



AGENDA

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 22 November 2023, at 2.00 pm Ask for: **Katy Reynolds**
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Telephone: **03000 422252**
Hall, Maidstone

Membership (17)

- Conservative (12): Mr D L Brazier (Chairman), Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman),
Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr P Bartlett, Mr T Bond, Mr T Cannon,
Mr N J D Chard, Mr P C Cooper, Mr J P McInroy, Mr H Rayner,
Mr R J Thomas and Mr M Whiting
- Labour (2): Ms M Dawkins and Dr L Sullivan
- Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook
- Green and
Independent (2): Rich Lehmann and Mr P Stepto

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcement
- 2 Apologies and Substitutes
- 3 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- 4 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2023 (Pages 1 - 4)
- 5 Initial Draft Budget 2024-25 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-27 (Pages 5 - 76)
- 6 Contract Management Review Group Update (Pages 77 - 84)
- 7 Annual Equality and Diversity Report (Pages 85 - 156)
- 8 23/00101 - Kent Communities Programme (Pages 157 - 594)

- 9 23/00108 - Disposal of former Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE (Pages 595 - 612)
- 10 23/00106 - Oracle Enterprise Business Capabilities System – Hosting and Support (Pages 613 - 622)
- 11 Work Programme (Pages 623 - 628)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Ben Watts,
General Counsel
03000 416814

Tuesday, 14 November 2023

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 19 September 2023

PRESENT: Mr R J Thomas, Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr D L Brazier, Ms M Dawkins, Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr A J Hook, Rich Lehmann, Mr H Rayner, Dr L Sullivan, Mr M Whiting and Mr B J Sweetland

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R Gough, Mr P Oakford, and Mr D Jeffrey

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Beer (Deputy Chief Executive), Mrs R Spore (Director of Infrastructure), Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Mr D Whittle (Director of Strategy, Policy, Relationships and Corporate Assurance), Miss K Reynolds (Democratic Services Officer), Mr Easthope, Ms L McPherson, Miss K Phillips (Strategic Business Adviser - GET), Wagner (Interim Chief Analyst) and Ms Z Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**162. Apologies and Substitutes**

(Item 2)

Apologies for absence had been received from Mr Bond, Mr McInroy, Mr Stepto, Mr Bartlett, Mr Cannon and Mr Chard. Mr Sweetland was present as substitute for Mr Chard.

163. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda

(Item 3)

In relation to agenda item 9, Mr Rayner declared an interest as a Life Member of the RLI.

164. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023

(Item 4)

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2023 are correctly recorded and they be signed by the Vice Chair. There were no matters arising.

165. Election of Chair

(Item 5)

1. Mr Dendor proposed, and Mr Thomas seconded that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee.
2. It was agreed unanimously that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee.

3. RESOLVED that Mr Brazier be elected Chairman of the Cabinet Committee

166. Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department

(Item 6)

1. Mr Roger Gough, Mr David Whittle and Mr Matt Wagner introduced the report which showed performance for the Chief Executive's Department (CED) and Deputy Chief Executive's Department (DCED) against targets set for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). 21 of the 27 KPIs achieved target for the latest month and were RAG (Red/Amber/Green) rated Green, two were below target but did achieve the floor standard (Amber) and four did not achieve the floor standard (Red). A brief overview of the Red rated KPIs was provided to the Committee.
2. In response to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
 - a) The calculation of the Red rated 'GL02: Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests completed within 20 working days' KPI was based on the responses provided for the relevant period. It was said that an overview of the FOIs received during this period could be provided to Members in the Information Governance Briefing. This would include information on the relationship between the subjects of the FOI requests and complaints received.
 - b) In relation to 'CS07: Complaints responded to in timescale', it was said that different action plans had been put in place to reduce backlogs within the different directorates. Significant improvement had been made in Growth, Environment and Transportation since the introduction of these additional measures. This was likely to be reflected in the next set of results.
 - c) Further information could be provided to the Committee regarding the number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) included in the Red rated 'FN07: Invoices received by Accounts Payable within 15 days of KCC received date' KPI.
 - d) The trend in 'FN06: Percentage of sundry debt due to KCC outstanding over 6 months old' was not unusual. Members expressed an interest in an informal briefing on this KPI.
3. RESOLVED to note the performance position for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department.

167. Information Governance Update

(Item 7)

1. Mr Ben Watts introduced the paper. Members were asked to provide the clerk with any further areas of interest for the briefing by no later than 4pm on 29 September 2023.
2. It was requested that the 'Use of AI in decision making' be added to the agenda for the briefing.
3. RESOLVED to note the update and agree that an update paper be brought to the next meeting.

168. Artificial Intelligence Interim Policy

(Item 8)

1. Mr Roger Gough and Mr David Whittle introduced the paper which summarised the reasons for developing a policy about KCC's use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). It was confirmed following consultation with the Corporate Management Team that this was not an interim policy. Instead, it would be introduced as a permanent policy to be reviewed regularly; to evolve as necessary in response to national and legislative developments. It was said that the policy aimed to consider both the risks and opportunities presented by AI. It was highlighted that there would be further work required to establish assurance where third party providers made use of AI. This was not a KCC-specific risk.
2. In response to questions and comments from Members it was said that:
 - a) In relation to accountability, it was highlighted that the outputs of AI are heavily impacted by the human decisions made in its design. Therefore, the policy emphasised that all staff would have a responsibility to maintain transparency in its use. There was a need to consider how this would be done in a proportionate and effective way.
 - b) The use of AI would rely on a management decision, with specific consideration of the restrictions outlined in the policy. Mr Watts reminded the Committee that it remained the responsibility of the Information Asset Owners to put in place the appropriate arrangements to ensure that data management was carried out correctly in their service areas. However, it was agreed that internal communication was necessary to ensure that staff at all levels were aware of their responsibilities in relation to AI.
 - c) It was reiterated that further opportunities for the use of AI would be explored as part of the regular review of the policy.
 - d) The Committee expressed interest in an all-Member training session on the Artificial Intelligence Policy.
3. RESOLVED to note KCC's Artificial Intelligence Policy.

169. 23/00063 - Granting of Lease to Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for Lifeboat Station in Margate

(Item 9)

1. Mrs Rebecca Spore introduced the report which outlined the proposal to grant a Lease for over 20 years to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) for its Lifeboat Station at The Rendezvous in Margate. It was said that figure in paragraph 8.2 of the report should be '20 years' instead of '200 years'.
2. RESOLVED to consider and endorse the proposed decision to:
 - a) grant the RNLI a new lease of its Lifeboat Station in Margate on terms as outlined in exempt Appendix A; and
 - b) delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise terms for the lease and any related agreements including licences for alterations.

170. Work Programme
(Item 10)

RESOLVED to consider and note the planned work programme for 2023.

From: Roger Gough – Leader of the Council
Peter Oakford - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Finance, Corporate & Traded Services
Dylan Jeffery - Cabinet Member for Communications and
Democratic Services

To: Policy & Resources Cabinet Committee – 22 November 2023

Subject: **Initial Draft Budget 2024-25 and MTFP 2024-27**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

The attached report sets out the background to the setting of the capital programme, revenue budget and medium-term financial plan (MTFP) for the forthcoming year. The report includes fuller details of funding, spending, savings, income and reserves estimates in the initial draft revenue budget together with analysis of risks.

The same budget report is being presented to each Cabinet Committee as it is a standard report for the whole council, focussing on the key strategic considerations underpinning the decisions necessary for County Council to agree the budget at the Budget Meeting in February.

The relevant Cabinet Members will outline the key budget points relating to their portfolio as part of the Cabinet Committee consideration, to clarify the budget areas within scope of the Committee and to seek feedback on the relevant proposals.

To support ongoing budget consideration by Members, outside of the particular Cabinet Committee stage of the budget development process, a separate interrogatable dashboard is available to Members, setting out key information about individual elements of the initial draft revenue budget.

Recommendations

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to:

- a) NOTE the initial draft capital and revenue budgets including responses to consultation
- b) SUGGEST any changes which should be made to the section of the budget related to the Cabinet Committee's portfolio area before the draft is considered by Cabinet on 25th January 2024 and presented to Full County Council on 19th February 2024

Contact details:

Report Author(s)

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Initial Draft Budget 2024-25 and 2024-27 MTFP

	Sctn	Page
<u>Executive Summary</u>	1	2
<u>Background and Context</u>	2	5
<u>Principles for 2024-25 Local Government Finance Settlement</u>	3	11
<u>Progress on Outcomes Based Budgeting</u>	4	13
<u>Council Tax</u>	5	16
<u>The Administration's Initial Draft Budget Proposals</u>	6	18
<u>Revenue Strategy and Initial Draft Budget</u>	7	22
<u>Reserves</u>	8	25
Appendices		
<u>High Level Summary 3 Year Draft Revenue Plan and Financing 2024-27</u>	A	
<u>Directorate Summary of 2024-25 Spending, Savings & income, Reserves</u>	B	
<u>Budget 2024-25 Dashboard</u>	C	
<u>List of individual spending growth and savings & income items</u>	D	
<u>Reserves Policy</u>	E	
<u>Budget Risks and Adequacy of Reserves</u>	F	
<u>Budget Risk Register</u>	G	

From Leader of the Council; Roger Gough
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services; Peter Oakford
Cabinet Members

Relevant Director(s) Corporate Director Finance; Zena Cooke
Interim Chief Executive,
Corporate Directors, ASCH, CYPE and GET

Report author Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy; Dave Shipton

Circulated to Cabinet Committees and Scrutiny Committee

Classification Unrestricted

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Directorates – abbreviations in this report

ASCH - Adult Social Care and Health	CYPE - Children, Young People and Education
GET - Growth, Environment & Transport	CED - Chief Executive's Department
DCED – Deputy Chief Executive's Department	NAC - Non-Attributable Costs

1.1 This report sets out the proposals in the administration's initial draft revenue budget 2024-25 and three-year medium term financial plan (MTFP) 2024-27. The report and appendices provide the essential information for the scrutiny process in advance of full Council approval in February 2024. As reported to Policy & Resources committee in July 2023 the draft budget for scrutiny is being published earlier than in recent years for the November 2023 cycle of meetings; initially enabled by the announcement of the settlement principles for 2024-25 in the 2023-24 local government finance settlement, and more importantly to free up capacity in the January 2024 cycle of meetings for key decisions on individual aspects of the budget proposals to be considered and agreed in principle pending County Council approval of the budget on 19th February 2024.

1.2 This timescale was planned before the challenge of further significant revenue overspends emerged in the first budget monitoring for 2023-24 as reported to Cabinet on 17th August 2023. These overspends are principally in adult social care (older persons and to a lesser extent vulnerable adults), home to school transport, and placement costs for children in care. The level of spending growth in these areas in recent years has been increasing at an unsustainable rate within the constraints of current government spending plans for local government. This growth has added significantly to the revenue budget challenge for 2024-25, not only from the need to reflect the full year effect of unbudgeted activity and costs during 2023-24 (and later stages of 2022-23) into 2024-25, but also on future forecasts for impact from cost drivers and demand. Inevitably an earlier publication for scrutiny also means that the initial draft budget is based on the best estimates available at the time and the final draft budget will need to be based on the latest information available in December/January (including the local government settlement announcement for 2024-25 and tax base estimates). Therefore, all the financials in the initial draft are necessarily provisional.

1.3 The report to Cabinet on 5th October "Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy" set out the necessity to address the structural budget deficits that have led to overspends in 2022-23 and 2023-24, and to bring the council back into financial sustainability based on securing the provision of services for Kent residents whilst meeting the statutory Best Value duties. The budget recovery plan set out the broad strategic approach with specific focus on the actions in 2023-24 that would have an immediate impact to bring current year spending back into balance as quickly as possible (many of which are one-offs and would not feed through into 2024-25).

1.4 The recovery plan set out separately the proposed strategies to meet the objective of delivering savings and future cost reductions over the medium to longer term impacting on 2024-25 budget and 2024-27 MTFP. Not all the detail of this second objective has yet been fully worked up in time for the publication of the initial draft budget for November scrutiny and delivering some of the structural changes to resolve deficits will take time. At this stage the administration's initial draft budget for 2024-25 and MTFP 2024-27 is unbalanced with budget gaps, and with indicative amounts from the broad strategic objectives in the recovery plan identified but with further detail to follow. However, this does not preclude scrutiny of the initial draft spending, savings, income and reserves estimates towards balancing the budget against the estimated 2024-25 settlement and council tax. An updated draft will need to be published in January 2024 with any missing detail for further scrutiny and consideration of key decisions in March 2024. As in previous years a final draft will be published on 9th February in accordance with publication deadlines for County Council consideration and approval on 19th February 2024.

1.5 The budget recovery strategy identified 3 main areas where there is the biggest opportunity for further substantial savings and to reduce costs in 2024-25 to resolve the gap and balance the budget. These include review of demand and cost drivers in adult social care, children's services and home to school transport leading to scope to reduce future cost growth; contract renewals in the next 12 months; and further targeted savings including bringing forward savings in later years of MTFP.

1.6 The financial sustainability of a number of councils is a national concern at this time, and many of the spending growth pressures impacting on KCC are common in other councils. Whilst KCC will seek to take all the necessary steps to manage future spending within resources available through savings, income and future cost avoidance this will not necessarily fully secure the Council's financial resilience and sustainability if future spending growth continues at unsustainable levels. In particular, if the structural deficits in key spending areas in adults and children's are not addressed there will become a point where the council is unable to balance the budget on a sustainable basis from savings in other spending areas.

1.7 The draft revenue estimates for spending, savings, income and reserves have been set out in a more accessible format. This change was planned alongside the earlier publication timescale and the development of outcomes based budgeting. It is designed to enable plans to be considered from the perspective of the main spending areas accounting for over 80% of revenue spending (excluding non-attributable costs), as well as the traditional directorate perspective. The main spending areas cover care support & preventative services for older persons, care support & preventative services for vulnerable adults, care support & preventative services for vulnerable and disabled children, public transport (including home to school transport), waste recycling & disposal, and highways management & maintenance. The more accessible format comprises of dashboards that allow interrogation in more detail of current spending and proposed changes from spending growth, savings, income and reserves that lead to draft net spending plans for 2024-25 and subsequent years, as well as providing background information on key impacts, risks, sensitivities and dependencies. These dashboards replace the previous tabular formats and are only available internally within the Council (link sent with budget papers). The estimates are an early forecast which can, and in all likelihood will, change in the final draft budget. Effectively this means the gap presented is a figure within a likely range.

1.8 The draft capital plan will not be published for November scrutiny. The final draft programme will be published in January to ensure that the plan can fully reflect grant notifications and the latest forecast spending on projects and rolling programmes including rollovers from the 2022-23 outturn.

1.9 As well as the impacts of current year overspends and future forecast cost drivers and demand, inflation is still forecast to remain at historically high levels during 2023-24 and into 2024-25. Inflation impacts on the costs of goods and services in revenue budgets and costs of labour, fees and materials on capital projects. At this stage the impact of inflation built into budget estimates is based on the March 2023 forecasts from the Office of Budget responsibility (OBR). The March 2023 OBR forecasts were for Consumer Price Index (CPI) to peak at 10.7% in quarter 4 2022, thereafter reducing to:

- 9.7% in quarter 1 2023
- 6.9% in quarter 2 2023
- 5.4% in quarter 3 2023
- 2.9% in quarter 4 2023
- 1.5% in quarter 1 2024

1.10 Inflationary uplifts are applied according to the terms of individual contracts including timing. This means that in many cases mid-year uplifts have a part year impact in 2023-24 and full year impact in 2024-25. The rate of inflation in 2023 has not reduced as quickly as the March 2023 OBR forecast, with reported CPI from Office for National Statistics (ONS) of 10.2% quarter 1, 8.4% quarter 2 and 6.7% quarter 3 2023. Revenue spending subject to inflation is around £1.4bn, so each 1% adds £14m to council costs.

1.11 The administration's initial draft budget includes a 4.992% assumed increase in Council Tax charge. This would increase the County Council share of the bill for a typical band D household by £1.47 per week (£76.59 per year). Council Tax is the council's most significant source of income to fund essential services, and whilst the administration seeks to keep increases to a minimum, the assumed amount is in line with the government's principles for 2024-25 announced in the 2023-24 local government finance settlement of a 3% referendum limit and 2% adult social care precept. The tax base (the number of dwellings liable for council tax after discounts, exemptions and assumed collection rates) is assumed to increase by 1.7%, which is around the normal level we would expect from growth in the number of households and anticipated changes to discounts. The council tax precept is based on combination of the council tax band D charge and the estimate of the net number of band D equivalent properties in the tax base for 2024-25. The tax base estimate is ultimately determined by collection authorities (district and borough councils) for the final draft budget and council tax precept for full Council approval on 19th February.

2.1 The setting of the budget is a decision reserved for Full Council. The Council's Budget and Policy Framework requires that a draft budget is issued for consultation with the Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees to allow for their comments to be considered before the final budget proposals are made to Full Council.

2.2 The overall strategy for the budget is to ensure that the Council continues to plan for revenue and capital budgets which are affordable, reflect the Council's strategic priorities, allow the Council to fulfil its statutory responsibilities and continue to maintain and improve the Council's financial resilience. This is consistent with the objectives set out in Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy. However, these aims are not always an easy combination and involves some difficult decisions about service levels and provision both for the forthcoming year and over the medium term. In reaching this balance it is essential that the Council has regard to bearing down on spending growth (future price inflation, non inflation related cost increases and demand increases), delivering efficiency/transformation savings, generating income to fund services, and agreeing changes in policies to reduce current recurring spending and/or avoid future spending while making the necessary investments to support service improvement. In this context it is worth clarifying that savings relate to reducing current recurring spend whereas bearing down on future growth is cost avoidance, both amount to the same end outcome of reducing future spending from what it would otherwise have needed to be without action and intervention. The initial draft budget should be assessed against these aims recognising that there are still gaps to close.

2.3 The Council is under a legal duty to set a balanced and sustainable budget and maintain adequate reserves such that it can deliver its statutory responsibilities and priorities. A MTFP covering the entirety of the resources available to the Council is considered to be the best way that resource prioritisation and allocation decisions can be considered and agreed in a way that provides a stable and considered approach to service delivery and takes into account relevant risks and uncertainty. However, it must also be acknowledged that the Government's Autumn Budget 2022 statement only covered a 2-year period, and the Local Government Finance settlement (LGFS) announcements to date only contained high level principles for 2024-25 with little detail and no indicative allocations for individual authorities. This means that the funding for 2024-25 is a best estimate at this stage and the forecasts for later years are speculative, consequently planning has to be sufficiently flexible to respond accordingly. Even so, it is clear that 2024-25 and medium term to 2026-27 are likely to continue to be exceptionally challenging and will require real terms reductions even though overall net cash spending is increasing. This will be a difficult message to convey.

2.4 As the Council develops its detailed proposals it must continue to keep under review those key financial assumptions which underpin the Council's MTFP particularly in the context of wider public spending and geo-economic factors. Over the previous decade the Council had to become ever more dependent on locally raised sources of income through Council Tax and retained business rates, and it is only in recent years that additional central government funding has been made available to local authorities primarily to address spending pressures in social care (albeit at a time when the national public sector deficit has been increasing). However, there is no certainty that this additional central government funding will be baselined for future years.

2.5 In accordance with Financial Regulations, a medium-term capital programme and financing plan is prepared on an annual basis. Where capital estimates are included, funding must be secured and approved prior to any expenditure being incurred.

2.6 Setting the annual budget is one of the most significant decisions the County Council takes each year. It sets the County Council's share of council tax and the overall resource framework in which the Council operates. The administration's budget is the financial expression of the council's strategic priorities. The budget gives delegated authority to manage the budget to Corporate Directors and Directors within the parameters set out in the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations. Corporate Directors and Directors are accountable for spending decisions within delegated powers reporting to the Chief Executive, and these are monitored through the council's budget monitoring arrangements regularly reported to Cabinet. The draft budget is developed, scrutinised and ultimately approved in compliance with the following six key considerations:

A) Strategic Priorities – Strategic Statement

2.7 The County Council approved a new strategic statement "Framing Kent's Future (FKF)" on 26th May 2022. The statement sets out the challenges and opportunities Kent is faced with and the actions the Council will prioritise to address them over the next four years focussing on four key priorities. The 2023-24 budget recognised that the significant shift in the financial and operating landscape since FKF's approval meant that policy and service decisions had to be taken to balance the budget which could run counter to the priorities and ambition set out in Framing Kent's Future.

2.8 Securing Kent's Future (SKF) has explored these shifts in more depth and acknowledges that given the significance of adults and children's social care within the council's budget, and that spending growth pressures on the council's budget overwhelming (but not exclusively) come from social care, that the priority of delivering New Models of Care and Support within FKF must take precedence over the other priorities. This creates an expectation that council services across all directorates must collectively prioritise delivering the new models of care and support objective as a collective enterprise.

2.9 This does not mean that the other objectives of Levelling Up Kent, Infrastructure for Communities, and Environmental Step Change are not still important and all work on these must stop. However, the scope of these other three objectives will have to be scaled back in terms of additional investment and funding, and management time and capacity that can reasonably be given to them.

B) Best Value

2.10 SKF has recognised that the Council must prioritise its Best Value statutory responsibility. The expansion of the legislative framework in which councils operate in has extended statutory duties without the necessary additional financial resources through increased government funding or income generating/local tax raising powers to cover the additional costs. The government has recently issued revised statutory Best Value guidance (subject to consultation) reminding local authorities of the requirement to secure continuous improvement having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The revised guidance goes on to explicitly state that this covers delivering a balanced budget, providing statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and securing value for money in all spending decisions.

2.11 The implication is clear. Those councils that cannot balance competing statutory duties, set a balanced budget, deliver statutory services, and secure value for money are not meeting their legal obligations under the Local Government Act 1999. Consequently, the statutory Best Value duty must frame all financial, service and policy decisions and the council must pro-actively evidence the best value considerations, including budget preparation and approval. The initial draft budget is a step towards this enhanced Best Value compliance and we will look to develop Best Value assessment of individual elements within budget proposals in later drafts (and subsequent budgets) but these will not be ready for this initial draft and until the further detail to resolve budget gaps has been completed.

C) Requirement to set a balanced budget

2.12 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to consult on and ultimately set a legal budget and Council Tax precept for the forthcoming financial year, 2024-25. This requirement applies to the final draft budget presented for County Council approval. It does not apply to interim drafts. Whilst there is no legal requirement to set a balanced MTFP, this is considered good practice with an expectation that the financial strategy is based on a balanced plan in the medium term (albeit the resource equation beyond 2024-25 is still highly uncertain)

2.13 Setting the Council's revenue and capital budgets for the forthcoming year will be incredibly challenging due to the economic circumstances and forecast levels of growth pressures on council services. This has made current year budgets significantly more volatile due to unpredictable cost of providing council services from inflation, market conditions, delivering statutory responsibilities and ultimately client and resident expectations. Demand is also unpredictable although currently this is less volatile in terms of client numbers in most services. This volatility has knock-on consequences for our ability to forecast future spending requirements and income levels.

2.14 The LGFS for 2023-24 provided some additional certainty and increase in the resources available to the local government sector as a whole (and social care in particular) through the announcement of core principles for council tax referendum and grant settlements for 2024-25. The announcement did not include any indicative amounts for individual authorities for 2024-25 although we are able to estimate the likely amount with a reasonable degree of certainty providing the allocation methodology is not significantly altered for 2023-24.

2.15 The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget. However, what is meant by 'balanced' is not defined in law and relies on the professional judgement of the Chief Financial Officer to ensure that the budget is robust and sustainable. A prudent definition of a balanced budget would be a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how planned spending and income equals the available funding for the forthcoming year. Plans can take into account deliverable cost savings and/or local income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. The government has confirmed that the Statutory Override for the Dedicated Schools Grant deficits is extended for a further 3 years from 2023-24 to 2025-26. However, despite this extension under the Safety Valve programme the Council will have to start to make provision for a contribution in the 2024-25 budget and subsequent years for the duration of the agreement towards the accumulated DSG deficit.

2.16 While there is no legal definition of a balanced budget, legislation does provide a description to illustrate when a budget is considered not to balance:

- where the increased uncertainty leads to budget overspends of a level which reduce reserves to unacceptably low levels, or
- where an authority demonstrates the characteristics of an insolvent organisation, such as an inability to pay creditors.

2.17 The administration's initial draft budget includes a significant increase in risks, due to the combination of the magnitude of overspends in the current year (including under delivery of savings plans), unsustainable levels of growth and the need to avoid/reduce these, the magnitude of savings/income required for 2024-25, and external factors including geo economic circumstances and the impact of a recent high court order that the Council must take all possible steps to care for all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) children arriving in the county under the Children's Act 1989, unless and until they are transferred to other local authorities under the National Transfer Scheme. The risks from the judgment not only arise from the cost of securing additional care provision for UAS children should government departments not fully compensate the council but also knock-on consequences on the availability and cost of care for other children already in Kent. To date the offer is circa £9m which is insufficient to cover forecast costs for caring for UAS children for the remainder of 2023-24 which if not resolved would leave a forecast deficit, and no offer has yet been made for 2024-25. This combination poses a major threat to the Council's financial sustainability.

2.18 The increased risks means there will need to be a very robust approach to negotiating and agreeing prices for a range of council services to stay within the inflation allocations in the draft budget, an enhanced emphasis on controlling the drivers of non-inflation related cost increases, a more rigorous approach to managing, monitoring and reporting on demand for council services and greater oversight, monitoring and reporting of savings delivery to reduce the risk of further calls on reserves. The level of savings required in 2024-25 and over the medium term continues to be higher than in recent years driven largely by growth in spending rather than cuts in funding, representing a new and very specific challenge.

2.19 To avoid the risk of an unbalanced budget the Council has to be financially resilient. Good financial management is fundamental in establishing confidence in the budget and ensuring that the finances can withstand unexpected shocks. The Council undertook a review of each Directorate's financial management arrangements, following the Council wide financial management review undertaken by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The Council is also developing Outcomes Based Budgeting which will see a more integrated approach to budget and service planning over the MTFP period focussing on priority outcomes and value for money.

2.20 Setting a clear medium-term financial plan (MTFP) also strengthens the Council's financial resilience by identifying financial issues early and options for potential solutions.

D) Budget Consultation

2.21 The Council launched a consultation on the 2024-25 budget on 13th July 2023. The consultation was open until 6th September 2023 and can still be viewed via the <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/budget-consultation-2024-25> [Council's website](#).

2.22 2,620 responses were received which is higher than the 2,161 responses to last year's budget consultation. Responses were received from Kent residents, KCC staff and local businesses. 49.8% of respondents found out about the consultation via Facebook advertising, 19.4% via a KCC e-mail and/or website.

2.23 A supporting document set out the background to the consultation including key facts about Kent, KCC's strategic priorities, the financial challenges the council has had to address in recent years, the 2022-23 budget outturn, and the 2023-24 budget. The document included information on the council tax referendum principles together with the assumed levels for 2024-25 and impact on council tax bills. The document sets out the financial outlook for the forthcoming year and the difficult decisions that will be needed to balance significant forecast spending increases with the forecast resources from council tax and central government settlement.

2.24 The supporting document focuses on the six main spending areas which account for over 80% of revenue spending (excluding non-attributable costs):

- Care, support and preventative services for vulnerable adults (32%)
- Care, support and preventative services for vulnerable and disabled children (17%)
- Care, support and preventative services for older persons (15%)
- Public transport including home to school transport (8%)
- Waste recycling and disposal (7%)
- Highways management and maintenance (4%)

2.25 The consultation sought views on both the general council tax and the adult social care levy, and whether increases up to the referendum level are supported, increases should be less than referendum level, or any increase is opposed. The consultation sought views on spending priorities within the big six areas, and whether current spending is too little, too much or about right. The consultation sought views on if spending has to be reduced in one of the big six areas which should it be. The consultation also sought views on ideas for savings.

2.26 A separate detailed report setting out the responses received is included as a background document to this report.

E) Equalities Considerations

2.27 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, in the exercise of its functions to have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.28 To help meet its duty under the Equality Act the council undertakes equality impact assessments to analyse a proposed change to assess whether it has a disproportionate impact on persons who share a protected characteristic. As part of our budget setting process an equality impact assessment screening will be completed for each savings proposal to determine which proposals will require a full equality impact analysis (with mitigating actions set out against any equality risks) prior to a decision to implement being made.

2.29 The amounts for some savings can only be confirmed following consultation and completion of an equalities impact assessment. Consequently, amounts are only planned at the time the budget is approved and can change. Any changes will be reported through the in-year budget monitoring reports which will include separate and specific consideration of delivery of savings plans.

F) Treasury Management Strategy

2.30 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement will be included as an appendix to the report for approval by full Council in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The Statement sets out the proposed strategy with regard to borrowing, the investment of cash balances and the associated monitoring arrangements.

2.31 The prudential indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Strategy will be based on the first three years of the 10 year Capital Programme.

3.1 The provisional local government finance settlement for 2023-24 included guiding principles for 2024-25, although no indicative figures for individual councils were set out. The guiding principles related to council tax referendum principles, additional social care grants announced as part of a two-year package for 2023-24 and 2024-25 in the Autumn 2022 Budget, and uplifts to retained business rates and Revenue Support Grant (RSG) linked to business rate multipliers.

3.2 The guiding principle on council tax is that referendum limits for 2024-25 would be the same as 2023-24 i.e. for authorities with adult social care responsibilities an increase in the general precept of up to but not exceeding 3% without the requirement for a referendum, and adult social care levy of up to but not exceeding 2%. The initial draft budget assumes a council tax increase of 4.992%, the maximum that would be allowed without a referendum.

3.3 The additional grants for social care include:

- an extra £532m nationally in the Social Care Grant for adults and children's social care (increasing the total grant from £1,345m to £1,877m). If the same distribution methodology is used for 2024-25 as 2023-24 KCCs estimated share of the extra would be £14.4m (increasing Social Care grant from £88.8m to £103.2m).
- an extra £283m nationally in the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (increasing the total grant from £562m to £845m). If the same distribution methodology is used for 2024-25 as 2023-24 KCCs estimated share of the extra would be £7.3m (increasing Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund grant from £14.4m to £21.7m).
- an extra £200m nationally in the local authority 50% share of the Discharge Fund (increasing the total grant from £300m to £500m). If the same distribution methodology is used for 2024-25 as 2023-24 KCCs estimated share of the extra would be £4.7m (increasing Discharge Fund grant from £7.0m to £11.7m).

3.4 On 28th July 2023 the government announced a further £600m funding for adult social care over 2023-24 and 2024-25. £570m was added to the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (£365m in 2023-24 and a further £205m in 2024-25). KCC's share in 2023-24 was £9.4m with an estimated share of £5.2m in 2024-25. The remaining £30m is to be targeted to those authorities in the most challenged health systems (no details have yet been published).

3.5 The estimated increased social care grants have been included in the initial draft budget assumptions. The additional social care grants and increase in the adult social care council tax precept must be passported into social care budgets. This effectively sets a minimum increase in net spending on social care services between 2023-24 and 2024-25 and caps the amount that can be delivered from efficiency and transformation programmes in social care services to offset increasing costs.

3.6 The Non-Domestic Rating Bill is currently making its way through parliament. Most of this will not affect the retained funding for local authorities other than it will confirm that the annual indexation will be based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than Retail Price Index (RPI) and the increase in the small business and standard multipliers would be decoupled. The impact of these changes on retained business rates funding is subject to technical consultation which closes on 2nd November. Ministers will still have the power to approve a lesser increase in the multiplier. Ministers have used the power of a lesser increase in recent years including using CPI rather than RPI (although local authorities have been compensated for the impact on retained business rates through a separate Section 31 grant).

3.7 The initial draft budget assumes that retained business rates (including top-up grant) and RSG will be uplifted by CPI (with no further compensation to RPI) as this was set out in the guiding principles. At this stage there has been no assumption about the decoupling of small business and standard multipliers pending the outcome of the consultation. This could mean that future uplifts are either based on local weighted average tailored for each authority according to the individual mix of small businesses and standard businesses within the tax base, or an England wide national weighted average. The initial draft budget assumes all increases are based on the un-decoupled small business rate multiplier (assumed 1.4p less than standard multiplier for 2024-25). The final impact of the decision on decoupled uplifts will need to be included in subsequent drafts once decisions have been confirmed.

4.1 Traditionally the revenue budget has been determined on an incremental basis. Incremental budgeting starts with the current year's budget and then adds/subtracts for known and forecast changes. These changes include the full year effect of current year forecast variances as well as future forecasts for pay/prices, service demands (largely driven by non-inflation related demand and cost drivers), service improvements and government legislation. These spending forecasts are then balanced against available funding by spending reductions through savings and income. Non inflation related demand and cost drivers would include things like increased costs of additional hours in care packages, longer journey routes, and supplier competition.

4.2 Incremental budgeting is relatively simple to understand and is appropriate if the primary cost drivers do not change from year to year, or changes can be robustly forecast. One of the big challenges in recent years has been the scale and unpredictability of changes in these non-inflation related demand and cost drivers and the difficulty in forecasting them accurately. This has resulted in overspends. There are also other problems with incremental budgeting as it tends to reinforce current practices and can lead to budget slack due to the inbuilt incentive to over-estimate incremental changes or failure to challenge the basis of current budgets. It is also highly susceptible to volatility from external factors.

4.3 Outcomes based budgeting (OBB) seeks to challenge the orthodoxy of incremental budgeting as it seeks to measure the difference that council spending is expected to make to the quality of life for local residents and communities and target spending accordingly. It will take some time to fully move to OBB due to the large amount of recurrent spending that is effectively fixed in the short to medium term due to existing care and support packages, contractual obligations, and long-standing agreements. This means that initially OBB is focused on an alternative approach to determining the distribution of the available year on year change in resources. This continues to be through the calculation of resource envelopes. For 2024-25 budget and MTFP resource envelopes were set for each of the next three years covering 2024-25 and indicative allocations for 2025-26 and 2026-27. The envelopes for 2024-25 are more predictable with the announcement of guiding principles within the 2023-24 settlement which confirmed increases in social care grants and council tax referendum principles for 2024-25.

4.4 The resource envelopes allocate the forecast available additional resources after taking account of corporate issues such as maintaining adequate and prudent reserves, provision for Kent scheme pay award and debt charges to fund capital programme. The resource envelopes for social care (adults and children's) need to ensure that additional resources from targeted government grants and specific council tax levy are passported in full.

4.5 Envelopes have been set on an Outcomes Based approach for the "big six" spending areas:

- care, support and preventative services for older persons
- care, support and preventative services for vulnerable adults
- care, support and preventative services for vulnerable and disabled children
- public transport (including home to school transport)
- waste recycling and disposal
- highways management & maintenance

4.6 The resource envelope calculation for the big six is based on a combination of unavoidable spending increases (largely contractual price increases) and savings from existing incremental MTFP, with the balance of available resources allocated according to outcomes. Effectively this replaces the previous incremental demographic demand growth and service improvements with an Outcomes basis. The envelopes for remaining spending outside the big six (other envelope) are set from the remaining resources based on historical spend and existing incremental MTFP growth and savings/income.

4.7 Services were tasked with identifying the actions they would need to take to manage spending within the resource envelopes. The initial draft plans to date have led to significant gaps in older people & vulnerable adults, integrated children’s and public transport envelopes where spending growth to date is forecast to be greater than the envelope and sufficient new savings/income have not been identified to manage within the envelope. It will be essential in closing the gap that the further outstanding actions seek to find ways to manage down the spending growth in these areas although this will take some time and it is inevitable that spending in other areas will also have to reduce below the levels expected in the envelope allocations. The council will need to engage additional external support to assist with identifying solutions that enable future spending growth in these key areas to be managed within the likely resources available within general fund from local taxation and government settlement and that these services do not take up an ever increasing and disproportionate share of the Council’s overall budget.

4.8 Currently there is a smaller gap in the waste recycling and disposal envelope and small surpluses in highways and other envelopes. The overall gap in the initial draft revenue budget of £48.8m will need to be closed across all envelopes for subsequent and final drafts through the objectives and actions identified in the strategy reported to Cabinet on 5th October 2023 “Securing Kent’s Future – Budget Recovery Strategy”. The latest position compared to the envelopes is set out in table 1 below.

Table 1 – Resource Envelopes compared to Initial Draft Spending Plans

	Resource Envelope £m	Initial Draft Plans £m	Gap / (surplus) £m
Older people & vulnerable adults	40.4	52.3	11.9
Integrated Children’s Services	3.7	21.4	17.8
Highways management & maintenance	4.8	4.3	-0.5
Waste recycling & disposal	0.7	3.0	2.3
Transport	3.9	26.3	22.3
Other	-0.4	-1.3	-0.9
Corporate for reserves, pay & financing	46.9	42.7	-4.2
Total	99.8	148.6	48.8

4.9 The spending plan submissions have been captured in a new way using sharepoint templates. This allows for more consistency with strategic business planning, enables more information to be collected and held centrally to inform budget decisions, and allows members to access more information about the draft budget proposals as part of the scrutiny process. The information from the templates is presented in a series of dashboards that can be interrogated. These dashboards have been designed to provide a high level of summary information which can then be drilled down. The information can be viewed from directorate, OBB service category, and the traditional MTFP categories (prices, demand, efficiencies, etc) perspectives.

