls in Tongham you will take a lifeline. Not only are you cutting a service from a community with shoddy public transport links and actually directly discriminating against the very poorest people you purport to hope to favour, but you are shutting the best children's centre in the area.

There were questions and concerns raised about access to the remaining centres and the poor public transport available. Some residents thought this would leave many poorer families isolated with them not receiving the early help they believed they were entitled to.

Don't agree with reducing the amount of smaller children centres. Some families won't be able to make the children centres that are further away and therefore may need more help than originally needed.

By making families travel further and offering support to less families you are completely contradicting OFSTEDs recommendation that we need better and more comprehensive early help services. Money you save from this will just end up going into more staff in frontline services as there will be an increase in referrals.

Surely to target the low income families they HAVE to be within PUSHCHAIR WALKING DISTANCE. Trust me, hard enough getting small child strapped into a pushchair - but attending a session a car ride away is much more challenging! Change centres to "part time" at the centres (i.e. this centre open Monday / Thursday that centre open Tuesday / Friday).

The plan to have two centres very close together when the rest of the borough will be so poorly served did not make sense to several respondents.

You are keeping the two permanent centres in locations very close to each other whilst reducing services or removing them in areas which also have large populations in need and a huge housing development which will result in much greater need. Would suggest keeping Ash as full time, one Guildford one as full time and the second Guildford as reduced services and do outreach to more rural parts of GBC

Both the Spinney and Guildford CC are within a mile of each other yet the span of Guildford Borough is huge. Parents living in the Park Barn / Bellfield's area will be able to access 2 centres within walking distance and yet the rest of the Borough will need transport to get to a centre. That is absurd when you could have just one of them operating in Guildford then 1 in Boxgrove and 1 in Ash/ Tongham area to ensure all families have a fairer chance of accessing support. They could run on the less money than the Spinney but by doing this the LA would be supporting more families across the borough.

Closure of the Boxgrove CC will mean many local families will receive no services whatsoever. The nearest CC will be miles away and will involve long journeys on snarled roads to get there - which will be a huge disincentive. Likewise with Ash Grange.

There were suggestions to make Boxgrove a satellite centre. If it were to close, more investment in public transport will be required. Furthermore, charging for services and encouraging more volunteer help were seen as part of the solution.

I feel that Boxgrove should be a satellite centre as there are a reasonably high number of families in Council housing in Boxgrove who will rely on services. The bus service from Boxgrove and Bellfield's areas into town has been reduced so it isn't that easy to travel by bus from Boxgrove to Hazel Avenue. If you close Boxgrove then you need to invest in subsidising the relevant bus services to increase their frequency and enable easier travel between Boxgrove and Bellfield's by public transport.

3.4 Mole Valley

Support was expressed for the existing centres and the value they bring to the community, particularly for the Dorking centre. Many objected to the proposed closure of the centre in Leatherhead.

It should be absolutely be managed by Dorking Nursery School and Children's Centre. The leadership and stewardship there is outstanding.

I think that is a logical place to site the new centre

It is scandalous to pull out of Leatherhead - we are losing services to Dorking all the time (Police Station, Library downgraded) yet we are just as entitled to quality local services

People need to make their town a community and you only do that by making friends and being part of something. If families needed to travel to other areas it could still feel isolating once back home. I feel there should be one in every town in Surrey. They do so much good for everyone. Young to old.

The closure of the Leatherhead site will be a disaster for struggling families in this area. This site is used by more people than the Dorking sites, despite the 'need' being greater in Dorking.

Leatherhead Children's Centre has been invaluable to me and my family since we moved home from Dubai last December - from drop in weigh clinics to play and learn, little treasures and sing and sign classes we have loved the support and meeting new people. It is very sad this centre is slated for closure - it is an amazing place that helps lots of people.

*Don't reduce services from the successful, popular, oversubscribed West Dorking site.
The team here is brilliant.*

The Leatherhead children's Centre offers great opportunities for children and families and serves a wide community. Its closure would be a big loss. It doesn't matter if there are few low - income families in the area; the children's centre still represents the only place where it's possible to seek advice from professionals and other mums and where the "resilient community" you seek to achieve is actually built.

Respondents expressed that those who are not on a low income also need help

I believe reducing the local children's centres to only Dorking would put a significant strain on new families and parents already struggling in the leatherhead area, income should not be a reason to reduce this critical facility on which all new mums, financially stable or not so rely on the early years of raising their children,, just because a family has income does not make their need for free access to this service less important.

There is an assumption that if you do not have a low income or are out of work that you do not have any problems with child rearing. Is this true and how is this proved? Obesity appears to affect a range of children.

Just because a service provider has done a good job doesn't mean they can continue to do the same on less money - they can't - services will suffer with 35% or 53% cuts as proposed.

Just because a service provider has done a good job doesn't mean they can continue to do the same on less money - they can't - services will suffer with 35% or 53% cuts as proposed.

Some respondents believed the proposals undermine the objectives of early intervention; feeling that vulnerable families will slip through the net, resulting in greater social problems later on.

Why are families on a low income targeted? All families struggle at some point, a parent with young children should have the opportunity to attend a children centre where there are known trusted professionals who can recognise anxiety/depression/ domestic violence and intervene before the situation escalates. Early intervention will cost less in the long term.

Social problems will arise from the lack of early intervention and social cohesion will be affected if centre's stay and play services are not open to all

Just having one main site in Dorking means staff will have to cover a huge geographical area across Mole Valley. Public transport links are also not very frequent or reliable in what is a largely rural borough and this means that many families won't be able to access what services are available if they only have the choice of attending one site. With a cut in funding and a smaller team of staff I fear it will increase the number of vulnerable families who simply will slip under the net.

Some questioned the purpose of the proposals and the evidence underpinning these decisions

Closing the centres is simply a cost saving exercise because of reduced Government funding rather than managing the services to provide them to those whom you say need it most.

Effectively you are closing the service in the entire north of Mole Valley and targeting it on Holmwood. This is bizarre and no evidence is offered to support this proposal. A satellite in the north of the district is surely needed too?

The difference in need between Leatherhead North and Dorking (Goodwyns) is marginal, and this does not warrant losing the Leatherhead site. This site serves the entire North of the District, and if you look at the map it is quite a large district! Leatherhead North is nearly equally deprived than Goodwyns on a number of areas, some less and some more, but this simplistic formula you have used is not good enough here. We need a main centre for the North and for the South. This warrants keeping the two main centres in Leatherhead and Dorking open. The community will absolutely come together to protect Leatherhead Trinity Children's Centre.

The majority of the concerns around proposals focussed on access - how far people had to travel and how much it would cost. There was a belief that poorer families would be hit hardest.

There needs to be a designated building in Leatherhead for local families to access, families will not travel to Dorking.

Dorking is out of reach for a lot of families, although it is possible to get public transport this comes at a cost that some people do not have. Also closing the leatherhead site who serves 2500 families and expect those families to then travel to a site which is "bursting at the seams" already with 1500 families is ridiculous.

I strongly disagree with the closure of the Leatherhead children's centre. It is such a fantastic facility, in a good, accessible location, as well as being close to a more deprived area. The range of groups and toys there is such a great resource, and though I usually pay £1 or £1.50 to attend some of these, I'm sure people would be willing to pay more. I have been able to bring 2 children to the centre over the years, and the party and learn group up to age 7 is really good, and helpful in school holidays.

There is no public transport to get to North Holmwood, so anyone with mobility issues or financial difficulties will not have access to it. Having this as the main centre site is a huge risk for this reason.

To cover the whole of Mole Valley by a smaller team located within the current Dorking Children Centre is far too much of a geographical area to cover. There needs to be a base in Leatherhead to cover Bookham/ Ashted/ Fetcham/ Effingham. There is no direct bus to Dorking, the train station is a long walk away and the parking is limited. It will just see the (reduced) staffing over worked with too many caseloads and therefore waiting lists for the support will be too long and almost worthless. Unfair to staff and families. It will create the same problem that social care are currently facing, understaffed, too many families.

There was a concern that the remaining centres will be oversubscribed - which they felt will affect the quality and availability of existing services.

Trinity is a busy and well utilised centre, moving services to Dorking will overload the services and the right support will not be given. Groups and classes at Trinity bring so many people together, this will also disappear & go against the idea of making the community better. Everyone will not fit into 1 centre - where will we go then?

Consolidating the centres will mean that the play and learn sessions are oversubscribed, because they already are. Need to put on an increased number of play and learn sessions to stop them being full.

Your plans to double Dorking's capacity, more than halve its funding and force Leatherhead parents to travel further is absolutely ludicrous

There were suggestions as to how to redesign services

There has to be some support for families who live in the villages. Some may not have their own transport or unable to afford public transport - that is if there is any

available!

Some sort of 'mobile' support should be available.

I don't understand decision to shut Services' in Ihead my understanding was this was a population with higher deprivation etc is it not possible to run both sites (but with less frequently if resources tight?