4.10 A short video demonstration of the dashboards has been prepared to help to use them. The dashboards can only be accessed through a kent.gov e-mail account. The attached appendix C includes screen shots of examples from the dashboards. A brief description of each of the spending growth, savings & income, and reserves entries in the dashboard is set out in appendix D. The templates and dashboards are a new approach to gathering and presenting budget information. This means that inevitably further developments and improvements both to the design and presentation of them, and quality of information, will be needed as these evolve.

4.11 This approach is part of a transition towards Outcomes Based Budgeting ensuring a greater outcome focus on the most significant spending areas. This is not to say that other services are not necessarily a priority and cannot be added to the outcome based approach in later years. As the approach is developed increasingly future years envelopes will be based on finance and performance outcomes metrics. These metrics will need to be developed and agreed.

4.12 The core objectives of the revenue strategy are largely unchanged by an Outcome Based approach. The core budget objectives are as follows:

- Maintain a balanced budget and medium-term financial plan with net expenditure (after income and specific grants) not exceeding available funding from un-ringfenced grants and local taxation
- Set a council tax that does not exceed the government referendum limits
- Ensure the council is financially sustainable minimising the risk that the council could cease to be responsible for its financial and other affairs through government intervention or appointment of commissioners
- Maintain an adequate and prudent level of reserves commensurate with risks
- Maintain and improve the council's overall financial resilience through sustainability of reserves, levels of external borrowing and debt costs, balance of income compared to spend, proportion of council budget spent on social care
- Prudent management of cashflow and liquidity through Treasury Strategy which balances risks and returns on financial investments and low interest costs and certainty on borrowing
- Full cost recovery on charges for discretionary services other than where Cabinet agrees to provide services at a subsidy and/or concession
- Prudent capital investment programme
- Aligns resources to the council's strategic vision and priorities whilst allowing the council to fulfil statutory obligations

5.1 Council Tax income is a key source of funding for council services. The amount generated through Council Tax is based on precept on collection authorities derived from the estimated band D equivalent Council Tax Base (the number of weighted properties in each band adjusted for exemptions, discounts and assumed collection rates) and the county council share of the band D household charge.

5.2 A significant proportion of the funding towards the revenue budget is derived from the County Council’s share of council tax. The County Council share of council tax typically amounts to around 70% of a household council tax bill. The County Council charge is the same for all households in the county (as is the share for Police & Crime Commissioner and Fire and Rescue authority), the amount for district/borough and town/parish councils will vary depending on the local area and the individual decisions of these councils.

5.3 The Council currently can, subject to legislative constraints, increase its Council Tax rate through two mechanisms, the Adult Social Care (ASC) precept and general tax rate increases. Each 1% increase in the Council Tax rate generates circa £8.9m per annum in 2024-25, which equates to an extra 29.5 pence per week for a band D property.

5.4 The guiding principles for 2024-25 allow for up to but not exceeding 3% general tax rate increases without a referendum plus an additional Adult Social Care precept of up to 2%. These increases are based on the total county council share of the household charge for 2023-24 (£1,534.23 for band D household). The administration’s initial draft budget 2023-24 includes an assumed 2.998% increase for the general precept (up to but not exceeding the referendum level) and a further 1.994% increase for the adult social care levy (ASCL). The impact of these assumed council tax increases on individual bands are shown in table 2.

Table 2 – Assumed Council Tax Band Charges

Band	Proportion of Band D Tax Rate	2023-24 (incl. ASCL)	2024-25 (excl. increase in ASCL)	2024-25 (incl. increase in ASCL)
A	6/9	£1,022.82	£1,053.48	£1,073.88
B	7/9	£1,193.29	£1,229.06	£1,252.86
C	8/9	£1,363.76	£1,404.64	£1,431.84
D	9/9	£1,534.23	£1,580.22	£1,610.82
E	11/9	£1,875.17	£1,931.38	£1,968.78
F	13/9	£2,216.11	£2,282.54	£2,326.74
G	15/9	£2,557.05	£2,633.70	£2,684.70
H	18/9	£3,068.46	£3,160.44	£3,221.64

5.5 The County Council’s 2023-24 council tax charge (including Fire and Rescue Authority to ensure valid like for like comparison) is currently 10th highest of the 21 counties and 4th of the 7 south east counties. We will not know KCC’s relative position on Council Tax for 2024-25 until all county councils have agreed their precept and Council Tax charge for 2024-25.

5.6 The assumed tax base in the initial draft budget is 1.7% increase. This is based on an assumed historical average increase of 1.5% for increases in number of dwellings and changes in discounts, exemptions and assumed collection rates plus a further 0.2% for the assumed impact if the remaining 9 councils remove the remaining discounts on empty dwellings. Removing such discounts would be consistent with reducing the number of empty dwellings and reducing collection costs. Removing empty property discounts would also be more consistent with reforms in the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill which would allow premiums to be charged on dwellings empty for more than one year as otherwise owners of empty dwellings would pay reduced or no council tax in the first year a property became empty but then double council tax in second year. At this stage the tax base includes no assumption of these increased premiums pending progress of the Bill through parliament.

5.7 The final council tax precept and council tax funding levels will have to be based on tax base estimates notified by the 12 collection authorities. This could change from the assumed tax base in the initial draft 2024-25 budget. Collection authorities also have to notify estimated collection fund balance for over/under collection. This must also be reflected in the final budget as over/under collection has to be taken into account as part of the final decision on council tax charge for 2024-25. The initial draft includes an assumed £7m collection fund balance.

6.1 The administration's initial draft capital and revenue budgets are subject to the budget scrutiny process in November (with scrutiny of further detail to follow in January). The estimates in the initial draft budget are early forecasts which can, and in all likelihood will, change in the final draft budget. Following the scrutiny process the administration's final draft budget for approval by County Council will be published by 9th February 2024. The full Council is responsible for agreeing the budget at the County Council meeting on 19th February 2024 (this is later than previous years to avoid the school holidays but does mean that the council tax precept must be agreed even if other aspects of the budget are deferred to the reserve date as district and borough councils need certainty over the county council precept for their budget setting which is scheduled in the days immediately after the county council meeting). As required by the Council's Constitution and Financial Regulations, the final draft budget for County Council approval will be proposed by the Leader and published in a format recommended by the Corporate Director, Finance and agreed by the Leader.

6.2 The draft proposed ten-year capital spending plans for 2024-34 are being updated to reflect the recent monitoring position and are currently work in progress. The updated plans will need to include some minor changes as detailed below, with the comprehensive refresh scheduled to be published in January:

- Roll overs from the 2022-23 outturn position,
- The transfer of small recurring annual spend to revenue,
- The addition of £26.1m between 2024-25 to 2026-27 to the corporate Modernisation of Assets programme, funded from additional capital receipts,
- Reflection of the 2025-26 basic need grant allocations which resulted in £20.5m additional grant in 2025-26,
- Replacement of £2.6m prudential borrowing with available grant in 2024-25.

6.3 The presentation of the administration's draft revenue budget 2024-25 and 2024-27 MTFP focuses on the key policy and strategic implications of the proposals. The revenue proposals are summarised in appendices A to D of this report. These appendices show the spending, income and savings changes from the current year's approved budget (2023-24) and the financing requirements. Appendix A provides a high-level summary of the proposed three-year plan for the whole council, showing separately the spending growth, savings & income, changes in reserves for core KCC funded activity (funding from the local government settlement and local taxation) from changes in externally funded activities (largely specific grant funded).

6.4 Appendix B provides a directorate high level summary of the proposed plan for 2024-25 again showing separately spending growth, savings & income, changes in reserves and funding for core KCC funded activity (funding from the local government settlement and local taxation) from changes in externally funded activities (largely specific grant funded). Throughout this report the focus is on core funded spending, savings, income and reserves as changes on externally funded spend are financially neutral.

6.5 Appendix C shows examples of the more detailed information available through the dashboards. Appendix D provides a full list of individual spending and savings & income items. Subsequent versions of the draft and final budget will provide more budget details in other formats as the dashboards can only be accessed via a kent.gov e-mail account. The dashboards have been designed specifically to address issues with previous budget presentations for scrutiny purposes.

6.6 The final draft budget presented to County Council will include the key service analysis. The original planned spending on key services is set out in appendix E of the final approved Budget Book for 2023-24 (published in March) and available on KCC website at https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/148947/Budget-Book-2023-24.pdf

It is not feasible or appropriate to produce a key service presentation in the initial draft budget for scrutiny as the scrutiny process needs to focus on the proposed changes to the approved budgets for 2023-24 before more detailed delivery plans are completed and these plans will inform the key service budgets for 2024-25.

6.7 Additional proposed spending growth includes the impact of decisions and activities already being delivered in the current year not included in the current base budget and known future contractual obligations. It also includes forecasts for future cost or activity changes for the forthcoming year, or changes in Council policy. These are set out in fuller detail in dashboards including an explanation of the reasons for the change, key impacts and risks, dependencies and sensitivities. As outlined in section 4, the dashboards have been designed as a new approach but inevitably will need further development on design, content and data quality.

6.8 The savings and income options in the dashboards follows a similar pattern with proposed savings amounts derived from the full year effect of 2023-24 plans already agreed; savings and income for 2024-25 in the original 2023-26 MTFP (albeit updated); savings/income from the application of existing policies; savings/income that do not require any changes in policy; and those that require policy changes presented as policy savings, efficiency/transformation savings, income or financing savings. Given the scale of the savings, enhanced detailed delivery plans will need to be prepared and monitoring arrangements will be put in place in addition to the arrangements already embedded through the monthly monitoring with budget managers and regular quarterly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet.

6.9 The high-level equation for changes in planned revenue spending for 2024-25 (growth and savings), income and net budget, together with the balancing changes in funding is shown in table 3 below. This summarises how the requirement to set a balanced budget will be met once the outstanding actions for 2024-25 outlined in Securing Kent's Future have been finalised and confirmed. To improve transparency the spending, savings and reserves from core KCC funds are shown separately from externally funded changes (consistent with revised presentation of appendices A and B).

Table 3 – Net Change in Spending and Funding

Change in Net Spending	Core Funded	External Funded	Change in Net Funding	Core Funded
Assumed additional spending	£201.5m	-£24.1m	Increase in Social Care grants	£31.7m
Proposed savings from spending reductions and future cost avoidance	-£59.2m*		Net Increase in other government grants	£7.9m
Proposed changes in income	-£10.1m*	-£0.3m	Change in council tax base	£14.9m
Savings & future cost avoidance from SKF to be identified	-£48.8m		Assumed increase in council tax charge	£44.5m
Assumed changes in specific government grants		£20.9m	Change in retained business rates	£3.0m
Proposed net change in reserves	£16.4m	£3.5m	Change in net collection fund balances/S31 compensation	-£2.2m
Total Change in Net Spending	£99.8m	£0.0m	Total Change in Net Funding	£99.8m

*Net figures from original 2023-26 plan updated and new proposals

6.10 The increased and additional grants have been set out in more detail in the section on the principles for 2024-25 local government finance settlement (section 3 of this report). This includes the ASC Discharge Fund, increases in Social Care Grant and Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund.

6.11 The initial draft MTFP does not show a balanced 3 year plan. The initial draft budget for 2024-25 has a gap of £48.8m due to spending growth after savings, income and reserves exceeding the estimated resources from the government settlement and local taxation. The early forecasts on which the initial draft budget is based means that effectively this means the gap presented is a figure within a likely range. The recovery plan has set out indicative amounts from the further actions to close this gap although at this stage these have not been worked in sufficient detail to include as savings and cost reduction plans for the initial draft budget. The recovery plan identified 3 main areas where there is the biggest opportunity for further savings and to reduce costs in 2024-25 to resolve the gap and balance the budget. These include:

- review of demand and cost drivers in adult social care, children's services and home to school transport leading to scope to reduce future cost growth with a particular focus on managing down demand and non-inflationary cost increases in line with the best value principles outlined in section 2B of this report
- Review of all contracts due for renewal in the next 12 months with particular regard to those that can be allowed to lapse and those where there can be a significant change in specification leading to lower tender prices
- Further targeted policy savings in areas of non-statutory spending (including elements of SEN, adult social care and children's services), efficiency/transformation savings such as planning of SEN transport routes, and bringing forward savings in later years of MTFP.

These further detailed plans will need to be presented for scrutiny in January in advance of the publication of final draft budget plans for full Council approval in February. The plans for 2025-26 and 2026-27 have further albeit lesser gaps although the funding and spending forecasts are less reliable for these later years.

6.12 Pressures arising from Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) impact upon both the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the General Fund. Pressures on DSG are addressed primarily by the Safety Valve mechanism, whereby Department for Education provides a substantial contribution (up to £140m), in return for improvements to the SEND system. Pressures on the General Fund are reflected primarily on the number of requests to assess, produce and then annually review Education & Health Care Plans (EHCP) and the associated increased SEND home to school transport costs.

6.13 There is already substantial work being undertaken to manage down this financial pressure and additional work will focus on identifying and reviewing changes to existing policy and practice so that we are meeting statutory minimum requirements, but ceasing discretionary services where they are not cost effective and only issuing EHCPs where they are necessary, and needs cannot be met by other means.

6.14 Where required consultation and Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) will need to be undertaken on individual new savings and income proposals. The final planned amounts can only be confirmed following consultation and EQIA. Any variances between the approved budget and final planned amounts will be included in the budget monitoring report to Cabinet, together with progress on delivery.

Proposed Initial Draft 2024-25 Revenue Budget – key numbers

£1,415.4m	Assumed net revenue budget for 2024-25. This represents a £99.8m increase on the final approved budget for 2023-24 of £1,315.6m.
£201.5m	Additional assumed core funded spending growth – see paragraph 7.1 for more detail.
-£69.3m	Assumed savings, income and future cost increase avoidance. Of this £28.3m relates to proposed savings, £10.1m additional income generation (mainly fees and charges), and £30.9m reductions in the amount assumed for future demand and cost increases in adult social care and home to school transport – see paragraph 7.2 for more detail.
£16.4m	Assumed net impact on the budget of changes in use of reserves including new contributions and removing previous years drawdown and contributions – see section 8 for more detail
-£48.8m	Outstanding actions yet to be finalised from Securing Kent’s Future – Budget Recovery Strategy. These additional reductions will need to mainly come from further avoidance of future spending increases from reviewing impact of cost and demand drivers, contract renewals and further service savings.
£936.2m	Assumed to be raised from Council Tax precept. An increase of £59.4m on 2023-24. £14.9m is due to a 1.7% assumed increase in the tax base due to additional dwellings, changes in discounts and exemptions and assumed collection rates. £44.5m is from the assumed increase in the household charge up to but not exceeding 5% (including £17.8m from the adult social care levy).
£39.6m	Assumed increase in the local government grant settlement. This comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £14.4m increase in Social Care Grant announced in 2023-24 settlement from repurposed funding from social care charging reforms • £12.5m increase in Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund to support capacity and discharge (including £7.3m announced in 2023-24 settlement and £5.2m further announcement in summer 2023) • £4.7m ASC Discharge Fund • £10.2m indexed linked uplifts in business rate top-up, business rate compensation and Revenue Support Grant • -£2.3m removal of New Homes Bonus Grant

Revenue spending: a reminder of what it is
 Revenue spending is spent on the provision of day to day services, either directly through KCC staff and operational buildings, or commissioned from third parties. Revenue spending is identified as gross spend and net spend after taking account of service income and specific government grants. The net revenue budget requirement is funded by a combination of council tax, locally retained business rates and un-ring-fenced grants from the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) included in the local government finance settlement. Grants from other government departments are ring-fenced to specific activities and are shown as income to offset the related spending.

7.1 The additional assumed core funded spending growth (i.e. excluding changes arising from external funding changes) of £201.5m for 2024-25 is summarised in appendices A and B and set out in more detail in appendix D together with more detail in the dashboard. It has been subdivided into the following categories:

Net base budget changes £45.5m	Changes to reflect full year effect of variations in the current year's monitoring forecast compared to approved budget. These adjustments are necessary to ensure the draft budget is based on a robust and sustainable basis.
Demand and cost drivers £80.9m	Forecast estimates for future non-inflationary cost and demand increases such as additional care hours, increased journey length's, etc. across a range of services including adult social care, integrated children's services, home to school transport and waste tonnage.
Price uplifts £46.2m	Contractual and negotiated price increases on contracted services, including full year effect of planned mid-year uplifts in current year and forecast future price uplifts.
Pay £14.2m	Additional net cost of assumed pay award and progression after savings from appointing new staff lower in pay ranges.
Service Strategies & Improvements £13.2m	Other assumed spending increases to deliver strategic priorities and/or service improvements and outcomes including financing of capital programme
Government & Legislative £1.4m	Additional spending to meet compliance with legislative and regulatory changes

7.2 The proposed savings, income and future cost increase avoidance of £69.3m for 2024-25 are summarised in appendices A and B and set out in more detail in appendix D together with more detail in the dashboard. It has been subdivided into the following categories:

Policy Savings £6.6m	Savings arising from proposed changes in KCC policies including full year effect of 2023-24 savings and new proposals for 2024-25 (full year effect in later years will be shown in detail in future drafts). Savings in this category are changes to charging policies and changes in our service offer.
Transformation & Efficiency Savings £49.4m	Savings aimed at achieving improved or the same outcomes at less cost including full year effect of 2023-24 savings and new proposals for 2024-25 (full year effect in later years will be shown in detail in future drafts). Savings in this category include future cost increase avoidance as well as reductions to existing recurring spend. Transformation and efficiency savings include contracted spending as well as in-house spending on staffing and premises.
Financing Savings £3.3m	Review of amounts set aside for debt repayment (MRP) based on asset life and increased investment income returns.
Income Generation £10.1m	Increases in fees and charges for council services from applying existing policies on fee uplifts (including contributions from other bodies) and new income generation proposals. Existing policies include increases in client contributions in line with estimated 2024-25 benefits and other personal income increases and increases in contributions to Kent Travel Saver and 16+ pass linked to fare increases.

8.1 Reserves are an important part of the Council's financial strategy and are held to create long-term financial stability. They enable the Council to manage change without undue impact on the Council Tax and are a key element of its financial standing and resilience.

8.2 The Council's key sources of funding face an uncertain future and the Council therefore holds earmarked reserves and a working balance to mitigate future financial risks.

8.3 There are two main types of reserves:

- Earmarked Reserves – held for identified purposes and are used to maintain a resource in order to provide for expenditure in a future year(s).
- General Reserves – these are held for 'unforeseen' events.

8.4 The Council maintains reserves both for its General Fund activities and it accounts for the reserves of its maintained schools. Schools are funded by a 100% government grant, Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Local authorities cannot fund DSG activities from the general fund without express approval from the Secretary of State. The Statutory Override on DSG deficits has been extended for 3 years from 2023-24 to 2025-26, however during this period it is essential that the Council makes provision for the local authority contributions to the Safety Valve agreement. The Secretary of State has given the council the necessary approval for KCC's contribution to the Safety Valve to be funded from the general fund. The Safety Valve agreement does not fully eliminate the risk of DSG overspends until the plan has been fully delivered and high needs spending is contained within the block of funding available within DSG.

8.5 There remains a significant risk to reserves from the forecast overspend for 2023-24 and the gap in 2024-25 in the initial draft budget until all the actions to bring spending in 2023-24 back into balance have been delivered and the actions to balance planned spending in 2024-25 finalised and agreed. The level of reserves held is a matter of judgment which takes into account the reasons why reserves are maintained and the Council's potential financial exposure to risks. A Reserves Policy is included as Appendix E to this report. An analysis of budget risks is included as Appendix F, and risk register as Appendix G.

8.6 The Council holds reserves in order to mitigate future risks, such as increased demand and costs; to help absorb the costs of future liabilities; and to enable the Council to initially resource policy developments and initiatives without a disruptive impact on Council Tax. Capital reserves play a similar role in funding the Council's capital investment strategy.

8.7 The Council also relies on interest earned through holding cash and investment balances to support its general spending plans.

8.8 Reserves are one-off monies and, therefore, the Council generally aims to avoid using reserves to meet on-going financial commitments other than as part of a sustainable budget plan. The Council has to balance the opportunity cost of holding reserves in terms of Council Tax against the importance of interest earning and long-term future planning.

8.9 Reserves are therefore held for the following purposes:

- Providing a working balance
- Smoothing the impact of uneven expenditure profiles between years e.g. collection fund surpluses or deficits, local elections, structural building maintenance and carrying forward expenditure between years.
- Holding funds for future spending plans e.g. capital expenditure plans, and for the renewal of operational assets e.g. information technology renewal.
- Meeting future costs and liabilities where an accounting 'provision' cannot be justified.
- Meeting future costs and liabilities so as to cushion the effect on services e.g. the Insurance Reserve for self-funded liabilities arising from insurance claims.
- To provide resilience against future risks.
- To create policy capacity in the context of forecast declining future external resources.

8.10 All earmarked reserves are held for a specific purpose. A summary of the movement on each category of reserves is published annually, to accompany the annual Statement of Accounts.

8.11 The administration's Initial draft budget 2024-25 includes an assumed net £16.4m increase in reserves impacting on the budget including new contributions and removing previous years drawdown and contributions. These changes include the following main changes:

Increased/new contributions £36.7m

- £16.2m general reserves including £11.1m repayment of 50% of the amount drawn down to balance 2022-23 and £5.1m for the additional annual contribution to reflect the increase in net revenue budget to maintain general reserves at 5%. The phased repayment of 2022-23 drawdown means general reserves are not planned to be returned to 5% of net revenue until 2025-26
- £15.1m DSG reserve for the planned 2024-25 local authority contribution to the safety valve programme
- £4.3m repayment to smoothing reserves for planned drawdown to support 2023-24 budget
- £1.0m annual contribution to establish new Emergency Capital Events Reserve for emergency capital works and revenue costs related to capital spend such as temporary accommodation, and condition surveys which don't result in capital works

Drawdowns and Removal of Prior Year Drawdown and Contributions -£20.2m

- -£5.8m removal of 2023-24 contribution to general reserve for increase in net budget
- -£12m removal of contribution to risk reserve (now treated as contingent spend rather than reserve)
- -£5.6m removal of 2023-24 contribution to Local Taxation Equalisation reserve
- -£1.2m removal of annual contribution for phased repayment of long term reserves borrowed to fund grant reductions in 2011-12 as these are now fully repaid
- +£4.3m replace drawdown from reserves to support 2023-24 budget

Appendices and background documents

Appendices

High Level Summary 3 Year Draft Revenue Plan and Financing 2024-27	A
Directorate Summary of 2024-25 Spending, Savings & Income and Reserves	B
Budget 2024-25 Dashboard	C
List of individual spending growth and savings & income items	D
Reserves Policy	E
Budget Risks and Adequacy of Reserves	F
Budget Risk Register	G

Background documents

Below are click-throughs to reports, more information, etc.
Click on the item title to be taken to the relevant webpage.

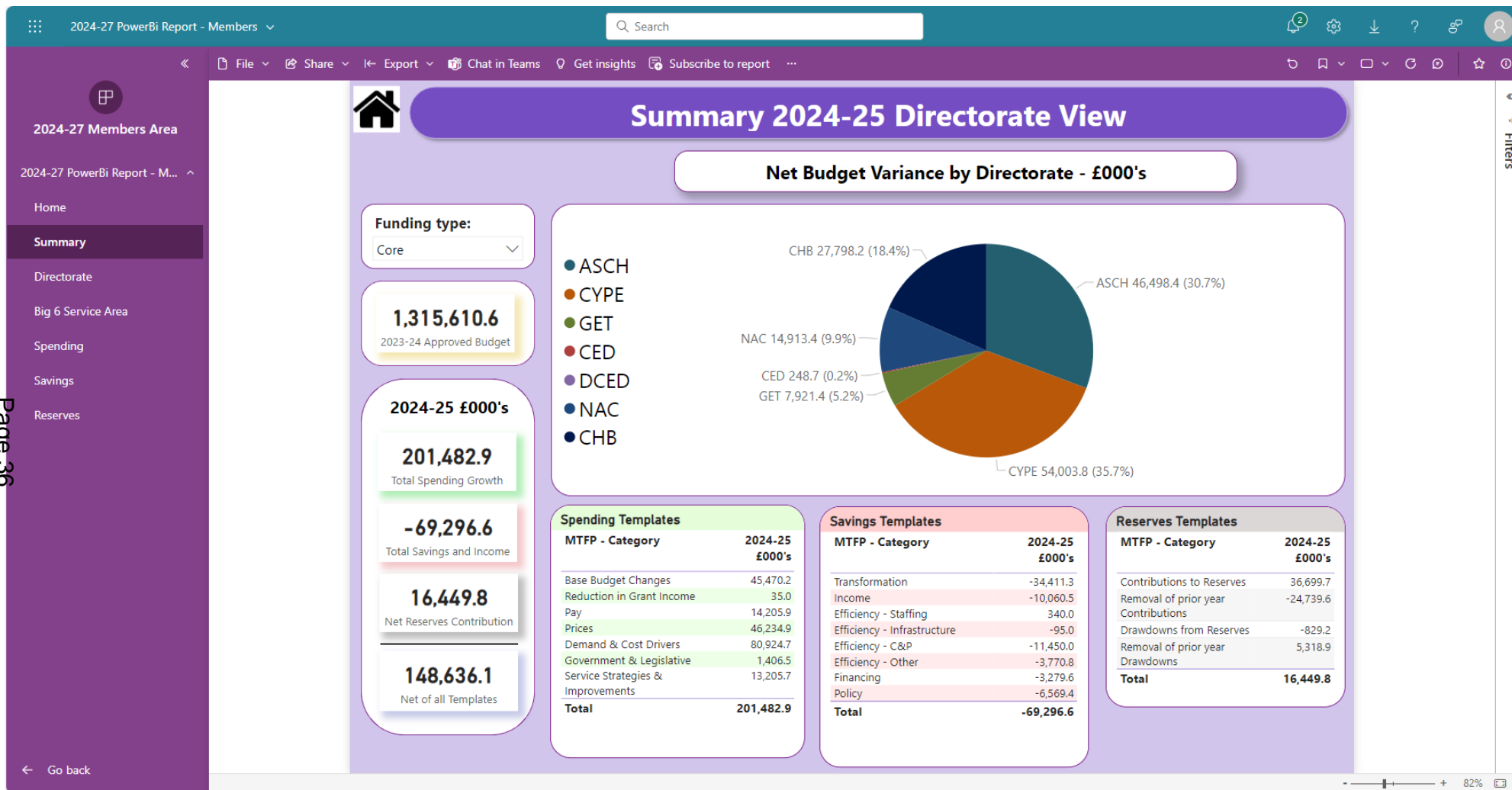
KCC's Budget webpage	1
KCC's Corporate Risk Register (item 9)	2
KCC's Risk Management Strategy, Policy and Programme (item 11)	
KCC's approved 2023-24 Budget	3
2024-25 Budget Consultation (Let's Talk Kent) including the Budget Consultation report	4
June 2023 (high level update for August 2023) Monitoring Report	5
Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy	6
Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Report	7

APPENDIX A: HIGH LEVEL 2024-27 REVENUE PLAN AND FINANCING

	2024-25			2025-26			2026-27		
	core funded	externally funded	TOTAL	core funded	externally funded	TOTAL	core funded	externally funded	TOTAL
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Revised Base Budget	1,315,610.6		1,315,610.6	1,415,450.7		1,415,450.7	1,473,162.2		1,473,162.2
Spending									
Base Budget Changes	45,470.2	0.0	45,470.2	20,355.0	0.0	20,355.0	20,400.0	0.0	20,400.0
Reduction in Grant Income	35.0	0.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pay	14,205.9	505.1	14,711.0	7,611.8	0.0	7,611.8	7,560.1	0.0	7,560.1
Prices	46,234.9	967.4	47,202.3	28,345.0	0.0	28,345.0	22,513.2	0.0	22,513.2
Demand & Cost Drivers	80,924.7	314.7	81,239.4	84,447.6	0.0	84,447.6	82,879.0	0.0	82,879.0
Service Strategies & Improvements	13,205.7	-2,568.8	10,636.9	572.6	-3,952.0	-3,379.4	738.8	0.0	738.8
Government & Legislative	1,406.5	-23,337.5	-21,931.0	126.5	-4,520.6	-4,394.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Spending	201,482.9	-24,119.1	177,363.8	141,458.5	-8,472.6	132,985.9	134,091.1	0.0	134,091.1
Savings, Income & Grants									
Transformation & Efficiency	-49,387.1	0.0	-49,387.1	-46,852.2	-13.9	-46,866.1	-41,833.7	0.0	-41,833.7
Income	-10,060.5	-281.3	-10,341.8	-5,170.3	0.0	-5,170.3	-4,695.4	0.0	-4,695.4
Financing	-3,279.6	0.0	-3,279.6	222.4	0.0	222.4	-281.8	0.0	-281.8
Policy	-6,569.4	-9.2	-6,578.6	-14,499.1	0.0	-14,499.1	-5,032.9	0.0	-5,032.9
Total Savings & Income	-69,296.6	-290.5	-69,587.1	-66,299.2	-13.9	-66,313.1	-51,843.8	0.0	-51,843.8
Increases in Grants and Contributions		20,949.1	20,949.1		8,136.0	8,136.0		0.0	0.0
Total Savings & Income & Grant	-69,296.6	20,658.6	-48,638.0	-66,299.2	8,122.1	-58,177.1	-51,843.8	0.0	-51,843.8
RESERVES									
Contributions to reserves	36,699.7	0.0	36,699.7	29,910.0	0.0	29,910.0	15,560.0	0.0	15,560.0
Removal of prior year Contributions	-24,739.6	0.0	-24,739.6	-36,699.7	0.0	-36,699.7	-29,910.0	0.0	-29,910.0
Drawdowns from reserves	-829.2	-350.5	-1,179.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	5,318.9	3,811.0	9,129.9	829.2	350.5	1,179.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net impact on MTFP	16,449.8	3,460.5	19,910.3	-5,960.5	350.5	-5,610.0	-14,350.0	0.0	-14,350.0
NET CHANGE	148,636.1	0.0	148,636.1	69,198.8	0.0	69,198.8	67,897.3	0.0	67,897.3
Outstanding Actions for Securing Kent's Future (-ve)	-48,796.0		-48,796.0	-11,487.3		-11,487.3	-2,385.2		-2,385.2
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	1,415,450.7	0.0	1,415,450.7	1,473,162.2	0.0	1,473,162.2	1,538,674.3	0.0	1,538,674.3
MEMORANDUM:									
The net impact on our reserves balances is:									
Contributions to Reserves	36,699.7	0.0	36,699.7	29,910.0	0.0	29,910.0	15,560.0	0.0	15,560.0
Drawdowns from Reserves	-829.2	-350.5	-1,179.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net movement in Reserves	35,870.5	-350.5	35,520.0	29,910.0	0.0	29,910.0	15,560.0	0.0	15,560.0
FUNDING									
Revenue Support Grant			11,649.6			11,716.1			11,716.1
Business Rate Top-Up Grant			148,138.7			148,985.2			148,985.2
Business Rate Compensation Grant			46,546.6			46,812.6			46,812.6
Social Care Support Grant			103,212.0			103,212.0			103,212.0
Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund			26,969.4			21,703.9			21,703.9
Hospital Discharge Grant			11,686.6			11,686.6			11,686.6
Services Grant			7,599.4			7,599.4			7,599.4
Improved Better Care Fund			50,014.7			50,014.7			50,014.7
Other un-ringfenced grants			3,257.7			3,257.7			3,257.7
Local Share of Retained Business Rates			63,177.9			63,521.7			63,521.7
Business Rate Collection Fund			0.0			0.0			0.0
Council Tax Income (including increase up to referendum limit but excluding social care levy)			800,774.3			841,243.1			884,201.0
Council Tax Adult Social Care Levy			135,423.8			156,409.2			178,963.4
Council Tax Collection Fund			7,000.0			7,000.0			7,000.0
Total Funding			1,415,450.7			1,473,162.2			1,538,674.3

APPENDIX B: HIGH LEVEL 2024- 25 REVENUE PLAN BY DIRECTORATE

	TOTAL			ASCH Adult Social Care & Health	PH Public Health	CYPE Children, Young People & Education			GET Growth, Environment & Transport	CED Chief Executive's Department			DCED Deputy Chief Executive's Department	NAC Non Attributable Costs	CHB Corporately Held Budgets		
	core funded £000s	externally funded £000s	TOTAL £000s	core funded £000s	externally funded £000s	core funded £000s	externally funded £000s	TOTAL £000s	core funded £000s	core funded £000s	externally funded £000s	TOTAL £000s	core funded £000s	core funded £000s	core funded £000s	externally funded £000s	TOTAL £000s
Revised Base Budget	1,315,610.6		1,315,610.6	527,430.4	0.0	360,353.0		360,353.0	194,949.0	33,118.9		33,118.9	83,989.0	116,062.2	-291.9		-291.9
Spending																	
Base Budget Changes	45,470.2	0.0	45,470.2	16,900.0	0.0	21,666.0	0.0	21,666.0	-468.9	-55.4	0.0	-55.4	-3,000.0	-3,369.7	13,798.2	0.0	13,798.2
Reduction in Grant Income	35.0	0.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	35.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pay	14,205.9	505.1	14,711.0	0.0	505.1	553.0	0.0	553.0	85.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.9	13,500.0	0.0	13,500.0
Prices	46,234.9	967.4	47,202.3	28,482.3	967.4	13,384.0	0.0	13,384.0	2,841.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,482.1	45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Demand & Cost Drivers	80,924.7	314.7	81,239.4	50,602.0	314.7	29,181.5	0.0	29,181.5	1,141.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Service Strategies & Improvements	13,205.7	-2,568.8	10,636.9	296.1	-2,568.8	2,008.0	0.0	2,008.0	5,065.0	656.6	0.0	656.6	-320.0	5,500.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Government & Legislative	1,406.5	-23,337.5	-21,931.0	0.0	-489.6	0.0	-777.0	-777.0	1,406.5	0.0	59.9	59.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	-22,130.8	-22,130.8
Total Spending	201,482.9	-24,119.1	177,363.8	96,280.4	-1,271.2	66,792.5	-777.0	66,015.5	10,105.3	601.2	59.9	661.1	-1,837.9	2,243.2	27,298.2	-22,130.8	5,167.4
Savings, Income & Grants																	
Transformation & Efficiency	-49,387.1	0.0	-49,387.1	-39,758.1	0.0	-9,240.0	0.0	-9,240.0	-94.0	-250.0	0.0	-250.0	-45.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Income	-10,060.5	-281.3	-10,341.8	-8,773.9	-281.3	-417.7		-417.7	-868.9	0.0		0.0	0.0	-500.0	500.0		500.0
Financing	-3,279.6	0.0	-3,279.6	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	-3,279.6	0.0		0.0
Policy	-6,569.4	-9.2	-6,578.6	-1,250.0	-9.2	-3,131.0		-3,131.0	-1,221.0	-102.5		-102.5	-864.9	0.0	0.0		0.0
Total Savings & Income	-69,296.6	-290.5	-69,587.1	-49,782.0	-290.5	-12,788.7	0.0	-12,788.7	-2,183.9	-352.5	0.0	-352.5	-909.9	-3,779.6	500.0	0.0	500.0
Increases in Grants and Contributions		20,949.1	20,949.1		-1,898.8		777.0	777.0			-59.9	-59.9			22,130.8		22,130.8
Total Savings & Income & Grant	-69,296.6	20,658.6	-48,638.0	-49,782.0	-2,189.3	-12,788.7	777.0	-12,011.7	-2,183.9	-352.5	-59.9	-412.4	-909.9	-3,779.6	500.0	22,130.8	22,630.8
RESERVES																	
Contributions to reserves	36,699.7	0.0	36,699.7	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	160.0	36,539.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Removal of prior year Contributions	-24,739.6	0.0	-24,739.6	0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	0.0		0.0	-160.0	-24,579.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drawdowns from reserves	-829.2	-350.5	-1,179.7	-567.2	-350.5	0.0		0.0	0.0	-262.0		-262.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	5,318.9	3,811.0	9,129.9	567.2	3,811.0	0.0		0.0	0.0	262.0		262.0	0.0	4,489.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net impact on MTFP	16,449.8	3,460.5	19,910.3	0.0	3,460.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16,449.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
NET CHANGE	148,636.1	0.0	148,636.1	46,498.4	0.0	54,003.8	0.0	54,003.8	7,921.4	248.7	0.0	248.7	-2,747.8	14,913.4	27,798.2	0.0	27,798.2
Outstanding Actions for Securing Kent's Future	-48,796.0		-48,796.0												-48,796.0		-48,796.0
NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	1,415,450.7	0.0	1,415,450.7	573,928.8	0.0	414,356.8	0.0	414,356.8	202,870.4	33,367.6	0.0	33,367.6	81,241.2	130,975.6	-21,289.7	0.0	-21,289.7
MEMORANDUM:																	
The net impact on our reserves balances is:																	
Contributions to Reserves	36,699.7	0.0	36,699.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	160.0	36,539.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Drawdowns from Reserves	-829.2	-350.5	-1,179.7	-567.2	-350.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-262.0	0.0	-262.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Net movement in Reserves	35,870.5	-350.5	35,520.0	-567.2	-350.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-262.0	0.0	-262.0	160.0	36,539.7	0.0	0.0	0.0



2024-27 PowerBi Report - Members
Search

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Home Summary Directorate Big 6 Service Area Spending Savings Reserves

Go back

Funding type:

Core

Directorate selected:

Division selected:

Big 6 Service Area selected:

Director:

- ASCH
- CYPE
- GET
- CED
- DCED
- NAC
- CHB
- Public Health

Division:

Big 6 Service Area:

Click on the + to see the descriptions of the templates under that Category

Spending Templates

MTFP - Category

	No. of Templates	2024-25 £000's
+ Base Budget Changes	23	45,470.2
+ Reduction in Grant Income	1	35.0
+ Pay	7	14,205.9
+ Prices	34	46,234.9
+ Demand & Cost Drivers	14	80,924.7
+ Government & Legislative	2	1,406.5
+ Service Strategies & Improvements	15	13,205.7
Total	96	201,482.9

Please select a Individual Spending Template

The screenshot shows a PowerBI report titled "2024-27 PowerBi Report - Members". The interface includes a top navigation bar with a search box and various utility icons. A left-hand navigation pane lists several sections: "2024-27 Members Area", "2024-27 PowerBi Report - M...", "Home", "Summary", "Directorate", "Big 6 Service Area" (which is currently selected), "Spending", "Savings", and "Reserves".

The main content area features a filter section with a home icon, a "Funding type:" dropdown menu set to "Core", and a "Big 6 Service Area selected:" field currently showing "--". To the right, a "Big 6 Service Area:" section contains a list of checkboxes for: Older People, Vulnerable Adults, Integrated Children's Services, Highways, Transport, Waste, Adult Social Care Staffing, and Other. Below this is a call-to-action button that says "Click on the + to see the descriptions of the templates under that Category".

The primary data visualization is a table titled "Spending Templates". The table has three columns: "Directorate", "No. of Templates", and "2024-25 £000's". The rows are as follows:

Directorate	No. of Templates	2024-25 £000's
ASCH	11	96,280.4
CYPE	23	66,792.5
GET	36	10,105.3
CED	3	601.2
DCED	10	-1,837.9
NAC	10	2,243.2
CHB	3	27,298.2
Total	96	201,482.9

A prominent black callout box on the right side of the table contains the text: "Please select a Individual Spending Template".

At the bottom left of the report, there is a "Go back" button. The bottom right corner shows a zoom level of 100%.

2024-27 PowerBi Report - Members

Search

File Share Export Chat in Teams Get insights Subscribe to report

2024-27 Members Area

2024-27 PowerBi Report - M...

Home

Summary

Directorate

Big 6 Service Area

Spending

Savings

Reserves

Go back

Home

Funding type:
Core

MTFP Spending category selected:
--

Click on the + to see the descriptions of the templates under that Category

MTFP Spending Category:

- Base Budget Changes
- Reduction in Grant Income
- Pay
- Prices
- Demand & Cost Drivers
- Government & Legislative
- Service Strategies & Improvements

Please select a Individual Spending Template

Spending Templates

Directorate	No. of Templates	2024-25 £000's
ASCH	11	96,280.4
CYPE	23	66,792.5
GET	36	10,105.3
CED	3	601.2
DCED	10	-1,837.9
NAC	10	2,243.2
CHB	3	27,298.2
Total	96	201,482.9

Filters

100%

2024-27 PowerBi Report - Members

File Share Export Chat in Teams Get insights Subscribe to report

2024-27 Members Area

2024-27 PowerBi Report - M...

Home

Summary

Directorate

Big 6 Service Area

Spending

Savings

Reserves

Go back

Search

Home

Funding type:
Core

MTFP Savings category selected:
--

Click on the + to see the descriptions of the templates under that Category

MTFP Savings Category:

- Transformation
- Income
- Increases in Grants and Contribut...
- Efficiency - Staffing
- Efficiency - Infrastructure
- Efficiency - C&P
- Efficiency - Other
- Financing
- Policy

Please select a Individual Savings Template

Savings Templates

Directorate	No. of Templates	2024-25 £000's
ASCH	22	-49,782.0
CYPE	17	-12,788.7
GET	19	-2,183.9
CED	3	-352.5
DCED	3	-909.9
NAC	3	-3,779.6
CHB	1	500.0
Total	68	-69,296.6

Filters

100%

The screenshot shows a PowerBI report titled "2024-27 PowerBi Report - Members". The interface includes a top navigation bar with a search box and utility icons, a left-hand navigation pane with menu items like "Home", "Summary", "Directorate", "Big 6 Service Area", "Spending", "Savings", and "Reserves", and a main content area. The main area contains a "Home" icon, a "Funding type" dropdown menu set to "Core", and an "MTFP Reserves category selected" field currently showing "--". To the right, there is a list of "MTFP Reserves Category" options with checkboxes: "Contributions to Reserves", "Removal of prior year Contributio...", "Drawdowns from Reserves", and "Removal of prior year Drawdowns". A callout box prompts the user to "Click on the + to see the descriptions of the templates under that Category". Below this is a dark banner that reads "Please select a Individual Reserves Template". At the bottom, a table titled "Reserves Templates" displays data for various directorates.

Directorate	No. of Templates	2024-25 £000's
ASCH	2	0.0
CED	2	0.0
DCED	2	0.0
NAC	13	16,449.8
Total	19	16,449.8

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

						177,363.8		
A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?	
Base Budget Changes	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Realignment of Vulnerable Adults budget to reflect underlying pressure forecast in 2023-24	9,900.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core	
Base Budget Changes	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Realignment of Older People budget to reflect underlying pressure forecast in 2023-24	7,000.0	Older People	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CED	Roger Gough	Safeguarding Adults	Removal of Review Manager at the end of the two year fixed term appointment for dealing with the increased number of Adult Safeguarding reviews being undertaken and to free up capacity to undertake development work for the Safeguarding Adults Board	-55.4	Adult Social Care staffing	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CHB	Peter Oakford	Corporately Held Contingency	Emerging pressures contingency for risk of inability to deliver against approved budget estimates due to unforeseen changes in external factors that arise after the budget is set	14,000.0	Other	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CHB	Dylan Jeffrey	Pay and Reward	Release of 2023-24 unallocated pay and reward allocation. The costs of the pay award and increase in annual leave entitlement for some staff were less than assumed when the 2023-24 budget was set	-201.8	Other	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CYPE	Rory Love	Home to school transport	Realignment of the home to school transport budget to reflect the full year effect of the cost and number of children being transported in 2023-24	10,900.0	Transport	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Realignment of looked after children's placement budget to reflect the increase in cost of supporting children due to the market and complexity, and the number of children in different placement types in 2023-24	7,950.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Realignment of children in need packages of care budget to reflect the cost of home support services including daycare and direct payments seen in 2023-24	2,121.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core	
Base Budget Changes	CYPE	Sue Chandler	18-25 placements	Realignment of the 18-25 Adult Learning & Physical Disability Community Services budget to reflect the increase in cost of supporting these clients in 2023-24	695.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core	
Base Budget Changes	DCED	Peter Oakford	KCC Estate Energy	Reduction in the price of gas and electricity for the KCC estate in 2023-24 compared to the assumptions at the time of setting the budget	-3,000.0	Other	Core	
Base Budget Changes	GET	Susan Carey	Waste prices	Realignment of prices for a variety of waste streams within the Materials Recycling Facilities contract	960.0	Waste	Core	
Base Budget Changes	GET	Susan Carey	Waste haulage costs	Right sizing of budget for waste haulage contracts due to inflation being higher than the increase assumed in the 2023-24 budget	623.9	Waste	Core	
Base Budget Changes	GET	Susan Carey	Waste Facilities	Right sizing of budget for household waste recycling centre and waste transfer station management fees and rent due to higher inflation than assumed in the 2023-24 budget	257.9	Waste	Core	
Base Budget Changes	GET	Clair Bell	Coroners	Rightsize budget for post mortems, Coroner's pay, Senior Coroner fees, pathologists fees and funeral director costs due to increasing number and complexity of cases	223.0	Other	Core	
Base Budget Changes	GET	Clair Bell	Trading Standards	Delay in achieving income from Trading Standards Checked service due to economic climate which was originally planned for 2021 -22	-40.0	Other	Core	

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Base Budget Changes	GET	Neil Baker	Public Transport	Removal of budget for the public transport smartcard following the winding down of the scheme	-48.0	Transport	Core
Base Budget Changes	GET	Susan Carey	Waste income from paper & card	An increase in the price per tonne received for recycled paper and card	-485.8	Waste	Core
Base Budget Changes	GET	Neil Baker	Streetlight Energy	Figure has been adjusted to reflect additional costs of £475k to upgrade from 3g to 4g due to third party providers removing 3g capability in 24/25. This is required for functionality of the CMS and LED street lighting management	-1,959.9	Highways	Core
Base Budget Changes	NAC	Peter Oakford	Insurance	Rightsize budget for increase in insurance premiums	564.5	Other	Core
Base Budget Changes	NAC	Peter Oakford	Other Non Attributable costs	Payment to Kent Fire and Rescue Service of 3% share of the Retained Business Rates levy in line with the Kent Business Rates pool agreement	90.0	Other	Core
Base Budget Changes	NAC	Peter Oakford	Environment Agency Levy	Rightsize budget for the Environment Agency Levy as the increase in 2023-24 was lower than anticipated when the budget was set	-8.2	Other	Core
Base Budget Changes	NAC	Peter Oakford	Non Attributable Costs	Removal of budget for Transferred Services Pensions as these payments have now ceased	-16.0	Other	Core
Base Budget Changes	NAC	Peter Oakford	Capital Financing Costs	Reduction in debt charges from 2023-24 due to decisions taken by Members to contain the capital programme, significant levels of re-phasing of the capital programme in 2022-23 and changes in interest rates	-4,000.0	Other	Core
TOTAL BASE BUDGET CHANGES					45,470.2		Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for impact of the full year effect of all current costs of care, further increases in client numbers including young people coming into Adult Social Care through transition, and additional costs arising for existing clients and for those new clients whose needs are becoming more complex- Vulnerable Adults	34,945.3	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for impact of the full year effect of all current costs of care, further increases in client numbers including young people coming into Adult Social Care through transition, and additional costs arising for existing clients and for those new clients whose needs are becoming more complex- Older People	15,656.7	Older People	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Rory Love	Home to School transport - SEN	Estimated impact of rising pupil population on SEN Home to School and College Transport	15,500.0	Transport	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Estimated impact of an increase in the population of children in Kent, leading to increased demand for children's social work and disabled children's services - number of children & increasing packages of support	6,371.5	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Adult Social Care	Provision for impact of the full year effect of all current costs of care, further increases in client numbers expected through transition into adulthood from Children's Social Care, additional costs arising for existing clients and for those new clients whose needs are becoming more complex.	3,400.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Estimated impact of an increase in the population of children in Kent, leading to increased demand for children's social work and disabled children's services - complexity of packages	2,260.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Rory Love	Home to School transport - Mainstream	Estimated impact of rising pupil population on Mainstream Home to School transport	1,400.0	Transport	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Care Leavers	Estimated increase in number of children supported by the care leaver service	250.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Susan Carey	Waste - tonnage changes	Estimated impact of changes in waste tonnage as a result of population and housing growth	936.7	Waste	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Clair Bell	Coroners	Increase in budget for toxicology analysis due to increasing number and complexity of cases	60.0	Other	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Clair Bell	Trading Standards	Increase in legal costs as a result of more Crown Court cases	55.0	Other	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Susan Carey	Planning Applications	Costs of the independent examination of the Minerals & Waste Local Plan by the Planning Inspectorate in the summer of 2024	50.0	Other	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Neil Baker	Streetlight energy & maintenance	Adoption of new streetlights at new housing developments and associated increase in energy costs	27.5	Highways	Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	GET	Clair Bell	Public Rights of Way	Adoption of new routes	12.0	Other	Core
TOTAL DEMAND & COST DRIVERS					80,924.7		Core
Government & Legislative	GET	Neil Baker	Highways	Costs of meeting our statutory duties in relation to inspection of bridges and structures and complying with the Tunnels Regulations	960.0	Highways	Core
Government & Legislative	GET	Susan Carey	Waste charging	Loss of income from removal of charging for disposal of non DIY waste materials at Household Waste Recycling centres following change in legislation	446.5	Waste	Core
TOTAL GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATIVE					1,406.5		Core
Pay	CHB	Dylan Jeffrey	Pay and Reward	Contribution to pay pot and impact on base budget of uplifting pay grades in accordance with single pay reward scheme including the revision of lower Kent Scheme pay scales to further increase the differential between the lowest pay range and the Foundation Living Wage and increasing the annual leave entitlement for some staff. This is the subject of pay bargaining with Trade Unions.	13,500.0	Other	Core
Pay	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Agency Staff	Uplift in pay budget in line with average earnings for posts which are temporarily covered by agency staff- Integrated Children's Services	332.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Pay	CYPE	Rory Love	Agency Staff	Uplift in pay budget in line with average earnings for posts which are temporarily covered by agency staff - Special Educational Needs	181.0	Other	Core
Pay	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Agency Staff	Uplift in pay budget in line with average earnings for posts which are temporarily covered by agency staff - lifespan pathway 0-25	40.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Pay	GET	Clair Bell	Public Protection	Increase in staffing costs and consumables within Kent Scientific Services to deliver scientific testing which are offset by increased income	49.0	Other	Core
Pay	GET	Clair Bell	Coroners	Increase in pay for senior, area and assistant coroners in accordance with the pay award agreed by the national Joint Negotiating Committee for Coroners	36.0	Other	Core
Pay	NAC	Peter Oakford	Apprenticeship Levy	Increase in the Apprenticeship Levy in line with the pay award	67.9	Other	Core
TOTAL PAY					14,205.9		Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Prices	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for contractual and negotiated price increases across all adult social care packages including nursing, residential, domiciliary, supporting independence and direct payments - Vulnerable Adults	14,317.2	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Prices	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for contractual and negotiated price increases across all adult social care packages including nursing, residential, domiciliary, supporting independence and direct payments - Older People	10,075.9	Older People	Core
Prices	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for contractual and negotiated price increases across all adult social care packages funded by the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund included in the provisional local government finance settlement - Older People	2,155.1	Older People	Core
Prices	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Provision for contractual and negotiated price increases across all adult social care packages funded by the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund included in the provisional local government finance settlement - Vulnerable Adults	1,934.1	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Prices	CYPE	Rory Love	Home to School Transport	Provision for inflation on contracted services and season tickets for mainstream & SEN Home to School and College Transport	4,933.0	Transport	Core
Prices	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Provision for price negotiations with external providers, and uplift to in-house foster carers in line with DFE guidance - Integrated Children's Services	4,513.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Prices	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Adult Social Care	Provision for contractual and negotiated price increases across all adult social care packages including nursing, residential, domiciliary, supporting independence and direct payments - Vulnerable Adults 18-25	2,447.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Prices	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Provision for price negotiations with external providers, and uplift to in-house foster carers in line with DFE guidance - lifespan pathway 0-25	937.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Prices	CYPE	Rory Love	Kent Travel Saver & Kent 16+ Travel Saver	Provision for price inflation related to the Kent Travel Saver and Kent 16+ Travel Saver which is recovered through uplifting the charge for the pass - Kent 16+ Travel Saver	210.0	Transport	Core
Prices	CYPE	Rory Love	Non specific price provision	Non specific provision for CPI inflation on other negotiated contracts without indexation clauses - Children, Young People & Education	180.0	Other	Core
Prices	CYPE	Rory Love	Facilities Management	Estimated future price uplift to new Facilities Management contracts - schools	91.0	Other	Core
Prices	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Provision for price negotiations with external providers, and uplift to in-house foster carers in line with DFE guidance	73.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Facilities Management	Estimated future price uplift to new Facilities Management contracts - Corporate Landlord	867.7	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Corporate Landlord	Provision for price inflation for rates for the office estate	417.4	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Cantium Business Solutions (CBS)	Inflationary uplift on the CBS ICT contract	390.3	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Technology contracts	Provision for price inflation on Third Party ICT related contracts	272.2	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Corporate Landlord	Provision for price inflation for rent for the office estate	269.6	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	Kent Commercial Services (KCS)	Inflationary uplift on the KCS HR Connect contract	109.6	Other	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Prices	DCED	Dylan Jeffrey	Contact Centre	Price inflation on Agilisys contract for provision of Contact Centre	103.9	Other	Core
Prices	DCED	Peter Oakford	KCC Estate Energy	Anticipated price change on energy contracts for the KCC estate as estimated by Commercial Services	-948.6	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Neil Baker	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - Highways contracts	1,170.3	Highways	Core
Prices	GET	Susan Carey	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - Waste contracts	1,117.6	Waste	Core
Prices	GET	Neil Baker	Other Transport Related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to other transport services including subsidised bus services - subsidised bus routes	584.0	Transport	Core
Prices	GET	Neil Baker	Kent Travel Saver	Provision for price inflation related to the Kent Travel Saver and Kent 16+ Travel Saver which is recovered through uplifting the charge for the pass - Kent Travel Saver	463.5	Transport	Core
Prices	GET	Neil Baker	Highways Management	The handing back of the urban grass cutting and rural verge mowing contract by Folkestone & Hythe District Council	100.0	Highways	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - Public Rights of Way contracts	81.7	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - Coroners Funeral Directors contract	37.0	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Coroners	Provision for inflationary increase in specialist pathologist fees	25.5	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - Coroners Post Mortem contract	21.2	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Contract related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to Highways, Waste and other contracted services (based on contractual indices) - annual uplift to the SLA with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council for the running costs of the Amelia	13.0	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Clair Bell	Other Transport Related inflation	Provision for price inflation related to other transport services including subsidised bus services - Mobile libraries fuel	5.0	Other	Core
Prices	GET	Neil Baker	Streetlight Energy	Provision for price changes related to Streetlight energy as estimated by Commercial Services	-777.3	Highways	Core
Prices	NAC	Peter Oakford	Levies	Estimated increase in Environment Agency Levy together with impact of estimated change in taxbase	23.8	Other	Core
Prices	NAC	Peter Oakford	Non specific price provision	Non specific provision for CPI inflation on other negotiated contracts without indexation clauses - increase in Inshore Sea Fisheries Conservation Area (IFCA) Levy	21.2	Other	Core
TOTAL PRICES					46,234.9		Core
Reduction in Grant Income	GET	Clair Bell	EU funding	Replace a reduction in EU Funding ensuring sufficient resource is available to continue delivering the Positive Wellbeing Service at current levels	35.0	Older People	Core
TOTAL REDUCTION IN GRANT INCOME					35.0		Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Service Strategies & Improvements	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Increase in the bad debt provision to reflect the anticipated impact of the high cost of living on our income collection rates from client contributions - Older People	256.3	Older People	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Increase in the bad debt provision to reflect the anticipated impact of the high cost of living on our income collection rates from client contributions - Vulnerable Adults	81.8	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Safeguarding	Removal of two year pilot to combat Serious and Organised Crime	-42.0	Adult Social Care staffing	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	CED	Peter Oakford	Partnership Arrangements with District Councils	Incentive payments for Kent District Councils to remove the remaining empty property discounts to maximise council tax, and reimburse Kent District Councils for temporary discretionary council tax discounts provided for properties affected by fire or flooding	541.1	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	CED	Peter Oakford	Member Allowances	Uplift to Member Allowances	115.5	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	CYPE	Rory Love	Special Educational Needs	Increase in staff numbers in SEN service to support improved quality of Education Health & Care Plans	2,000.0	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Adult Social Care	Increase in the bad debt provision to reflect the anticipated impact of the high cost of living on our income collection rates from client contributions - Vulnerable Adults 18-25	8.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	DCED	Peter Oakford	Oakwood House Development	Removal of holding costs and loss of income in the short term once Oakwood House is no longer operational, offset by savings in the longer term following change of use	-320.0	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	GET	Neil Baker	Highways	<p>Increased highway spend in line with additional Outcome allocation for 2024/24. Activity focused on supporting the front line operational activities across the highway network as follows:</p> <p>Service improvement: £2.4m to enhance the national pothole funding</p> <p>Unavoidable (realignment): £1.2m committed HTMC operational impact on district teams £1.0m to drainage to realign budget for current activity levels £0.4m to winter service to realign for current activity projections</p>	5,000.0	Highways	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	GET	Clair Bell	Country Parks	Change the funding of improvements and adaptations to country parks from capital to revenue	70.0	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	GET	Clair Bell	Sports Facilities	Change the funding of refurbishment and provision of sports facilities and community projects from capital to revenue	37.5	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	GET	Clair Bell	Village Halls & Community Centres	Change the funding of grants for improvements and adaptations to village halls and community centres from capital to revenue	37.5	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	GET	Derek Murphy	Economic Development Recovery Plan	Removal of time limited funding for re-design of the service and additional staffing and consultancy capacity to draft and deliver the Economic Recovery Plan/Economic Strategy following the Covid pandemic	-80.0	Other	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Service Strategies & Improvements	NAC	Peter Oakford	Project Prime	Loss of income from a review of contract with Commercial Services Group, specifically due to the removal of buy back of services	3,000.0	Other	Core
Service Strategies & Improvements	NAC	Peter Oakford	Capital Programme	The impact on debt charges of the review of the 2021-24 capital programme.	2,500.0	Other	Core
TOTAL SERVICE STRATEGIES & IMPROVEMENTS					13,205.7		Core
Demand & Cost Drivers	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health	Estimated increase in internal recharges for support services	375.1	Other	External
Demand & Cost Drivers	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Healthy Lifestyles	Removal of additional temporary funding for reducing waiting lists for Postural Stability	-60.4	Other	External
TOTAL DEMAND & COST DRIVERS					314.7		External
Government & Legislative	CED	Roger Gough	Domestic Abuse New Burdens	Costs of undertaking domestic abuse support in safe accommodation duties funded by specific grant	59.9	Other	External
Government & Legislative	CHB	Peter Oakford	Household Support Fund	Removal of the extension of the Government funded Household Support Fund into 2023-24 as announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 17th November 2022	-22,130.8	Other	External
Government & Legislative	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Family Hubs	Estimated reduction in our share of the DfE/DHSC Family Hubs and Start for Life grant	-777.0	Integrated Children's Services	External
Government & Legislative	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Targeted housing support interventions for people in drug and alcohol treatment funded by Drug Strategy Housing Support Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	23.1	Other	External
Government & Legislative	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Investment in substance misuse services funded by Individual Placement and Support in Community Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	7.5	Other	External
Government & Legislative	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Removal of wraparound and engagement and community treatment funded by one-off Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities in 2023-24	-520.2	Other	External
TOTAL GOVERNMENT & LEGISLATIVE					-23,337.5		External
Pay	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Pay	Estimated net impact of KCC pay award and other adjustments for KCC Public Health staff	505.1	Other	External
TOTAL PAY					505.1		External
Prices	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health contracts	Estimated increase in public health contract values linked to the NHS Agenda for change pay increases	614.2	Other	External
Prices	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Sexual Health	Contractual increases in other services including Sexual Health and Health Improvement	353.2	Other	External
TOTAL PRICES					967.4		External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Investment in Substance Misuse services funded by Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	1,412.9	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Other	Removal of additional temporary investment in other minor service improvements	-20.0	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Healthy Lifestyles	Removal of temporary investment in Public Health services to promote and support health visiting	-118.4	Other	External

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SPENDING PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of spending increase	A6iii - Brief description of spending increase	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Spending Template relate to?	E3i - Is this Externally or Core funded?
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Healthy Lifestyles	Removal of additional temporary investment in Public Health services to promote and support Healthy Lifestyles	-195.4	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Sexual Health	Removal of additional temporary investment in Public Health Sexual Health Services	-212.9	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Healthy Lifestyles	Removal of temporary public health contribution towards the voluntary sector in 2023-24	-350.0	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Children's Programme	Removal of additional temporary investment in counselling services for children	-1,085.0	Other	External
Service Strategies & Improvements	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Mental Health	Removal of one-off public health investment in Live Well Kent in 2023-24	-2,000.0	Other	External
TOTAL SERVICE STRATEGIES & IMPROVEMENTS					-2,568.8		External

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

						-48,638.0		
A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of saving/income	A6iii - Brief description of saving/income	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Saving/ Income Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?	
Policy	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care Charging	Review of the Adults Charging Policy, in line with Care Act legislation and the statutory guidance	-1,250.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core	
Policy	CED	Peter Oakford	Partnership arrangements with District Councils	Cease Early Intervention Payments to District Councils	-82.5	Other	Core	
Policy	CED	Peter Oakford	Member Services	End Select Committees and Short Focused Inquiries	-20.0	Other	Core	
Policy	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Review of Open Access - Youth Services & Children's Centres	Review of open access services in light of implementing the Family Hub model	-1,500.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core	
Policy	CYPE	Rory Love	Services to Schools	Review our offer to schools in light of the latest DFE funding changes and guidance including exploring alternative funding arrangements and engaging in efficiency measure to reduce costs	-1,200.0	Other	Core	
Policy	CYPE	Rory Love	SEN Transport	Introduction of charging for post 16 SEN transport and reductions to the Post 19 transport offer	-781.0	Transport	Core	
Policy	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Residential Care	Development of in-house residential units to provide an alternative to independent sector residential care placements (invest to save)	100.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core	
Policy	CYPE	Rory Love	Kent 16+ Travel Saver	Removal of undeliverable 2023-24 saving and review the Kent 16+ Travel Saver scheme	250.0	Transport	Core	
Policy	DCED	Peter Oakford	Corporate Landlord	Review of Office Assets	-763.9	Other	Core	
Policy	DCED	Peter Oakford	Corporate Landlord	Review of Community Delivery including Assets	-101.0	Other	Core	
Policy	GET	Susan Carey	Waste - Household Waste & Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	Review of the number and operation of HWRC sites	-616.0	Waste	Core	
Policy	GET	Clair Bell	Review of Community Wardens	Review of Community Warden Service to deliver a £1m saving which is likely to result in an overall reduction in wardens	-500.0	Other	Core	
Policy	GET	Clair Bell	Reduction of Trading Standards Budget	Adjustment of Trading Standards legal costs as Courts recover post-Covid	-55.0	Other	Core	
Policy	GET	Susan Carey	Planning Applications	Savings from delayed recruitment	-50.0	Other	Core	
TOTAL POLICY SAVINGS					-6,569.4		Core	
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Review of Charges for Service Users - existing service income streams & inflationary increases	Uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams - Older People	-4,773.1	Older People	Core	
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Estimated annual inflationary increase in Better Care Fund - Older People	-2,188.0	Older People	Core	
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Review of Charges for Service Users - existing service income streams & inflationary increases	Uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams - Vulnerable Adults	-1,529.1	Vulnerable Adults	Core	
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Estimated annual inflationary increase in Better Care Fund - Vulnerable Adults	-179.5	Vulnerable Adults	Core	

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of saving/income	A6iii - Brief description of saving/income	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Saving/ Income Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Estimated annual inflationary increase in Better Care Fund - Adult Social Care Staffing	-99.8	Adult Social Care staffing	Core
Income	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Estimated annual inflationary increase in Better Care Fund - Integrated Community Equipment Service and Assistive Technology	-4.4	Other	Core
Income	CHB	Peter Oakford	Review of fees & charges	Removal of corporately held saving from a review of all fees and charges as these savings are reflected within the individual directorate proposals	500.0	Other	Core
Income	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Adoption Service	Adoption Service	-200.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Income	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Review of Charges for Service Users - existing service income streams & inflationary increases	Uplift in social care client contributions in line with estimated benefit and other personal income uplifts, together with inflationary increases and a review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams - 0-25	-123.7	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Income	CYPE	Rory Love	Kent 16+ Travel Saver	Kent 16+ Travel Saver price realignment to offset bus operator inflationary fare increases	-94.0	Transport	Core
Income	GET	Neil Baker	Kent Travel Saver	Kent Travel Saver price realignment to offset bus operator inflationary fare increases	-463.5	Transport	Core
Income	GET	Neil Baker	Highways	Increase in net income from recovery of costs from third parties for streetworks and permit scheme	-100.0	Highways	Core
Income	GET	Neil Baker	Highways	Income from traffic management penalties including contravening traffic restrictions, box junctions and bus lanes	-100.0	Highways	Core
Income	GET	Clair Bell	Public Protection	Increased income within Kent Scientific Services for toxicology analysis for the Coroners Service	-60.0	Other	Core
Income	GET	Clair Bell	Review of Charges for Service Users - existing service income streams & inflationary increases	A review of fees and charges across all KCC services, in relation to existing service income streams	-50.0	Other	Core
Income	GET	Clair Bell	Review of Charges for Service Users - existing service income streams & inflationary increases	Increased contribution from Medway Council under SLA relating to increasing costs for provision of Coroner service in Medway	-49.0	Other	Core
Income	GET	Clair Bell	Public Protection	Inflationary increase in income levels and pricing policy for Kent Scientific Services	-45.0	Other	Core
Income	GET	Clair Bell	Trading Standards	Inflationary increase in fees and charges	-1.4	Other	Core
Income	NAC	Peter Oakford	Income return from our companies	Estimated increase in the income contribution from our limited companies	-500.0	Other	Core
TOTAL INCOME					-10,060.5		Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign phase 2 of the ASCH restructure	Review and reshape the ASCH savings plans set out in the sustainability plan to deliver new models of social care, and reducing costs associated with care and support with a specific focus on growth - Vulnerable Adults	-15,745.3	Vulnerable Adults	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of saving/income	A6iii - Brief description of saving/income	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Saving/Income Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign phase 2 of the ASCH restructure	Review and reshape the ASCH savings plans set out in the sustainability plan to deliver new models of social care, and reducing costs associated with care and support with a specific focus on growth - Older People	-8,856.7	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Older People's Residential & Nursing Care	Negotiate 5% reduction in Older People's Residential & Nursing contract expenditure	-8,000.0	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Care & Support in the Home	Negotiate 5% reduction in Care & Support in the Home contract expenditure	-3,400.0	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on increasing the take up of direct payments for use on micro-enterprises, Personal Assistants - Vulnerable Adults	-1,581.4	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on increasing the take up of Technology Enabled Care - Older People	-1,471.2	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on increasing the take up of direct payments for use on micro-enterprises, Personal Assistants - Older People	-1,459.7	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care Equipment contract	Efficiencies from new contract for the supply of equipment for adult social care clients	-900.0	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on increasing the take up of Technology Enabled Care - Vulnerable Adults	-577.8	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Regular review of new and existing care packages to ensure that they are achieving the best outcomes - Vulnerable Adults	-347.4	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care	Regular review of new and existing care packages to ensure that they are achieving the best outcomes - Older People	-309.4	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on digital self service - by developing new, accessible and user-friendly ways for people to access clear information and support from adult social care when they need it. Includes the use of self-assessment and financial assessment tools so people can access this remotely - Vulnerable Adults	-212.1	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Continuation of of savings from earlier years from the redesign of the Adult Social Care operating model. This saving focuses on digital self service - by developing new, accessible and user-friendly ways for people to access clear information and support from adult social care when they need it. Includes the use of self-assessment and financial assessment tools so people can access this remotely - Older People	-195.8	Older People	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of saving/income	A6iii - Brief description of saving/income	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Saving/ Income Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Rephasing of 2023-24 service redesign saving - Older People	1,356.6	Older People	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Adult Social Care service redesign	Rephasing of 2023-24 service redesign saving - Vulnerable Adults	1,942.1	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CED	Peter Oakford	Historic Pension Costs	Reduction in the number of Historic Pension Arrangements within CED Directorate	-250.0	Other	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Rory Love	Home to School transport - SEN	Estimated reduction to the impact of rising pupil population on SEN Home to School and College Transport	-6,300.0	Transport	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Looked After Children	Implement strategies to reduce the cost of packages for looked after children, including working with Health	-1,000.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Adult Social Care	Review of 18-25 community-based services: ensuring strict adherence to policy, review of packages with high levels of support and enhanced contributions from health	-650.0	Vulnerable Adults	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Early Help & Preventative Services	Expanding the reach of caseholding Early Help services	-560.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Disabled Children's Placement and Support	Review of children with disability packages ensuring strict adherence to policy, review packages with high levels of support and enhanced contributions from health	-550.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Children's Social Care	Explore strategies, including statutory guidance, to reduce dependency on social work agency staff	-300.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Rory Love	Initiatives to increase use of Personal Transport Budgets	Initiatives to increase use of Personal Transport Budgets to reduce demand for Hired Transport	-300.0	Transport	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Rory Love	Historic Pension Costs	Reduction in the number of Historic Pension Arrangements - CYPE Directorate	-180.0	Other	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Open Access - Youth & Children's Centres	Removal of one-off saving in 2023-24 from vacancy management and avoiding all non-essential spend across open access	600.0	Integrated Children's Services	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	DCED	Peter Oakford	Corporate Landlord	Property savings from a review of specialist assets	-45.0	Other	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Susan Carey	Improved Food Waste Recycling Rates	Work with Kent District Councils to deliver savings from improving kerbside food waste recycling rates	-160.0	Waste	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Susan Carey	Waste - Household Waste & Recycling Centres (HWRCs)	Increased waste material segregation, increased re-use, black-bag splitting and trade waste recycling with a view to generating income or reducing cost	-105.0	Waste	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Neil Baker	Highways	Renegotiate income levels to include inflationary uplift for permit scheme, lane rental scheme & National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme	-50.0	Highways	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Susan Carey	Windmills	Temporary reduction in spend on weatherproofing windmills	-50.0	Other	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Clair Bell	Kent Sport	Withdraw the remaining contribution to the KCC hosted Active Kent and Medway.	-28.0	Other	Core

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - SAVINGS PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of saving/income	A6iii - Brief description of saving/income	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - LATEST Figure	B1i - What priority service area (Big 6) does the Saving/ Income Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Clair Bell	Libraries, Registration & Archives (LRA)	Removal of one-off reduction in 2023-24 in the Libraries Materials Fund and one year contribution holiday for the Mobile Libraries renewals reserve	-1.0	Other	Core
Transformation & Efficiency	GET	Susan Carey	Environment	Removal of one-off saving in 2023-24 from planned delay in recruiting to the new structure in the Environment Team	300.0	Other	Core
TOTAL TRANSFORMATION & EFFICIENCY SAVINGS					-49,387.1		Core
Financing	NAC	Peter Oakford	Investment Income	Increase in investment income largely due to the increase in base rate	-2,279.6	Other	Core
Financing	NAC	Peter Oakford	Debt repayment	Review amounts set aside for debt repayment (MRP) based on review of asset life	-1,000.0	Other	Core
TOTAL FINANCING SAVINGS					-3,279.6		Core
Policy	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health	Review of Public Health Services principally related to Healthy Lifestyles to ensure spending is contained within ringfenced grant	-9.2	Other	External
TOTAL POLICY SAVINGS					-9.2		External
Income	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Additional income linked to HIV prevention	Additional income from NHSE to fund increased costs linked to HIV prevention	-275.2	Other	External
Income	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health	Estimated additional income for externally funded posts	-6.1	Other	External
TOTAL INCOME					-281.3		External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	CED	Roger Gough	Domestic Abuse	Increase in Domestic Abuse Duty grant to fund new burdens in providing domestic abuse support in safe accommodation	-59.9	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	CHB	Roger Gough	Household Support Fund	Removal of the extension of the Government funded Household Support Fund into 2023-24 as announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 17th November 2022	22,130.8	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	CYPE	Sue Chandler	Family Hubs	Estimated reduction in our share of the DfE/DHSC Family Hubs and Start for Life grant	777.0	Integrated Children's Services	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	-1,412.9	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Grant	Estimated increase in Public Health Grant pending announcement from Department of Health and Social Care	-975.5	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Drug Strategy Housing Support Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	-23.1	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Individual Placement and Support in Community Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	-7.5	Other	External
Increases in Grants and Contributions	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health - Substance Misuse	Remove one-off Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant from Office for Health Improvement & Disparities	520.2	Other	External
TOTAL INCREASES IN GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS					20,949.1		External