I would propose to keep Leatherhead running and shut Goodwyns road. Due to the far larger amount of low income families that are helped at leatherhead and the bad welcome Goodwyns road will give you if you are a low income family. Or change the staff!

I think the Leatherhead Trinity centre is too important for local people to be removed and the building is appropriate to meet family needs. I think you can reconsider to extend all the services all under one roof at Leatherhead. For example to run over the weekend and run courses to bring in an income to support funding the Monday-Friday service.

3.5 Reigate and Banstead

There was support for all the centres in Reigate and Banstead with residents expressing their personal experiences.

Just pleased to see Merstham Red Oak will be staying open as it's brilliant

I think Stepping Stones needs to remain open. It is attached to such a large school and is able to have an impact on thousands of families. It is a purpose built, family friendly venue and benefits the community well. It is close to Redhill so is still be accessible for families living in the town centre.

The Red Oak is essential as Merstham is quite cut off and out of the way. The families rely on it and they do fantastic work.

My local centre is Steppingstones Sure Start Children's Centre in Redhill. It is located in a residential area alongside many nurseries and a local school. I used this centre frequently after the birth of my son, and I genuinely don't think I could have faced travelling further afield. I had a traumatic labour (as I'm sure many do!) and was suffering physically and mentally for months, and getting out of the house at all was a struggle.

I believe that all the centres are needed. Earlswood makes a difference especially for children with special needs who are always welcome

Earlswood steppingstone centre offers an amazing community hub for a highly condensed area dominated by families.

Anyone who has used the services in Dover's Green, Stepping Stones and Red Oak will testify that one centre cannot replace the services that these three provide. There already used to be queues at the weekly baby weigh-ins and, since these weigh-ins have been reduced to fortnightly those queues have gotten longer and frankly make the service unusable with a new, fretful baby. Removing three centres will be unsustainable and vulnerable new families will suffer. There will no longer be a centre in walking distance for those living in the Redhill and Reigate areas - I'm not sure how it can be said that those on low incomes are a priority when only those with cars can attend.

Epsom downs children's centre are so supportive to the families in the area would be such a loose to the community

The YMCA Centre in Banstead is an invaluable asset to local mums. It is busy on most days of the week, providing a popular Preschool as well. It would be a huge shame if it closed - Epsom Downs is not as easy to access by bus for mums who don't drive.

The difference Dovers Green has made to my life and those of my friends are immeasurable. None of us count as low income but it has made a significant difference to my children's welfare.

Respondents stated that the centres were important and a good environment to mix with different groups

Removing opportunities for families from mixed socio-economic backgrounds would have a detrimental effect on all children affected.

I don't understand why these services have to be reduced when they provide such a valuable resource for their communities.

The role centres play in reducing social isolation amongst mothers was mentioned by several residents.

Devastated to hear Earlswood Surestart may close. As a mum of young children this centre kept me sane. It can be so easy to become lonely and isolated as a mum and having somewhere on your doorstep to go for company is vital. What a shame the council can't see that savings made by closing centre will end up costing more by the effects it has on the local mums.

There was concern that the remaining centres would be overstretched.

Four centres are simply not enough. The Stepping Stones centre in Earlswood is a hugely valuable and much needed resource for local families. The need should be met locally.

I believe that too much support is being removed, especially from the Horley Area. Horley currently has the use of two Children's Centres, depending on where you live. To change that to one proposed location is not enough. Already things have changed within the centres, and they offer less activities/opportunities for families. And with all the new build houses, how can possibly one be enough?

Epsom Downs is essential- so many deprived families in this area have no transport and it is essential that the local school remains the one stop shop. I am concerned that cuts in staffing and a widening of their catchment area will limit their effectiveness.

Obviously it is very disappointing that some centres are planned for closure and it is obvious that those who will no longer be receiving SCC services will only be 'available for families' for services not funded by SCC and just for community groups relying on volunteers - this obviously means they are unlikely to be run by professionally qualified people unless they are able to give their time for free and I still feel it is very unfair to expect that from people who usually need to earn money to survive. Areas such as Woodhatch, where the Dovers Green Centre is, is also an

area of high deprivation and not everyone will be able to travel to Horley, Redhill or Merstham to obtain the services they need. I do feel R&B are probably luckier than some areas of Surrey though.

The issue of access and transport links was raised with people believing this would result in vulnerable mothers not being able to use the service.

The centres you are keeping do seem to be the best ones in terms of access with public transport. However it seems a shame that so many have to go. I agree they could be better used than maybe they are at the moment but that should mean investment not cuts.

The Windmill at Smallfield serves a rural community who struggle to get to Horley.

*Removing Earlswood seems to leave no provision for Whitebushes residents
There is no free parking in Redhill for those parents who drive and Welcare is a fair walk with young children from the train/bus station.*

Banstead children's centre is amidst a hub of parents and schools and is accessed easily by lots of areas. The majority of the other proposed remaining open locations are on the outside of the m25 with tricky transport links for those parents without cars. Banstead has excellent transport links and should remain open

I simply would not have accessed as much support if it was not for having stepping stones within walking distance. I feel this is true of others who would simply not access support if they have the added barrier of distance, time and money to access.

While people agreed that targeting resources at those in need is a good idea some thought the needs of others had not been taken into account

Whilst I appreciate you have to offer services to the most in need/on a low income. These changes are detrimental to anyone in the "squeezed middle" bracket - I think the new proposal will isolate this bracket (people not on benefits but without money to spare) and prevent them from accessing services easily or freely. Such a shame as mental healthiness doesn't differentiate between incomes and without the centres locally and easily accessible to all then I believe this will have a negative impact on lots of Mums who need the support for breastfeeding, play clubs, etc.....

I believe that keeping only the children centres in areas which are more deprived based on financial means is a big mistake. Having more money does not mean that you are less likely to be depressed, isolated etc. Which is an area children centres offer a lot of help.

There was a belief by some that the proposals undermine the objectives of early intervention and felt this will result in vulnerable families slipping through the net

There has been a Stepping Stones group for children with SEN running at Earleswood for several years. This has provided advice, tea, tissues and support for parents from a huge area. It has kept several families out of social care, just by providing a weekly opportunity to share emotions, problems and to gather info for parents and staff. Resilient families don't just happen and a child with SEN doesn't become a child without SEN after 6 weeks intensive support. These groups are invaluable to parents - this is what builds resilience and what the concept of children's Centres should be about.

Yes I believe all of the Children's Centres should remain open and to close them is a false economy. Children's mental health is in crisis, Camhs had to close to new referrals as they couldn't meet demand, Children's Services have failed again.....everything points to early intervention and being accessible to all.....Children's Centres are the best way to deliver universal services.

Closing children's centre will be detrimental to the resilience of local families. This seems to directly contradict the aims of the proposal.

There are huge number of families in Reigate and Horley who will not be able to access support. East Surrey Hospital has 7000 new babies born every year. They are not able to provide support in community past 10 days. Where do all these women go? Some women cannot drive for 6 weeks to access support/weigh babies, get help with feeding - all the services provided locally currently. There will be more families with more issues needing more help down the line.

Some people questioned the overall plans and the data that has informed the decision to close certain centres

There is confusion as Smallfield comes under the Tandridge borough council and Smallfield is written as a village under the Tandridge page yet the Windmill Children's centre (In Smallfield) is shown on the Reigate and Banstead page although Smallfield does not show as an area covered! This is not well explained how a children's centre in Smallfield cannot seem to be covering Smallfield in this paperwork!

Closing these centres would appear to be contradictory to the 'vision' and other ambitions espoused in the early part of the Council's statement of its strategy. The buildings that 'may be available for other services to be offered for local families', but are more likely to be sold off to private use in the end, are unlikely to be better used to benefit local families than they are now.

Am keen to see the rational document that selected 5 out of the 8 centres for closure, there must have been bona fide reasons that 5 out of 8 were selected from the Reigate and Banstead Borough and why these specific 5 were chosen. There is nothing in the Family Resilience document suggesting same and it would I feel be in the public interest to publish this document. I have reservations that 62% closure rate is based entirely on matters de facto and would suggest there to be elements of subjectivity and opinion leading to these closures.

They will suffer greatly. The proposals have not been logically thought through and those in offices have no idea how the staff on the frontline work and the actual positive impact it has. Data and statistics only tell you a snippet of information.

Compared to the responses from other boroughs there were fewer suggestions for redesigning the services

It is also important that services are provided at an appropriate time (for example drop ins for weigh INS), especially if people have to travel further to access these services.

Reductions to other services should come first, perhaps the unnecessary road works when it's time to use the budgets up?

I think you should look at commercialising the centres instead of closing them. Commercial ventures such as the nest in Merstham show that these centres could make money, that money can then be used to subsidise activities for those that can't afford them

3.6 Runnymede

Support was expressed for many of the centres in Runnymede and respondents shared their personal experiences of the impact children's centres have had on their lives.

There are not many places in my area where you can go and ask advice without waiting for answers and for your child to build their social skills these centres provide these things and they are amazing and make mums feel so much better and less stressed over things.

This proposal is discriminatory against middle income families who also experience challenges with parenting and need the support of sure start centres. I have accessed the New Haw sure start centre on numerous occasions and have found the help and support there invaluable. I work hard, I have small children and I need support too. Through this local centre I have met other local mums who have become friends and a local support network. I do not have family nearby and this has been very important for me. Parenting is hard work and we also need local support.

I do not have a car, have no friends or family in Surrey (I relocated from Birmingham to live with my husband) and the Chertsey children's centre has been a lifesaver. I suffer extreme anxiety and without this children's centre I would have become a complete recluse, and my son would have no interaction with others. With the closure of children's centres, people like myself with no transport or support network will really suffer, and even worse, so will our children.

There were concerns about capacity issues

Sayer court is a great children centre with a great team however it's not big enough to take on more family some days they have to turn people away as they are at max numbers! - If anything there should be more money going into this so they can offer there service to more family!

Two centres for this large area is simply not enough and those people who aren't thought of as in immediate need will stop going as centres will be too busy or, I know I would, start to feel like a burden. The support my current centre gives me is unmeasurable, even though I am 'low need'

Centres need to stay local. Every time I visit my local centre (Poplars) it is FULL! Travelling with young kids is not easy especially for those in most need. Widening the catchment will not necessarily increase usage.

Loss of key professionals in the borough was a concern for some.

I'm concerned that people in some parts of Addlestone and New Haw will struggle to access services. I don't have a problem with Sayes Court relocating as such but it would be a massive loss if staff lost their jobs, they are so skilled and enthusiastic.

Issues around access to the remaining centres were mentioned many times.

Have you considered how families that have no access to a car will now be able to attend session at the other locations!? Living in New Haw I could walk to the Poplars and could possibly walk to Sayes Court or Byfleet, all set to close. I have said it already but this is honestly disgraceful that in 2018 we are removing such vital services.

Haven would be too far for me from Addlestone.

Sayers court should stay as it's well-located and there are a lot of families who use this service who won't be able to travel

Sayes Court was always busy and welcoming and friendly before the manager changed. Poplar was further for me, but a favourite because of the staff. Chertsey was good too, but a little out the way. I think the proposed changes are a mistake as Addlestone is considered an area at risk, yet the nearest centre will be near Staines. Most families in need do not have transport and would be unable to get support so far from Addlestone.

I think it would be a shame to reduce the services so much. Public transport is not great and takes a long time in the area (buses etc) I think closing the centres will ostracise families from what is a very useful service

One of the big changes is that where families now only have a satellite or no children's centre they will be affected, especially if they don't have car or good public transport; one of the aims of a Children's Centre is for families to walk to their nearest centre.

Some people were relieved that some centres would remain open

Happy that there will be some remaining. I live in Ottershaw so have always had to travel to one of the centres anyway

The effects of the loss of certain services locally was mentioned by a few residents

I feel very strongly that sessions aimed at parents of young babies, for example breastfeeding support should be available locally, for everyone. Taking away this support or making it more difficult for people to attend by moving it further away would drastically decrease breastfeeding rates.

I would be extremely unhappy if the Sure Start centre at The Poplars, New Haw were to be closed as my husband and I currently use this centre because we look after our grandchildren in the week and the centre provides different activities, toys and children of similar ages for them to play with. We cannot provide this by ourselves.

Poplars is needed for way more people than just 'those in need at the early stages' or those on low income. They have to turn people away for rhyme time on a Tuesday and anywhere else would not be local for us.

More details were required as to what a reduced service for satellite centres would look like

This all depends on what "reduced" means for the satellite centres. Without this detail I cannot say whether this is good or bad. Considering you say the areas of most need are "Egham and Addlestone" and yet you are reducing services in Addlestone from 2 centres to 1 satellite, so this doesn't seem to align with your purpose.

Some thought the proposals appear to undermine the objective of early intervention

All children's centres should remain. Early intervention and universal services are key to identifying families that need additional support. This is an incredibly short sighted proposal especially after the significant capital investment that has been made for CC's a cross Surrey.

There was a belief that children's centres reduce the demand for other services

Reducing the number of locations will mean less families will be able to access the services. I strongly do not agree that any children's centres should be closed. The wider reaching impact of the children's centres can be profound on families in Surrey thus reducing demand for other services. Closing children's centres will only increase demand elsewhere. There should be a children's centre in Addlestone.

There were some suggestions for adapting the service

Maybe putting the new-borns weight checks at the weekly mum's group so you can cut those two hours at the Chertsey family health centre.

I believe another site should be found within the centre of Chertsey Town to serve the local community

From Woodham and New Haw the centres above are difficult to get to, particularly by public transport. Surely it is better to keep the present centres open, and specialist services travel to each of them on a rota basis. Or, put in place the same system as you use for the Community Libraries. Support the centres with volunteers to run them on a partnership basis.

I don't think that having children's centres changed in that way will benefit families. Families need better access to services so one way to do that is to run services in every town/ village but maybe only once or twice a week and in a church hall or other community space. Having all the services in just a few areas limits the number of people who can access it.

Consider relocating the children's centres rather than closing them to cheaper alternatives or places that could be multi-functional with other services.

Keep the children's centre teams as outreach workers across numerous existing local venues so no areas lose out on services. Purpose built venues should be sold off.

Our local centre in Chertsey provides great children groups which are loved by local mums and would be sad to lose it. We would be happier to pay a higher nominal fee to keep it as it would be still cheaper than private groups.

The Poplars centre is a vital part of the community, could more volunteers help? Reduce hours? Fixed donation/charges for e.g. toddler groups

The chancellor has indicated that the age of austerity is at an end. There should be a re-review of the level of cuts being made to public services and instead of cuts, additional funding sought. Centres where data proves lack of use could well be candidates for re-purpose / change of use but should still remain as community-focused facilities.

I think having a centre in both Chertsey and Addlestone does seem like a waste of resources and it's a good idea to combine the centres with other services

3.7 Spelthorne

There was some support for the proposals for Spelthorne

I agree on the main hubs, especially as I have experience working and living in that area.

I tend to agree with them. There will need to be very clear promotion of where services will be offered from.

Good that the two main centres will be kept open as those ones are the best

Respondents shared their personal experiences of how the children's centres were a lifeline for families

I love having a local centre to me, I can walk there if I need help/advice/support and my daughter absolutely loves her time there - no exaggeration it's like her 2nd home! On paper it seems like a good plan condensing the centres down but I don't have a car, cannot afford to keep jumping on buses every day. A lot of mums I know are in the same situation.

My baby wasn't weighed for 6 months due to the lack of baby clinics in the area and I was made to feel this was my fault. Closing centres will obviously have more of an impact on this. Also it would be difficult for remaining children's centres to meet the demands for families and it is often hard for some parents to attend due to distance. Spelthorne is my local and perfect walking distance. Closing centres would have a devastating impact on family support and mental health of mum's with babies.

Kenyngton Manor Sure Start Children's Centre, have helped me and my family so much, I would not be the person I am today if it was not for the people that run the children centre, I have done many courses and they have helped me a lot, they have also done a lot for me and my family in other ways that I could not thank them anymore, not only have they helped me and my family but they are always there if you need to have a chat about anything, I'm so grateful they have been there for all of us.

.....They also run the Freedom programme for women suffering domestic abuse, with at least one of the Centres trying to run a Freedom course for men suffering domestic abuse. They help parents who have children with ADHD or Autism etc., etc., etc. I could go on but I'm sure you are fully aware of all the excellent work done by the sure start Children Centres. DO NOT CUT THIS SERVICE WHICH IS USED AND NEEDED BY MANY IN THE BOROUGH.

Buckland children's centre is an amazing place to visit. Its staff are always on hand and welcoming. It would be a huge loss to Staines community if you decide to close it! Many families would suffer. Reducing the number of Children's Centres is a concern as fewer families will be able to access support.

The issue of access, particularly for low income families was highlighted by many

It would be a real shame to reduce these services that prove invaluable to a lot of families. For a low income family living in Shepperton or Sunbury for instance, how would they afford to travel to these locations to access these services?

Public transport to Ashford and Stanwell from Sunbury is very limited how can parents from the Sunbury area be expected to reach these destinations if they do not have transport...

this will alienate families not from those areas as I would assume that most attending Stanwell and Ashford would be from the local area, may prove difficult to mix

Yes, I strongly disagree with the proposed changes. Have you ever visited Sunbury Common/Ashford Common?? There are high levels of vulnerable children and families, if they need access to the facilities or advice, the closest centre would be Clarendon School in Ashford high street. Many of the vulnerable families DO NOT drive, they would have to get a bus, incurring travel costs. If they do drive, you would have to pay for parking in Ashford, there is very limited parking in Ashford high street and even then it is a maximum of 2 hours. I feel that you are alienating these vulnerable families/children, they would be less likely to travel to this location.