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - RESERVES PROPOSALS

						19,910.3		
A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of reserve template	A6iii - Brief description of reserve template	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - NEW Figure	B1 - What priority service area does the Reserve Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?	
Contributions to reserves	NAC	Peter Oakford	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit - Safety Valve	KCC Contribution towards funding the DSG deficit as agreed with DfE as part of the Safety Valve agreement	15,100.0	Other	Core	
Contributions to reserves	NAC	Peter Oakford	General Reserves repayment	Repay the General Reserve over two years (2024-25 & 2025-26) for the drawdown required in 2022-23 to fund the overspend	11,050.0	Other	Core	
Contributions to reserves	NAC	Peter Oakford	General Reserves	Contribution to reserves in order to maintain general reserve at 5% of net revenue budget	5,100.0	Other	Core	
Contributions to reserves	NAC	Peter Oakford	Corporate Reserves	Contribution to reserves to repay the drawdown required to balance the budget in 2023-24 in order to maintain financial resilience	4,289.7	Other	Core	
Contributions to reserves	NAC	Peter Oakford	Emergency capital events reserve	Annual contribution to a new reserve for emergency capital works and revenue costs related to capital spend such as temporary accommodation, and condition surveys which don't result in capital works	1,000.0	Other	Core	
Contributions to reserves	DCED	Peter Oakford	Facilities Management	Contribution to reserves to smooth the impact of the mobilisation costs of the Facilities Management contracts over the life of the contracts (2022-23 to 2026-27)	160.0	Other	Core	
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESERVES					36,699.7		Core	
Drawdowns from reserves	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Drawdown corporate reserves	Fund the Kent Support and Assistance Service from Corporate Reserves for two years 2023-24 and 2024-25 - ASCH Directorate	-567.2	Other	Core	
Drawdowns from reserves	CED	Roger Gough	Drawdown corporate reserves	Fund the Kent Support and Assistance Service from Corporate Reserves for two years 2023-24 and 2024-25 - CED Directorate	-262.0	Other	Core	
TOTAL DRAWDOWNS FROM RESERVES					-829.2		Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	Risk Reserve	Removal of prior year one-off contribution to risk reserve (2023-24 increase in annual contribution)	-7,000.0	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	General Reserves	Removal of prior year one-off contribution to general reserve	-5,800.0	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	Risk Reserve	Removal of prior year one-off contribution to risk reserve (original contribution)	-5,000.0	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	Local Taxation Equalisation - Council Tax Collection Fund	Removal of prior year contribution to Local Taxation Equalisation smoothing reserve of Council Tax Collection Fund surplus above £7m assumed	-4,488.7	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	Removal of contribution related to repayment of previous "borrowing" from reserves	Reduction & full removal of the annual repayment of the "borrowing" from reserves to support the budget in 2011-12, reflecting when the reserves will be fully repaid	-1,223.3	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	NAC	Peter Oakford	Local Taxation Equalisation - Business Rates Collection Fund	Removal of prior year contribution to the Local Taxation Equalisation smoothing reserve of the Business Rates Collection Fund surplus	-1,067.6	Other	Core	
Removal of prior year Contributions	DCED	Peter Oakford	Facilities Management	Removal of prior year contribution to reserves to smooth the impact of the mobilisation costs of the Facilities Management contracts over the life of the contracts (2022-23 to 2026-27)	-160.0	Other	Core	
TOTAL REMOVAL OF PRIOR YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS					-24,739.6		Core	

APPENDIX D: 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET - RESERVES PROPOSALS

A9 - MTFP Category	A2 - Directorate	A5 - Cabinet Member	A6ii - Headline description of reserve template	A6iii - Brief description of reserve template	A8i - 2024-25 Amount £000's - NEW Figure	B1 - What priority service area does the Reserve Template relate to?	E3 - Is this Externally or Core Funded?
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	NAC	Peter Oakford	Drawdown corporate reserves	Removal of one-off use of reserves in 2023-24	4,289.7	Other	Core
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	ASCH	Dan Watkins	Drawdown corporate reserves	Removal of use of corporate reserves in prior year to fund the Kent Support and Assistance Service - ASCH Directorate	567.2	Other	Core
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	CED	Roger Gough	Remove prior year drawdown from Covid reserve	Removal of use of corporate reserves in prior year to fund the Kent Support and Assistance Service - CED Directorate	262.0	Other	Core
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	NAC	Peter Oakford	Drawdown corporate reserves	Removal of one-off drawdown from No Use Empty reserve in 2023-24	200.0	Other	Core
TOTAL REMOVAL OF PRIOR YEAR DRAWDOWNS					5,318.9		Core
Drawdowns from reserves	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Reserves	Use of Public Health reserves to fund one-off costs and invest to save initiatives in 2024-25	-336.6	Other	External
Drawdowns from reserves	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Reserves	Use of Public Health reserves to balance 2024-25 budget plans	-13.9	Other	External
TOTAL DRAWDOWNS FROM RESERVES					-350.5		External
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Reserves	Removal of use of Public Health reserves to fund one-off costs in previous year	2,440.3	Other	External
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Reserves	Removal of use of Public Health (Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust) reserves to fund one-off costs in previous year	1,313.9	Other	External
Removal of prior year Drawdowns	Public Health	Dan Watkins	Public Health Reserves	Removal of use of Public Health (Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust) reserves to fund one-off costs in previous year	56.8	Other	External
TOTAL REMOVAL OF PRIOR YEAR DRAWDOWNS					3,811.0		External

Key

ASCH	Adult Social Care & Health
CED	Chief Executive's Department
CHB	Corporately Held Budgets
CYPE	Children, Young People & Education
DCED	Deputy ChiefExecutive's Department
GET	Growth, Environment & Transport
NAC	Non Attributable Costs

Reserves Policy

1. Background and Context

- 1.1. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 require councils to consider the level of reserves when setting a budget requirement. Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to report formally on the adequacy of proposed reserves when setting a budget requirement. The accounting treatment for reserves is set out in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.
- 1.2. CIPFA issued Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) Bulletin No.99, Guidance Note on Local Authority Reserves and Balances in July 2014, which updated previous Bulletins to reflect the new requirements of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Code of Practice. In addition, during the period of financial austerity for the public sector, the Local Authority Accounting Panel considered it necessary to update the guidance on local authority reserves and balances. Compliance with the guidance is recommended in CIPFA's Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. In response to the above requirements, this policy sets out the Council's approach for compliance with the statutory regime and relevant non-statutory guidance for the Council's cash backed usable reserves.
- 1.3. All reserves are categorised as per the Local Authority Accounting Practice guidance, into the following groups:
 - **Smoothing** – These are reserves which are used to manage large fluctuations in spend or income across years e.g., PFI equalisation reserves. These reserves recognise the differences over time between the unitary charge and PFI credits received.
 - **Trading** – this reserve relates to the non-company trading entities of Laser and Commercial Services to cover potential trading losses and investment in business development.
 - **Renewals for Vehicles Plant & Equipment** – these reserves should be supported by an asset management plan, showing projected replacement profile and cost. These reserves help to reduce fluctuations in spend.
 - **Major projects** – set aside for future spending on projects.
 - **Insurance** - To fund the potential cost of insurance claims in excess of the amount provided for in the Insurance Fund provision, (potential or contingent liabilities)
 - **Unspent grant/external funding** – these are for unspent grants which the Council is not required to repay, but which have restrictions on what they may be used for e.g., the Public Health grant must be used on public health services. This category also consists of time limited projects funded from ringfenced external sources.
 - **Special Funds** – these are mainly held for economic development, tourism and regeneration initiatives.
 - **Partnerships** – these are reserves resulting from Council partnerships and are usually ringfenced for the benefit of the partnership or are held for investing in shared priorities.
 - **Departmental underspends** – these reserves relate to re-phasing of projects/initiatives and bids for use of year end underspending which are requested to roll forward into the following year.
- 1.4. Within the Statement of Accounts, reserves are summarised by the headings above. By categorising the reserves into the headings above, this is limited to the nine groups, plus Public Health, Schools and General. Operationally, each will be divided into the relevant sub reserves to ensure that ownership and effective management is maintained.

- 1.5 Reserves are an important part of the Council's financial strategy and are held to create long-term budgetary stability. They enable the Council to manage change without undue impact on the Council Tax and are a key element of ensuring the Council's strong financial standing and resilience. The Council's key sources of funding face an uncertain future and the Council therefore holds earmarked reserves and a working balance in order to mitigate future financial risks.
- 1.6 Earmarked reserves are reviewed regularly as part of the monitoring process and annually as part of the budget process, to determine whether the original purpose for the creation of the reserve still exists and whether or not the reserves should be released in full or in part or require topping up based on known/expected calls upon them. Particular attention is paid in the annual review to those reserves whose balances have not moved over a three-year period.

2. Overview

- 2.1. The Council's overall approach to reserves will be defined by the system of internal control. The system of internal control is set out, and its effectiveness reviewed, in the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). Key elements of the internal control environment are objective setting and monitoring, policy and decision-making, compliance with statute and procedure rules, risk management, achieving value for money, financial management and performance management. The AGS includes an overview of the general financial climate which the Council is operating within and significant funding risks.
- 2.2. The Council will maintain:
 - a general reserve; and
 - a number of earmarked reserves.
- 2.3. The level of the general reserve is a matter for the Council to determine having had regard to the advice of the S151 Officer. The level of the reserve will be a matter of judgement which will take account of the specific risks identified through the various corporate processes. It will also take account of the extent to which specific risks are supported through earmarked reserves. The level will be expressed as a cash sum over the period of the general fund medium-term financial strategy. The level will also be expressed as a percentage of the general funding requirement (to provide an indication of financial context). The Council's aim is to hold general reserves of 5% of the net revenue budget to recognise the heightened financial risk the Council is facing.

3. Strategic context

- 3.1. The Council continues to face a shortfall in funding compared to spending demands and must annually review its priorities in order to address the shortfall.
- 3.2. The Council also relies on interest earned through investments of our cash balances to support its general spending plans.
- 3.3. Reserves are one-off money. The Council aims to avoid using reserves to meet ongoing financial commitments other than as part of a sustainable budget plan and one of the Council's financial principles is to stop the use of one-off funding to support the base budget. The Council has to balance the opportunity cost of holding reserves in terms of Council Tax against the importance of interest earning and long-term future planning.

4. Management and governance

- 4.1 Each reserve must be supported by a protocol. All protocols should have an end date and at that point any balance should be transferred to the general reserve. If there is a genuine reason for slippage then the protocol will need to be updated.

A questionnaire is completed by the relevant budget holder and reviewed by Finance to ensure all reserves comply with legislative and accounting requirements. A de-minimis limit has been set to avoid small funds being set up which could be managed within existing budgets or declared as an overspend and then managed collectively. This has been set at £250k.

- 4.2 Reserves protocols and questionnaires must be sent to the Chief Accountant's Team within Finance for review and will be approved by the Corporate Director of Finance, Corporate Management Team and then by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services. Protocols should clearly identify contributions to and drawdowns from reserves, and these will be built into the MTFP and monitored on a quarterly basis.

Accessing reserves will only be for significant unusual spend, more minor fluctuations will be managed or declared as budget variances. In-year draw-downs from reserves will be subject to the governance process set out in the revised financial regulations. Ongoing recurring costs should not be funded from reserves. Any request contrary to this will only be considered during the budget setting process. The short term use of reserves may be agreed to provide time to plan for a sustainable funding solution in the following financial year.

Decisions on the use of reserves may be delayed until financial year end and will be dependent on the overall financial position of the council rather than the position of just one budget area.

The current Financial Regulations state:

Maintenance of reserves & provisions

A.24 The Corporate Director of Finance is responsible for:

- i. proposing the Council's Reserves Policy.
- ii. advising the Leader and the Council on prudent levels of reserves for the Authority when the annual budget is being considered having regard to assessment of the financial risks facing the Authority.
- iii. ensuring that reserves are not only adequate but also necessary.
- iv. ensuring that there are clear protocols for the establishment and use of each earmarked reserve. Reserves should not be held without a clear purpose or without a planned profile of spend and contributions, procedures for the reserves managements and control, and a process and timescale for review of the reserve to ensure continuing relevance and adequacy.
- v. ensuring that all renewals reserves are supported by a plan of budgeted contributions, based on an asset renewal plan that links to the fixed asset register.
- vi. ensuring that no money is transferred into reserves each financial year without prior agreement with him/herself.
- vii. ensuring compliance with the reserves policy and governance procedures relating to requests from the strategic priority and general corporate reserves.

- 4.3. All reserves are reviewed as part of the monitoring process, the budget preparation, financial management and closing of accounts processes. Cabinet is presented with the monitoring of reserves on a regular basis and in the outturn report and the Council will consider a report from the S151 Officer on the adequacy of the level of reserves in the annual budget setting process. The report will contain estimates of reserves where necessary. The Governance and Audit Committee will consider actual reserves when approving the statement of accounts each year.
- 4.4. The following rules apply:
- Any in year use of the General Reserve will need to be approved by Cabinet and any planned use will be part of the budget setting process.
 - In considering the use of reserves, there will be no or minimal impairment to the Council's financial resilience unless there is no alternative.
- 4.5. The Council will review the Reserves Policy on an annual basis.

Budget risks and adequacy of reserves

The assessment of budget risks and the adequacy of reserves is even more important for 2024-25 initial draft budget and the medium-term plan due to the priority to restore the council's financial resilience as set out in Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy". The strategy recognises that the current in-year overspend on the scale forecast and the underlying causes from rising costs most notably in adult social care, children in care and home to school transport represent a fundamental risk to the council's ability to set a balanced budget for 2024-25 and a sustainable MTFP to 2026-27. Those risks are assessed in more detail In this section of the budget. In the circumstances it is more essential than ever that the Council is sufficiently financially resilient to avoid the risk of financial failure leading to the Council losing the ability to manage its finances. This section includes a new and separate assessment of the current position of the council against the key symptoms of financial stress identified by CIPFA in its report entitled "Building Financial Resilience".

The administration's initial draft budget and MTFP is informed by the best estimate of service costs and income based on the information currently available. Publishing the initial draft in November inevitably means these estimates are longer range and thus more likely to change for the final budget or when actual costs are incurred. It is also acknowledged that this does not come without risks particularly as the recent trends for changes in key cost drivers makes forecasting them accurately under traditional incremental budgeting very difficult and we have not completed the full transition to an Outcomes Based Budgeting approach (which in any case would not in itself completely remove the risk from cost drivers). In addition, there will always be factors outside of the Council's direct control which have the potential to vary the key planning assumptions that underpin those estimates.

There are a number of significant risks that could affect either the cost of providing key services and/or level of service demand or its main sources of funding. In addition, there are general economic factors, such as the level of inflation and interest rates that can impact on the net cost of services going forward. Pressures from the main cost drivers and in some cases from service demand are evident in children's and adults social care, waste volumes, and home to school and special educational needs transport.

There are also opportunities to either reduce costs or increase income which will not, as yet, be fully factored into the planning assumptions. The main risks and opportunities are summarised below.

Risks

Cost of Living

- Extraordinary increases in the costs of goods and services procured by the Council
- Market instability due to workforce capacity as a result of recruitment and retention difficulties leading to exit of suppliers, increased costs, and supply chain shortages

- Increased demand for Council Services over and above demographic demands, including crisis and welfare support
- Reductions in income from fees and charges
- Under collection of local taxation leading to collection losses and reductions in tax base
- Claimants of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme discounts

International Factors

- War in Ukraine and other conflicts causing instability
- Impact of the decision to leave the European Union
- Legacy impact of covid-19
- Ongoing supply chain disruption including energy supplies
- Breakdown of hosting arrangements under Homes for Ukraine scheme

Regulatory Risk

- **High Court ruling on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) Children** – the judgement that the council is responsible for supporting all UAS children arriving in the county until they are transferred under National Transfer Scheme impacts on the availability and therefore cost of carers for local children as well as risks of shortfalls in funding refugee schemes (see below)
- **Replacement Legislation and Regulation following Brexit** – including additional council responsibilities, impact on businesses and supply chains, and economic instability
- **Statutory overrides** – currently there are a number of statutory overrides in place which reduce short term risks e.g., high needs deficit, investment losses, etc. These are time limited and require a long-term solution
- **Funding settlements** - adequacy of the overall settlement and reliance on council tax over the medium term, and uncertainty over future settlements (especially beyond 2024-25)
- **Delayed Reforms to Social Care Charging** - uncertainty over future plans and funding, and providers' fee expectations
- **Other delayed legislative reforms** – impact on council costs and ability to deliver savings/spending reductions e.g. Extended Producer Responsibilities
- **Departmental Specific Grants** - Unanticipated changes in specific departmental grants and ability to adjust spending in line with changes
- **Asylum and Refugee Related** – increase in numbers of refugees (adults and families) accommodated within the community impacting on council services. Inadequate medium-term government funding for refugee schemes
- **New Burdens** – Adequacy of funding commensurate with new or additional responsibilities
- **Further delay of the Local Government Funding Review** - The government has committed to updating and reforming the way local authority funding is distributed to individual authorities. However, this has now been further delayed until 2025-26 at the earliest. The Fair Funding Review of the distribution methodology for the core grants

was first announced as part of the final local government settlement for 2016-17. The data used to assess funding distributions has not been updated for a number of years, dating from 2013-14 to a large degree, and even as far back as 2000.

General Economic & Fiscal Factors

- Levels of national debt and borrowing
- Inflation continues to be well above the government target for a sustained period with consequential impacts on contracted services (see below) and household incomes (including incomes of KCC staff)
- Economic recession
- Rise in unemployment
- A general reduction in debt recovery levels
- Reductions in grant and third-party funding
- Increase in fraud

Increases in Service Costs and Demand

- Long term impact of Covid-19 pandemic on clients and suppliers
- Higher cost for new clients coming into care than existing clients especially but not exclusively older persons residential and nursing care and children in care
- Adult Social Care demography from increased complexity
- Children's Social Care including sufficiency of Foster carers and numbers of UAS children or those with no recourse to public funds
- Significantly higher than the national average Education and Health Care Plans with consequential impact on both Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs placements/services and General Fund services for assessment and home to school transport
- Waste tonnage
- Public health services
- General demographic trends (including a rising and ageing population and growth in the number of vulnerable persons)

Contractual Price Increases

- Index linked contracts rise above budgeted amounts
- Containing locally negotiated contracts within the amounts provided in the budget
- Financial sustainability of contracted providers

Efficiencies and Savings Programme

- Slippage in the expected delivery of the savings programme
- Non-delivery of planned savings
- Shortfalls in income from fees and charges

Opportunities

- Growth in local taxbase for both housing and businesses
- Service transformation and redesign including digital services
- Invest to save approach to reduce revenue costs
- Service remodelling

Adequacy of Reserves

Reviewing the level of reserves the Council holds is an important part of the budget setting process. The review must be balanced and reasonable, factoring in the current financial standing of the Council, the funding outlook into the medium term and beyond, and most importantly, the financial risk environment the Council is operating in. The assessment of reserves is based on factors recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as set out below together with an indication of the direction of travel (up arrow represents an improved position i.e., the risk is less than it was last year).

Assumptions for inflation



The direction of travel for this indicator was showing as deteriorating in last year's budget due to the historically high levels of inflation that arose during 2022. The annual rate of inflation (using CPIH) peaked at 9.6% in October 2022 and has been on a downward trajectory in the subsequent months (CPI peaked at 11.1% and RPI at 14.2% in October 2022).

The March Office for Budget Responsibility forecasts were for the rate of inflation to peak in quarter 4 of 2022 (CPI 10.7% in quarter 4 2022), before the rate of prices growth falls back reducing to 9.7% in quarter 1 2023, 6.9% quarter 2, 5.4% quarter 3, 2.9% quarter 4 and 1.5% quarter 1 2024. However, the rate of inflation in 2023 has not reduced as much as the March 2023 OBR forecast with reported CPI from Office for National Statistics (ONS) of 10.2% quarter 1, 8.4% quarter 2 and 6.7% quarter 3. Revenue spending subject to inflation is around £1.4bn so each 1% adds £14m to council costs. One of the principal reasons that inflation is not falling as much as forecast is due to the rise in petrol and diesel prices amid a sharp rise in in global oil costs over recent months offsetting falls in food price inflation.

The higher than forecast inflation is the reason why this measure is still showing as deteriorating for 2024-25 as it makes the impact on future price forecasts in budget plans uncertain and volatile.

Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts



The Council uses receipts as part of the funding for the capital programme. The Council has not applied the flexible use of capital receipts to fund revenue costs since the 2018-19 budget and does not propose to use the permitted extension. Delivery of receipts against the target has continued to fall behind in recent years necessitating additional short-term borrowing/use of reserves.

Performance in the current year has been mixed with the rise in interest rates dampening large new-build housing developments. Although there is a reasonable pipeline of assets for disposal the risk profile for potential delays remains high therefore leading to a continued deterioration in this measure.

Capacity to manage in-year budget pressures and strategy for dealing with demand and service delivery in the longer term



2022-23 ended with a revenue budget overspend for the first time in 23 years. The net overspend in 2022-23 was £47.1m after roll forwards (3.9% of net revenue). Overspends before roll forwards were reported in Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) of £24.4m, Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) of £32.7m, Growth Environment and Transport (GET) of £0.9m, Deputy Chief Executive Department (DCED) of £1.6m. These were partly offset by underspends in Chief Executive Department (CED) of £3.5m and Non-Attributable Costs and Corporately held budgets (NAC) of £11.8m

The most significant overspends were:

- £30.5m older persons residential and nursing care in ASCH
- £16.1m home to school transport in CYPE
- £9.9m children in care in CYPE

The most recent 2023-24 revenue budget monitoring presented to Cabinet on 5th October 2023 showed a forecast overspend of £37.3m before management action. This overspend was largely driven by higher spending growth than the £182.3m (excluding spending on externally funded activities) provided for in the budget. The largest overspends are in the same main areas as 2022-23 (adult social care, children in care and home to school transport). This is despite including additional spending in the budget for the full year effect of recurring spend from 2022-23 and forecasts for future price uplifts, increases in demand and cost increases unrelated to price uplifts.

At the same Cabinet meeting on 5th October 2023 a separate report “Securing Kent’s Future – Budget recovery Strategy” set out the broad strategic approach to providing reassurance on the necessary action to bring 2023-24 budget back into balance and the opportunity areas for further savings and avoidance of future cost increases over the medium term 2024-27.

However, until this strategic plan has been converted into detailed plans and these have been delivered managing in-year spending and spending growth over the medium term presents the most significant risk to

the Council's financial resilience and sustainability and therefore the highest rating of deterioration.

Strength of financial reporting and ability to activate contingency plans if planned savings cannot be achieved



There continues to be a reasonable degree of confidence in the validity of financial reporting despite the uncertainties and volatility as a result of overspends. However, the ability to activate contingency plans if planned savings cannot be achieved has to date been severely restricted as a result of these overspends, although every effort is being made to reduce the forecast overspend in 2023-24.

Reporting has been enhanced to include separate analysis of delivery of savings plans, treasury management and council tax collection. Further improvements are planned in terms of the timeliness of financial monitoring and reporting to ensure corrective action is taken as early as possible.

Some areas of spending can still be changed at short notice if required as a contingency response if planned savings cannot be achieved (or there are unexpected changes in spending). A significant plank of the 2023-24 recovery strategy is to reduce non committed spending for the remainder of the year. At this stage it is expected that managers across the whole organisation will exercise this restraint to reduce forecast spending for the remainder of the year. However, if this does not result in sufficient reductions to bring in-year spending back into balance further spending controls will have to be considered. These spending reductions are largely anticipated to be one-offs and will not flow through into 2024-25 or later years.

The increased focus on savings monitoring and delivery has had some impact and the majority of the overspend in 2022-23 and forecast for 2023-24 is due to unbudgeted spend rather than savings delivery, although savings delivery is still a contributory factor and remains a risk, this is no greater risk than in previous years, hence this measure has not been rated as deteriorating.

However, if the further savings necessary to bring 2023-24 back into balance are not proving to be achieved this measure would need to be reassessed for future drafts.

Risks inherent in any new partnerships, major outsourcing



Partnership working with NHS and districts has improved. However, further sustained improvements are still needed to change the direction of travel.

arrangements, and major capital developments

Trading conditions for Council owned companies continue to be challenging.

A number of outsourced contracts are due for retender and the Council is still vulnerable to price changes due to market conditions.

The ability to sustain the capital programme remains a significant challenge. It is essential that capital programmes do not rely on unsustainable levels of borrowing and additional borrowing should only be considered where absolutely essential to meet statutory obligations. This will impact on the condition of non-essential assets possibly resulting in the closure of facilities although the planned spending to limit modernisation programmes to essential measures to ensure buildings are safe warm and dry has proved to be inadequate and the programme needs to reflect a realistic level of spend on the assets the council needs to sustain necessary functions. Despite the action taken to limit additional borrowing, a third of the capital programme is still funded by borrowing. Slippage within individual projects remains an issue leading to lower than planned spending in the short-term but potentially higher medium to long term costs due to inflation. This slippage defers borrowing rather than reducing it.

The quarter 1 capital monitoring report showed a forecast net underspend on capital spending of £42.3m comprising net £8.2m increased spending on projects (real variance) and £50.5m reduction due to slippage. The real variance includes spending on grant and externally funded projects where funding has been announced after the capital programme was approved.

Financial standing of the Authority (level of borrowing, debt outstanding, use of reserves, etc.)



The financial standing of the Council has weakened significantly as a result of the overspend in 2022-23 that was balanced by the drawdown of £47.1m from general and risk reserves (39% of general reserve and all of the risk reserve). Usable reserves were also reduced through the transfer of £17m from earmarked reserves to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) reserve as part of KCC's contribution the Safety Valve agreement with DfE in March 2023 (with further transfer of £14.4m planned for 2023-24). Overall, the council's usable revenue reserves have reduced from £408.1m at 31/3/22 (40% of net revenue) to £355.1m at 31/3/23 (29.8% of net revenue) with further reduction to £316.3m (24% of net revenue) forecast for 31/3/24.

This forecast assumes 2023-24 revenue budget is brought back into balance by year end with no further draw down from reserves.

The reduction in usable reserves has significantly reduced the council's ability to withstand unexpected circumstances and costs, and reduced the scope to smooth timing differences between spending and savings plans. The levels of reserves now pose a more significant risk to the council's financial resilience than levels of debt. Levels of reserves are now considered to be the second most significant financial risk after capacity to deal with in-year budget pressures. Reserves will need to be replenished at the earliest opportunity and will need to be factored into future revenue budget plans.

The Council has an ongoing borrowing requirement of £1.1bn arising from its historic and ongoing capital expenditure, which is expected to remain broadly stable over the medium term. Most of this requirement is covered by existing external debt, which is forecast to decline gradually over the medium term (from around 72% in 2023/24 to 66% in 2026/27. The remaining portion is met via internal borrowing (namely the temporary use of internal cash balances in lieu of investing those balances with external counterparties).

Although the Council has been protected to a significant extent from the material increase in interest rates over the past two years (given that the majority of its borrowing requirement is already met by fixed rate debt) the higher rate environment has increased the expected costs of internal borrowing as well as costs associated with any new external borrowing over the near and medium term.

A small portion of the borrowing requirement (8.4% in 2023/24) is met via "LOBO" (Lender Option Borrower Option) loans. These instruments provide lower cost financing in exchange for giving the lender the periodic opportunity to reset the loan's interest rate. The Council manages the risks around these loans being "called" by restricting their use to only a minor portion of the borrowing portfolio and by avoiding any concentration in the loans' associated option dates.

In managing the structure of its borrowing (the balance between internal and external borrowing, and the portion of the latter that is made up of fixed-rate as opposed to variable-rate loans), the Council is chiefly concerned with risks arising from uncertainty around

interest rates as well as ensuring it has adequate liquidity over the medium term. The Council reviews its borrowing strategy formally on an annual basis to ensure its approach remains appropriate.

The Authority's record of budget and financial management including robustness of medium-term plans



The direction of travel for this factor was shown as deteriorating in the final budget presented to County Council on 9th February 2023 due to the quarter 3 monitoring for 2022-23 showing a significant £53.7m forecast revenue overspend. The overspend reduced a little by year-end to £44.4m before roll forwards (£47.1m after roll forwards). However, this was not sufficient to change the direction of travel bearing in mind the scale further of the forecast overspends for 2023-24.

The most significant cause of the overspends is higher than budgeted spending growth despite significant increases already factored into the budget. The need to include for the full year effect of current year overspends as a variance to the published medium-term plan means that the capacity to manage in-year budget pressures (highest rated risk assessment) is the most significant factor in MTFP variances rather than robustness of MTFP forecasts. This is the only reason that this particular assessment has not been shown as a significant deterioration with a double arrow. Nonetheless, the robustness of forecasts included in the MTFP does need improvement (hence this assessment is still showing a deterioration until these are improved).

The initial draft budget for 2024-25 and MTFP for 2024-27 is not balanced. As outlined in the budget report this was an acknowledged risk from the earlier publication of the draft for scrutiny. At this stage the unbalanced initial draft has not been taken into account in the assessment of this risk as there is a strategy agreed to bring future drafts into balance. Should that strategy not be successful this aspect would need to be reassessed as further deterioration in future drafts.

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Virement and year-end procedures in relation to under and overspends



The direction of travel for this factor was shown as deteriorating in last year's budget due to monitoring for 2022-23 forecast to overspend and ongoing issues with Whole Government Accounts. The forecast for 2023-24 is further forecast overspend and issues remain with Whole Government Accounts meaning there has not been sufficient progress to date to change the direction of travel on this assessment.

The Council continues to adhere to its virement and year end procedures as set out in its financial regulations. The Council's ability to close the year-end accounts early or even on time is becoming increasingly difficult. The audit certificate for 2020-21 was issued on the 4th September 2023, following confirmation that no further work was required on the Whole Government Accounts. The audit certificate for 2021-22 has not been issued due to the audit of the 2021-22 Whole Government Accounts being outstanding as the external auditors have prioritised the audit of the Council's 2022-23 accounts.

The draft outturn for 2022-23 was reported to Cabinet on 29th June 2023 outlining the main overspends and underspends together with roll-forward requests. This was presented alongside an update to the medium-term financial outlook. A net overspend of £47.1m was reported after roll forwards of £2.7m. The overspend was funded from a drawdown from earmarked and General reserves. The draft accounts for 2022-23 were published on 1st July 2023 and are still being audited. The audit is ongoing as there is still audit work to complete on group accounts and pensions.

The availability of reserves and government grants/other funds to deal with major unforeseen events



As identified in the assessment of the financial standing of the authority the levels of usable reserves have reduced at the end of 2022-23 and are forecast to reduce further by the end of 2023-34. Furthermore, a number of significant risks remain unresolved (including at this stage balancing 2023-24 revenue budget) which could impact on reserves and the assessment of their adequacy if solutions are not found.

The most significant risk to reserves in previous years has been identified from the accumulated and growing deficit on the DSG reserve largely from the overspending high needs support within the DSG. This has now been addressed over a number of years through the Safety Valve agreement with DfE. However, at this stage the Safety Valve agreement is a recovery plan that will be delivered over a number of years with spending on high needs support gradually bought back into balance with the available grant funding and the historic accumulated deficit cleared with contributions from DfE and local authority. However, this does not fully mitigate the risk as should the plan not be fully delivered there is a risk that DfE could withhold contributions and a residue deficit would remain.

The reserves forecast includes the transfer to the DSG reserve of the local authority contribution for 2022-23 and a further forecast transfer for the local authority contribution in 2023-24. Provision is included in the 2024-25 initial draft budget and 2024-27 MTFP for the remaining local authority contributions. The DSG reserve forecast also includes the DfE contributions for 2022-23 to 2027-28. These contributions together with the recovery plan to reduce the in-year deficit on high needs spending would see the accumulated deficit cleared by 2027-28. However, resolving this aspect of risk to reserves does represent £82.3m over the term of the agreement of the authority's resources which would otherwise have been available to mitigate other risks.

A new risk has arisen during the course of 2023-24 following the high court order that the Council must take all possible steps to care for all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) children arriving in the county under the Children Act 1989, unless and until they are transferred to other local authorities under the National Transfer Scheme. The council is currently in negotiation with Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Home Office and Department for Education (DfE) over a funding package to support compliance with the judgement. To date the offer is circa £9m which is insufficient to cover forecast costs for caring for UAS children for the remainder of 2023-24 which if not resolved would leave a forecast deficit and no offer has yet been made for 2024-25. This combination poses a major threat to the Council's financial sustainability.

Although this DSG risk has been addressed the risk of the requirement for further draw downs if the 2023-24 current year spend and gaps in 2024-25 initial draft budget and 2024-27 MTFP and the overall forecast level of reserves means the assessment of this risk cannot yet show an improvement and could be a further deterioration'

A register of the most significant risks is published as part of the initial draft 2024-25 revenue budget, 2024-27 medium term plan and 2024-34 capital programme.

The general financial climate including future expected levels of funding



The Autumn Statement 2022 included departmental spending plans up to 2024-25 and high-level spending plans up to 2027-28. The plans for 2023-24 and 2024-25 included significant additional support for local government including additional grants and increased assumptions for council tax. These plans will be

updated in the 2023 Autumn budget which is scheduled for 22nd November.

The local government finance settlement only included individual grant allocations and core spending power calculations for 2023-24. The settlement did include council tax referendum levels for 2024-25 as well as the overall additional amounts for the main grants for 2024-25 but did not include individual authority allocations. Other departmental specific grants were not included in the settlement..

The Autumn Statement and local government finance settlement confirmed that the planned reforms to social care charging have been delayed until 2025. It is this delay that has enabled Government to redirect the funding allocated for social care reform as a short term increase in funding for current pressures in adult social care. A further tranche of funding for the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund for workforce reform for 2023-24 and 2024-25 was announced in July 2023.

However, the inadequacy of medium to long term sustainable funding for adults social care remains, and the lack of certainty that the additional funding available in 2023-24 and 2024-25 will be baseline for subsequent years cause the assessment of this risk to remain as a neutral direction of travel at this stage. This can be reassessed following the 2023 Autumn Budget statement.

The long-awaited update and reform to the funding arrangements for local government have also been delayed again until 2025 at the earliest.

Despite increased certainty of funding for 2023-24 and 2024-25 medium term financial planning remains uncertain, particularly future spending and income forecasts . The plans for 2025-26 include a higher level of uncertainty. Plans can only be prepared based on prudent assumptions and forecasts for later years remain highly speculative.

The adequacy of insurance arrangements



The Council's insurance policies were reviewed for January 2022. A hardening market along with changing levels of risk has resulted in a rise in premiums, with some deductibles being increased to mitigate this. The implications of limiting capital borrowing to absolutely essential statutory services increases the risk of insurance claims where assets have not been adequately maintained. A fund audit confirms the levels of insurance reserve are

adequate, however as the corporate contribution to the fund is remaining unchanged more reliance will be placed on the reserve to balance insurance claims.

Of the eleven factors used to assess risk and the adequacy of reserves, only one has shown no change from twelve months ago (the strength of financial reporting and ability to activate contingency plans, and even this is conditional on delivering the contingency plans to bring 2023-24 spending back into balance), the remaining ten are still deteriorating. In the case of capacity to manage in-year budget pressures and strategy for dealing with demand and service delivery in the longer term and financial standing of the Authority (level of borrowing, debt outstanding, use of reserves, etc.) the deterioration is now at a severe level and cause for serious concern. There are aspects of these deteriorations as well as number of the others that are largely due to outside factors but still need to be managed and mitigated as much as possible. No weighting has been applied to the individual factors, but the general financial risk to the Council should now be regarded as substantially and severely increased compared with a year ago, which in turn, was increased from the year before.

The amounts and purposes for existing reserves have been reviewed to ensure the Council achieves compliance with Local Authority Accounting Panel (LAAP) Bulletin 99. This bulletin sets out the recommendations on the purposes for holding reserves. Reserves are split between general reserves (working balance to help cushion the impact of uneven cashflows/avoiding unnecessary temporary borrowing and contingency to cushion the impact of unexpected events/emergencies) and earmarked reserves to build up funds for known/predicted specific events.

The administration's initial draft 2024-25 budget includes a £16.4m net increase from changes in contributions and draw down from reserves. This is largely for the to replenish the draw down from general reserves in 2022-23 over two years 2024-25 and 2025-26 and provision for the local authority contribution to DSG reserve under the safety valve agreement. A full reconciliation of all the changes to contributions and draw down from reserves for 2024-25 is available through the detailed dashboard of budget variations.