I attended my local centre to see the midwife after having a caesarean, this was in walking distance as you are not allowed to drive. How would this affect other mothers who would be in a similar situation, how can they travel when they're recommended to rest and not to exert themselves. What alternatives would be provided? This is not a good idea and hasn't been thought through properly

The choice of two centres relatively close together was questioned

Having only 2 centres so close together will disadvantage families in the other areas. Not all families have cars and would have to rely on public transport. Also now that you have to book appointments to get babies weight and to see a health visitor how do you propose the demand in only 2 centres?

To have 2 children centres within a couple of miles or so of each other leaves needy parents/children in the other areas at greater risk. People in Shepperton and Sunbury will not access children centre services so far away as Ashford and Stanwell. Why not have 3 centres, one in Staines, and one in either Ashford OR Stanwell and one in Sunbury. These are huge areas with lots of deprivation, especially in Sunbury around the Cross that rely on the services available locally. If people are in need of help, they usually will not travel to get the help, they expect it on their doorstep.

Some were concerned that existing services will be over-stretched – particularly if extended to families with older children

How do you expect parents to get to Ashford or Stanwell especially if they don't drive or are on low income or maternity pay and cannot afford to get public transport to the children's centres! Also there will not be enough appointments for baby clinic with just two centres serving eight towns. It will also put people off going to the centres and in result could do damage to their children! And why would you chose two towns next to each other!

I am extremely concerned about the proposed changes for Spelthorne Children's Centres. Spelthorne is an area of high need and if these proposals do go ahead, this will increase the referrals to specialist services as there is simply not enough resources available to support families.

Two children's centres are extremely unlikely to provide sufficient coverage for families in this borough, particularly if you are looking at extending provision from families with young children to those with older ones as well.

It was felt that other deprived areas in Spelthorne were not recognised.

The description of Spelthorne having 'high numbers of children in workless or low income families' speaks for itself. Making cuts in the services and support that these families need will in the long term create more difficulties and crisis issues related to child protection and neglect. Ways should be found to generate more support for these families and encourage them to become useful members of society not stop the support altogether and thus generate less serious issues in the future. Closing these centres is short sighted.

I feel that the area around Kenyngton centre is also quite deprived, so I am concerned to see that this is one of the centres where it is proposed to have no SCC services.

I think removing both Kenyngton and Spelthorne completely is outrageous. Where are the services for Sunbury? There are large housing estates near both. It's a well-known fact that these vulnerable families will not travel to other centres, and the other centres are much too far Buckland and Saxon are not areas I would travel to from where I live as it's too far on public transport so other people will feel the same.

Vulnerable families in Sunbury will be massively overlooked. It seems silly that two centres in one area will be both closed. Surely one must stay open even with reduced activities.

There was a concern that opportunities for the early detection of problems will be missed

Targeted families generally have fewer resources (access to transport) and frequently more barriers (depression, transport, funds to access public transport) and resistance to travelling away from their local area to access support at another location. They are unlikely to have built relationships with a centre outside of their day to day life and therefore are less likely to attend and have a higher chance of slipping through the gaps and adding to the workloads of children's services.

Some believed that Spelthorne, compared to other boroughs in Surrey, is more deprived so should receive more funding

Areas of Spelthorne where you are reducing the service have much more deprivation than other Surrey boroughs. To apply your policy of concentrating on need fairly, you should reduce services in other boroughs and districts, and leave Spelthorne alone.

There were some suggestions as to how to make better use of existing community services

It's right to focus on areas where families are in need but you risk alienating young families in other areas with this approach. You already expect families to wait 4-6 weeks for Well Baby clinics and have taken away the opportunity for families to socialise and build friendships during these sessions with the new format. Actually this community could support each other (and stop problems before they happen) if you gave them the chance. Use charities like HomeStart to provide baby clinics in more locations and more frequently across the whole borough.

Oh dear. Spelthorne has high need, as you say yourselves. This doesn't feel like enough. To have only a satellite offering in Staines - is that really sufficient for the numbers involved? Also, the Lumen Learning Trust is doing good work across Spelthorne, taking on challenging schools and turning them around in relatively short time-scales. Is there a way to capitalise on that experience and leadership?

I think all services, health, housing, schools etc. could work together more including budgets. Housing currently pay a lot for floating support etc. for instance where budgets could be combined to use the outreach workers in each sector to support these families.

The mobile bus is a valued resource and used to reach and support those who would not otherwise attend a children's centre and has made a huge difference to the support accessed by these most vulnerable families (for example young, lone and workless parents).

3.8 Surrey Heath

There was support for the centres proposed for closure and for those proposed to stay operational. Comments were generally supported by personal experiences

Very sad that Bagshot set to close, I understand it's difficult but my family doesn't have a lot of money and found the local support and help invaluable when my babies were small

Mytchett children's centre is a real asset to the local community. I cannot express just how much the staff at Mytchett children's centre have gone the extra mile for my family every time I have needed their support. They are simply outstanding, and it is such a huge shame they are not listed as a future location for a children's centre.

The children centre (Bagshot) is amazing!

Live close to the Orchard Centre - from what I can see they are already doing the work you would like and have the same vision. They work in the community, with elderly, and minority groups - they have organised an Asian Women's running group they are very well used in the area and a hub of the community

I think it's a disgrace. Having the health visitor clinics (which have already been cut this year) and the courses and classes run at the children's centre accessible locally is the only thing that prevented me from entering postnatal depression after giving birth. I would have struggled to keep up with getting my child weighed as I couldn't drive for quite some time, and being new to the area it was a lifeline in actually meeting other mums. I may not have needed the services you are looking to improve, but I certainly depended on everything else the centre offers.

Mytchett centre also covers the Deepcut area which has a lot of Military families who often require more support due to their transient nature & many do not have family nearby to help them & are isolated.

There was concern expressed that the remaining centres are both in Camberley

Replacing 5 with 2, but increasing workload is not a good idea. Also the 2 centres that are being maintained are all in a similar area and as such provide no real support for people in need on the other side of the borough. Whilst covering the areas of most need is important you should also have even geographical coverage. Just because an area might be "better off" does not mean there are not families suffering with post-natal depression

Two centres in Camberley and zero in any other town. This makes no sense to the residence of Bisley, Cobham, west end, Bagshot and light water. The distance and cost of travel to these centres will increase for all of our families, yet Camberley residence get a choice of 2 centres.

What about families with no transport I believe this to be discriminatory to those families.

Seems a bit unfair for those living further away from Camberley as Orchard & Pine Ridge are quite close to each other - although I agree with the logic used!

There was a concern that there are limited other alternative services for people to use in the area

Currently I reside in the Mytchett CC reach area. There is currently very limited voluntary services in my area, other than the services that Mytchett provide..... As there are very limited resources in regards to health visiting, with just one post birth visit, the children's centre was the only other professional help I was able to access without feeling judged. This supported me through low level mental health issues which are likely to have escalated without this support.

The service covers people from a variety of backgrounds, including settled travellers, who would not otherwise come together. Under the new proposal, I don't believe this same need would be met.

This whole notion is not taking into account those with disabilities, financial hardship, numerous children attending different schools etc.

There was a belief amongst some that the objectives of early intervention will be undermined by closing centres

These changes are very short sighted, families in rural areas will be even more isolated. Many families who appear affluent are actually near crisis due to their change of jobs and lifestyles when children arrive. Universal services which are accessible to all are vital in preventing these families from falling into the targeted groups you are proposing to support.

I know that is where a lot of relationships are made (so that families feel able to ask for support) as well as reducing isolation. Experienced professionals can also identify potential issues at these groups, it is a great idea for volunteers to run them but they do not necessarily have the knowledge or experience to see if someone is silently crying out for help.

All pre-school children should have access to language and social skills at Sure Start Centres. Some families need extra support – as the local Besom Charity would acknowledge.

Children's Centres engage well with young families at their most vulnerable and this should continue; families in need of additional/intensive/specialist services often don't realise it or resist this-if centres closed, who will identify these families?

While some agreed that targeting resources at areas of highest need was correct others believed that using IDACI does not take full account of needs of people not on low incomes

I agree with the proposed changes as the 2 proposed centres are within the areas of highest need. I would reiterate that for continuity of care and support the current staff should remain in post wherever possible.

I agree that The Orchard and Pine Ridge are the most important to keep open as they have the most families in need

I think alot of work has gone into this proposal and I think it's the right approach to work with families to make them more resilient. I just hope all the services communicate and work TOGETHER then it will work. It will ONLY WORK if the system works together!