Appendix G: Budget Risks Register 2024-25

TOTAL	499.7
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Maximum Financial
						£m
Significant Risks (over £10m)						
CYPE	High Needs Spending	The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block does not meet the cost of demand for placements in schools, academies, colleges and independent providers.	The Safety Valve programme does not deliver the reduction to the in-year deficit on spending to support children with high needs as planned leading to a higher deficit	The Department for Education withholds its contribution towards the accumulated deficit and/or the increased overspend leaves a residue deficit. The government requires that the total deficit on the schools budget to be carried forward and does not allow authorities to offset from general funds anything above the amounts included in the Safety Valve agreement without express approval from Secretary of State. This approach does not resolve how the deficit will be eliminated and therefore still poses a significant risk to the council	4	150.0
ALL	Non delivery of Savings and income	Changes in circumstances, resulting in delays in the delivery of agreed savings or income	Inability to progress with plans to generate savings or additional income as scheduled, due to changing circumstances	Overspend on the revenue budget, requiring alternative compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	103.1
CYPE	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	The High Court has ruled that the council is responsible for the care of all Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking (UAS) children arriving in the county until such time as they are transferred to other councils under National Transfer Scheme	Failure to reach agreement with government departments (Home Office and Department for Education) to cover all costs incurred by the council in supporting UAS children	Overspend on the revenue and or capital budgets, requiring alternative compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	3	60.0
ALL	2023-24 potential overspend impact on reserves	Under delivery of recovery plan to bring 2023-24 revenue budget into a balanced position by 31-3-24.	Overspend against the revenue budget in 2023-24 required to be met from reserves leading to a reduction in our financial resilience	Insufficient reserves available to manage risks in 2023-24 and future years	3	37.3
ALL	Revenue Inflation	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Price pressures rise above the current MTFP assumptions and we are unsuccessful at suppressing these increases.	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	21.0

Appendix G: Budget Risks Register 2024-25

TOTAL	499.7
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Maximum Financial
ASCH / CYPE	Market Sustainability	The long term impact of Covid-19 is still impacting on the social care market, and there continues to be concerns about the sustainability of the sector. At the moment all areas of the social care sector are under pressure in particular around workforce capacity including both recruitment and retention of staff especially for providers of services in the community, meaning that sourcing appropriate packages for all those who need it is becoming difficult. This is likely to worsen over the next few months with the pressures of winter, and increased activity in hospitals. Throughout this year we have continued to see increases in the costs of care packages and placements far greater than what would be expected and budgeted for, due to a combination of pressures in the market but also due to the increased needs and complexities of people requiring social care support.	If staffing levels remain low, vacancies unfilled and retention poor, then repeated pressure to increase pay of care staff employed in the voluntary/private sector in order to be able to compete in recruitment market. At the moment vacancy level said to be 1 in 10.	Care Homes closures are not an infrequent occurrence and whilst some homes that close are either too small or poor quality others are making informed business decisions to exit the market. The more homes that exit in this unplanned manner further depletes choice and volume of beds which can create pressures in the system regarding throughput and discharge from hospital thus potentially increasing price.	5	20.0
ALL	Full year effect of current overspends	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Increases in forecast current year overspends on recurring activities resulting in higher full year impact on following year's budget (converse would apply to underspends)	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	20.0
ALL	Capital	Capital project costs are subject to higher than budgeted inflation.	Increase in building inflation above that built into business cases.	Capital projects cost more than budgeted, resulting in an overspend on the capital programme, or having to re-prioritise projects to keep within the overall budget. For rolling programmes (on which there is no annual inflationary increase), the level of asset management preventative works will reduce, leading to increased revenue pressures and maintenance backlogs.	4	18.3
CYPE	Market Sustainability	Availability of suitable placements for looked after children. Availability in the market for home to school transport, due to reducing supplier base and increasing demand.	Continued use of more expensive and unregulated placements, where it is difficult to find suitable regulated placements as no suitable alternative is available. The cost of transport contracts continues to increase above inflation.	Unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves.	5	10.0

Appendix G: Budget Risks Register 2024-25

TOTAL	499.7
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Directorate	Risk Title	Source/Cause of Risk	Risk Event	Consequence	Current Likelihood (1-5)	Estimated Maximum Financial
						£m
ALL	Demand & Cost Drivers	The Council must ensure that the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) includes robust estimates for spending pressures.	Non inflationary cost increases (cost drivers) continue on recent upward trends particularly but not exclusively in adult social care, children in care and home to school transport above the current MTFP assumptions and the council is not able to suppress these	Additional unfunded cost that leads to an overspend on the revenue budget, requiring compensating in year savings or temporary unbudgeted funding from reserves. Potential recurring budget pressure for future years.	4	10.0
Other Risks (under £10m - individual amounts not included)						50.0

Likelihood Rating

Very Likely	5
Likely	4
Possible	3
Unlikely	2
Very Unlikely	1

From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader
Clare Maynard, Head of Commercial and Procurement

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee

Date: 22 November 2023

Subject: Update from the Contract Management Review Group (CMRG)

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report reflects on the work of the Contract Management Review Group (CMRG) since it was originally convened in September 2016. It also provides an update on amendments to the Terms of Reference (Annex A), including membership, of the CMRG and the approach to future meetings of the Group, following the Council's launch of a new Commercial and Procurement Division in September 2023.

Recommendation(s):

Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to **consider** and **note** this report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Contract Management Review Group (CMRG) was originally convened in September 2016. Over the seven years since its inception, the Group has played a key role in identifying and championing contract management best practice across the Council, while also highlighting areas for development, ensuring that any identified issues are addressed.
- 1.2 This report reflects on the lessons learned through the reviews undertaken by the CMRG over its lifetime and the difference the Group has made. Following KCC's launch of a Commercial and Procurement Division in September 2023, and the recent publication of the Council's Budget Recovery Strategy, the report highlights key changes to be made to the Terms of Reference (Annex A), including membership, of the CMRG and the approach to future meetings.

2. Reflections on CMRG contract reviews between 2016 and 2023

- 2.1 Since the CMRG was established in September 2016, the Group has for the majority of that time been chaired by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance. In line with its Terms of Reference, during its lifetime, the CMRG has reviewed the maturity of the Council's contract management on over sixty contracts that have been selected based on strategic importance, value, risk, and complexity.
- 2.2 The contracts reviewed have covered the full span of the services that KCC is responsible for delivering, ranging from contracts for adult social care services

and children's services, to those for the delivery of major construction and infrastructure projects. Contract owners have been held to account with in-depth reviews against the NAO Good Practice Contract Management Framework.

2.3 Over the past seven years, the CMRG has played an important role in raising the overall standard of contract management across KCC. This was recognised in an assessment of the Council's contract management maturity undertaken in partnership with the Cabinet Office in September 2022. It was judged that practice across KCC was 'Good' with excellent prospects for improvement.

2.4 With more than sixty reviews undertaken by the CMRG, several common strengths in contract management have been identified across KCC with some notable improvements since the Group was established in 2016. This includes:

- A better understanding of contract management roles and responsibilities
- Evidence of strong working relationships being established with providers
- Clear governance and escalation processes identified and followed
- Improved monitoring and scrutiny of supplier performance
- Greater consideration of social value that can be delivered on contracts
- A well-rounded understanding of the major risks associated with contracts
- Improved contract administration through a contract management system

2.5 The CMRG has played a key role in embedding such strengths and driving forward change where needed. It has challenged where it has found performance measures to be inappropriate, advocated for benchmarking, and championed social value. The Group has also ensured appropriate consideration of financial performance and risks and initiated KCC's adoption of a central repository of contract information in a contract management system.

2.6 It is also important to acknowledge that those strengths and improvements have also been secured through the combined efforts of all involved in contract management across KCC, who have been supported by a comprehensive suite of guidance, tools, and templates and a training and development programme that has raised the profile of contract management and promoted best practice.

3. Launch of the new Division and a revised approach to the CMRG

3.1 Recognising the importance of delivering value for money for Kent residents, a key principle also the driving force behind the CMRG, KCC launched a new Commercial and Procurement Division in September 2023, which will provide professional leadership across KCC's commercial and procurement activity.

3.2 While contract management responsibility will sit within KCC's Directorates, the new Division will provide additional commercial advice, guidance and support to named contract managers. Commercial experts will hold suppliers to account on contractual performance, oversee commercial risks, lead negotiations, and ensure robust consideration of value for money prior to contract extensions. This will be a key enabler in delivering KCC's Budget Recovery Strategy and the priority to closely scrutinise existing contractual arrangements.

3.3 The Division has already and will continue to raise awareness around the Council's recently revised contracting and spending rules, and establish

mechanisms for monitoring and reporting on compliance. This will be in addition to building on already strong relationships with Cabinet Office, Crown Commercial Services, and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to extend accredited contract management training to contract managers and commercial professionals in order to further raise capability.

- 3.4 The new Division will enable KCC to build on the identified strengths in its contract management, with dedicated commercial professionals able to drive forward further improvements. Directorates will be able to focus on considering a broader range of delivery options, maintaining good provider relationships, and ensuring services are co-designed with and deliver for Kent residents.
- 3.5 The role of the CMRG will remain critical to ensuring strong oversight and assurance of KCC's contract management maturity. While there are no plans to fundamentally adjust the criteria on which contracts are selected, with the focus remaining on the Council's key contracts, it is an opportune time to review and update the membership of the Group and the approach to the meetings.
- 3.6 Considering the priority of the new Division and KCC's Budget Recovery Strategy to undertake a thorough review of existing contractual arrangements and drive forward further improvements, the Deputy Leader has agreed that it is most appropriate for the new Head of Commercial and Procurement and Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance to jointly chair the CMRG going forward. This will better position the Group to initiate any required action to help improve the overall effectiveness of contract management across the Council. The Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer will also be invited to attend, or to provide representatives, to increase the rigour of reviews. Cross-party Member representation will continue to be vital, recognising the value of diverse contributions and perspectives.
- 3.7 Contract owners, with input from their commercial business partners, will still be assessed against the NAO Good Practice Contract Management Framework. However, there will be a renewed emphasis placed on whether it can be demonstrated that 'best value' is being secured for the Council, there is compliance with internal rules, legislation and regulations, and transparency and accountability around decision-making. The timing for reviews will be clarified to be the midway point of contracts and prior to any extension.
- 3.8 With regards to meeting frequency, the CMRG will meet once per annum to agree the forward plan for the next 12 months. Thereafter, the Group will meet at least every two months for contract reviews, which will ensure there is opportunity to progress the required actions and activity between meetings. This may be adjusted based on the volume of contracts that are due to be reviewed.
- 3.9 The CMRG will continue to share its findings to the relevant Corporate Director and Cabinet Member after each review, with a summary of contract reviews being reported to Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee every six months. Contract managers will be responsible for acting on the recommendations of the CMRG supported, as necessary, by the Commercial and Procurement Division.
- 3.10 Acknowledging that the new Commercial and Procurement Division is requiring significant Officer capacity to mobilise, and that meetings are scheduled under

the previous format of the CMRG until November 2023, it is proposed that the revised approach will commence in full from January 2024 with the amended membership meeting ahead of this to review the Council's key contracts and to agree the 12-month forward plan for the Group.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Since it was first convened seven years ago, the CMRG has played a critical role in identifying areas of strength in contract management across the Council, making a significant impact to ensure areas for development are addressed.
- 4.2 Going forward, especially in the economic and financial climate within which the Council is operating, the CMRG will continue to be an important mechanism to maintain strong oversight and assurance of contract management at KCC. Working alongside the Commercial and Procurement Division, it will ensure that KCC contract management practice moves from 'Good' to 'Better' and beyond.

5. Recommendation(s)

Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and note this report.

6. Contact details

Report Author:

Michael Bridger, Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager

Relevant Director/s:

Clare Maynard, Head of Commercial and Procurement



Contract Management Review Group

Terms of Reference

Version No: 8
Drafted By: Michael Bridger, Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager
Date: 1 November 2023

1. Role and Purpose

The Contract Management Review Group (CMRG) has been in operation since September 2016, following agreement at the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee to implement a forum to review KCC's strategically important contracts. CMRG's key objectives are as follows:

- a. To provide assurance as to good practice in the management of KCC contracts, as this will improve outcomes, value for money and management of risk.
- b. To provide challenge and an opportunity to identify potential improvements in the management of the contract that will help ensure the contract represents 'best value'.

The CMRG will meet at least every two months to look in depth at specific contracts; asking contract managers to report on the performance of the contract and to review the maturity of their contract management practice against criteria from National Audit Office best practice guidance (Appendix 1).

2. Membership

Membership of the CMRG is drawn from Officers and Members from across KCC, recognising the key role of Officers and Members in providing oversight and governance of the commissioning cycle. The Chair of the CMRG is appointed by the Deputy Leader. ~~and is e~~ Currently, a Joint Chair arrangement is in place with the Head of Commercial and Procurement and Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance. The Chair ~~s~~ is ~~are~~ responsible for identifying ~~two~~ further Officers and Members to sit on the panel.

Officers

- ~~• Interim Strategic Commissioner~~
- ~~• Joint Chair – Head of Commercial and Procurement~~
- ~~• Section 151 Officer (or representative) Head of Finance Operations or Corporate Accountant~~
- ~~• Monitoring Officer (or representative)~~
- ~~• Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager~~
- ~~• Commercial and Procurement Policy and Governance Lead~~
- ~~• Commissioning Standards Programme Officer~~
- ~~• Commissioning and Commercial Assistant~~

Members

- ~~• Joint~~ Chair – Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance
- ~~• Member 2 – Member from the Conservative Group~~
- ~~• Member 3 – Member from the Conservative Group~~
- Member ~~4~~4 – Member from an Opposition Group
- Member ~~5~~2 – Member from an Opposition Group

For each meeting, additional invitees would be:

- Presenting Contract Manager/s (mandatory)
- Head of Service for the Contract and/or Head of Commissioning (mandatory)
- Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead (mandatory)

- Operational Director for the Service (optional)
- Cabinet Member for the Service (optional)

3. Functions and responsibilities

- The CMRG reviews contracts against the National Audit Office (NAO) Good Practice Contract Management Framework (see Appendix 1) and an associated maturity assessment template.
- The CMRG will have a forward plan of contracts to be reviewed for the next 126 months and contract managers will be given at least 6 weeks' notice of when their contract will be reviewed.
- Each contract manager completes the template and provides supporting evidence for submission prior to meeting with the CMRG. The expectation is that contract managers should have the information required to complete the template readily available as part of a day-to-day good practice approach to contract management. As required, the Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager and Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead may also have discussions with the contract manager to clarify issues or queries prior to the meeting.
- Unlike an audit, the review process relies on a self-assessment by the contract manager and the CMRG does not itself verify evidence and check source material. However, contract managers do sign to attest agree that the information provided to the CMRG is accurate.
- Within the CMRG meeting, the Member-led gGroup provides a robust level of challenge and questioning to determine whether overall value for money can be demonstrated in addition to there being compliance with the relevant internal rules and public procurement regulations and transparency and accountability around decision-making. The group will advise on where improvements may be made in contract management practice to better realise those objectives.
- ~~It also provides advice and guidance to managers ahead of any contract extension for areas to consider in their future practice, or when they are looking at re-commissioning services, in order to ensure consideration of achieve greater value for money and procedural requirements through the contract and its management.~~
- Where appropriate, the Chairs and wider membership of the CMRG will discuss contract details and issues with the contractor or service user/s in order to gain a wider perspective on contract performance. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis. On occasion, it may also be appropriate for the contractor to attend, if agreed as part of the forward plan.
- Following the CMRG, the Chairs will issue ~~a letter of~~ findings and recommendations regarding the specific contract reviewed to the relevant Corporate Director, Cabinet Member and, where necessary, Committee.
- The Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager and Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead ~~are~~ responsible for following up with contract managers after each meeting to review progress against the recommendations put forward by the CMRG and to clarify what the outcomes have been from those reviews.
- When appropriate, Contract Managers will be asked to return to CMRG after a defined time period to account for the actions requested, and to provide assurance that change has been embedded within contract delivery.
- The CMRG is responsible for capturing the lessons learned from contract reviews and sharing best practice across the Council, in order to identify common themes and to improve standards across KCC.
- CMRG will refer matters to KCC's internal audit term if the need arises.

4. Governance

- The CMRG is a part of the Council's established Informal Governance Arrangements and meets at least every two months on a monthly basis.
- P&R Cabinet Committee will receive requires half yearly reports on lessons learned and the forward look for reviews.
- ~~As and when required, the CMRG is able to provide an independent opinion on existing contracts for the Strategic Delivery Board (SDB).~~

5. Meetings, Communication and Timelines

- As standard, the CMRG will meet every two months ~~monthly~~ for 1½ to 2 hours, usually reviewing either one or two specific contracts at each meeting. The frequency, duration, and number of contracts reviewed may vary dependent on business need. ~~Whilst standard practice will be to review two contracts at each meeting, where a particular contract is highly politically sensitive or strategically important, it may be appropriate to allot the full session to that individual contract.~~
- The Contract Manager, relevant Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead, and relevant Corporate Director and Cabinet Member are invited to attend CMRG a minimum of six weeks prior to meeting, with the master slide deck and timelines for completion provided.
- The Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager will have a pre-meet with the contract manager to talk them through what needs to be completed, explain format of the meeting and to understand what the contract is.
- Officers are required to provide a completed set of the maturity slides and, where appropriate, supporting evidence, a maximum one week in advance of the meeting date.
- The agenda, the completed slide deck and supporting evidence will then be issued to the CMRG one week before the CMRG meeting.
- The Chair ~~and the Strategic Commissioner~~ will be briefed on the contract by the Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager five to seven days before the CMRG.
- The Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Manager will arrange a post-CMRG meeting between ~~within three and~~ six months after the presentation with the Contract Manager and Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead, so that observations and the outcomes from agreed actions can be discussed.
- The minutes and actions will be circulated to the CMRG, contract managers, Strategic Procurement and Commercial Lead, Corporate Director and Cabinet Member within four weeks after the date of CMRG, with a letter of the findings and recommendations from the Chair Group.
- The CMRG is responsible for capturing the lessons learned from the contract reviews for future reference and sharing of best practice. This will be used to update procedural and policy guidance maintained by the Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Team to ensure that it is swiftly embedded within daily practice.

6. How contracts are selected for review

Contracts are selected for review by using the Contract Register produced by the Commissioning Commercial and Procurement Standards Team and consideration of the Council's priority to deliver Securing Kent's Future. This will be made available to the Chair ~~and wider membership of the CMRG, the Interim Strategic Commissioner and the Commissioning Standards Manager~~, who will meet once every twelve months ~~a six-monthly basis~~ to agree to the ensuing six ~~twelve~~ months' forward plan. ~~The Chair, in liaison with the two supplementary Members, can request contracts of particular political or strategic interest, or where there are expressed concerns. Otherwise, c~~Contracts should be selected according to the following criteria.

- Alignment with Securing Kent's Future
- High value or politically sensitive.
- High ~~C~~complexity – i.e., are there factors that would make contract management more difficult?
- High ~~R~~risk – is the service one that carries inherent risks?

- Strategically important – contracts that are identified as 'Gold' contracts using the Council's contract tiering tool that takes account of all the above factors, in addition to importance may not fulfil the above criteria but recognised as important to the Council fulfilling its strategic objectives.
- ~~Stage of commissioning cycle – will the contract be coming to an end in the next one to two years?~~
- Synergy with audit – is a review of the contract on the timetable for audit? ~~or have audit recently conducted a review?~~
- Has been identified internally as not working well.
- ~~Where Strategic Commissioning can add value or get a better deal.~~
- ~~Synergy with Strategic Delivery Plan.~~

Contracts meeting the above will be reviewed at the mid-point of their duration (excluding extensions). They will also be reviewed prior to any extension to the contract.

Appendix 1

National Audit Office (NAO) Good Practice Contract Management Framework

The CMRG adopted the National Audit Office (NAO) good practice contract management framework as the reference for reviews. This framework identifies eight key contract management areas:

- Planning and governance – preparing for contract management and providing oversight
- People – ensuring the right people are in place to carry out the contract management
- Administration – managing the physical contract and the timetable for making decisions
- Managing relationships – developing strong relationships that facilitate delivery
- Managing performance – ensuring the service is provided in line with the contract
- Payment and incentives – ensuring payments are made to the supplier in line with the contract and that appropriate incentive mechanisms are in place and well managed
- Risk – understanding and managing contractual and supplier risk
- Contract development – effective handling of changes to the contract
- Supplier development – improving supplier performance and capability

From: Roger Gough, Leader of the Council
 Amanda Beer, Interim Chief Executive

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, 22 November 2023

Subject: Annual Equality & Diversity Report 2022-23

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: Corporate Management Team

Future Pathway of report: N/A

Summary:

This report sets out progress against Kent County Council's six Equality Objectives, as set out within Framing Kent's Future, which is a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

Recommendation:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to approve the Annual Equality & Diversity Report for 2022-23, attached as Appendix A.

1. Introduction

1.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force in April 2011. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- a. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
- b. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- c. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership, sex and sexual orientation).

1.2 In addition, the Equality Act regulations require that public authorities publish:

- a. One or more 'equality objectives', at least every four years.
- b. Annual 'equality information' to demonstrate their compliance with the general duty.

1.3 The 'Annual Equality & Diversity' report appended to this paper discharges the council's statutory duty to produce and publish annual 'equality information'.

2. Equality Objectives

- 2.1 The 2022-23 Annual Equality & Diversity report is the first report to measure progress against KCC's 'new' equality objectives for 2022-26, as published in Framing Kent's Future. This was the first time that the Equality Objectives were integrated within the council's strategy, demonstrating a clear commitment to embedding equality within everything we do.
- 2.2 There are six Equality Objectives, four of which are primarily outward facing and two of which are inward looking, concerning our workforce. These are:
- Strengthen our equality data collection and analysis across our services to better understand people's needs and the cumulative impact of the council's actions on people with protected characteristics.
 - Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chains, including our trading companies.
 - Ensure council information and services are accessible for everyone including those who are digitally excluded.
 - Work with our strategic partnerships to understand and support the diverse needs of our communities.
 - Continue to be an inclusive employer which provides fair, open and equitable access to career progression and a trusted environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour.
 - Attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation which reflects the communities that KCC serves.
- 2.3 The 2022-26 equality objectives mark a shift from the previous service-specific objectives to a broad, strategic and council-wide approach. As such, we have taken a different approach to the compilation and structure of the Annual Equality & Diversity report. To identify the potential mechanisms that could be used to evidence progress against the new objectives, colleagues in Strategy, Policy, Relationships & Corporate Assurance (SPRCA) developed a framework consisting of quantitative and qualitative data and information sources for each objective. The development of this framework was informed by engagement with KCC's Corporate Equality Group (CEG) and individuals and teams responsible for the data and information identified.
- 2.4 This data and information was used to compile the annual report and supplemented by information received from a call-out to the directorates asking for service examples that contributed to the objectives during the period. Directorates were asked to respond to each of the Equality Objectives where possible for their services, which has enabled the development of a cross-directorate picture of our performance.
- 2.5 The report has been structured to methodically assess performance against each of the equality objectives in turn, starting with the four outward-facing objectives, and finishing with the two workforce objectives.

3. Annual Review

- 3.1 Our new approach to the compilation of information for the 2022-23 Annual Equality & Diversity Report has provided comprehensive material from which to develop a picture of activity and progress against the objectives for their first year. Alongside analysis of quantitative data about our performance, there was a breadth of examples of where services have supported the delivery of our Equality Objectives. This included harnessing equality data collection opportunities; conducting detailed equality analysis to inform service delivery and procurement activity; attempts to mitigate barriers to access experienced by diverse groups and use of strategic partnerships to better understand the needs of communities. Within the Human Resources and Organisational Development (HR/OD) service, a range of measures were implemented in support of improved inclusivity and diversity, including improved support for KCC's staff groups, and targeted activity to promote disability inclusion and attract young people to the organisation. The key observations from this year's report are summarised below.
- 3.2 Data arising from the EqlA App Power BI dashboard underpins a substantial amount of the analysis on KCC's performance under the Equality Objective related to **equality data collection and analysis** (section 3). The dashboard tells us that in the period, 139 Equality Impact Assessments (EqlAs) were published, which is a significant increase on the 83 of the previous reporting period. This was accompanied by a gradual increase in the number of new users each quarter, demonstrating a steady growth in staff engagement with the EqlA process during the year and thereby providing an ever-improving picture of equality analysis across the council. This contributed to the identification of the potential underutilisation of national evidence/data within our equality analysis, with it being identified as a data source in only 59% of the EqlAs completed in the period. As this data source is potentially useful in understanding impacts on protected characteristics for which we might have less service user data available, further investigation and promotion of its use with officers will therefore be a key priority for future improvement.
- 3.3 Analysis for this Equality Objective also demonstrated a substantial improvement in the proportion of Key Decisions that were supported by EqlAs in 2022-23, at 66%. This had been identified as a priority area for improvement in the previous year's report, with only 25% Key Decisions in 2021-22 having an EqlA attached and 39% having an EqlA linked. Work was undertaken in the period to update our EqlA Policy to emphasise the requirement for EqlAs to be completed for Key Decisions and sustain progress in this area into the future. During 2023-24, monitoring will be undertaken of implementation of other policy provisions made in the updated EqlA Policy; this will include the completion of the associated e-Learning module by EqlA App users. Initial investigation has indicated that whilst App users were not required to complete this e-Learning during 2022-23 in advance of using the App, the module was completed at low levels (by 31% of Responsible Officers and 15% of Heads of Service). Data for 2023-24 has shown that this has begun to improve and may need to be supported by further action.
- 3.4 Section 5, which concerns the Equality Objective related to the **accessibility of council information and services and digital exclusion**, painted a very

positive picture, including wider notions of accessibility and 'intangible' or 'hidden' impacts experienced by some protected characteristic groups. This was the case to the extent that we received more service examples for this objective than could be included within the report. As such, consideration needs to be given as to how we can utilise these examples of good practice to improve performance in other service areas (both for this Equality Objective, and others). Data collection for this Equality Objective has also enabled the establishment of a baseline for performance with regard to digital accessibility and the production of alternative formats and translations.

- 3.5 Whilst for the Equality Objectives relating to **commissioning, procurement and trading companies** (section 4), and **strategic partnerships** (section 6), analysis primarily demonstrated a need to improve mechanisms for monitoring and understanding our equality performance in these areas over the course of the following years, our services provided a range of successful examples. Improvement in these areas will form part of existing planned activity within the wider development of KCC's Commercial function, Commercial Services Group's evolving workforce equality ambitions, and the development of a Strategic Partnership register.
- 3.6 The **workforce objectives** discussed in section 7 and 8 demonstrate an overall positive picture in terms of KCC's inclusivity and the diversity of its workforce, however, there are some specific details to draw out for further consideration and/or action. That there were more trends identified within these areas is a legacy of the robust data collection in place within HR/OD. The impact of activity undertaken in 2022-23 to improve inclusivity and diversity will need to be reviewed alongside 2023-24 workforce data in the following year's report to determine areas where further action is required.

4. Looking Ahead

- 4.1 Looking ahead, we aim to harness examples of best practice to support developing approaches and spread learning opportunities across services; progress with the development of additional measurement mechanisms where required and, supported by CEG, work within services and directorates to drive improvement in priority areas. This will encapsulate a range of activity over the course of 2023-24 and into the future, however, as touched on in the previous section, some of the key activities will include:
- Further investigation into key trends emerging from the EqlA App Dashboard by CEG.
 - Continued review of the adoption of the updated EqlA policy's provisions, to include monitoring of the proportion of Key Decisions that are supported by an EqlA and the level of EqlA App users and approvers that have completed the Introduction to EqlAs e-learning.
 - Consideration of how best practice examples from 2022-23 can be used to standardise our approaches to equalities where possible, or where they can be used in support of learning opportunities and continuous improvement across services. This applies to successful examples across our objectives but is particularly relevant to the Equality Objective regarding accessibility of council information and services, which was our greatest area of strength in this year's report.

- Development of additional measurement mechanisms in support of an improved understanding of our equalities performance across the objectives, and in particular with regard to commissioning, procurement, trading companies and strategic partnerships.
- Monitoring the impact of HR/OD inclusion and diversity action taken in 2022-23 alongside new data arising from initiatives such as the CMT open doors events, the reverse mentoring programme and new Health & Safety Incident and Accident reporting form. This will support identification of where further action is required in the future.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Legal implications

6.1 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), the Council is required to publish 'equality information', detailing how it has met its general duties, and performance against its 'equality objectives' on an annual basis. This Annual Equality & Diversity report discharges these duties for 2022-23.

7. Equalities implications

7.1 The Annual Equality & Diversity report considers progress against KCC's Equality Objectives, which were designed to support our delivery of the PSED. As such, alongside the fulfilment of our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010, this report will enable the identification of the council's priorities for improving its performance with the PSED over the coming years. As the report relates to performance monitoring of the previous year's work there is no requirement to undertake an EqIA.

8. Conclusions

8.1 Despite this being the first year that KCC has reported against the 2022-2026 Equality Objectives, the Annual Report for 2022-23 demonstrates that their key principles have already begun to be embedded across the council's services. This will continue to be built upon over the lifespan of the objectives.

8.2 The new Equality Objectives for 2022-2026 have required a more analytical and cross-council approach to the compilation of our Annual Equality & Diversity report. In turn, this has enabled the development of a more proactive and measurable approach to monitoring and steering KCC's equalities performance than in previous years, supported by a comprehensive framework of information and data. As detailed in this report, a number of key priorities have been identified for further investigation and development over the course of 2023-24 and into the future. This will be supported by continued work within directorates and with specific services. In addition, the report findings will be considered by CEG in order to formulate focused areas of action to be owned by the group for the remainder of 2023-24 and 2024-25.

9. Recommendation:

9.1 The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to approve the Annual Equality and Diversity Report for 2022-23, attached as Appendix A.

10. Contact details

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Contents

- 1. Executive Summary 3
- 2. Introduction 8
- 3. Strengthen our equality data collection and analysis across our services to better understand people’s needs and the cumulative impact of the council’s actions on people with protected characteristics. 10
 - Strengthening our equality data collection 10
 - Strengthening our equality data analysis 11
 - Better understanding people’s needs..... 20
 - Conclusions & Next Steps..... 23
- 4. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chains, including our trading companies. 24
 - Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Key Contracts 24
 - Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Commissioning & Procurement Processes 25
 - Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion via KCC’s Trading Companies 28
 - Conclusion & Next Steps 29
- 5. Ensure council information and services are accessible for everyone including those who are digitally excluded. 30
 - Council information is accessible for everyone 30
 - Council services are accessible for everyone 34
 - Digital Exclusion..... 40
 - Conclusion & Next Steps 42
- 6. Work with our strategic partnerships to understand and support the diverse needs of our communities. 44
 - Work with Strategic Partnerships 44
 - Partnership Working 46
 - Conclusion & Next Steps 47
- 7. Continue to be an inclusive employer which provides fair, open and equitable access to career progression and a trusted environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour. 48

An inclusive employer	48
Fair, open, and equitable access to career progression	54
A trusted working environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour	55
Conclusion & Next Steps	57
8. Attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation which reflects the communities that KCC serves.	58
KCC's Workforce Profile	58
Retaining a diverse workforce.....	59
Attracting a diverse workforce.....	61
Conclusion & Next Steps	63
9. Conclusion.....	64

Useful information

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the detail of how the council has complied with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023. In addition to discharging the council’s duties under the Equality Act 2010, this report is intended to support the identification of priority areas for improvement, highlight where specific action is required, inform where additional measurement mechanisms are needed and demonstrate areas of success. The findings of this report are a vital tool for KCC in ensuring the continuous improvement of our equalities performance.
- 1.2 In line with KCC’s 2022-2026 Equality Objectives, as published in Framing Kent’s Future, this report considers the council’s performance with equalities across equality data collection and analysis; procurement and commissioning; accessibility of information and services; strategic partnership working and the inclusivity and diversity of the workforce. In the assessment of our performance across the Equality Objectives, both the trends emerging from quantitative data obtained from specific services, and anecdotal information on equalities activities from directorates have been considered.
- 1.3 A summary of the headline issues emerging across the six Equality Objectives is detailed below.

Strengthen our equality data collection and analysis across our services to better understand people’s needs and the cumulative impact of the council’s actions on people with protected characteristics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whilst 83% of the EqlAs published during 2022-23 utilised data on the protected groups impacted, only 59% utilised national data/evidence, suggesting that this may be an underutilised data source within equality analysis. This data could be particularly useful to support understanding of the impact of changes on protected characteristic groups for which service user data may not be available. As such, this trend will be a priority for further consideration with Corporate Equality Group in the coming year.• Across 2022-23 EqlAs, the greatest number of potential negative impacts (and mitigating actions) were identified for disability, age and carers responsibilities, whilst the fewest were identified for marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender/transgender. This suggests that negative impacts are more frequently identified for protected characteristic groups which typically experience more ‘physical’ or ‘tangible’ negative impacts, rather than groups who might be more likely to experience ‘intangible’ or
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	<p>'hidden' negative impacts. This has been identified as an area for a focused piece of work with CEG in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Across the Key Decisions for 2022-23, 66% included an EqlA as a link or attachment. Whilst this is a marked improvement on the previous year with 25% Key Decisions having an EqlA attached and 39% having an EqlA linked, and demonstrates improved compliance with KCC's EqlA Policy, this needs to be sustained alongside a wider review of how successfully other policy provisions have been implemented in 2023-24. This will include monitoring of completion of the associated online learning module. • The report demonstrates multiple examples of best practice in equality analysis conducted during the period; opportunities to harness these to help improve other services' future analysis needs to be explored. • Whilst analysis for 2022-23 suggests that across many of KCC's services, service user equality data is routinely collected, there is the potential to develop a fuller understanding of the extent and status of service user equality data collection across the council. • There is also the opportunity to strengthen our equality data collection via the publication and socialisation of the updated 'About You' questions, which is expected in 2023-24.
<p>Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chains, including our trading companies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC's services provided a range of examples of their consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion across commissioning and procurement activity during 2022-23. This included examples of co-production, detailed equalities analysis, social value and provisions made within tender documentation, specifications, and KPIs. • However, detailed analysis for this objective was limited by the extent of measurement mechanisms currently in place. As such, the priority for improvement within this objective will be the development of additional mechanisms to measure our equality performance. This will be supported by both the wider development of KCC's commercial function, and our Trading Companies' ambitions to develop their policies and workforce equality profile measures. • KCC achieved a score of 'Realise' for diversity and inclusion in procurement in the Employer's Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE) benchmarking tool. Future improvement within this objective will also be informed by the recommendations of this evaluation.

Ensure council information and services are accessible for everyone including those who are digitally excluded.

- For 2022-23, this objective constitutes KCC's greatest area of success, with more examples of how council information and services were made accessible than it was possible to include within the report. This included examples of where a broader understanding of 'accessibility' has been adopted, to consider the needs of people across the protected characteristic groups, including the experience of 'intangible' or 'hidden' barriers. In particular, there were several examples of best practice emerging from 2022-23 consultations. As such, our priority will be highlighting the areas of best practice and identifying how these can be used to inform subsequent service developments over 2023-24.
- Of the complaints received in the period, there was one example related to accessibility where a solution was then actioned. In addition, 12 compliments were received that related to the council providing support to meet individuals' needs arising from disability.
- The baseline has been established for KCC's performance with regard to digital accessibility, with a clear range of actions already underway to drive improvement over 2023-24.
- The baseline has also been established for the level and type of requests completed by the Alternative Formats team, which will continue to be monitored over the lifetime of the 2022-2026 objectives.
- Digital exclusion has already been well embedded within equality analysis for 2022-23 and supported via a range of digital inclusion projects. We will look to sustain and strengthen this into the future.

Work with our strategic partnerships to understand and support the diverse needs of our communities

- A key priority for 2023-24 will be the development of a mechanism to understand the full extent of KCC's Strategic Partnerships, and the equalities achievements and/or opportunities that they bring, to enable more detailed analysis for this objective within the following year's report.
- Looking at available data for 2022-23, the majority of examples of partnership working toward positive equality outcomes have supported better understanding of the diverse needs of communities, over specific action to support them. It is hoped that as this improved understanding becomes embedded and dispersed, this will begin to have an impact on how the diverse needs of our communities are physically supported.

Continue to be an inclusive employer which provides fair, open and equitable access to career progression and a trusted environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour.

- Whilst 82.0% staff responded positively to questions around 'Inclusion and Fair Treatment' in the 2022 Staff Survey, more detailed review of responses suggests the need to continue to promote disability inclusion, ensure staff feel that their individual needs will be met, and that staff they feel comfortable to discuss them.
- Analysis of the 2022-23 TCP ratings demonstrated that whilst there was improvement in some areas, there are still some areas of disparity, which have increased in the period for LGBTQ+ employees, younger and older employees (aged under 25 and over 65), and disabled employees.
- As of December 2022, approximately 11.4% of the workforce had an adjustment in place; considering the council's workforce profile, it seems that there are opportunities to promote and increase this proportion further. This will be a continued focus, alongside promotion of Inclusion Passports.
- Changes in the equality profile of new apprenticeship starts in 2022-23 were largely in line with the overarching themes of movement and change in the council's total workforce profile, suggesting that these development opportunities were accessible and inclusive to most groups of KCC staff. Whilst apprenticeships were particularly utilised by younger staff, trends associated with disabled staff, staff with a faith/religion, and older staff need to continue to be monitored.
- Whilst Staff Survey 2022 responses regarding bullying/harassment were relatively even across the protected characteristics, these identified that further work is required regarding staff experiences with non-employees, and for LGBTQ+ staff and disabled staff in particular. To support future improvement, the impact of 2022-23 activity will need to be reviewed alongside new data arising from the updated Health & Safety Incident and Accident reporting form.

Attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation which reflects the communities that KCC serves.

- Despite some areas of disparity, KCC's workforce profile for 2022-23 is broadly reflective of the Kent county profile, with some protected characteristic groups reaching their highest levels within the workforce in the past few years. The diversity of KCC's leadership group has improved in 2022-23, however there is more work to be done to continue to improve the representation of female staff and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff.

- KCC job applicant demographics for 2022-23 were largely proportionate to the greater Kent profile, with the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants and female applicants surpassing the county profile and Disabled applicants applying in a smaller proportion compared to the county profile.
- Data suggests that our workforce diversity has been maintained largely via new recruits, with the staff turnover rate for staff aged 25 and under, staff aged 65 and over, transgender staff and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff surpassing the organisational average.

Figure 1: 2022-23 Annual Equality & Diversity Report Executive Summary

- 1.4 Evidently, the 2022-23 report has supported the identification of key priorities for the future, both in terms of specific areas for improvement, and where additional measurement mechanisms need to be established to enable more detailed performance analysis. Furthermore, whilst this is the first year that KCC is reporting against the new Equality Objectives, their key principles have already been embedded across council services, with numerous examples of best practice available in the main body of this report.
- 1.5 Looking ahead, work will be undertaken both within directorates and with specific services to drive improvements in identified areas and utilise the learning opportunities of our areas of success. This will also be supported by a focused session with the Corporate Equality Group (CEG), to identify the group's specific priorities and the actions it will take to support their delivery/achievement.

2. Introduction

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

2.1 As a public authority, Kent County Council (KCC) must comply with the **Public Sector Equality Duty** (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. The PSED includes both general duties, and specific duties. In the exercise of its functions, the **general duty** requires KCC to have paid due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited in the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic¹, and those who do not,
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

2.2 The **specific duties** under the PSED require that the council publishes annual Gender Pay Gap information, annual **'equality information'** to demonstrate their compliance with the general duty and one or more **'equality objectives'** in support of the achievement of the general duty, at least every four years.