This will just put children in more affluent areas at risk

Basing your decision on cutting back wealthy areas is unfair to people who are not wealthy, but find themselves living in an 'expensive' area

I think the shutting of the children's centres are incredibly short sighted. Chobham might appear affluent but there are a large number of families on the edge who rely on the children's centre. I am supposedly affluent and with a disability diagnosis for myself and my child this year we have found ourselves relying on the children's centre for support and guidance. This cannot be provided by any of the church groups. This should be council run. There is no public transport to either of the other venues.

There were many concerns regarding access to the remaining centres

It seems that these have been chosen on population and on paper seems to make sense. I'm not sure that these centres are particularly well connected with public transport links which could then not fit with the county's green transport plans.

Orchard and Pine Ridge are 35minutes apart on the same bus route so if people can get to one, they can easily get to the other. People who access the other Surrey Heather centres at present are much disadvantaged by access via public transport, needing at least two buses to access the centres.

You saying about saving money and helping families in need but families on a lower income would have to travel further and may not have a money to be able to do that. I have witness this type of situation in one of the children centres where lady could not commit herself to come for baby massage as she didn't have money for bus ticket.

Families in Chobham will not have access to the centres unless they drive. There may be few families in Chobham who need help but they do exist. This solution will marginalise them even more and they will be invisible until they arrive at school.

I live in Windlesham. It is already a 45minute walk to get to Bagshot children's centre. I could not get to the old dean without getting 2 buses, costing money and taking time. We would need to be served by a satellite centre at the very least. I do not see why ones financial position comes into it. New parents need support whatever their position.

Some were concerned that remaining centres will be oversubscribed

The area that the 2 remaining children's centres will have to cover is huge so many families will miss out on the support they need.

By reducing these centres you will isolate vast numbers of people who can't travel to your proposed sites. How do you intend on capturing these people? There are areas of severe poverty in Surrey Heath that you will not have captured. With the roll out of Universal Credit coming in Nov 2018 the number of people needing support from these centres is likely to increase and they won't have a local centre to attend.

There were suggestions offered as to how to redesign the service or reduce costs

Could transport to the Camberley sites from Bagshot, Chobham and Mytchett be subsidised so families can travel to activities?

Two hubs within one mile of each other? If money is to be saved and only 2 hubs remaining there should be one in the villages so isolated families without transport can access them more easily.

Mytchett is my local centre and supports those in Deepcut as well as Frimley Green and Mytchett. With the new Deepcut development there will be more families with no local support which would be a travesty. The Orchard Centre is small (as is Mytchett) if you are to reduce the number to just 2, they need to be of adequate size to accommodate families unable to access a centre locally. It may be that in order to provide a centre(s) with sufficient space to offer activities, breastfeeding support, CAB support and private rooms for discussion that empty office space in Camberley might be a better location where there is more ample parking and better bus routes.

Transport support should be given to families in need to get to centres

Funding needs to be adequate for these centres to offer enough of an outreach service for those families who need it in the other areas as there are pockets of need even in these supposedly more affluent, less needy areas and they cannot be forgotten.

Pine ridge and the Orchard and geographically very close together. Could these two be combined centrally and another centre kept open in one of the other areas. Having a hub in the Camberley town centre with the library, church and a children's centre may work. Especially when a cafe etc are available at high cross church.

Appears plan to concentrate service in the west, leaving no local service in the east in an area poorly served by affordable public transport. If reducing by so much would it not be better to consider new sites, rather than just considering existing sites

3.9 Tandridge

Some people understood the challenge of trying to balance the budget and there were a few positive remarks.

Such a shame but I do understand the challenge of budgets

It is a brilliant idea and I hope it goes ahead very soon

However, many residents objected to the closing centres and leaving Tandridge with one.

Lingfield should not close. They have fantastic facilities. Perhaps they could use the building and services for other income generating ideas whilst not in use as a children's centre.

I think four centres for this whole area is already a stretch. To reduce it to one centre is a joke. How do you really think you can be effective with one centre for this whole area? How can you think it is acceptable to have no support for new mothers? Regardless of income parents need support and guidance to bring up their children. I just fail to comprehend how this is seen as an area where money can be saved. It feels like money is going to the over 65s at the expense of the next generation and it's going to kill our society.

Hamsey Green is also very well used by the North Tandridge 0-19 Health Team.

Caterham is wholly unsuitable as a location for a sole Tandridge children's centre. It is not accessible to the rest of Tandridge by public transport and is a 40 min drive from South Tandridge for those that do drive.

I feel strongly that although Caterham is a needy area - within Hurst Green and surrounding rural area there is a lot of depravation, families with little or no income, no transport and find the Hurst Green CC invaluable. Hurst Green should not be masked by Oxted its immediate better off neighbour

How can one centre support such a vast amount of children and then support additional children from 6-11 too? You will be forcing people away from children's centres not providing extra support. If wider services are deemed inadequate why would you sabotage children's centres that are providing a haven to support local families?

People commended the existing children's centres with examples of how they have personally benefited from the service in times of need.

Personally I have used Hamsey Green CC for over three years (despite living in Caterham, I started going to Hamsey after having a caesarean and not being able to manage the stairs at Caterham CC). The range of activities and support given is

astronomical and it would be devastating to lose such a valuable resource in the community. Particularly in such a hilly geographical area, some people would not be able to access just one CC if the others went.

Some believed that centres provide a rare opportunity for social mixing.

... the children also rely on this centre for their way of mixing with other children and communicating!

Many people were very concerned with access issues. Tandridge is semi-rural with poor bus links and it was felt that having one centre in an area with particularly poor public transport links could create many problems for people living on the other side of the borough.

I live just outside of Hurst green. I cannot easily get to Caterham with small children. There is no direct transport link, Caterham is not my community it is not my home town. This is totally at odds with your proposal for better community relationships

My understanding is that Hurst Green in particular is a very high need area as has been identified in previous reports. This community is very rural and needy families here will not be able to travel to use other facilities. Equally so at St Piers. Whilst there may be high need in Caterham, some families do cross the border to access services at Croydon Children's Centres - this is not an option for those families in Hamsey Green or Lingfield.

A woman with post-natal depression may make it to a local centre, but would struggle to get in a car to travel 20minutes to go somewhere unfamiliar. A woman struggling with a difficult baby may find it difficult to get out of her house but might just make it to a local centre for support when a 20 minute car journey feels too much. I would argue that LOCALITY IS EVERYTHING.

There is no easy way to get to Caterham from Oxted for example unless you have a car so how are those people going to access services?

Tandridge has a number of areas which are isolated from affordable, accessible public transport links. Low income families without a car will struggle to access services in Caterham. Families living in areas such as Blindley Heath, Godstone and Smallfield will be further disadvantaged. Whilst Lingfield and Hurst Green have an accessible train line, Caterham is not on it

Transport links have not been considered and there is currently no provision for families in the SE of Tandridge where deprivation is high and the transport links are poor. A lot of the families are socially isolated.

Given the nature of Tandridge and the poor transport links, to only have 1 children centre in the north of the district will not meet the needs of families south of the M25. Therefore, suggest that Hurst Green becomes a second Children Centre in Tandridge

Some were concerned that the plans would undermine the objective of early intervention.

Sometimes the Universal Services flag up where more additional/intensive support might be required. Parents/carers might not notice these things until they meet other parents/children and realise something is not quite right with their child. How is this going to happen when there are no universal services to go to?

There was support for targeting resources at those in most need but more consideration should be given to families who would not be classified as being deprived but still need support.

As a mum of two children who has had severe postnatal depression twice, I feel local children centres provide vital services for families. I had severe anxiety about travelling with both my children and if it were not for a local children centre I doubt I would have left the house much as I knew they would have like-minded people who are also likely to be struggling. I am not from a low income household and would be willing to pay for services but I don't feel like the mental health of mothers in rural communities is any less important. I am on my 3rd pregnancy and the thought of not having local support fills me with fear.

It is wrong to presume only families of deprivation have a need to use the services of Children's Centres. Isolation and PND in adults plus anxiety in children are very common referral reasons, with families having children later in life and losing their social circle when they give up work and children being put under more pressure to achieve in schools who don't have the financial resources to support their social and emotional needs.

Placing centres on income fails to support families with SEND, challenging behaviour, post-natal depression, long term illness, loss of family members as none of this is impacted on by money. Also just because a family has a higher income than another family it does not make them any more of a capable parent who won't need these services.

Some were concerned about the effects on other services if children's centres were closed.

Current networking systems in Tandridge are good with strong partnerships between Midwifery, Health, Housing, Police, Schools and Private Providers, this will all decrease if the number of buildings is cut, meaning they cannot be utilised by Midwifery & Health.