2.3 This **Annual Equality & Diversity Report** acts as the **'equality information'** to demonstrate the detail of how the council has complied with this equality legislation between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023, including progress and activities that contributed to **KCC's 2022-2026 Equality Objectives**.

KCC's Equality Objectives (2022-2026)

2.4 With the publication of **Framing Kent's Future**, KCC included its Equality Objectives within its Strategic Statement for the first time. This decision was made in order to demonstrate the council's commitment to delivering on these objectives and to highlight the centrality of equalities to the council's wider goals and ambitions for 2022-26.

2.5 For 2022-2026, KCC has six **Equality Objectives**, four of which are outward-looking and concern our residents and service users, and two of which are inward-looking, concerning our workforce:

¹ The protected characteristics are Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage/civil partnership, Pregnancy/maternity, Race, Religion/belief, Sex, and Sexual orientation. KCC have also made a commitment to consider the impact on people with Carers responsibilities as part of their equality analysis, although this is not a characteristic which is protected under the Equality Act 2010.

- Strengthen our equality data collection and analysis across our services to better understand people’s needs and the cumulative impact of the council’s actions on people with protected characteristics.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chains, including our trading companies.
- Ensure council information and services are accessible for everyone including those who are digitally excluded.
- Work with our strategic partnerships to understand and support the diverse needs of our communities.
- Continue to be an inclusive employer which provides fair, open and equitable access to career progression and a trusted environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour.
- Attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation which reflects the communities that KCC serves.

2.6 These objectives are broad, strategic and embrace a range of activity across the council’s directorates and services, marking a shift in approach on the previous set of **Equality Objectives** which were largely service specific. This will enable a unified, council-wide approach to achieving our objectives, as each objective largely translates to service delivery across directorates. However, this does also mean that both the structure of the report, and the methodology for collecting data to inform the report, have changed compared with the **Annual Equality & Diversity Report 2021-22**.

2.7 For 2022-23 the report will take you through each of the **Equality Objectives** methodically, starting with the outward facing objectives, and finishing with the workforce objectives. This year, our Directorates (Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH), Children, Young People & Education (CYPE) and Growth, Environment & Transport (GET)) were asked to respond to each of the Equality Objectives, where possible for their services, instead of being required to respond to Equality Objectives specific to their individual services. As such, we have been able to develop a cross-directorate picture of performance for each of the Equality Objectives. In addition, some specific Corporate services (within the Chief Executive’s Department (CED) and Deputy Chief Executive’s Department (DCED)) were asked to provide information to further support this cross-directorate picture of our performance.

2.8 As the first year that KCC is reporting against the new Equality Objectives, it is expected that this report will work to establish a baseline with which to measure our future progress; support the identification of priority areas and/or specific action that needs to be taken to enable progress and help establish where additional measurement mechanisms need to be developed to improve our understanding of our performance.

3. Strengthen our equality data collection and analysis across our services to better understand people's needs and the cumulative impact of the council's actions on people with protected characteristics.

- 3.1 In our approach to this Equality Objective, we have considered information available on the current status of equality data collection across services; key EqIA App Dashboard data from 2022-23; policy changes that have been introduced to support continuous improvement; the types of data that have been used by services to inform service delivery and equality analysis, and the additional learning opportunities that have been made available to support staff understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics. This has also been supplemented with three detailed case studies looking at the equality profile of Let's Talk Kent registrations and 2022 Annual Budget Consultation participants; the findings of Active Kent & Medway's Tackling Inequalities through Sport and Physical Activity report, and the activity undertaken by the Safeguarding, Professional Standards & Quality Assurance service. The latter two offer best practice examples of how the council has undertaken equality analysis to better understand people's needs across a range of themes.

Strengthening our equality data collection

KCC Equality Data Collection

- 3.2 Where possible, KCC's services collect protected characteristic information about their service users, in order to better understand who their current customers are, which groups might be missing, and to support activity to understand and meet the needs of service users with particular protected characteristics.² For example, equality information is collected by the **No Use Empty** service at the point of application, within **Active Travel** cycle training packages, and in regular customer satisfaction surveys conducted by **Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs)** and **Libraries**. The Children, Young People & Education (CYPE) **Strengthening Independence Service** collects feedback from all families within the service three times a year and has worked closely with **Kent Analytics** to analyse the responses and understand where existing procedures need to be improved or amended.³ Equality data is also collected from participants across **Kent Youth Voice** services; as of the end of March 2023, this data indicated that the service had engaged a diverse range of young people in service delivery, with 24% participants Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, 19%

² Whilst services may ask service users to provide their equality information, this is always voluntary, with individuals able to choose not to declare.

³ Most recently, analysis has identified the need for improved communication.

participants having Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, and 10% participants identifying as Trans or Non-binary. Whilst this provides a perspective on the nature of equality data collection at KCC, it is hoped that over the coming years, our understanding of the full extent and quality of equality data collection across our services will improve.

About You

- 3.3 KCC uses 'About You' questions when collecting protected characteristic information about service users. In the past year, it was identified that some of the questions and answers included outdated terminology that might not offer responders the opportunity to accurately reflect aspects of their identity as they understand it. As such, a project was begun between KCC's Consultation Team and Analytics Team to reconcile the council's About You questions with up-to-date standards, as set in the Census. These have been through a thorough engagement exercise with the Corporate Equality Group (CEG), which includes representatives from the council's **staff groups**, to ensure their appropriateness. It is expected that these will be approved and available for use in the following reporting period, with future review to be undertaken where required.

Strengthening our equality data analysis

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) & the EqIA App Dashboard

- 3.4 Following the findings of the 2021-22 Annual Equality & Diversity Report which demonstrated that compliance with the requirement for all Key Decisions to be supported by an EqIA had decreased in recent years, changes were made to strengthen the EqIA Policy (see **3.9**), and communications were issued via various channels⁴ to make staff aware and drive improvement over 2022-23. As a result, we have seen significant progress in compliance with this policy position.
- 3.5 Across all Key Decisions for 2022-23, 66% included an EqIA as a link or attachment. This is a marked improvement on the figure of 25-39% for the previous year.⁵ A closer analysis shows that there was a significant shift to 91% compliance in Quarter 3 of 2022-23, following 45% compliance in Quarter 2; this may be associated with the dissemination of the 2021-22 findings in this period. Whilst this demonstrates a positive step in strengthening our equality analysis for Key Decisions, priorities for the future will include maintaining this improved

⁴ Including via Corporate Directors, CEG, GET Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Group and communications for staff and managers.

⁵ In 2021-22, 25% Key Decisions had attached an EqIA and 39% had linked an EqIA. Since 2022-23, monitoring has collated this into one category to no longer differentiate between where EqIAs are provided as a link or as an attachment.

compliance, ensuring officers are following the full EqlA App process, and beginning to build on the quality of the analysis that is being completed. In particular, work is required to ensure that officers are always using the EqlA App to conduct their analysis, (this was not done for 18% of Key Decisions) and ensuring that these are approved in-App by the Head of Service prior to the Key Decision date (this was not completed for a further 13% of Key Decisions).

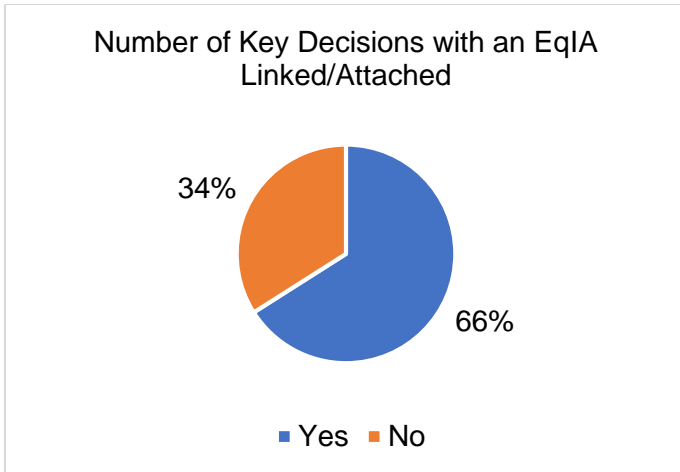


Figure 2: Number of Key Decisions with an EqlA Linked/Attached

3.6 Data inputted into EqlAs in the EqlA App automatically flows into the EqlA App Dashboard in Power BI⁶, which offers a rich source of data on how equalities analysis is being undertaken across the council. The Dashboard shows that during 2022-23, 139 EqlAs were published via the EqlA App; the directorate breakdown of these is summarised in the chart below.

⁶ Power BI is a data visualisation platform available within the Microsoft suite that enables the creation of data dashboards to report and visualise data in a range of styles and formats, including graphs and charts.

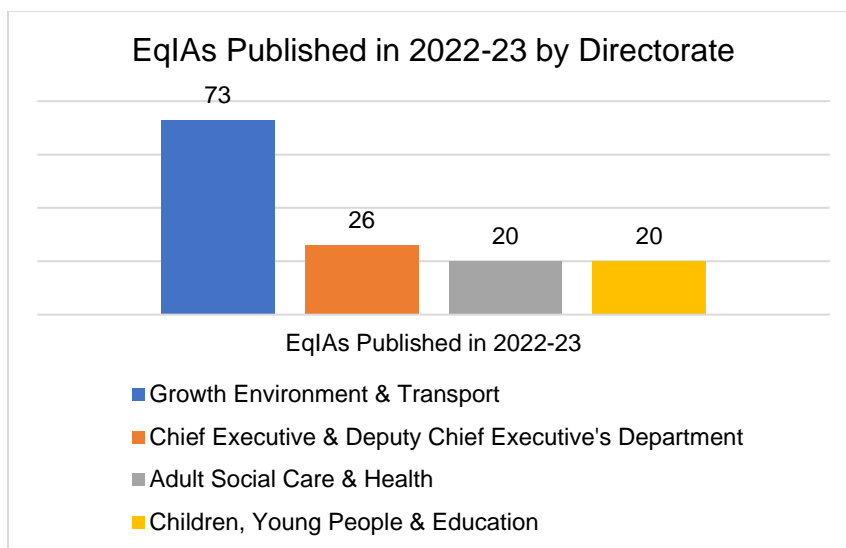


Figure 3: EqIAs Published in 2022-23 by Directorate

3.7 This is a significant increase on the 83 EqIAs published in the last Annual Equality & Diversity report period (between App launch in June 2021, and March 2022). Closer analysis shows that there was a gradual increase in the number of EqIAs published in each quarter of 2022-23. This was accompanied with a gradual increase in the number of new users each quarter. Overall, this demonstrates that staff engagement with the EqIA process and the EqIA App has continued to grow over the course of 2022-23, which in turn provides us with a more accurate picture of equality analysis across the council. Similarly to the previous year, the vast majority of EqIAs published in 2022-23 concerned projects or programmes, with a significant proportion concerning strategies or policies, and commissioning or procurement.

3.8 Quarterly analysis of the EqIA App Dashboard has been presented at CEG meetings since December 2022 with the introduction of the Policy Officer for Equality role. The form of this analysis has continued to be refined in order to best support the identification of priorities for progress, and how CEG can work to support these. Some of the key findings that have been presented and discussed at the group during 2022-23 include:

- When completing an EqIA, Responsible Officers are asked about the supporting evidence for their analysis; in order to proceed, they must answer positively to one of the three options available⁷. **Across the 139 EqIAs published in 2022-23, 83% had data related to the protected groups**

⁷ This means that officers must answer yes to at least one of the following questions: 'Do you have data related to the protected groups of people impacted by this activity?', 'Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?', 'Is there national evidence/data that you can use?'

- impacted, for 83% it was possible to get this data in a timely and cost-effective way, and for 59% there was national evidence or data that could be used.** This suggests that national evidence/data is potentially underutilised in the council's equality analysis; this is interesting because this type of data could be particularly useful to support understanding of how different groups could be impacted by changes, particularly for protected characteristics where service user data is not available. Further exploration of this will be a future area of focus for CEG.
- **The greatest number of potential negative impacts (and mitigating actions) were identified for disability, age and carers responsibilities, whilst the fewest were identified for marriage/civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender/transgender.** This is somewhat surprising given that being a carer is not a characteristic protected under the Equality Act 2010, but a characteristic that KCC has made a commitment to consider within its equality analysis. In addition, it would appear that negative impacts are more frequently identified for protected characteristic groups which typically experience more 'physical' or 'tangible' negative impacts, rather than groups who might be more likely to experience 'intangible' or 'hidden' negative impacts. This has been identified as an area for a focused piece of work with CEG in the future, which can be complemented with review of how services have attempted to mitigate intangible or hidden negative impacts in 2022-23, which is detailed in sections **5.17-5.22** of this report.
 - Of the 139 Published EqlAs, 74 identified no negative impacts. This enabled interesting discussion around EqlAs where this might have been unexpected and could be an area for further exploration in the future.

Equality Policy

- 3.9 In the period, work has been undertaken to develop the council's equality policy provision in order to support and improve KCC's equality analysis. Published in April 2023, but developed over the course of 2022-23, the updated **EqlA Policy** introduced a number of key changes, and reinforced the existing requirement for all Key Decisions to be supported with an EqlA. The key changes included additional guidance about the roles and responsibilities of officers across the organisation within the EqlA process, the requirement for all officers creating or approving EqlAs to first complete the Introduction to EqlAs Delta module, and for action plans to be developed, approved by Heads of Service and sent to a central mailbox for EqlAs that identified significant mitigating actions. The impact of these policy changes on how staff are making equality considerations will be reviewed in the 2023-24 Annual Equality & Diversity report, to assess if any further changes or measures are required in support of continuous improvement.
- 3.10 Whilst it was not KCC policy during 2022-23 that all officers creating and approving EqlAs must first complete the **Introduction to EqlAs Delta module**, it

is useful to review the module completions during this period to establish a baseline for future comparison. Of the 111 Responsible Officers who completed an EqlA during 2022-23, only 31% had first completed the module. Of the 59 Heads of Service who approved an EqlA in the same period, only 15% had first completed the module. This demonstrates significant room for improvement, which will be supported via future communications highlighting that the module must be completed before completing or approving EqlAs, in line with the EqlA Policy. There is an aspiration to complete a review and refresh of the e-learning module during 2023-24, which will also provide an opportunity to promote its availability and encourage more staff completions.

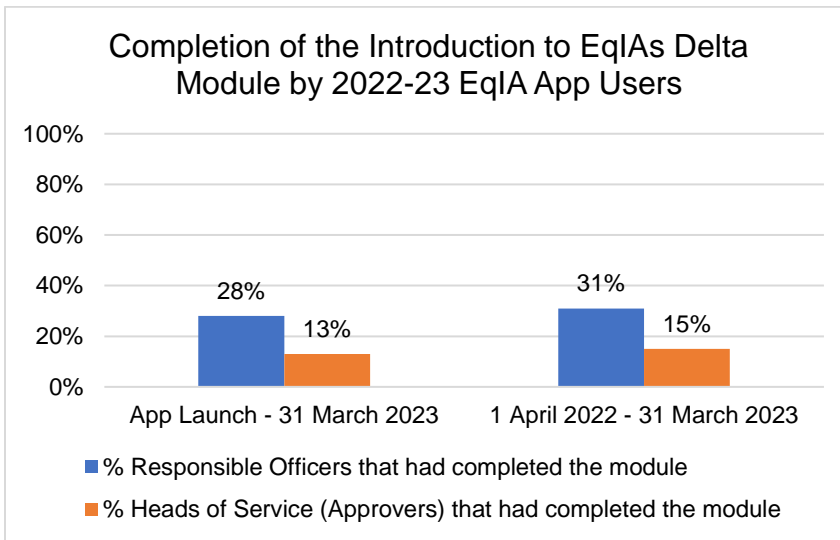


Figure 4: Completion of the Introduction to EqlAs Delta Module by 2022-23 EqlA App Users

3.11 Finally, work also began in the period to produce an Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy in response to the equalities risks associated with the use of AI that became evident in our work with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in late 2022.

Census Data

3.12 Following the release of the Census 2021 data, Kent Analytics highlighted the new equality information for Kent on [Kent.gov](https://www.kent.gov.uk) so that it could be easily accessed by staff, service users and residents. This information is summarised by protected characteristic, where possible in the county profile table below. Compared with the previous Census, there were some key differences in Kent's equality profile; these included:

- A decrease in the proportion of residents who are neither disabled under the Equality Act nor have a long-term physical or mental health condition.
- An increase in the proportion of residents who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic.

- An increase in the proportion of residents with no religion, and an increase in the proportion of residents who practice a religion other than Christianity.
- A small decrease in the proportion of households with a couple in a marriage/civil partnership.
- Data on gender identity and sexual orientation was available in the Census for the first time.

Protected Characteristic	Census 2021	Census 2011
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74.8% not disabled under the Equality Act, with no long term physical or mental health condition • 17.9% disabled under the Equality Act • 7.4% not disabled under the Equality Act but have a long term physical or mental health condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 82.4% day-to-day activities not limited by a long-term health problem or disability • 17.6% are limited a lot or a little by a long-term health problem or disability
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 89.4% White⁸ • 10.6% Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 93.7% White ethnic • 6.3% Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic
Religion/belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40.9% have no religion • 48.5% Christian • 4.9% Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or other religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26.8% have no religion • 62.5% Christian • 3.4% Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh or other religion
Marriage/civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31.8% households with a couple in a marriage/civil partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34.9% households with a couple in a marriage/civil partnership
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.6% straight or heterosexual • 2.7% LGBTQ+ 	N/A

⁸ Including White English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, British, Irish, Gypsy, Irish Traveller, Roma, or other White ethnicity)

Gender reassignment (Gender/Transgender)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94.4% gender identity the same as sex registered at birth • 0.4% other gender identities 	N/A
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Figure 5: Kent County Profile Comparison between Census 2021 and Census 2011

- 3.13 In addition, the 2021 mid-year population estimates show that Kent is the most populous county council area in the South East with a population of 1,578,500 people. 51.3% Kent residents are female, and 48.7% male. The mean age of the population in Kent is 41.6 years, which is a year older than the national mean age.
- 3.14 Census equality information is an important data source for KCC as it is often the starting point for officers when completing EqlAs, as a means of identifying groups that may be impacted by proposals, or groups that are underrepresented and need to be targeted with service provision or changes. This data is particularly useful for services which are unable to collect equality information on their service users. In 2022-23, the **Youth Justice service** made use of Census data as part of their county planning activity, considering the county demographic changes with respect to age and ethnicity in particular. This informed their demand planning and their understanding of workforce diversity and development needs around having sensitive conversations with children and families about their experiences and needs. The **Kent Fostering Service** also used Census 2021 information to inform their recruitment campaigns during 2022-23. Within **Integrated Children’s Services**, analysis of Census data identified shifts in the size of populations within districts, and the need to tailor service delivery within different districts which have different ethnic minority profiles as a result. Census 2021 data was also vital for the planning of **library** locations for the ‘British Library Living Knowledge Network – Chinese and British touring’ exhibition. The data was used to identify areas in Kent with the largest Chinese communities, and areas with smaller Chinese communities in order to promote inclusion and diversity in those areas.⁹

Service User Equality Data

- 3.15 Where available, services have also utilised service user equality data to understand how well they have adapted to need and to inform future strategy and approaches to service delivery. In 2022-23, this included discussion at West Kent Management Meeting about the demographic breakdown of Kent Children In Care, using the **Corporate Parenting** Scorecard to determine how the service

⁹ The touring exhibition was held in Canterbury, which has the largest Chinese community in Kent, and in Sevenoaks, Cheriton, Gravesend and Ashford.

adapts to meet the needs of the profile. In particular, this discussion looked at how Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) are supported, as well as the increasing number of children with disabilities in the service who do not meet the threshold for support from the Supporting Independence Service. Child level data collected by the council was used by **Adoption Partnership South East** to inform the adopter recruitment strategy (for more information **see 5.10**). **The Corporate Parenting** Service also contributed data to the Children's Commissioner survey on the care experience relative to the protected characteristics, and to research conducted by the University of Kent into young LGBTQ+ migrants.

Use of a range of data, from a variety of sources

- 3.16 It is good practice for equality analysis to be supported with evidence/data from a variety of sources where possible, relevant and proportionate, with national evidence being particularly useful where there might be gaps in Census or service user equality data for some protected characteristic groups. In a number of cases, equality analysis in the period has involved the use of national evidence or data from a variety of sources; this has included the following.
- 3.17 During 2022-23, a comprehensive EqIA was completed and updated for the Fastrack Electrification project¹⁰. This was informed by an extensive range of evidence and information including the 2021 Network Survey, KCC's 'Disability in Kent' statistical bulletin (2020) and KCC's 2018 Air Quality Report¹¹. To support this data, engagement was undertaken with the Kent Association for the Blind and Compaid Kent¹², in order to further understand the potential impacts of the electrification of Fastrack buses, and the associated introduction of physical charging infrastructure on streets. This engagement also supported the identification of how negative impacts on service users who are blind, partially sighted, hard of hearing, or with sensory needs could be mitigated, which informed the tender documents for the project. For more information on how this equality analysis impacted the procurement process, **see 4.8**.

¹⁰ To include the physical bus electrification infrastructure, electric bus fleet and the new operator contract.

¹¹ The Air Quality report was used to understand the air quality in each area, which should be improved by the electrification of the bus fleet as part of this project. It is intended that this will benefit those with respiratory disabilities or illness who are disproportionately impacted by poor air quality.

¹² This is a charitable organisation which helps disabled, older and vulnerable people to live life to the full.

3.18 Similarly, a wide range of data was used in equality analysis for the Country Park Strategy EqIAs and for the Countryside Partnerships EqIA. This included national and local data, stakeholder feedback and specific research into barriers to access to ‘green therapy’ activities for different protected characteristic groups.

Case Study: Consultation / Let’s Talk Kent

3.19 To support work towards this Equality Objective, an analysis of the equality data for Let’s Talk Kent¹³ registrations in 2022-23, and participants in the 2022 Annual Budget Consultation has been completed.¹⁴ This analysis may help to determine which groups are currently participating in KCC consultation opportunities, identify any areas of under or over representation, and highlight potential barriers to participation. With 2022-23 as the baseline year, this will continue to be monitored in future Annual Equality & Diversity reports. Services are responsible for conducting an equality analysis of the demographics that respond to their consultations and considering, for the specific service or topic, the extent to which this is representative and reflects their expectations, or if any particular groups need to be targeted. It is hoped that this analysis could be considered in future reports.

2022-23 Let’s Talk Kent Registrations

3.20 Looking at the equality profile of registrations with Let’s Talk Kent during 2022-23, whilst the numbers of both men and women registering continued to increase, men remained slightly underrepresented when compared with the county profile. Under 34s continued to be underrepresented compared with the county profile, whilst the age group most overrepresented were those aged 35-44.¹⁵ Despite this, there was a slight increase in the proportion of registrations aged 25-34, compared with 2021-22. Whilst trends in the equality profile remain relatively consistent year on year, it would seem that to a certain extent, demographic changes in registrations are impacted by the scale and scope of consultations occurring in the period. In 2022-23, examples included the Community Services and Home to School Transport consultations which both

¹³ [Let’s Talk Kent](#) is KCC’s online public consultation portal which allows members of the public to have their say on KCC projects and proposals.

¹⁴ Due to the nature of consultation, depending on the specific project concerned, it is to be expected that some protected characteristic groups will be overrepresented on some consultations. The Annual Budget Consultation has been selected for analysis as it represents a regular and unspecific consultation where we would hope to see participant demographics which are broadly reflective of our county profile.

¹⁵ Those registering must be aged 14 or over, so to a certain extent it is expected that those aged under 34 would be underrepresented amongst registrations when compared to the county profile.

seemed to generate an increase in registrations, particularly from female individuals.¹⁶

2022 Annual Budget Consultation

- 3.21 When comparing the demographics of those who responded to the **2022 Annual Budget Consultation** with the Kent county profile¹⁷, whilst there were some areas of disproportionality, participation was broadly representative for many of the protected characteristics, including sex, gender identity and disability. Those aged under 34 were underrepresented, with the most overrepresented aged groups being 65-74, 50-59 and 60-64. However, it is likely that this underrepresentation of younger people is a result of the Annual Budget Consultation being largely aimed at Kent householders who pay council tax. Whilst the proportion of participants with Christian faith was broadly in line with the county profile, no responses were received from individuals with Sikh faith¹⁸, and people of Muslim and Hindu faith were also underrepresented. People from ethnic minority groups were also underrepresented amongst participants, with particularly low responses from those identifying as Asian or Asian British Other, and those identifying as Black or Black British African.¹⁹ Both in 2021 and 2022 there was a higher proportion of carers responding than indicated in the Census, and this has continued to increase.

Better understanding people's needs

Equality Learning & Development Opportunities

- 3.22 In addition to utilising various equality data sources, engagement opportunities and conducting equality analysis to better understand the needs of people in Kent, a number of services have provided training and learning opportunities for their teams in order to better support and develop this understanding.
- 3.23 **CYPE Safeguarding** provided Communities of Practice online training events, which covered topics such as diversity and difference for Gypsy, Roma and

¹⁶ The Community Services consultation saw 746 female registrations and 166 male registrations, whilst the Home To School Transport consultation saw 195 female registrations and 44 male registrations.

¹⁷ As per the Census 2021. It should be noted that for some of the protected characteristics, questions to collect data vary from those asked in the Census 2021, so do not necessarily offer a direct comparison.

¹⁸ Who represent 1.5% of the County profile.

¹⁹ Asian or Asian British Other (0% in 2022 Annual Budget Consultation compared to 1.6% in the Census) and Black or Black British African (0.3% in 2022 Annual Budget Consultation compared to 1.9% in the Census).

Traveller communities, and offered masterclasses to staff during Black History month, which included a discussion with Hari Sewell about intersectionality. A Kent UASC Networking Event was held in March 2023, bringing together 50 people from organisations working with UASC in Kent. A Microsoft Team has since been created for the group, with a conference planned for the future, which will involve UASC children in its organisation and delivery. In September 2022, an in-service mandatory training day was held for all **Corporate Parenting Service** staff, which incorporated learning opportunities around topics such as Cultural Competence, Language, Unconscious Bias, LGBTQ+ issues, Professional Curiosity, Exercises in blind spots, and Minority Stress Theory. At the event, both staff and service users were able to share examples of their own experiences, ask questions and make use of learning and reflection time. Within **Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH)**, training was delivered during 2022-23 on assessing people under the Mental Health Act who are from the LGBTQ+ community; training has since been commissioned for the following year, to increase awareness on assessing people who are not White British under the Mental Health Act.

- 3.24 Case Study: [Tackling Inequalities through Sport and Physical Activity Report](#)
- Following the delivery of a range of sport and physical activity projects utilising Sport England's 2020-22 Tackling Inequalities Fund, **Active Kent and Medway** produced a detailed report into its impact and key learnings. The report is available online and considers the impact of the projects on three key underrepresented groups (people from lower socio-economic groups, people from culturally diverse communities, and people with a disability or long-term health condition), along with recommendations for delivering similar projects in the future. The findings have been shared with partners through webinars to support their understanding of working with targeted groups. Some of the key findings for future projects include the need to: utilise the local community to engage with target audiences, recruit staff that are relatable, build in social elements, involve participants in the development of projects and maintain regular contact. The report also found that across the 74 projects delivered, 63% participants were female, 37% participants were from culturally diverse backgrounds and 54% participants had a disability.

- 3.25 Case Study: [CYPE Safeguarding, Professional Standards & Quality Assurance](#)
- Within **CYPE Safeguarding, Professional Standards & Quality Assurance (SPSQA)**, extensive work was undertaken to better understand the needs of people from a range of protected characteristic groups. This included:

- Following the Ofsted Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection in May 2022, a task and finish group was created to explore diversity within practice across Integrated Children's Services (ICS), with a

number of actions agreed and implemented. This included provision of additional or updated training across themes of identity, individuality, unconscious bias and cultural competence.²⁰ The service also took part in the 2023 multi-agency UASC training programme.²¹ Guidance was updated to include writing from a child's perspective and providing oversight and reflective supervision in the completion of forms and supervisions. Finally, the Practice Development Service developed an Identity Hub containing tools and research.

- In September 2022, an audit was conducted by the **SPSQA** and **Youth Justice** services, looking at ten Kent Black or Minority Ethnic children who had been convicted of the most serious offences and were consequently subject to either custodial or highly intensive court orders.²² Key themes arising from the audit included staff skills and confidence in discussing and analysing culture and ethnicity, the impact of staff's own values, bias and culture, the potential for cultural competency training, support for parents, earlier interventions, information sharing with Local Authorities and support for other agencies. As a result, the findings were presented to the County Youth Justice Board (CYJB) and a new **Youth Justice** KPI was introduced, requiring partners to report data on racial disparities to the CYJB. Further action to address racial disproportionalities identified have been embedded within the 23/24 Youth Justice plan.
- Following the publication of the practice review 'The Myth of Invisible Men' and a deep dive study completed by Kent Safeguarding Multi-Agency Partnership (KCSMP)²³, it was identified within Kent Children's Services that fathers were not routinely engaged and were notably absent from assessments and visits. As a result, a Parent Inclusion Coordinator was recruited in May 2022 to develop and implement Father Inclusive Practice across the county. Key activity included training and guidance on father inclusive practice; implementation of father inclusivity in policy and quality assurance processes; support provided to other services developing this practice, including in the commissioning tender for Men's Antenatal/Postnatal

²⁰ In February 2023, training was delivered on 'Unconscious Bias and Cultural Competence in Safeguarding Children' as well as a Communities of Practice session on "Capturing the needs and experiences of children; exploring identity and individuality".

²¹ This involved KCC, Refugee Council, Barnardos (Independent Child Trafficking Guardians), and Porchlight and was a programme for professionals (including foster carers) including training on age assessments, radicalisation and Prevent, LGBTQ+, trauma, the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), trafficking, and the asylum process.

²² The audits were measured against the relevant recommendations in the Her Majesties Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) October 2021 report on "The experiences of Black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system" and the subsequent effective practice guide published in December 2021.

²³ This was completed in 2021 to better understand non-accidental injury involving babies under one year.

support, and consultation with fathers in partnership with Dads Unlimited in order to understand their wants and needs from professionals.

Conclusions & Next Steps

- 3.26 Overall, analysis for this Equality Objective has determined that across many of KCC's services, service user equality data is routinely collected; that increasingly Key Decisions are being supported by EqlAs and that there is an abundance of examples of where services have used Census data, service user equality data and learning and development opportunities to support equality analysis, and, ultimately, their understanding of people's needs. Despite this, there are some key areas for future improvement and/or further exploration.
- 3.27 Both the number of service examples, and the findings of the EqlA App Dashboard seem to suggest that national evidence may be underutilised within equality analysis. This, along with some of the other key trends arising from the Dashboard will be priority areas for further consideration with CEG in the coming year. Whilst compliance with the EqlA Policy in terms of Key Decisions and EqlAs has improved, this needs to be sustained alongside a wider review of how successfully other policy provisions have been implemented in 2023-24. There is also the opportunity to use the case studies demonstrating best practice of understanding people's needs to support future equality analysis within other services. All of this would be supported by a fuller understanding of the extent and status of service user equality data collection across the council. Improving our understanding of this will be a key focus for the future, along with finalising the review and socialisation of the 'About You' questions in support of new data collection opportunities.
- 3.28 Finally, it is noted that this Equality Objective also includes an aspiration to understand the cumulative impact of the council's actions on people with protected characteristics. This will continue to be an aspiration for the future of the objectives, with our initial focus being to develop the areas mentioned above, in order to ensure a robust basis for cumulative impact analysis to be built upon.

4. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chains, including our trading companies.

4.1 The introduction of this Equality Objective has provided the council with new opportunities to understand how existing commissioning and procurement processes have worked to promote equality, diversity and inclusion across services, and determine how this can be further improved and supported. Such activity will be underpinned by the continued development of KCC's new Commercial & Procurement function. For 2022-23, existing data on key contracts has been utilised to begin to develop a picture of our performance and has been supported by examples of practice across services, and at different stages of commissioning, procurement and delivery.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Key Contracts

4.2 During 2022-23, there were 28 Key Decisions that related to commissioning and procurement. An EqlA was attached to 75% of these, which is higher than the overall figure of 66% across all Key Decisions. For three of these, an additional Selection Questionnaire (SQ) stage was completed, which would have included specific questions on equalities considerations. Furthermore, all projects resulting in a contract would have seen the awarded supplier/s being bound by KCC's standard terms and conditions, which require adherence to equalities legislation. Looking at the eight reviews of KCC's key contracts conducted by the Contract Management Review Group (CMRG) in 2022-23, there were substantive references to social value in two of the presentations, minimal references in three of the presentations, and no reference to social value or equalities considerations in the remaining three presentations. Where social value was mentioned, this largely looked at the provision of apprenticeships, community development and sustainability initiatives, with one referencing the supplier's commitment to ensure all employees are treated equally.

4.3 During 2022-23, KCC participated in the Employer's Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE), which identified that in terms of diversity and inclusion in procurement, KCC was operating within the 'Realise' category.²⁴ Key areas for improvement included improving equality,

²⁴ This is a benchmarking tool which evaluates an organisation's performance with regard to diversity and inclusion, to identify the steps and actions required to support an inclusive culture. Assessment is made across a number of areas including, the workforce; strategy and plans; leadership and accountability; recruitment and attraction; training and development; employment practices; communication and engagement; and procurement. Each area is given a score identifying where performance sits on the enei's Diversity and Inclusion Road Map. The Road Map levels are: Prepare, Mobilise, Realise, Embed, and Sustain, with Sustain being the highest level.

diversity and inclusion monitoring of suppliers and contracts, and action to promote the benefits of engaging with diverse suppliers.

- 4.4 As mentioned, our future aspirations for development and monitoring of this Equality Objective will coincide with the wider changes to KCC's commercial function, which will include development of our approach in the areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. This will likely include the introduction of measures to better understand the diversity of our suppliers, and how equalities considerations are embedded within our commissioning and procurement processes. As part of the Annual Equality & Diversity report data collection process, services were asked to provide information on contracts that were active in the period along with commissioning or procurement exercises undertaken. These examples are detailed in the following sections and determine both areas of success and interesting points for future exploration or consideration.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Commissioning & Procurement Processes

Co-design & Co-production

- 4.5 During the co-design work to produce the new model for the **Integrated Community Equipment Services (ICES)**, the project team noted a lack of representation from ethnic minority groups and people with non-English cultural backgrounds at engagement events. As a result, the team engaged Healthwatch Kent²⁵, and through their People's Voice Service, made connections with a number of groups, including Nepalese, Caribbean, Nigerian and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities living in Kent. This involved awareness raising of Healthwatch during the Windrush event held by the Caribbean group in North Kent, engagement with Carers' Support East Kent and planning with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Network to arrange ongoing visits to discuss health inequalities. Through this engagement, a service accessibility gap was identified, as individuals were not aware of the services available to them or how to access them. This informed the design of the new service specification, which included an expectation for the new provider to improve awareness of the service and how to access it.
- 4.6 In 2022-23, **Healthwatch Kent and KCC** were shortlisted by Healthwatch England for an Impact Award, in recognition of their co-production work to improve digital skills, increase mental wellbeing and address health inequalities for the Nepalese community in Folkestone. The Kent Coast Volunteering project

²⁵ Healthwatch Kent is a local health and social care champion that uses its network to share the experiences of individuals, ensure their voice is heard and help them to find information and advice.

delivered digital skills training to 21 people from the Nepalese community, which enabled them to access health and social care services and book Covid vaccines online and improve their overall knowledge and confidence.

- 4.7 The development of the service specification for **Community Support Services** for Children, Young People and Adults with Sensory Needs included focus groups with young people and adults with sensory impairments. Workshops focused on the qualities of support workers, outcomes that people wanted from support services, and providing feedback. These groups were facilitated by the use of British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.

Equality Analysis

- 4.8 As mentioned in **3.17**, an EqIA was completed in 2022-23 to support the development of the tender documents for both the Kent Thameside Electric Fastrack Operations Contract (including Electric Fleet) and for Charging Infrastructure Provision²⁶, in order to ensure that the procurement process promoted equality, diversity and inclusion. To mitigate the potential negative impacts on protected characteristic groups identified within the EqIA, the tender specifications were amended to include the following:

- To address difficulty in electric vehicle detection for people who are blind, partially sighted or hard of hearing, induction loops must be provided for the electric vehicles. The operator must also undertake an education campaign with Kent Association for the Blind ahead of the launch of the fleet.
- To provide familiar journey sounds and mitigate sensory challenges arising from the quietness of the electric vehicles, audio recordings of bus vehicle sounds must be provided via the Fastrack App.
- To promote accessibility for customers with a range of additional needs, electric vehicles must meet the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR). These regulations require a second priority wheelchair space, an audible and visual route, next stop announcements on board and induction loops.
- To mitigate the disproportionate risk of collision with on-street charging infrastructure for those with a visual impairment, the tender specified a 1.8m footway width to be maintained next to chargers.
- For both contracts, Tenderers were required to submit an answer to be assessed based on the Social Value requirements that were set out, including a focus on how they would provide more opportunities for employment for those with protected characteristics, as required within the specification.

²⁶ Whilst the Invitation To Tender (ITT) was published in April 2023, the tender documents and associated equality analysis were completed during 2022-23.

4.9 Analysis of data collected via the **Short Breaks Service** dashboard was used to inform the approach to future contracts for the service and promote equality for young people with different protected characteristics. This analysis demonstrated that of the young people that attended between April 2022 and March 2023, 62% were male and 38% female, and that there were far more opportunities for young people aged 8-18 than those aged 0-8. As a result, work was undertaken to understand why females were less likely to attend sessions; this included engagement with Short Break providers with higher female attendance levels to explore what made their sessions more engaging for this group. The findings will inform the grant funding rounds for April 2024-2026. To increase access opportunities for younger children, the service held an Innovation Grant opportunity to ask the market to bid for money to deliver activities for children aged 5-8. In addition, when implementing the Short Break one year grant extension, a provider expressed that their service had gained the skills and experience to offer more places exclusively to children and young people with more complex needs, in response to local demand. As a result, a variation was made to the agreement to facilitate this change.

4.10 Analysis was also conducted as part of the scoping work for the future **Direct Payment Support Service**. This involved review of the protected characteristic data²⁷ for the current cohort to identify any trends and comparison with Kent's Census information to determine if there were any protected characteristic groups with unmet needs. This analysis evidenced that diverse groups had engaged with the service and identified no signs of indirect discrimination in current service delivery.

Equality considerations in Tender Documents

4.11 In 2022, the **Environment & Circular Economy** division completed a procurement exercise for a new provider to undertake a programme of mystery shopping and research across its network of Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs). Tenderers were asked to provide examples of how social value will be embedded into the contract. The successful tenderer gave examples of how they had supported researchers with protected characteristics. The service hopes to develop this through their contract and explore how well site staff understand HWRC procedures related to equalities.

Contract Monitoring

4.12 There are equality monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) within a number of Adult Social Care and Health contracts; this includes the number of

²⁷ Including age, sex and disability.

people accessing services who are from deprived areas or target groups, for example, individuals with a learning disability, or individuals from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) Contract also includes quarterly monitoring of the diversity of service users. This information is then shared at the ICES Partnership Board in order to ensure equality, diversity and inclusivity are identified at the point of prescribing equipment solutions.

Social value and fostering diversity

- 4.13 Arriva, the **Fastrack** Kent Thameside operator, implemented a number of initiatives in support of social value in the period. This included a Fastrack driver recruitment campaign to improve the number of drivers who are female and/or from disadvantaged backgrounds and a driver dress down day to raise money for guide dog training. To support this, KCC gave Arriva permission to host a recruitment day at Gravesend Bus Station and to produce on-bus advertising. **Environment & Circular Economy's** contract providers have also supported social value in the period, supplying wood to Kent Menshed²⁸ and arranging a site visit to Canterbury's HWRC for a group of junior international school students studying Sustainable Development Goals.
- 4.14 In January 2023, a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), was set up for the contracting of Independent Chairs for **Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)**. Whilst in previous years, the Chairs that applied tended to be from a very similar demographic and working background, applicants to the new DPS have been more varied, providing greater diversity in the Chairs we work with for DHRs.

Promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion via KCC's Trading Companies

- 4.15 **Commercial Services Group (CSG)** is the umbrella for all of the trading companies owned by the local authority, spanning education services, legal services, IT solutions and recruitment and HR services. With the formation of CSG in 2022 to bring all of these together, equality, diversity and inclusion has been adopted as one of the key strategic themes to inform work into the future. Much of the work to develop this strategic theme, including the development of a People Strategy and a Diversity, Equality and Belonging policy was begun during 2022-23 and continues into 2023-24. Whilst progress on the full extent of this activity can be further reported on in the following year's report, work thus far has focused around inclusivity and wellbeing; ensuring communications are relevant and accessible to all; and the development of a Race Equality Action Plan.

²⁸ Menshed is an organisation that provides community spaces for men to connect, converse and create, with the objective of reducing loneliness and isolation and allow men to enjoy time together.

4.16 To establish the baseline and identify areas for improvement into the future, CSG has developed a dashboard to monitor workforce equality data. This is summarised below and identifies some key areas of focus for diversifying the workforce into the future, particularly around disability. It is intended that this will also be supported by work to collect workforce equality data on wider protected characteristics in the future.

Category	Workforce Profile as of March 2023	Kent County Profile as per Census 2021	Variance
Total number of staff	1,698	N/A	N/A
% who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	7.2%	10.6%	-3.4%
% who have declared a disability	3.0%	17.9%	-14.9%
% who are LGBTQ+ (16+)	1.6%	2.7%	-1.1%

Figure 6: 2022-23 Commercial Services Group Workforce Profile Comparison

Conclusion & Next Steps

4.17 Looking at commissioning and procurement activity requiring a Key Decision, and key contracts from the period, data indicates that largely, equality analysis was completed, but that more needs to be done to focus social value toward equality outcomes for protected characteristic groups. Examples gathered from services indicate that there are areas where opportunities for co-production are being utilised, and detailed equalities analysis undertaken with the result of engaging underrepresented groups, targeting inequalities and better understanding individuals' needs. In addition, some services implemented equalities considerations within tender documentation, specifications, KPIs and social value. These examples of best practice can be used to inform how wider practice could be improved and what further measures might be needed in order to support this. Looking ahead, it will be important that further mechanisms for measuring equality, diversity and inclusion in commissioning and procurement, and within KCC's Trading Companies are established to develop a more detailed understanding of the council's performance against this Equality Objective.

4.18 It should also be noted that across KCC's services, many of which are commissioned or procured, action was taken in 2022-23 to promote equality, diversity and inclusion for service users. This included targeting specific groups to address identified inequalities, promoting diversity amongst staff and service users, and ensuring services were accessible and inclusive to people from protected characteristic groups. This activity is discussed in more detail in the following section.

5. Ensure council information and services are accessible for everyone including those who are digitally excluded.

- 5.1 As part of our approach to this Equality Objective, we have considered a number of more familiar aspects of accessibility – physical accessibility, digital accessibility and language translation – in addition to our aspirations to implement more wide-ranging understandings of accessibility that consider the full extent of often intangible barriers to access experienced by many protected characteristic groups. In addition, we have utilised EqIA App Dashboard data to develop an understanding of how well digital exclusion has been considered within proposals for new services or changes to existing services.

Council information is accessible for everyone

Language & Alternative Formats

- 5.2 The **Alternative Formats team** facilitates a wide range of translation and alternative format requests from the council's services. In 2022-23, 43 language translation requests were made, 39 of which were completed. Whilst requests that can be completed in-house are free of charge, language translations and braille requests have a cost implication which cannot always be met by the service, potentially explaining the four requests that went uncompleted in the period. The top three languages for which the most translations were completed were Ukrainian (13), Russian (7) and Romanian (3).²⁹ It is likely that the number of Ukrainian translation requests was associated with the implementation of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. During the period, the team fulfilled 13 Large Print requests, 7 braille requests, 4 Easy Read requests, 3 audio requests, 3 plain text conversion requests, and 1 British Sign Language (BSL) request. In addition, across KCC, individual services have made attempts to improve the accessibility of their information to people with additional needs:
- 5.3 In order to improve accessibility for the many older users of the **KCC Fastrack service**, all public communications are designed with larger fonts, with service changes communicated both online and via paper leaflets and notices. To make information on service changes accessible to blind service users, the new Fastrack website³⁰ has been designed to work with screen reading software. During 2022-23, **Trading Standards** worked with interpreters to create videos on doorstep crime that are accessible to the deaf; developed built-in language translations on social media channels to allow residents to read content in their

²⁹ Other language translations included Polish, Pashto, Czech, Spanish, Kurdish, Sorani, Lithuanian, Tamil, Slovakian, Punjabi, Turkish, Kurdish, Albanian, Arabic, and Dari.

³⁰ The new Fastrack website is due to launch in early 2024 and has been designed to meet digital accessibility standards.

preferred language; created infographics for social media so that information could be more easily understood and placed posters with information from the doorstep crime digital campaign in local areas of interest. The team also continued to conduct regular checks of their website pages and social media captions to ensure plain English was used. In the summer of 2022 **Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS)** developed and printed new leaflets to promote their service, including an easy read version and a version in Ukrainian. In addition, one warden began British Sign Language (BSL) training to assist in their support to residents with additional needs.

- 5.4 To support equal access to KCC **Corporate Parenting's** adoption and foster care programmes, translators and signers were provided for applicants who did not have English as a first language or had a significant hearing impairment. The **Strengthening Independence Service** has a range of measures in place to ensure information is accessible, including use of Easy Read, BSL, Language Line³¹, Dragon Dictate, communication passports³² and Makaton³³. The **i-THRIVE and Participation** team ensured that all Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) election materials were produced using 'Widgit Communicate: In Print'³⁴, to enable more clear and effective communication with young people with additional needs due to age, disability or language. To ensure accessibility and clear communication, **Integrated Children's Services** utilise interpreters and translation services across areas of delivery where parents do not have English as a first language, to ensure that families can understand information written about them and the issues and concerns that are raised. In particular, BSL interpreters and a deaf relay were used by the service to support a family who are deaf and also have additional learning needs.
- 5.5 KCC's **Reception and Safe Care Service** (RSCS) provides accommodation and support to newly arrived Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in Kent. During 2022-23, the outcomes of the service's March 2022 Child Outcome Analysis were implemented, which included the provision of more pictorial and translated information on the walls at reception centres. Interpreters are used with children throughout their experience with the service, explaining information provided and attending each Looked After Child's review and weekly residents' meetings. A video to explain the National Transfer Scheme to children was

³¹ Language Line is a telephone interpreting service that connects individuals who do not share a common language via telephone.

³² Communication Passports present key information about people with communication difficulties who cannot easily speak for themselves.

³³ Makaton is a communication tool with speech, signs, and symbols to support communication for people with disabilities or learning disabilities.

³⁴ This is an accessible software which enables text to be directly linked with symbols in a wordbank.

produced in six languages, with two additional videos produced since, explaining the role of professionals that children may encounter on their care journey, and the educational options available in the UK. In March 2022, a specialist UASC Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was introduced to the service, which is the first example of its kind nationally. The specialist UASC IRO has since worked to produce the 'Best Practice in Working with Interpreters' guide which was disseminated to RSCS staff and district social workers.

Digital Accessibility

- 5.6 KCC's **Digital Accessibility Team** completes regular Digital Accessibility Audits³⁵ across the council's websites and digital systems. As of the end of 2022-23, this audit process identified that 42% of the council's websites had a fully compliant digital accessibility statement in place,³⁶ and each website met on average 21 of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) success criteria. Across the online services audited in the period, 46% were identified to be low risk, 53% were identified to be medium risk, and 1% were identified to be high risk.³⁷ In 2022-23, 35% of low risk websites were re-audited within the SLA period, 6% of medium risk websites were re-audited within the SLA period and 100% of high risk websites were re-audited within the SLA period.³⁸ In 2022-23, the team have worked to develop a robust road plan to target areas for improvement, with initial changes to be made in 2023-24.
- 5.7 The planned changes include revision of the audit template to make outcomes clearer and increase content owner buy-in, and the adoption of a new approach to audits, whereby the detail level will be adjusted to enable a greater number of audits to be completed by the team. These proposals were informed by engagement with services and a review of government guidance and other

³⁵ These look at whether accessibility statements are in place, how many of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) success criteria have been met and evaluate the overall risk profile of the digital content or website. Accessibility statements are required in order to meet accessibility regulations and document the level of accessibility across the website or app concerned, informing users of alternative routes to access where there are barriers, and providing contact details for the website owner if users identify issues.

³⁶ Where it was identified that a Digital Accessibility Statement had not been published, content owners within services were informed

³⁷ Risk ratings are used as part of the audit process in order to indicate the likelihood that any accessibility issues identified could become problematic to the website owner. To determine the risk level, the team considers how extensive any accessibility issues are, whether a compliant accessibility statement is in place and the level of visitors to the website or system.

³⁸ To manage risk and support continuous improvement of the council's digital accessibility, the team have established Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for the period of time in which websites will be re-audited, relative to their risk rating.

organisations' practices and will be underpinned by the Digital Accessibility Strategy, which began to be developed by the new Digital Accessibility Lead in the period.

- 5.8 The **Digital Accessibility Team** also provides a range of training which is regularly updated, spanning 'Accessible Social Media', 'Creating Accessible Documents' and 'Accessibility in Microsoft 365'. All three courses were well attended in 2022-23, with additional staff registering on the waitlist for future training³⁹. In addition, the team arranged a series of training courses with Kent Connects, called the 'Summer of Accessibility' for KCC colleagues and other organisations including the NHS, Kent Police and other councils. These courses received high turn-out and supported staff to improve their skills, knowledge and experience with making online services and documents more accessible. The team also held four Digital Accessibility Group meetings during 2022-23, attended by approximately twenty organisations such as the NHS, Kent Police and Kent Connects, to discuss planned training and to share good practice.
- 5.9 Whilst data suggests that the results of Digital Accessibility audits are not always actioned by content owners (and therefore an area of future focus), in many cases, KCC's services have embraced the feedback and guidance provided by the Digital Accessibility Team. Following the 2022 audit of KCC's consultation portal, **Let's Talk Kent**⁴⁰, an Accessibility Statement was developed and made available, and action taken to address 'not met' items. Work was also undertaken to improve the digital accessibility of the **Kent Academy**⁴¹ and improve the website's search function. Services also implemented and cascaded skills and information from training courses within their wider teams, with the **Library, Registrations & Archives (LRA) service** developing specific guidance for their library staff and volunteers around creating accessible social media content, adding alternative text to images, how to write accessible copy and best practice on how to film and add captions to videos.

Representing the communities we serve

- 5.10 Part of the council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) include the need to consider how it can promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between protected characteristic groups; in part, this can be delivered

³⁹ This included 90 attendees and 26 on the waitlist for Accessible Social Media, 82 attendees and 42 on the waitlist for Creating Accessible Documents and 39 attendees and 4 on the waitlist for Accessibility in Microsoft 365.

⁴⁰ Which identified the platform as medium risk, with 31 passes and 9 'not met' items.

⁴¹ The Kent Academy is a dedicated platform for the Children's and Adults' workforce to access support and resources to develop their knowledge, skills and practice

through inclusive council campaigns and communications that promote a positive narrative around equality. In 2022-23, this has included:

- **Kent Fostering's** recruitment campaigns and e-bulletins are inclusive and open to all members of the Kent community who are ready to provide a safe and loving home for our looked after children. Specific content from 2022-23 focused on supporting events such as International Women's Day, Black History Month and Pride, challenging myths about who can be a foster carer and highlighting that applicants from all communities are welcomed. The service also holds fostering information events throughout Kent which prospective foster carers can attend to meet with current foster carers and professionals; these have been well attended by individuals across the protected characteristic groups. The service also worked alongside the Fostering Ambassadors, which are made up of foster carers from different ethnic groups, who attended meetings with the Head of Service to support the review and development of policy, guidance and new services for foster carers and children.
- Similarly, **Adoption Partnership South East** worked closely with the National Adoption Strategy team, utilising their 'You can Adopt' recruitment campaigns to highlight that becoming an adopter is accessible and inclusive to all, and encourage applications from diverse protected characteristic groups and ethnicities.
- **Active Kent & Medway** produced a series of 'tackling inequalities' films to promote a positive narrative around supporting specific groups to become more active; this included Kent Wildlife Trust's [Walking for Mental Health](#), Whitstable Lawn Tennis Club's [Inclusive Tennis](#), Yo Street Zone's [Street Football](#), and Age UK Faversham & Sittingbourne's [Walking Netball](#). In its publications and campaigns, the service aims to utilise images that are reflective of our local communities and include representation for often underrepresented communities.
- In the period, **Public Health** has commissioned a branding and content team for Drug and Alcohol services to improve the information contained on the service's website and highlight the voices of underrepresented groups. This will involve insight work with women, minority ethnic groups and people with learning disabilities to understand the barriers to access for these groups.
- The new **Start for Life** web pages on Kent.gov were developed in the period. To ensure that the content produced was accessible and inclusive, the service worked with **Rainbow, Level Playing Field and the Single Parent staff group**.

Council services are accessible for everyone

Complaints & Customer Satisfaction

- 5.11 Whilst not reflective of every possible instance where KCC services or information may have been found to be inaccessible, data on equality related

complaints received in 2022-23 offers a useful temperature check for understanding how accessible the council's services and information are. Of the 5,580 complaints received in 2022-23, 180 were categorised as Equality and Regulatory, of which 64 were about equalities issues, with only 3 of these upheld and a formal apology issued. One of these complaints related to accessibility on a Public Right Of Way; as a result, additional site visits were offered to understand the impact and to seek a solution.

- 5.12 The Customer Satisfaction team also collects data on compliments received. In 2022-23, 12 compliments were received that related to the council providing support to meet needs arising from disability. These spanned across the directorates, and included how individuals' needs were understood, support in understanding forms, bus services and support provided at a Household Waste Recycling Centre.

Physical Accessibility Projects & Improvements

- 5.13 KCC's **Property team** have continued to engage AccessAble to undertake accessibility audits at over 300 corporate landlord freehold sites and over 300 KCC maintained school sites in 2022-23. As part of the audit process, AccessAble produce detailed Access Guides which provide details of what accessibility is like across KCC sites, these guides are available via the following [link](#). The team has also continued to deliver the School Accessibility Initiative (SAI) which delivers projects to make adaptations for children with accessibility needs or requirements. During 2022-23, 15 projects were due to be completed⁴².
- 5.14 In addition to ensuring that all **Active Kent and Medway (AKM)** events during 2022-23 were held at accessible venues and that attendees were asked about any additional support requirements ahead of the events, the service introduced a number of physical accessibility improvements. This included the introduction of a pool hoist at Folkestone Sports Centre and a funding award for provision of an accessible changing area and toilet at Gravesend Sailing Club in February 2023. The **Active Travel Service** purchased adapted trikes in order to make their adult cycle training provision more inclusive and accessible. In 2022-23, the **Environment & Circular Economy service** conducted a trial of a new feature as part of the **Household Waste and Recycling Centre** booking system, which enabled customers to request on-site assistance where they had additional needs arising from age, disability, pregnancy, or other protected characteristics.

⁴² These projects were delivered at the following school sites: Aylesham Primary School, Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School, Ditton Infant School, Eythorne Elvington Community PS, The Marsh Academy, New Ash Green Primary School, Palmarsh Primary School, Riverview Infant School, Senacre Wood Primary School, St Gregorys Catholic School, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe Primary School, Staplehurst School, The Churchill School, The Archbishop's School and Oakley School.

This trial was introduced as a result of consultation responses which identified that certain groups experienced challenges when lifting waste into containers. Following the successful trial period, this process has been retained, with approximately 8% of customers requesting additional assistance at the time of booking during the period.

- 5.15 During 2022-23, the **Country Parks (CP)** service continued to introduce further physical accessibility improvements across its sites. The new improvements that have been made are set out in the table below. Full accessibility information is available for each of the parks on kent.gov.

Physical Accessibility Improvement:	Lullingstone	Brockhill	Manor	Shorne Woods
Installation of Changing Places accessible toilets	✓	✓		
Installation of accessible rain shelters	✓		✓	
Installation of inclusive play areas (including ability swing and wheelchair roundabout)				✓
Resurfacing paths for wheelchair access	✓	✓		
Replacement of old kissing gates and chicane barriers with accessible versions to enable tramper ⁴³ and pushchair access.	✓			
Purchase of a tramper	✓			
Production of a printed access leaflet.				✓

Figure 7: New Physical Accessibility Improvements introduced to Country Parks in 2022-23

- 5.16 During 2022-23, **Public Health** undertook accessibility audits of all of KCC's Drug and Alcohol Hubs, providing additional budget to implement relevant accessibility improvements/actions identified in the audit process. A review of the Substance Misuse building was carried out in support of recommendations with regard to accessibility for disabled individuals. The service has also worked with district, borough and city councils, the Voluntary and Community Sector, health

⁴³ Trampers are mobility scooters designed for safe and comfortable use on all-terrains.

colleagues and other partners to share and extend knowledge locally; this has included work with One You⁴⁴, to extend the service's reach into the high street, by sharing buildings that are directly accessible to the public.

Inclusive Services & Addressing Invisible Barriers

- 5.17 Part of our aspirations under this Equality Objective involve looking at what we mean by accessibility more broadly, to understand the full extent of barriers to access experienced by people with all manner of protected characteristics, many of which could be invisible, hidden or intangible. Activity undertaken related to this will be explored under this category of Inclusive Services & Addressing Invisible Barriers.
- 5.18 Hypertension Heroes was developed in collaboration with system partners⁴⁵ as a community health project to address Blood Pressure management and target specific ethnic minority groups. To achieve this, the project focused on community engagement, personalisation and addressing health inequalities, which involved running specific sessions regarding health inequalities associated with ethnicity with 'Health Champions' who target groups and communities with the poorest health outcomes.
- 5.19 The Gypsy, Roma Traveller Needs Assessment was undertaken by **Public Health** to quantify the scale of health needs for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities in Kent. The Needs Assessment identified the following recommendations: development of a consistent approach to ethnicity data collection for the community; addressing barriers to primary care; investment in developing trust and culturally competent services and consideration of developing or commissioning accessible and appropriate resources for the community to raise awareness of disease, symptoms, prevention and the available health services. In October 2022, the **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller service**⁴⁶ made professional referrals to the Household Energy Fund which provided residents with vouchers towards their energy usage, as they were not eligible for the discount that all house dwellers received. This activity was then repeated when there was another round of funding available in March 2023.
- 5.20 Our **Integrated Children's Services** Early Help Workers have provided specific support for LGBTQ+ young people, linking to local LGBTQ+ groups, providing emotional well-being support to Trans young people, and developing case

⁴⁴ The One You service promotes and provides advice on small lifestyle changes that can be made in support of improved health and wellbeing.

⁴⁵ Including Kent and Medway Public Health, the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Integrated Care Board.

⁴⁶ This service is dedicated to providing landlord support and advice to the approximately 135 families from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities living on KCC owned sites.

recording to represent preferred pronouns and names. All staff have also attended additional training for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), enabling them to develop the knowledge to facilitate meaningful conversations with multi-agency partners regarding inclusion. The **Adolescents & Open Access** service has also delivered groups to meet the needs of specific user groups, including LGBTQ+, Roma, Afghan, neurodiverse and SEND young people who may struggle to attend other youth groups.

- 5.21 Due to the vulnerability of newly arrived Albanian young people, a series of scoping meetings were organised by the **Reception and Safe Care Service (RSCS)** with social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), and Barnardos Independent Child Trafficking Guardians (ICTGs). ICTGs delivered face-to-face training for social workers, reception centre staff and foster carers, and worked jointly with social workers, including attending home visits.
- 5.22 Libraries, Registrations & Archives (LRA) have introduced a range of activities to ensure their services are as inclusive and accessible to as many people as possible; during 2022-23, this included:
- Following an enquiry from a deaf individual in September 2022, the service developed a reading group for British Sign Language (BSL) signers, which began at Canterbury Library in December 2022 and meets monthly. This has been supported by promotion with partners, via accessible posters designed with a deaf volunteer, and on social media, including use of a video recorded with volunteers and members, which is available on YouTube.
 - The service has supported and promoted inclusive calendar events at libraries and online, including Black History Month, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month, LGBT+ History Month, Refugee Week, Disability Pride Month, Dementia Action Week and religious festivals.
 - To support promotion of the Summer Reading Challenge, targeted marketing was introduced with groups such as Autism South East⁴⁷ via social media.
 - As part of the LRA Cost of Living campaign, multi-sensory Bag Books were provided for people with severe, profound or multiple learning disabilities and Pictures to Share titles were provided to help support those living with dementia.

Consultation

- 5.23 When considering the accessibility of KCC consultations, two key aspects have been considered – 1) how accessible participation was, and 2) how communications and advertising about the consultation were used to maximise

⁴⁷ Which offers support to parents with autism

engagement from those who might be affected, including underrepresented groups. Of the 17 consultations held during 2022-23, 12 were advertised both digitally and physically. Whilst the remaining 5 were advertised solely via digital methods, these were primarily aimed at stakeholder organisations. To promote both the accessibility of participation and the inclusivity of engagement and advertising for consultations, there are a range of standard measures in place.⁴⁸ The following examples demonstrate how specific consultations from the period attempted to improve accessibility and engagement.

Gypsy and Traveller Site Pitch Allocations Policy

- 5.24 Prior to consultation, the service engaged with Friends, Families and Travellers⁴⁹, for their views on the draft policy and the consultation process. To make participation more accessible to those who have low literacy levels or do not wish to read consultation documents, videos summarising the consultation process and the changes to the policy were provided in addition to an audio version of the consultation document and face-to-face drop-in sessions held at libraries close to the KCC sites. Site Managers also visited KCC sites to explain the proposals, provide hard copies of consultation materials where required, and to help residents participate. To promote and encourage engagement, the service sent text messages to residents at the launch of the consultation, and as a reminder to participate toward the end of the consultation period. Site Managers identified potential site residents with adult children who may be future applicants and therefore impacted by the proposals and made sure that they were aware of the consultation and how they could be impacted by any proposed changes.

Community Services Consultation

- 5.25 To make participation as accessible as possible, feedback was welcomed in a range of formats such as videos, notes from group discussions and hard copies of the consultation questionnaire, with phone calls made to those impacted by proposals for 'Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities' in order to gather feedback verbally or through an Easy Read summary and questionnaire. Leaflets promoting the consultation were also translated into

⁴⁸ To support the accessibility of participation, word versions, hard copies, translations and alternative formats of documents and questionnaires can be made available. In order to promote inclusion and engagement in consultations, consulting services will usually email their stakeholder list to invite their participation and promotion of the consultation within their networks. This typically includes relevant Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations that represent or work with specific protected characteristic groups that the service wishes to engage.

⁴⁹ Friends Families and Travellers is a national charity that works on behalf of all Gypsies, Travellers and Roma.

Slovak, Polish, and Punjabi and included explanation of the consultation and how to access more information in their language. To increase engagement, 24 in-person drop-in events were held across the county in children's centres and libraries, and youth workers took engagement packs to the young people they supported for feedback. During the consultation it was identified that there was a low response from male parents/carers; as a result, social media advertising was used to target these groups with imagery of male parents/carers.

Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

- 5.26 During pre-consultation, the Fair Access Service reviewed the consultation materials and policy with Kent Parent and Carers Together (PACT)⁵⁰ and developed a parental engagement strategy. An article was featured in KCC's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) e-newsletter to reach parents and guardians of SEND young people in addition to posters displayed in Libraries and Gateways across Kent and on buses to reach pupils travelling to school. During the consultation period, the Head of Fair Access presented on Home to School transport at Kent Youth County Council (KYCC). A number of young people then took part in a focus group with the Head of Fair Access to discuss their thoughts in more detail, including suggestions for further changes, the limitations of legislation, and methodologies to encourage more young people to participate in the consultation.

Digital Exclusion

Consideration and mitigation of Digital Exclusion

- 5.27 At present, the primary mechanism to monitor the consideration of digital exclusion in the delivery of information and services is through review of the equality analysis for digital projects or services via the EqlA App. Whilst there is a potential knowledge gap for services that are not new and have existed for some time, this offers a useful starting point. Of the 139 EqlAs that were published in 2022-23, 17 concerned services that would be delivered, at least in part, digitally. For fourteen of these, physical options were available, or potential methodologies to mitigate digital exclusion were identified. Whilst this was not the case for three, considering the activities concerned, it is unlikely that significant negative impacts would arise for people who are digitally excluded as a result.
- 5.28 Data collected from services on their 2022-23 activity that contributed to this Equality Objective has further evidenced that consideration of digital exclusion and how it could be mitigated is already embedded within service delivery across the council, with most services who reported information having at least one

⁵⁰ A forum for parents and carers of children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) within the Kent local authority.

example of how such considerations have been made. This has included provision of physical options for accessing information and services; physical marketing and advertising methods and the introduction of digital inclusion initiatives to allow individuals to access equipment or improve their digital skills. Some examples include:

- **Active Kent and Medway** worked with partners to produce Active at Home booklets and provide digital skills workshops.
- **Trading Standards** offered an email alternative for the weekly roundup of scam alerts available on social media as standard. Many of Kent's parish councils are signed up to this and print copies for their notice boards.
- As an alternative to the **Household Waste and Recycling Centre** booking system, customers can telephone to make a booking and request additional assistance if required.
- The **Corporate Parenting service** ran monthly consultation sessions for families interested in becoming adopters and regular support groups for Kent Foster carers. These groups enable discussion and information sharing for individuals who struggle to access online information.
- The **i-THRIVE and Participation** service offered in-person events every month and during school holidays, as well as facilitating face-to-face sessions for young people who find it more difficult to engage digitally.

5.29 To mitigate the potential impacts of digital exclusion, the **LRA service** introduced Wifi printing to allow customers to print documents using their own devices, provided a plain text option for member newsletters and uploaded digital information on available services to Library Self Service machines. In addition, a Ministry of Defence project was introduced in July 2022, providing laptops for prisoners to use in-cell to develop their digital skills and make connections with the library and request items or other services. As a result, the library delivered requested stock to men who are disabled or physically unable to get to the library, or self-secluding, including one individual who uses a wheelchair and was provided with books on chair-based exercises.

Digital Inclusion Initiatives

5.30 **Digital Kent** have delivered projects and schemes to support residents to become more digitally included, working in partnership with NHS Kent and Medway and NHS Health Education England to tackle health inequalities. This included:

- Digital Champions Network – one of the largest networks of digital champions in the country with over 700 champions recruited. The Network has a diverse background of people, and can speak over 40 different languages.

- Digital Support & Skills – providing Digital Hubs and support sessions in community settings to individuals who are digitally excluded, helping them to apply for or find information for public services online.
- Hardware Access – providing 2-in-1 laptops to residents that are digitally excluded.
- Connectivity Access – providing connectivity solutions for a time-limited period (usually 12 months) to those that cannot afford to stay online through their cellular data or broadband.

5.31 In addition, **North West Kent Countryside Partnership** delivered a digital inclusion project in partnership with Age UK, delivering workshops to older people with mobility issues, which allowed them to access nature through wildlife cameras, webcams, online maps, wildlife apps and more. **Virtual School Kent** provided and set-up laptops for KCC’s Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who are living in the community and being supported by the **Reception and Safe Care Service** (RSCS), with Wifi provided by Ready Homes and district teams providing basic mobile phones for young people who do not have one.

Conclusion & Next Steps

5.32 Overall, review of performance against this Equality Objective paints a positive picture, which we would hope to maintain and build upon over the lifetime of these objectives. Looking at accessible information, provision of translations and alternative formats are already being utilised across many of our services as standard; we have established a benchmark for performance against digital accessibility which will be supported by a robust road map for improvement and a number of services have made a real effort to promote a positive narrative of equality, diversity and inclusion in their communications and materials about services. With regard to services, complaints and compliments demonstrate that a number of people with disabilities felt considered and supported, and that where something was found to be inaccessible, action was taken by the service. This was supported by physical accessibility improvements across buildings, country parks and within service provision; efforts to make specific consultations as accessible to impacted groups as possible and the introduction of specialised provision for certain groups that may experience intangible or hidden barriers to access. Looking ahead, a priority will be highlighting areas of best practice and identifying how these can be used to inform and improve future service developments over the next year. Despite this being the first year in which digital exclusion was specifically considered, it is evident that it is largely embedded within services’ equality analysis and supported by a number of projects and initiatives to promote digital inclusion. This will continue to be monitored to ensure that this is maintained into the future.

6. Work with our strategic partnerships to understand and support the diverse needs of our communities.

- 6.1 This Equality Objective was developed as a legacy of KCC's effective and collaborative partnership working during the pandemic, in order to maintain and improve upon the opportunities that our strategic partnerships provide for achieving equality outcomes. As part of our approach to this objective, we intend to develop a mechanism to understand the full scale of the council's strategic partnerships and the positive equality outcomes they could support or have achieved. This work will be a key priority for 2023-24, to enable more detailed reporting within subsequent Annual Equality & Diversity reports. It is intended that this will enable us to gain a greater understanding of the extent to which KCC's Strategic Partnerships have an equalities focus or priority; the proportion that have developed or contributed to an EqIA, and where they have enabled data sharing, engagement opportunities, equalities achievements, or supported diversity and inclusion. This year's report will therefore provide an insight into the 2022-23 activities of a number of our Strategic Partnerships⁵¹, as well as the equalities impacts of some of the council's more informal partnership working during the period.

Work with Strategic Partnerships

Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP)

- 6.2 In September 2022 the **Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP)** jointly delivered a webinar with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board for multi-agency frontline professionals regarding carers. This included a focus on age and disability, as the individuals in the Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) presented were elderly and suffering with dementia. Dr Hannah Bows was a guest speaker at the event and highlighted the assumptions frequently made around domestic abuse and older people, which is often misunderstood or dismissed. A further webinar was held in November 2022 regarding cultural competency. This focused on two published DHRs, [Tamana](#) and [Simran](#), and shared lessons around the intersection of race, religion, age, sex and culture, and how this influenced agency and individual responses in these cases, with a view to inform and improve how support is delivered across partners' services in the future.

⁵¹ For the purposes of this report, Strategic Partnerships have been defined as an organised and managed board or group of partners, including KCC and other organisations from public, private and/or VCSE sectors, which has a Terms of Reference and meets at least once a year.

6.3 In March 2023, KCSP delivered a Conference on the topic of Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) attended by over 250 people from a variety of partner agencies as well as Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector organisations. The aim of the conference was to raise awareness and share good practice covering a range of topics including the Trauma Effect of VAWG, Misogyny and Incels⁵², and the Active Bystander programme⁵³. Following the event, a resource pack was disseminated to delegates including information about available commissioned services in Kent, bite size videos about VAWG, along with reports and partner information. The feedback from the conference was very positive with 90% of respondents rating it as excellent or very good, and 98% of respondents rating it as excellent, very good or good. Respondents to the post-conference survey stated they would share details with colleagues, do additional research and undertake further training.

6.4 The KCSP also used some of the Crime Reduction Grant Funding provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner in support of the Hate Crime Forum to produce Kent Hate Crime posters in multiple languages as well as 2 banners for use at events.

Integrated Care System (ICS) Partnership

6.5 During 2022-23, the interim Integrated Care System (ICS) strategy was developed by partners in Kent and Medway. This was intended to be a system-led strategy for all, to support work to improve health, care and wellbeing by ICS partners and was supported by an EqIA completed by the NHS in collaboration with partners. Over the course of 2023-24, a process of engagement on the strategy has been undertaken to inform a final version for publication in December 2023.

6.6 Addressing health inequalities is a key priority/driver for the ICS, and as such, much of the partnership's work has focused around identifying and addressing uneven health outcomes, such as the increased chance of serious injury or death arising from pregnancy/maternity for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic women.

⁵² Incel stands for 'involuntary celibate', meaning people who are unable to get a romantic or sexual partner despite wanting one. People who subscribe to this ideology are usually part of online subcultures that are characterised by misogyny, misanthropy and hostility to women (and men) who are sexually active.

⁵³ The Active Bystander Programme supports colleagues to become active bystanders who feel confident to take an early intervention approach to prevent negative behaviours from escalating.

Work across the system has been divided into three groups: inequalities, prevention and population health. Over the following year, each group will work to develop action plans. As the ICS becomes further established, KCC's role within the partnership will develop and enable further progress under this Equality Objective.

Partnership Working

- 6.7 Within the **PRU⁵⁴, Inclusion and Attendance Service (PIAS)**, multi-agency work was undertaken with schools, PRUs and other strategic partners to use shared data on interventions for attendance, permanent exclusions, suspensions, managed moves, and directions off site to highlight inequalities occurring with respect to sex and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), to then review practice and impact in these areas.
- 6.8 **Adoption Partnership South East** worked closely with organisations such as New Family Social, CoramBAAF, Adoption UK and Parents And Children Together (PACT)⁵⁵ to ensure that the service was informed on current research on the diverse needs of different protected characteristic groups, including Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, and the LGBTQ+ community.
- 6.9 In addition to working with people and partners across the county in the development of the Move Together Strategy, **Active Kent and Medway** have implemented a number of actions with partners to achieve positive equality outcomes. This included asking all funded partners to provide participant demographics⁵⁶; sharing equality data with Sport England, including participant data regarding disability and race, and working with School Games Organisers based in each district, to inform targeting of schools both by data, and by local knowledge of schools that do not regularly engage in district level opportunities and programmes.
- 6.10 The **Adolescents & Open Access** team worked with Public Health, Health visiting and midwifery in the development of the Kent Communities and Family Hub consultation EqlAs, which were informed by data shared by partners. The team has continued to work with midwifery through the Health Inequalities Board to develop partnership work to address disparity in outcomes for specific community groups and localised areas. The team also worked closely with Canterbury City Council to deliver direct support services to Afghan nationals

⁵⁴ Pupil Referral Units

⁵⁵ New Family Social is a UK charity led by LGBTQ+ adopters and foster carers, CoramBAAF is a membership organisation for professionals working across adoption, fostering and kinship care, Adoption UK is a charity that supports adoption.

⁵⁶ Previously, some partners did not collect this data.

living in local hotels.