There should be feedback on the proposal previously submitted by Tandridge to see where we can strengthen the document. Staff CPD in Tandridge is strong, which is cost effective and this needs to be considered

Health visitors are already overstretched at their clinics, how will less children's centre possibly ensure better breastfeeding support, better postnatal clinics (and therefore the long term health of our future generations) if we maintain only 1 centre but with far more clients. Short term thinking. Dangerous thinking

Centres are already oversubscribed and there was concern that the remaining children's centre would not be able to cope with the increased demand

I think it's absolutely dreadful. I used to live in Croydon which has a vast number of centres with sessions on every day. With breastfeeding support and baby health clinics every day. There was always something on that you felt safe and secure going to as a first time mum with post-partum problems. I moved to Caterham and there was barely anything I can go to. It already has sessions that are every other week, already lacks the ability to support families in need. Why would you cut it even further? It's an absolute disgrace that you are even considering it.

I strongly agree that children's centres are required and fear that reducing the number would put greater strain on the one remaining centre, therefore making it harder to form bonds with staff and other people there and being able to attend sessions as they would often be at capacity.

My family will now be unable to access a children's centre. I have two toddlers, one is Autistic. When you already cut the opening hours of our local centre the other centre became too busy for my son. We were also attending a special needs group which was the only time I could speak to adults who understood, even if you do run it in Caterham I imagine it will be too busy for us.

There was concern that large groups of people already receiving little or no provision would lose out further e.g. people in mobile home parks and travellers.

If the proposed decommissioning of the mobile Centre goes ahead, there is poor provision for these families. There are various mobile home parks and one large travellers' site in the south of the borough.

Outreach workers located in Caterham will not be able to support families to reduce isolation and mental health issues.

There is the planning of the Garden Village between South Godstone and Dormansland which is intended to include 4000 new homes a percentage of these will be social housing and with the new developments in Blindley Heath these families will be most isolated. we see a lot of families who would not access support otherwise, if we to get to these families as soon as need arises, a large percentage of them will not be picked up and therefore will create more work later on. Please consider to include a satellite centre in the South of the borough, do not abandon these families.

Finally, there were suggestions for which centres to keep open.

Ideally a CC located centrally in the Borough would be a better idea - or retaining one in the north and one in the South.

I feel that IF cuts are to be made they only reduce the Children's Centres by 50% therefore keeping Hurst Green Sure Start Centre as well as Caterham Children's Centre, therefore providing provisions in the 2 most deprived areas of Tandridge

It makes sense to keep Caterham as the main centre but some sort of satellite service needs to be offered in Lingfield or Hurst Green to avoid parents in these areas becoming completely isolated. These are also areas with traveller communities who are historically hard to reach and will become even more so without a local centre

Close others not Hurst green it's easy to get to its got trains and buses and loads walk and it's near council office

Offer fewer services at the centres, ask for more volunteers, do whatever is necessary but please please keep them open and available.

3.10 Waverley

There was support expressed for all the centres in Waverley and a strong defence for the children's centres that were proposed for closure i.e. Christopher Robin in Cranleigh and Tennyson's in Haslemere.

If the Tensions sure start centre closes then the vulnerable families in our area will have no support. They cannot travel as they have no transport or money.

I am appalled by the plans to close the children's centre in Cranleigh. You are effectively preventing families in this area from accessing any support as there is NO direct public transport to the remaining children's centres in Whose who have and those who have not in the Cranleigh area. Families experience domestic violence, mental health issues and substance abuse. There are working families who are on the breadline but since they do not show up in your skewed statistics will be left with no support. This is a travesty.

If Cranleigh centre was to close, it would be a great loss to our community. They have supported me through some really hard times and without them I really don't know where I would be. The Children's Centre is one of the only places in our area who offer activities for young children. It's extremely isolating being at home with young children and having nowhere to socialise with them in a safe place and get to know other families in the same boat, to share experiences good and bad.

There was also some support for keeping the Wharf open

I believe the Wharf Nursery School in Godalming and Eashing is also very important to the areas they are in and should continue to offer a bigger amount of services in the areas they are in, especially considering the plans of more than 400 houses being built in Aarons Hill/Eashing.

The semi-rural nature of Waverley was cited as a barrier to access

I am pleased to see there is still scope for families living in Cranleigh to have an opportunity access something. I would have favoured keeping the Wharf as a prime location, given that Farnham is not so easy to get to but Godalming is on all major bus routes. Waverley has a poor public transport infrastructure with few train stations in some rural areas. Also social housing is at its highest in some of the hard to reach areas like Ockford Ridge and Aaronns Hill in Godalming.

I am pleased to see the Loseley fields centre is staying but how can 2 large towns, Cranleigh and Haslemere be left with nothing! Transport links from Cranleigh and Haslemere aren't great and will put families off approaching a children's centre for help if they have to make a long journey. Remember catching a bus/train with a toddler and baby/pushchair etc can be daunting.

People on low incomes would not afford the transport costs to access remote children centres, from Cranleigh, Farnham is a 40 min drive with no direct bus or train links Cranleigh is the biggest village and closing the centre here would disadvantage

many of the new families moving into the multitude of low cost housing being built in the area.

It would put ALOT of new mums and their babies at a huge disadvantage to close Tennyson's sure start centre. It isn't fair to put that much pressure on them to travel so far for basic help and advice.

Although many agreed that Waverley is a more affluent area, there are still pockets of deprivation and these families will be affected most.

Whilst I understand there may be more need for services in the deprived areas identified, removing services from large areas such as Haslemere, areas with little surrounding towns (Cranleigh) and other rural areas (Elstead) will mean a wide range of families are unable to access these services. They may be less deprived, but there are still pockets of deprivation in these areas, and removing these services may significantly impact those most in need.

While targeting the more deprived areas was supported by some, others thought that the emotional and wellbeing needs of others were not given enough consideration

I appreciate that we are very fortunate to be in an area of low childhood poverty, however this does not mean that the families here do not deserve local support. It would mean that I will not have access to the listening service that saved me from postnatal depression and my children will have no playgroups to go to on days that I don't work. This may not look like too much to someone on paper but it will rob the local community of a service essential to new parents even if we're not classified as high need.

I think it is unfair to assume that families who don't qualify as not working or low-income families do not need to use the services of Children's Centres. Many families in Waverley have both parents working in full time jobs and have hardly any disposable income after all bills have been paid so appreciate free or low-cost playgroups/parenting groups.

Some were concerned that the plans would undermine the objective of early intervention and could create more problems long term

Any reduction in children centres helping families will just pass the problem onto GPs, schools and social services. The demand for resources will always be there it just depends how far you want to kick it down the road.

The loss of the Cranleigh centre will be devastating for me and my family. They are been so supportive and have helped me get more involved in the community. I believe they have/are helping me provide a good start for my son and all of the next

generation which is very important and it is very short-sighted to shut these centres - it will cause more problems and cost more in the long run.

There was also concern that the remaining centres would be oversubscribed

Devastated that my local children's centre will be lost. Christopher robin is a huge part of the community and provides vital services for young families. New builds in Cranleigh only mean more young families and a greater demand for services which are being cut?! Public transport in Cranleigh is poor, and this will impact the poorest families who are unable to travel. Loseley fields will be massively oversubscribed and it won't be possible for many families to access the services when they need it

There were suggestions as to which centres to close and which to keep open.

I think that Haslemere should be a satellite instead of the wharf as Godalming will already be well served with a CC in Farncombe. Likewise The Christopher Robin CC should be kept and only one centre in Farnham.

Tennyson's Sure Start is a vital part of the community and the yearly outlay for the service is minimal in the wider scheme of the Councils budget. Alternatives should be considered such as asking other charities/local businesses to support the centre prior to any closure.

It is vital to ensure that there is service provision to Ockford Ridge and Aarons Hill delivered on the Greenoak site. With the high level of need in what is a vulnerable isolated community it is imperative that services are available. It is almost impossible to access Loseley Fields from Ockford Ridge due to lack of public transport and low car ownership.

In a largely rural borough thought needs to be given as to how services will be provided to pockets of real need particularly in Haslemere, Cranleigh and Elstead. Loseley Fields is poorly served by public transport.

3.11 Woking

Many praised the existing centres for the valuable contribution they make to their communities.

I'm really sad St Johns will be going! There is nothing else around that offers that level of support to new parents and I would have had a difference experience if I didn't attend three times a week! I don't fit the criteria and yet any new parents like me will miss vital support and advice in those first years!

The service these centres provide is invaluable and should continue to be run by Surrey County Council and Health Visitors. St Johns area is a pretty deprived area in places too - so strange you'd change your service there

I think that the centres that are staying offer a good range of services but worry about closing Brookwood as this is also in an area of need and offers great services

Please keep Horsells children's centre and their excellent staff.

There was a belief amongst some that the objective of early intervention will be undermined by closing centres

I think it is incredibly short sighted of the council to try and save money when it comes to the health of children and parents. The consequences will be: less breastfeeding mums and therefore, less healthy young children and adults; isolated parents and, therefore, more mental health problem which will have a detrimental effect on children and families.

A saving made now will only be short term as the amount of preventative work that children's centres currently do is being vastly underestimated. Children's centres currently provide very local support and are trusted within the local community. Closing children's centres is going to undermine this

This is the wrong decision and will result in increased child poverty, abuse and mental health problems going undetected.

There were many concerns regarding access to the remaining centres, many believing that it will be difficult and unaffordable for some resulting in negative outcomes for families

How will families who do not drive or have access to public transport get to the 2 centres allocated for Woking? Families will become more isolated and will not get the help they need.

Pyford is a long way to travel with or without car from Byfleet. St Marys centre. It will have a big impact on Byfleet village if the centre is not there. It has been a lifeline to lots of families I know!!

The Pyford and Byfleet centre or a version of it should remain open. Woking is a big area and expecting a family from Byfleet to travel to Sythwood is a big ask, especially if they do not have transport. These centres need to be closer to the community not an hour roundtrip away. Travelling with small children is also not easy.

Yes! My families would have to take two different buses at a cost of £5.60 per adult to access the Sythwood CC! This will isolate families further as they will not access it and will put even more children at risk under a very worrying unsatisfactory safeguarding outcome at present

My concern with the location of the 2 centres is the access for families. It may be a journey of 2 bus rides for a family which is expensive and can be too daunting if they are struggling, for example with post-natal depression.

Some were concerned that remaining centres/services will be oversubscribed

With the closing of some of the Woking area centres /cut backs in staffing how can the current outreach workers possibly deal with the extra quantity of families/children's effectively. The various courses I have attended have been amazing but how could they continue with such a massive increase. Most parents being offered support need it ASAP not to be placed on a waiting list which I would expect would be the case with these proposals.

There were arguments for and against centralising the centres

Closing centres will stop community support, and building relationships with other families in a safe environment with support from team to help this. I agree having a central location in town would be good, but Sheerwater is difficult to get to with public transport.

There are so many families who can't drive and don't speak English, how are they going to access services? Young mums, vulnerable families - the list goes on, need help in their community. Centralising the system won't help - it will cause problems- people won't get the help when they need it.

I understand the logic, but there are families in all these areas who may need support.

Some believed the remaining two centres were too close together leaving the remaining areas with no service

Secondly these centres are actually very close together across the borough and don't support those who live away from Woking town centre.

To close the Horsell Sure Start Centre would be hugely detrimental to the local community. Just because mums in Horsell may not have the financial concerns of the other areas there emotional well-being is just as important. Sure start provides valuable support and an opportunity to meet local friends. I would have found that first year so much harder without their support

While targeting the more deprived areas was supported by many, some thought that the emotional and wellbeing needs of others were not given enough consideration

I think it is wrong to remove all support from across Woking. Even families with higher incomes need support and guidance from children's centres. These centres provide valuable support to new mums, helping women not to feel isolated. Post-natal depression is NOT class specific and neither are behavioural/emotional resilience issues amongst children. Removing this support will place greater burden on schools

Although Brookwood appears to be an affluent area, we have many families using the food bank, Pirbright Army Training Camp and the Traveller site have families that really struggle on many levels, isolation, mental health, health, and learning difficulties, Brookwood Children's Centre has been a vital support to them and taking away this from their doorstep would be negligent, and detrimental.

There were suggestions offered as to how to redesign the service or reduce costs

Pyrford and Byfleet Sure Start Children's Centre should be a satellite centre, as it supports children going to Pyrford C of E Primary School, one of the largest primary schools in Surrey.

I do not agree with any dedicated children's centre buildings. The council already funds a large number of schools, can the children's centre functions not use existing school buildings outside of the school day and therefore better use that resource that is already costed?

Is it possible to provide services across the same areas as the current children's centre but in a different way? E.g. once day access to a children's centre worker within each school in Woking. Or combining existing centres? Or reducing the services they provide? Or asking people who can afford it to pay for these services?

We will need to increase our Outreach Workforce if 4 centres close down - we are inundated already with families who require additional support, and with expanding areas we will need more Outreach and those that are highly trained and know the local area well. Woking is a very complex area and requires a highly skilled workforce

Charge more for classes from those who can afford it rather than removing them altogether.

4. Email responses to the consultation

Nineteen email responses were received from district councils, councillors, local groups, a town forum, parish councils, local petitions, charities, and residents.

Some of the responses were part of a larger response to all of the five Surrey County Council consultations.

The email responses followed a similar pattern to the responses to the online Surrey Says consultation questionnaire with most of the main issues and concerns reiterated.

Children's centres are a valuable community asset

Many responses praised the children centres:

The County Council should hold up our Children's Centres as an example to other Councils of how they can continue to support families and local communities. Are Surrey brave enough to go against the tide of cutting services to the poorest and set an example of how these services should be prioritized and protected?

Reigate and Banstead

This is a wonderful service to those who are in need, but it appears very little thought has gone into what happens if nothing is available. Children's Centres as a service will be sorely missed once removed from the horizon - it will never be replaced once deleted from the area.

Mole Valley

The centres and their staff have the trust and confidence of their communities and users and local agencies, with strong relationships established over many years, and often generations. This is an invaluable 'hidden' and unappreciated local asset that Surrey/ SCC should build on as an integral part of the early help and support network.

County wide charity

There was concern about impact of closing services on the community:

There was concern on the cumulative impact on communities of potentially closing children's centres and libraries particularly in village locations.

Elmbridge

Proposals as outlined in the consultation will undoubtedly result in significant gaps in provision at the very least, in the short term. This will have a detrimental impact on a

significant number of families and will undoubtedly lead to a loss of key staff who have spent many years building up the trust of the families in the communities within which they work

Mole Valley

Moving from the current locations will sever longstanding relationships, and lose the trust and confidence of support to and links with the local community

County wide charity

Children's centres provide a base for other meetings:

Children's centres provide a base to hold meetings such as CIN (child in need) or TAF (team around a family) as they are warm and welcoming and if the family already attend the centre they feel more comfortable in that environment.

Elmbridge

Vulnerable Families

People were especially concerned about the effects on vulnerable families. All of the email responses were opposed to the closure of children's centres and in particular the possible effects on vulnerable families. This was echoed in the opposition from some to the possibility that low income families may be asked to pay for services:

The practicalities of deciding which "families can afford to pay" and administering the scheme could outweigh any income generated.

Elmbridge

This is surely one service that needs to be expanding not contracting, and offering more not less to the vulnerable it primarily seeks to serve.

Waverley

The SCC consultation also suggests families which use children's centres could be made to pay for services. We cannot support the idea that families on the lowest incomes must contribute to the cost of the support they receive.

Tandridge

There was a view from some that introducing more charging needs careful consideration to prevent certain groups being stigmatised:

Introducing charges for some activities may be attractive on the face of it but Surrey County Council needs to be careful not to inadvertently stigmatise those who would qualify for free activities, in a similar way to free school meals

Spelthorne

There were concerns that the health of mothers and children would suffer:

- *Isolation and social exclusion will increase*
- *Maternal mental health will suffer*
- *Pre-schools will be less well supported to meet the needs of families and identify children with additional needs*
- *Delivery of health services will be impacted*
- *Public health targets will not be met*

Mole Valley

Some welcomed the proposal to broaden the support available to vulnerable families up to eleven years old but noted that there will be extra workload and training required:

The Council agrees with the expansion of the age range for support and suggests that it be extended further to include support for families expecting a child. The Council believes the proposal will impact on the other services currently provided in the area including the Family Support Programme and the 0 -19 Service (which includes health visiting and school nursing) provided by First Community Health Care. There would need to be very close working between the teams and there must be clear criteria for support via the different teams.

Tandridge

Families expecting a child should also be included.

Tandridge

The extension of the age range from 0-5 to 0-11 is welcome as continued support for vulnerable families with primary age children will improve outcomes. However, it is important that the scope of this extra workload and staff training needs are planned for and defined clearly, particularly as the Family Support Programme is not included in phase 1 changes.

Woking

Increasing the scope to also cover children age 5-11 will result in added pressure. Children's Centres already running at high standards as shown by their already excellent performance record will now find it untenable as a business model. This can only ever lead to severe cuts and loss of service.

Mole Valley

Access issues

The issues of travel and the public transport costs were mentioned by some:

The closure of the Weybridge and Burhill children's centres in Elmbridge would have an adverse impact on local families with young children. Both centres are within walking distance of large areas of social housing. Bus services in Elmbridge are both infrequent and expensive, putting them out of reach for many young families.

Elmbridge

Insufficient transport as well as increasing traveling distances to access services will put extra strain on already beleaguered parents on low incomes.

Mole valley

Some commented on the problems of centralising into a single centre per borough or the close proximity of the remaining centres in their borough:

Centralising in a single Children's Centre for most borough and districts will inevitably reduce attendance and early identification: engagement rates for 0-5 children by Children's Centres runs at over 85%, it is difficult to see how this can be replicated by a central site

County wide charity

I completely understand that budgets are stretched and money needs to be saved. However, choosing to only keep 2 centres open within a mile of each other does not seem fair. I cannot imagine low income families from Mytchett will be travelling by public transport to Camberley or Frimley.

Surrey Heath

SEND is not linked to disadvantage on the whole, although disadvantage is likely to compound SEND issues: moving to a single site makes it less likely that those with first time SEND children will get immediate identified and supported; while those already having a SEND child will find it more difficult to attend the central site due to travel practicalities with SEND children

County wide charity

Early intervention

Many supported the view that Early Years help can shape a child's future development and life chances and believed the proposed closures will end up costing more in the long run:

...the proposed closure as extremely short-sighted and feel that in the long term vast amounts of money will need to be spent repairing the damage caused by families being denied the valuable prevention service provided at Hurst.'

Tandridge

Cutting resources and universal services for under 5s will increase the demand for services later in the child's life and therefore cost more in the long term

Mole Valley

While many of these services are universal it is important to note that they provide the opportunity to identify those in need at the very earliest opportunity. It is hard to understand how this new approach will help SCC improve its early help and intervention offer.

Mole Valley

Referrals

Children centres are an important source of referrals with one provider stating that a third of their referrals come through children's centres;

...any future model should build in ways of identifying and referring families who can benefit from our early help.

Elmbridge

There were some concerns about the possible disruption in referral processes:

We understand that there will be one Early Help Hub in Surrey, one Service Manager per quadrant and then Early Hub Coordinators. There is worry that there will be a delay for individuals to be seen as they have to be assessed on various levels. Given the track record of issues when referral processes have been changed in the recent past, we would like assurances that sufficient resource and time will be spent implementing the proposed new referral processes.

Spelthorne

Targeting and universal services

Many believed that services should be accessible to all regardless of needs:

We think that the best approach is to ensure that the service can be accessed by all those who need it, regardless of income.

Elmbridge

Universal services are an important component of our work with vulnerable families. They can be used as a cost effective, light touch approach to keep in contact with families who have had or may need targeted support, and continue to build their family resilience and improve outcomes. It is a welcoming environment that can provide families with an opportunity for informal support on such things as parenting, housing, nursery funding/places, sexual health, domestic violence, child development, voucher applications including foodbank and many other areas, with referrals made when required. It provides access to a trusted, skilled, familiar face that enables families to access the information and help they need before problems escalate and prevents further pressure on children's services

Woking

I feel that closing the doors to everyone other than low income families is a huge mistake. This not only makes them stand out like a sore thumb but also prevents people from differing backgrounds learning and supporting one another. At the sessions everyone is in the same boat, learning to deal with the daily struggles and joys of raising a baby. Money has no impact on this as someone can be in a mansion or a caravan and still be alone and isolated with a baby.

Surrey Heath

One respondent noted that targeted services work better with groups with mixed levels of need:

However it has been shown that retention and outcomes of targeted activities are better for groups with a mixed level of need.

Woking

However, there was some support for targeting resources:

The current Children Centre offer does not necessarily meet the needs of vulnerable children. There is a need to intervene earlier and resources need to be targeted at those in greatest need and not in providing a universal offer.

Elmbridge

We are not opposed to savings in children's centres if those savings achieve more cost effective ways of supporting vulnerable families particularly focusing on early help interventions given their impact on saving crisis and further and higher funding requirements later in families' journeys if early help isn't given.

Elmbridge

Volunteers

There was support for engaging more volunteers but some stated that recruitment is difficult and some were concerned that too many volunteers could undermine the professionalism of the current work:

Fully supportive of promoting volunteering through the centres, we would seek assurances that no substantive posts be replaced by voluntary ones.

Tandridge

Volunteers can be invaluable.....however recruitment of volunteers is getting harder, with their number of volunteers at an all-time low. Also retaining volunteers long term is under pressure from the current economic climate, younger volunteers need to find paid work or increase their working hours, older volunteers are stopping to childmind for grandchildren to help with childcare costs.

Woking

Our local Citizens Advice Bureau have advised that recruitment of volunteers is becoming a general problem because of increasing demands from many organisations.

Mole Valley

Some concerns were raised about relying on volunteers to run services:

There are a number of issues such as safeguarding oversight, volunteer continuity, and appropriate professional skills and training.

Woking

– we believe that volunteers can be hugely helpful in providing support but in a children's centre would need to work alongside paid staff, responsible for opening and closing buildings.

Elmbridge

I feel strongly that replacing the trained, skilled Children Centre staff with years of experience with volunteers for such an important job is extremely worrying. It is a skill to be able to give advice and ask the correct, probing questions to identify a vulnerable child or struggling parent. I think it is both unfair and dangerous from a child protection point of view for a volunteer to take on this role.

Surrey Heath

Volunteers cannot bridge the gap in a service of such vital importance

Mole Valley

Mobile centres and outreach

The importance of outreach was mentioned by several respondents and there were concern that with the closure of some centres, the existing networks that have been developed over years may be diminished:

For children's centres scheduled to close the existing networks the centres have nurtured over the years with for example job centres, CAB, the housing, training and education will be vulnerable

Tandridge

Some believed outreach services could never replace the support a children's centre can offer:

Many families will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to access the single remaining centre in Caterham. One of the hidden benefits of children's centres as currently configured is that the premises themselves offer a refuge from post-natal depression, domestic violence and family conflict. We believe an outreach service could never achieve this and given the rural nature of our District makes outreach itself costly.

Tandridge

There was also concern that the closure of mobile centres run from children's centres which link to traveller families could leave them without essential services

The closure of the mobile centre run from Lingfield, which links to traveller families, could leave them without health visitor input which is of considerable concern

Tandridge

Should the number of centres be reduced to the proposed level we urge the Council to reconsider the proposal to stop using the mobile units. Although it is accepted that they are an expensive resource they would enable SCC to provide an element of

equality of access to service for the more (but not most) deprived areas on a regular basis.

Tandridge

Some thought the proposals were unclear or poorly thought through

There were questions and criticism of the proposals and some commented that more information should have been included in the consultation:

It would appear that no assessment of any kind has been undertaken on the effectiveness of the children's centres in the District or the real benefit they bring.

Tandridge

No work seems to have been done on how the proposed expansion of the age range of the new Family hub will be implemented or whether the proposals will actually be fit for purpose.

Spelthorne

There is no indication on the consultation as to how much the cuts will be, and the wording is misleading and confusing.

Reigate and Banstead

There is no information at all regarding the proposal to reduce funding to children's centres across Mole Valley by 58%.

Mole Valley

The strategy suggests the need to make savings of £19.5 million but is not suggesting where these cuts will come from and when.

Spelthorne

We TOTALLY REJECT the recommendation that the Second New Family Hub should be Ashford. We feel this part of the proposal is quite contrary to the evidence and will be very poor fit for current or future needs.

Spelthorne

Population growth and identifying need

One respondent believed that the IDACI figures do not reflect the new growth in communities;

There have been many changes since the IDACI figures were produced - this includes the new Kingsmoor estate in Old Woking which has over 370 properties, 240 of which are social housing properties. The official population figure for children within that SOA area is 98, we have 181 children registered from that area, 185% of the official figure. In addition, there are many new flats in Woking town centre and plans for continued growth. Many of the families who were living in Sheerwater have relocated to Kingsmoor as part of the Sheerwater regeneration. Allocation of funding needs to be as flexible as the changing demographics of Woking. IDACI rating, while of use in established communities, does not accurately reflect the new Woking developments and significant movement of vulnerable families.

Woking

..as the increasing majority of the Mole Valley Population live in the Northern communities of Ashted, The Bookham's, Fetcham and Leatherhead. Can we have explained the analysis that means the proposed services are all located some ten miles away from most of the population? With significant pockets of deprivation in those communities and vulnerable families.

Mole Valley

Suggestions for developing the service

The Council might want to look at the Love Barrow Families approach. There are several other pioneering Councils that have de-bureaucratized, so families are asked from first contact 'what can we do to help' and they get it. A human approach. Pays for itself in spades. And saves children from escalating harms.

Tandridge

Approximately a third of Surrey's revenue goes on paying for Social Care. Will Surrey County Council join with other councils to lobby government to start to share the load to help local councils with this enormous load?

Reigate and Banstead

Given the financial constraints we feel the best provision for Spelthorne will be three full time hubs, at Stanwell, Sunbury North, and Buckland. In addition we recognise the need for satellite provision to cope with LSOA

058. Ashford is not best cited for this as there are at least three schools nearer. Failing this mobile provision based at the new Fordbridge Fire Station should be considered, this would of course have the added benefit of potentially providing service to Spelthorne as a whole.

Spelthorne

Prioritise spend on the Children's Centres against other areas of SCC expenditure: we strongly agree with this option set out in the consultation: reflecting that life chances and outcomes have been shown to be highly dependent on the development made by a child in the first 5 years

County wide charity