- 6.11 **Public Health** is in a legal partnership with Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust (KCHFT) who deliver a number of public health services. In early 2023, KCHFT developed a new programme of Health Equity Audits to support improved understanding and targeting of Public Health services. This will be used by KCC to support a programme of service transformation. The first audit was an in-depth equity profile of School Health Services, with an action plan developed in response to potential issues identified. In addition, as members of the Kent and Medway Turning the Tide Oversight Board⁵⁷, a dashboard was developed to identify gaps in need and as a result, the priority actions related to Population Health inequality. Analysis of the dashboard data identified several priorities for further work, including the identification of disproportionality of hypertension in the ethnic minority community, which led to the project detailed in **5.18**.

Conclusion & Next Steps

- 6.12 There is evidence that work has taken place, both within Strategic Partnerships and with more informal partnerships to support the delivery of this Equality Objective. However, review of what has taken place over 2022-23 indicates that this has leant toward using partnership working to understand the diverse needs of our communities. It is hoped that as this improved understanding becomes embedded and dispersed, this will begin to have an actual impact on how the diverse needs of our communities are physically met. Finally, a key focus for the next year will be working to establish the full extent of the council's Strategic Partnerships in order to better understand our activity and progress with this Equality Objective and identify any potential opportunities to be explored.

⁵⁷ The Turning the Tide Transformation Oversight Board was established by the Kent and Medway Integrated Care System (ICS) to drive the implementation of a strategy intended to address the impact Covid-19 is having on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic populations and workforce.

7. Continue to be an inclusive employer which provides fair, open and equitable access to career progression and a trusted environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour.

7.1 This is the first of the two equality objectives that focus on activity and progress across equality, diversity and inclusion for the council's workforce. As part of our approach to this Equality Objective, we have begun with an analysis of metrics and activity that contribute to a picture of the council's inclusivity as a whole, many of which underpin the ambitions of our **2022-27 People Strategy** and the conclusions of the **KCC Inclusivity Indicator**. This is then supported by findings related to our learning and development offer as an indication of the inclusivity of career progression opportunities. Finally, we have explored data around incidents, discriminatory behaviour and sickness absence to determine our progress in maintaining a trusted working environment for our staff.

An inclusive employer

People Strategy 2022-27

7.2 The People Strategy 2022-2027 sets out KCC's strategic statement of intent and aspiration for KCC as an employer, and fundamentally underpins all KCC activity to ensure we continue to be an inclusive and diverse employer. The strategy includes four overarching themes for achieving these ambitions, and is monitored by an annual progress report, drawing on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and detailed management information. Key areas of success noted for 2022-23 included employee support for cost-of-living concerns; awareness raising about menopause; investment in developing leadership and management; inclusive culture development; development of career pathways into KCC for people aged 16-25 and development of KCC's recruitment website.

Inclusivity Indicator

7.3 The **Inclusivity Indicator**⁵⁸ was introduced in 2019 to support organisational understanding of what we mean by inclusion, determine how staff experience the organisation, and to provide a robust evidence base with which to drive continuous improvement. **Inclusivity Indicator** analysis for 2022-23 concluded that the council had continued to improve as a diverse and inclusive employer, with monitoring mechanisms in place to track and identify opportunities for improvement. Compared to the previous year, KCC remained largely consistent,

⁵⁸ The Inclusivity Indicator acts as a methodology to synthesise KCC workforce data from a variety of sources in order to establish how inclusive KCC is an employer and drive continuous improvement.

with a high proportion of staff continuing to respond positively in terms of overall feelings of inclusion and fair treatment, despite some difference in experience for some minority groups of staff. These findings are supported by the following detailed analysis of the individual measures that sit within the Inclusivity Indicator and key activity undertaken in the period in support of workforce inclusivity.

Total Contribution Pay (TCP)

- 7.4 TCP ratings are important as they can have a direct impact on how valued staff feel, and also on their feelings about staying at, or leaving the organisation. Comparison of the awards between those who share a particular protected characteristic and those who do not can also potentially identify areas for improvement in terms of inclusivity, whether this be in supporting certain groups to perform at their best, working to develop a more inclusive workplace culture, in the application of ratings by managers taking into account individuals' ability to perform, or addressing inequality. Overall, an analysis of the 2022-23 TCP ratings demonstrates that whilst there was improvement in some areas, there are still some areas of disparity, which have increased in the period for LGBTQ+ employees, younger and older employees (aged under 25 and over 65), and disabled employees.

Gender Pay Gap

- 7.5 Both KCC's mean and median Gender Pay Gap for 2022 have fallen compared to 2021 and continue to be less than the national average.⁵⁹ Whilst it is positive that the pay gap is continuing to narrow, the remaining gap can be explained by the higher proportion of men in the upper middle and upper pay quartiles, although there is a higher proportion of women in all quartiles. Looking at the Gender Pay Gap information with regard to bonuses, whilst the proportion of both male and female employees who receive a bonus is falling, the gender pay gap between male and female staff that receive a bonus has increased.⁶⁰ The full report is available here: [KCC 2022-23 Gender Pay Gap Report](#).
- 7.6 In acknowledgement that other protected characteristic groups experience inequality in the workplace, the council has an aspiration to widen its pay gap analysis to other protected characteristics. Initial investigations have begun to explore the possibility of completing this analysis for disability and ethnicity,

⁵⁹ The gender pay gap (2022) for KCC is below the national average, 11.4% v 14.9% respectively for the mean. It is also lower than the figure for last year which stood at 12.2%. The median figure has also reduced to 12.6% from 18.0% previously.

⁶⁰ KCC's mean gender bonus pay gap for 2022-23 was 21.4% and the median was 28.6%. KCC's mean gender bonus pay gap for 2021-22 was 5.8% and the median was 16.7%. In 2022-23, the proportion of male employees in KCC receiving a bonus was 7.6% and the proportion of female employees receiving a bonus was 4.0%.

however the usefulness of this is dependent on first improving declaration rates of equality data. This will continue to be a focus for the future.

2022 Staff Survey

- 7.7 Overall response to the question of **'Inclusion and Fair Treatment'** in the 2022 Staff Survey remained positive, with 82.0% staff responding positively. However, disabled staff answered less positively to the topic than non-disabled staff. There was a small decline in the level of positive response to questions about whether employees believed positive action would be taken in response to their individual needs and personal circumstances, and how able employees felt to discuss their individual needs and personal circumstances. Whilst still minimal, where questions related to individual needs, this decline was slightly greater than questions related to personal circumstances. Response to questions regarding 'my manager' remained positive at 72.9%, which is a slight increase on the previous year. This suggests that whilst the general picture for all staff was positive, due to the lower level of positive response from disabled staff, the council needs to continue to promote disability inclusion. In addition, 2022 Staff Survey data shows that more work needs to be done to ensure staff feel that their individual needs will be met, and that they feel comfortable to discuss them.

Workplace Adjustments

- 7.8 In 2022-23, a new methodology for the collection of information on workplace adjustments was rolled out to make it easier for employees to be supported with adjustments and to improve the accuracy of the council's data. As a result of this change, there was an 11% increase in the proportion of staff providing their data⁶¹; an 8% increase in the number of staff reporting that they had adjustments in place, and a 19.6% increase in the total number of adjustments reported, compared with 2021-22. This is a positive indicator for the council's inclusivity. The increase in workplace adjustments can be seen largely in the uptake of flexible working patterns and absence/leave, which may be explained by the change in working arrangements across the organisation and/or due to the changing needs of employees. Looking at the data on adjustment types recorded, there has also been a shift toward physical equipment adjustments.⁶²
- 7.9 Data on the disability categories reported across the adjustments recorded for 2022-23 saw an increase across all categories except for Non-Visible disability, which fell by 136 compared to 2021-22. Physical Disability continued to be the

⁶¹ Including nil return for adjustments in place.

⁶² In December 2022, the top two adjustment types made remained the same as the previous year, with 523 adjustments made for Flexible Working Patterns and 278 adjustments made for Chairs (including specialist chairs). The number of adjustments for Computer Equipment (Hardware) has overtaken Absence/Leave in 2022, becoming the third largest adjustment type in the period.

most frequently reported disability category for adjustments. This information is used to understand the changing needs of our workforce and inform how these can be better supported, for example through the neurodiversity awareness raising work which began in 2022-23.

- 7.10 As of December 2022, approximately 11.4% of the workforce had an adjustment in place. Whilst it is not possible to accurately determine how many more staff might need or benefit from a workplace adjustment, considering the council's workforce profile, it seems that there are opportunities to promote and increase this proportion further. As such, there are plans to continually promote their availability via HR/OD communications. In acknowledgement that not all workplace adjustments arise from a disability and in order to support a broader range of staff needs, in 2022-23, KCC's Disability Passports were replaced by **Inclusion Passports**. The development of Inclusion Passports was supported by engagement with **staff groups**, to obtain feedback on the types of questions asked, the language, style, format and content of the documents. Thus far, this has resulted in only a small increase in the number of Inclusion Passports in place, however these will continue to be promoted, alongside opportunities to better understand how they are being used by staff. Despite this, there is evidence to suggest that staff are utilising adjustments for a broader range of needs than disability alone, as for 210 of the adjustments reported in 2022, no disability was recorded.

Policy Framework

- 7.11 KCC continually looks to improve the policies, practices and guidance documents that are in place to support staff, meet their individual needs and achieve their best at work. Two policies were refreshed in 2022-23 - the Whistleblowing Policy, and the Resolution Policy; these were reviewed as part of our review cycle to ensure that they continued to meet the changing needs of the organisation and its employees, values and culture. An additional nine guidance documents were also updated, spanning Reasonable Adjustments, Inclusion Passports, Shared Parental Leave, Drugs & Alcohol Policy, Positive Attendance Management and Case Management. During 2022-23, work was also started to review and increase awareness of disability resources and support, particularly around neurodiversity. In addition, work began to develop policy changes in order to reflect the council's position on IVF.

Building Inclusive Cultures

- 7.12 A 9-month pilot of a new reverse mentoring programme for Building Inclusive Cultures was delivered, with participants from KCC **staff groups** as mentors and senior managers at KR15 and above as mentees. This aimed to share different perspectives based on diverse backgrounds and explore how we can better support our work and our people, particularly for KCC's disabled colleagues due

to the evident difference of experience demonstrated through the 2022 Staff Survey results. Further development to support middle managers with learning on equality and inclusion has taken place, with the roll out of more than 28 cohorts of Developing Inclusive Management practice workshops to 696 attendees since January 2021. Following the reverse mentoring programme there are plans to set up of a community of practice to continue the discussion and work within directorates on inclusion.

Communications and Engagement

- 7.13 The engagement plan continued to mark celebration events in support of our strategic priorities for diversity and inclusion such as Black History Month and Race Equality week, Pride Month, World Mental Health Day and Mental Health Awareness Week, International Day of People with Disabilities and Menopause awareness, which included signposting to webinars and events. External speakers were brought in to lead events in support of Pride and Black History Month. KCC also became a White Ribbon accredited employer and promoted resources as part of 16 days of action on Domestic Abuse.
- 7.14 The development of the new KNet in the period involved the migration of 644 pages and 3,726 documents and an update of thousands of links to ensure a well-structured and compliant system is in place for staff to share and access information. To support deaf inclusion, some of the important KNet pages have been translated into British Sign Language to help our staff access the information they need to work or to support their wellbeing. This work was undertaken with sensory services in order to ensure the right information was prioritised in the right way. Managers were made aware of the BSL landing page to signpost colleagues as required.

Staff Groups

- 7.15 As of March 2023, KCC has six staff groups, these are: Level Playing Field (disabled staff and carers), Staff Ethnic Diversity Forum, Rainbow (LGBTQ+ staff), Aspire (staff aged 30 and under), Mental Health Support Network and Single Parent Staff Group (SPSG), which was established in March 2023⁶³. SPSG has already been able to comment/feedback on a number of both internal and external facing projects across the council, including Guidance for managers – Neurodiversity in the Workplace, and support for services in the development of the Domestic Abuse strategy and Father Inclusive Guidance. Our staff groups contribute to all three aspects of this Equality Objective, in providing a safe space for their members to discuss any issues; in providing support and development

⁶³ Whilst not formally established for much of 2022-23, SPF had already begun meeting in the period; themes of conversation from these meetings have informed the development of their action plan.

opportunities to their members, and in facilitating engagement across the council's services, providing feedback on equality issues and ensuring the employee voice is heard.

- 7.16 In support of the important role that staff groups play, the strategy for staff groups was reviewed by CMT during 2022-23. As a result, allocated time to conduct staff group role activities was introduced for specific roles within staff groups, and a Staff Group Guide was developed, which has since been applied in the formation of Single Parent Staff Group. Open door sessions with CMT were introduced to supplement existing escalation routes for issues identified by staff groups and are due to continue to take place at regular intervals going forward. HR/OD are supporting the delivery of the commitments made by CMT at the first open door, held with Aspire. A Safe Space workshop between CMT and Level Playing Field has also been planned, in order to understand the lived experiences of disabled staff in the organisation and identify improvement opportunities. This will inform part of an OD diagnostic piece of work aiming to take a different approach to challenging inclusive mindsets and behaviours of staff and managers, with an initial focus on disability and digital accessibility.

Workforce Action Plans

- 7.17 The **Disability Action Plan** captures areas of activity that are likely to have the greatest impact on workplace disability inclusion, which has been informed by data, best practice, feedback from **Level Playing Field staff group** and Staff Survey responses. The activity aims to increase declaration and representation rates of disabled staff to better reflect the communities we serve, to develop a culture where disabled staff feel confident and reach their full potential, and to involve and engage with disabled staff in decision making. Key activity in the period included the introduction of the Inclusion Passport, development of neurodiversity resources, delivery of engagement activity and awareness days, and the new approach to collating workplace adjustments.
- 7.18 Key 2022-2023 activity delivered against KCC's **Race Action Plan** included engagement for the roll-out of race equality objectives as part of the TCP process, effective from April 2023, equalities analysis of TCP ratings and exploration of the potential to develop a race pay gap analysis. Future areas of focus will include strengthening of the staff induction, and continuing small and large scale conversations about race via Challenger and T200. In support of CMT's Race Action plan, Adult Social Care (ASC) have continued to take part in a **Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SCWRES)**. In early 2022, this involved the development of the [SCWRES action plan](#) which was published on Kent.gov in May 2022. This spans areas such as recruitment, career progression, training and bullying, harassment and abuse and is supported by

corporate-level and directorate-level activities. Delivery of the associated actions has been supported by the WRES working group.

Fair, open, and equitable access to career progression

KCC's Learning & Development Opportunities

- 7.19 KCC's principal accredited staff training opportunities are available through use of the apprenticeship levy, which saw 224 new starts during 2022-23. The changes in the equality profile of new apprenticeship starts in 2022-23 were largely in line with the overarching themes of movement and change in the council's total workforce profile, which, overall, paints a positive picture of the inclusivity and accessibility of apprenticeships to staff from different protected characteristic groups. However, there were some areas of disparity with our workforce profile – staff aged under 25 are overrepresented amongst apprenticeship starts; whilst staff with a faith or religion and transgender staff are underrepresented.
- 7.20 Looking at the level of positive response to questions relating to '**Learning and Development**' in the **2022 Staff Survey**, this decreased slightly when compared to 2021, with 55.0% positive responses to "*KCC is committed to developing people*", and 48.8% positive responses to "*There are opportunities for me to develop my career within KCC*". Despite this, there was an increased positive response from staff aged 16-25 compared to the previous year, which is in line with the equality profile of apprenticeship starts. However, a smaller proportion of disabled staff responded positively to these questions than non-disabled staff. In 2022, two new questions were added to the '**Learning and Development**' section of the Staff Survey, related to digital skills. Both of these received a high positive response.
- 7.21 During 2022-23, **Aspire staff group** have also worked to promote career development and job opportunities to its members in support of KCC's intentions in this area. This included engagement with Kent University students to enable them to understand what working for KCC could be like for them and gain feedback on their experience. Furthermore, the staff group in collaboration with HR/OD, has continued to support participation in the Young Local Authority of the Year Award.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ The two-day competition is held annually, with the aim of enhancing the professional development of people from across the UK who are in the early stages of their careers in local government.

- 7.22 As mentioned in **4.3**, During 2022-23, KCC participated in the Employer’s Network for Equality & Inclusion (enei) Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation (TIDE).⁶⁵ Subsequently, the council received a silver TIDE award from the enei for our approach and progress on diversity and inclusion compared to other organisations. The enei’s recommendations on areas for improvement will be taken forward to support our future progress.
- 7.23 In addition to attempts to make its broader training offer as inclusive as possible, KCC also offers a range of **eLearning modules relating to equality and diversity** on its online training platform, Delta. These aim to provide all staff with the tools and knowledge to work in accordance with the council’s values and adapt their practice to principles of inclusivity, both when interacting with colleagues and members of the public. During 2022-23, these modules saw 1,149 completions, which is an increase on the previous year. Of these, there were 394 completions of ‘Introduction to Equality and Diversity’, 211 completions of ‘Care Certificate – Standard 4: Equality and Diversity’, and 159 completions of ‘Trans Awareness’. Recently, access to these modules was enhanced with the addition of the ‘Equality and Inclusion Zone’ on Delta, which allows staff to see all of the relevant modules available.

[A trusted working environment in which staff feel confident to call out discriminatory behaviour](#)

Discriminatory behaviour & Incidents

- 7.24 Whilst there was an overall decrease in the number of cases recorded on the **ER Case Management system** in 2022-23, the proportion of cases which were categorised as Resolution & Harassment increased by 3.7% compared to 2021-22. Looking at **2022 Staff Survey** responses on the likelihood that staff would report unfair treatment, whilst generally minority groups of staff reported less positively, the difference in experience was mostly minimal. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff answered that they were less likely to report compared with White staff, and disabled staff answered that they were less likely to report compared with non-disabled staff.
- 7.25 When comparing **2022 Staff Survey** responses from staff who have a certain protected characteristic with those do not, experience is relatively even across most of the protected characteristics with regard to bullying or harassment

⁶⁵ This is a benchmarking tool which evaluates an organisation’s performance with regard to diversity and inclusion, to identify the steps and actions required to support an inclusive culture. Assessment is made across a number of areas including, the workforce; strategy and plans; leadership and accountability; recruitment and attraction; training and development; employment practices; communication and engagement; and procurement. Each area is given a score identifying where performance sits on the enei’s Diversity and Inclusion Road Map. The Road Map levels are: Prepare, Mobilise, Realise, Embed, and Sustain, with Sustain being the highest level.

experienced in the twelve months prior. However, responses indicated that bullying or harassment had been experienced by greater proportions of disabled staff and LGBTQ+ staff. Whilst most groups of staff reported that the main source of harassment was received from non-employees, staff who are pregnant or have taken parental leave do not meet this trend, reporting colleagues as the main source.

- 7.26 In response to these findings, Corporate Management Team (CMT) communications in 2022-23 reinforced KCC's zero-tolerance stance toward any form of unacceptable behaviour or discrimination in the workplace, with the introduction of CMT open door sessions with **staff groups** to supplement existing escalation routes where issues do occur. This was supported by the introduction of refreshed Dignity at Work guidance and an internal campaign to promote the Expect Respect policy, to highlight the role we all play in challenging inappropriate behaviour. The Health and Safety Incident and Accident reporting form was also updated to support monitoring of bullying and harassment or abusive incidents and inform interventions where required. Work is continuing with directorates to reinforce the council's expectations around zero tolerance toward inappropriate behaviour from both staff and service users, and to inform what a refresh of the Expect Respect campaign for an external audience might look like.

Trusted working environment

- 7.27 The Staff Survey also includes questions which can contribute to our understanding of the KCC working environment more generally. In 2022, there was a high level of positive response to the statements "*I feel able to be myself at work*" (84.6% positive), "*I am treated with respect by the people that I work with*" (84.5% positive) and "*I think that KCC staff respect individual differences*" (81.2% positive), with minimal change in these areas compared to 2021. However, staff were less positive than the previous year with regard to feeling valued for the work they do and to feeling involved in decisions that affect their work. Whilst there is room for improvement, this suggests that most staff feel that KCC does offer a safe and trusted working environment that respects individual difference.
- 7.28 Trends related to staff **absence due to sickness** can also be a useful indicator of the inclusivity of the council's working environment, across a number of factors. Looking at data for 2022-23, trends for staff absence due to sickness have remained largely consistent with 2021-22. Sickness levels continue to be significantly higher for disabled staff than non-disabled staff, and female staff continue to take more sickness days than male staff proportionately. Sickness levels for White staff are only slightly higher than Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and staff who choose not to declare their ethnicity. Whilst it is difficult to draw a conclusion from this data, this will continue to be monitored as KCC

continues to support its staff and improve its understanding of the barriers and experiences of different groups of staff that may contribute to these trends.

Conclusion & Next Steps

- 7.29 Taken together, data related to the inclusivity of the council as a whole suggests an overall positive picture, with some difference in experience for disabled staff, LGBTQ+ staff and both younger and older groups of staff. There has been focused activity undertaken in the period to address this, particularly targeted toward disability inclusion via the Disability Action Plan. Whilst general inclusion work such as the Building Inclusive Cultures mentoring programme is intended to improve on this, the impact of this will need to continue to be monitored to determine if further specific action is required to improve the experience of the organisation for these groups. It is hoped that the continuing programme of CMT and staff group open doors will contribute to this, alongside wider HR/OD activity.
- 7.30 Data suggests that in the most part, our learning and development opportunities were accessible and inclusive to most groups of KCC staff and that these were particularly important to younger staff members this year. Looking ahead, it will be important to consider whether there are any barriers contributing to the difference of experience for disabled staff, staff with a faith/religion and older staff, and to continue to monitor trends for these groups.
- 7.31 Whilst the overall picture on the KCC working environment was positive, there is further work to be done to prevent cases of bullying or harassment, and to support staff where this is occurring, particularly in their interactions with the public. The impact of activity introduced to address this in 2022-23 will need to be monitored alongside the new data arising from the updated H&S Incident and Accident reporting form. Additional consideration may also need to be given to the unique experience of disabled staff.

8. Attract and retain a diverse workforce at all levels of the organisation which reflects the communities that KCC serves.

8.1 Whilst our previous set of equality objectives included a commitment around recruiting, retaining and developing a workforce that reflects the communities we serve, this Equality Objective for 2022-2026 includes an aspiration to actively promote diversity within the workforce. Therefore, in addition to comparing our 2022-23 workforce equality profile with the 2021 Census information and reviewing the staff turnover rate for each of the protected characteristics, we have also specifically considered the diversity of applicants and new hires, and action taken to improve the diversity and inclusivity of our recruitment processes.

KCC's Workforce Profile

8.2 Since publication of the 2021-22 Annual Equality & Diversity Report, the Census 2021 data has become available, enabling us to update our understanding of the county's demographic make-up. For example, the Census tells us that there has been an increased proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people, and people with a disability living in Kent. The Census has also included information on the number of LGBTQ+ people living in Kent for the first time. This has meant that, whilst the proportion of staff who are Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic increased in 2022-23, this group is now underrepresented when compared with Kent's county profile. Whilst variance with the county profile is small in some areas, there are also some larger disparities with the largest of these being in the categories of sex, disability, religion/faith and age (people aged between 16-25 or over 65). Largely, these are long-standing trends in terms of our workforce profile, and to a certain extent arise from the lower proportions of disabled people and people aged 16-25 in Kent who are economically active.

Category	Workforce Profile as of March 2023	Kent County Profile as per Census 2021	Variance
Current total number of FTE (non schools)	7,660.50	N/A	N/A
Current total FTE on grades KR6 or below ⁶⁶	3,165	N/A	N/A
% who are female	79.2%	51.3%	+27.9%

⁶⁶ Non-schools staff earning up to £23,262.

% who are Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic	8.9%	10.6%	-1.7%
% who have declared a disability	4.9%	17.9%	-13.0%
% who are LGBTQ+ (16+)	3.3%	2.7%	+0.6%
% who are transgender (16+)	0.5%	0.4%	+0.1%
% who have declared a religion/faith	45.2%	53.4%	-8.2%
% aged 16-25	8.2%	16%	-7.8%
% aged over 65	5.6%	20.4%	-14.8%

Figure 8: 2022-23 KCC Workforce Profile Comparison

8.3 Amongst KCC's leadership group⁶⁷, the proportion of female employees, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees, and disabled employees increased in 2022-23. However, there is still work to be done to continue to improve the representation of female staff and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff within this group.

Retaining a diverse workforce

8.4 The 2022-23 workforce equalities data demonstrates there was an increase in the proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic employees, disabled employees and LGBTQ+ employees, which all reached their highest point over the last four years. The proportion of employees with a faith/religion decreased very slightly, as did the proportion of employees who are transgender. This suggests that whilst our overall workforce and leadership group was not fully representative of our county profile, on the whole, the council continued to retain the diversity of its workforce over the past year.

Staff Turnover

8.5 As of March 2023, KCC's 12-month rolling turnover was at 16.0%. When comparing the turnover rate for staff across the protected characteristics, it would appear that groups which are in the minority of KCC's workforce tended to have a higher turnover rate, as did groups of staff who chose not to declare their equality information. Excluding staff who chose not to declare, the groups of staff

⁶⁷ Employees on a pay scale of KR13 or above.

with the highest turnover were staff aged 25 and under (34.5%), staff aged 65 and over (28.6%), transgender staff (28.3%), and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff (21.5%). Whilst there are a range of factors contributing to the full picture of staff desire to leave the organisation, it is interesting to note that employees aged 25 and under and 65 and over also received a lower percentage of higher TCP ratings, suggesting this could be a possible contributing factor among many for the higher turnover rate for these groups.

- 8.6 Taken with our workforce profile data, this suggests that there are a number of groups that are leaving the organisation at a higher rate than the average of 16.0%, and that therefore, our workforce diversity for 2022-23 was largely maintained by new recruits joining the organisation. To improve, key areas of focus would include:
- increasing the number of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff, disabled staff, and young staff (aged 16-25);
 - improving the overall diversity of our leadership group, and
 - introducing measures to retain staff who are disabled, aged 25 and under, aged 65 and over, transgender, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic.

Much of the activity discussed in the previous Equality Objective on inclusivity is intended to support these ambitions/outcomes.

2022 Staff Survey

- 8.7 Whilst analysis of 2022 Staff Survey responses did not identify any conclusive trends for specific protected characteristic groups around the themes of 'Plans for the future' and 'Employee Engagement' (both of which could be indicative of staff's appetite to leave the organisation), the overall findings for the organisation indicate that responses to both themes were less positive compared with 2021. The 2022 Staff Survey also captured staff comments on reasons to work for the council, and what could be done better.⁶⁸ Whilst only a small proportion of staff responded to these questions, the overall feedback suggested that there is an uneven picture about whether staff feel valued for the work they do, and that for a small proportion of staff, respect/fairness and harassment/discrimination were an issue. Any/all of these could be contributing factors to KCC's staff retention. Establishing a better understanding of why certain groups are leaving the council at a greater rate will be a priority area for the coming year; it is intended that this

⁶⁸ Looking at reasons to work for the council, the areas that received the most positive response were general support (4%) and feeling valued, appreciated and/or understood (2%). The most frequent comments about what could be done better focused around employees not feeling valued, appreciated and/or understood (5%), and a lack of respect, fairness and/or equality for all (3%), whilst 1% of respondents provided comments expressing a concern around bullying, harassment and or discrimination within the workplace.

will be supported by feedback gained from the CMT Open Doors and reverse mentoring pilot introduced in the period.

Attracting a diverse workforce

Diversity of Applicants

- 8.8 Looking at the equality information of applicants for 2022-23, there was a small increase in the proportion of applicants from most groups currently in the minority of KCC's workforce, as well as an increase in the proportion of applicants choosing not to declare their equality information. This was not the case for the level of disabled applicants, which fell by a small amount, and applicants aged 16-25, which fell more significantly. Applicant demographics were largely proportionate compared to the greater Kent profile, with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic applicants and female applicants surpassing the county profile. Disabled applicants applied in a smaller proportion compared to the county profile. This suggests that whilst KCC is successfully attracting a diverse pool of applicants to the organisation overall, there remains a need to attract more applicants that are disabled and/or aged 16-25, particularly as both of these groups were also underrepresented within KCC's 2022-23 workforce profile. It is recognised that this should be supported by work to encourage candidates to disclose where they have a disability, as some still prefer not to say. Work to achieve this had already begun in the period, as detailed in the following sections; this activity will continue to be developed over the coming year.

Attracting diverse candidates, including Disability Inclusion

- 8.9 In 2022-23, positive action was explored as a methodology to remove potential barriers in recruitment for disabled candidates and increase the number of disabled applicants. This involved engagement with a central and local government recruitment service and KCC **staff groups** on the effectiveness of specific disability recruitment websites, the use of recruitment apps and blind recruitment, and to ultimately inform the changes made. Feedback was also received from **Staff Ethnic Diversity Forum** members to support understanding of how job advertisement methods could be used to further attract diverse candidates. Following this engagement, improved guidance was developed for managers, and recruitment website content produced, to promote the reasonable adjustments that could be made in KCC's recruitment processes. In support of continuous improvement, a candidate feedback questionnaire was developed, feedback from which will further inform our understanding of the potential barriers that exist in the recruitment process, particularly for disabled applicants, including those who are neurodiverse.
- 8.10 During 2022-23 KCC's new recruitment website was launched. This was designed to be consistent with KCC's inclusive branding, incorporating the personal experiences of real KCC employees to promote KCC as an inclusive

and diverse employer. This will continue to be developed in the future, with the promotion of the council's flexible working arrangements, diversity of roles and career pathways, and further real-life stories on what it is like to work for KCC. In support of KCC's inclusive employer branding, posts on diversity and inclusion were shared during national events such as National Inclusion Week and Black History Month. Work also began to explore how outreach activity through the council's existing channels with diverse communities could be utilised to improve the diversity of applicants for KCC job opportunities; this will continue to be a priority for 2023-24.

Attracting young people

- 8.11 To further support the representation of young people amongst our workforce and attract those aged 16-25 to the organisation, a range of workforce development approaches have been introduced, tested and developed during 2022-23 to promote new entry points into KCC for this group. This includes the Kickstart and Graduate programmes which have both won awards, the availability of Social Work Degree apprenticeships and the Traineeship pilot with Kent Scientific Services. Ongoing student experience assessments will look to assess the effectiveness of different entry points for social work students, support mechanisms in place, and the overall impact of Practice education on outcomes for students.

Diversity in applicant shortlisting

- 8.12 When considering the equality profile of applicants who were shortlisted and hired in the period compared with those who applied, there were some inconsistencies across the protected characteristics. The proportion of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic hires, male hires and hires with a faith/religion fell most significantly when compared to the proportion that applied. This trend is consistent with 2021-22, and there may be many factors at play to explain this.

Improved recruitment processes

- 8.13 To improve the inclusivity of KCC's recruitment processes and positively impact our organisational culture through the values and attributes of those who are recruited to work for the council, a selection of new interview questions were introduced in the period. This included a mandatory inclusion question, a bank of values-based questions and additional specific questions for management or leadership roles. New Recruitment & Selection training was also made available on Delta⁶⁹, and was supplemented with improved guidance and information on KNet intended to support inclusivity and accessibility in recruitment. This included the induction to probation guidance, for which review remains ongoing, and the

⁶⁹ Evaluation of its impact and success will be considered in the following year's report.

recruiting manager toolkit, which highlights the need to consider standard advert wording and provide alternative contact details on job adverts to improve accessibility for disabled applicants.

- 8.14 To improve inclusivity for applicants with diverse gender identities, feedback was sought from the **Rainbow staff group** on proposed alternative wording for the pronoun question on KCC's recruitment management system. Pilots were also begun for the workforce planning tool, which, alongside other aspects, encourages managers to think about their diversity profile as part of their workforce planning. This will be fully rolled-out in 2023-24, with data obtained via the tool to support future Strategic Workforce Planning.

Conclusion & Next Steps

- 8.15 Data for 2022-23 has demonstrated that, whilst there are some disparities, KCC's workforce has remained diverse and broadly reflective of its county profile, with some protected characteristic groups reaching their highest levels within the workforce in the past few years. Despite this, it would appear that this diversity has been maintained largely as a result of new recruits to the organisation. This will require further work to understand the reasons for this, and implement action to improve retention, much of which has already begun in the period and is detailed under the previous Equality Objective on inclusivity. Monitoring this and identifying specific areas and action for improvement will be a priority for 2023-24. This is equally the case for work that was undertaken in order to attract more young people and disabled people to the organisation.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Information for 2022-23 has shown that despite this being the first year in which KCC has adopted and reported against the new Equality Objectives, many of the key principles across the new objectives have already begun to be embedded within service delivery. There is a breadth of examples of where services have harnessed equality data collection and analysis opportunities, including areas of best practice where detailed analysis was undertaken in order to inform future service delivery, and where relevant, the specific commissioning or procurement processes. In addition, this report has evidenced that significant efforts have been made across services to ensure that information and services are accessible to everyone; this has included activity to support the inclusivity of services to diverse groups who may experience 'hidden' or 'intangible barriers' to access, such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, LGBTQ+ people and people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. As noted in the 2021-22 report, consideration of digital exclusion and the potential for digital inclusion initiatives has also continued into 2022-23. Within HR/OD activity, inclusion and diversity have both continued to be promoted, with the implementation of a range of measures to improve our recruitment processes, improved support for our staff groups and targeted activity to improve disability inclusion and attract young people to the organisation.
- 9.2 However, compilation of this report has indicated that performance varies across the objectives. Our strongest area of performance is within the Equality Objective relating to the accessibility of our information and services, with a wealth of service examples provided across directorates, to the extent that not every example of good practice could be mentioned within this report. Consideration of how we could standardise the best practice approaches taken by specific teams in this area and spread learning opportunities will be a key focus looking ahead. The Equality Objective relating to equality data collection and analysis is also an area of strength and evident improvement compared to 2021-22. To support continuous improvement in this area, future work will involve maintaining and continuing to monitor compliance with the EqIA Policy; implementing learning from examples of best practice; further developing our understanding of the status of data collection and analysis and working with the Corporate Equality Group to utilise EqIA App Dashboard data to drive improvement in the quality of our equality analysis. Whilst there were excellent examples of the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion within strategic partnership working and commissioning and procurement in 2022-23, such as the outputs of the Kent Community Safety Partnership, these two Equality Objectives represent our central areas for improvement and development over the coming years as our understanding of performance has been limited by the extent of measurement mechanisms currently in place in these areas. This improvement will be

supported by the development of a Strategic Partnership register and through the development of measures within the reshaping of KCC's Commercial function, both of which will help close the knowledge gaps of our performance in these areas and support the identification of priority areas of focus to improve into the future.

- 9.3 Compilation of sections 7-8 regarding our workforce objectives have demonstrated that there is a robust evidence base in place in support of our understanding of performance in these areas. Looking ahead, our focus will be reviewing the impact of activity undertaken in the period to improve inclusivity and diversity and utilising information arising from additional measures that have been introduced in the period, such as the CMT open doors. This will support identification of any further activity required in order to address the 2022-23 workforce trends, including the prevalence of harassment from non-employees and the difference of experience of disabled staff across a number of areas.
- 9.4 Finally, it is intended that this improvement will be supported by continued work within directorates and with specific services to achieve the targeted improvements identified and to continue to embed the principles of the organisation-wide objectives across directorates and services. This will be supported by a focused session with the Corporate Equality Group (CEG), to identify the group's priorities and the actions it will take to support their delivery and achievement.

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From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance,
Corporate and Traded Services

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee 22 November 2023

Subject: Decision 23/00101 - Kent Communities Programme
Key decision

Classification: UNRESTRICTED

Future Pathway of Report: Cabinet

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This document is presented to Members in draft format, for discussion as to its further development before it is presented in final form to the Cabinet for consideration ahead of the 30 November 2023 meeting.

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons as set out in the report considered at Cabinet 'Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy and Financial Reporting' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in budgets to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends. Further use of these reserves would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in the transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, as set out below, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions, and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities programme seeks to rationalise Kent County Council's (KCC's) physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the county, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example, benefits offered by co-location of services, enhanced digital provision and outreach.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise, as far as possible, the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options are presented for consideration, informed by the consultation responses.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services and Cabinet on the proposed decision to:

- a) Consider and note the feedback from the Kent Communities Consultation on the proposals, as well as responses to the Family Hub Consultation, insofar as they are relevant to the Kent Communities proposals, alongside the amended policy and financial position set out in the report 'Securing Kent's Future;'
- b) Consider the options as set out in the decision report and confirm an option to be implemented including agreement of:
 - i. The network of buildings to be utilised to support the delivery of following services:
 - Open access youth and children services – including Public Health
 - Adults with Learning Disabilities
 - CLS – Adult Education
 - Gateways
 - ii. The decommissioning of services at those buildings which are no longer to be utilised to support the delivery of the services outlined above.
 - iii. The co-design of outreach services with partners.
- c) Approve expenditure from capital budget to enable adaptations to the agreed network of buildings in order to facilitate the co-location of multiple services;
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Directors of Children Young People & Education (CYPE), Growth Environment & Transport (GET), Deputy Chief Executives Department (DCED) and Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) to design the staffing model to support the changes as agreed in part b of the decision above, undertake the necessary staff consultation and implement any changes as a result; and
- e) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements to facilitate the implementation of the decisions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Scope of the review

- 1.1 The Kent Communities programme (KCP) has reviewed the balance of methods for delivering our community services, the relative need for the physical buildings, outreach provision and a universal digital offer. The services included within the review are our Open Access Services and our commissioned Public Health offer (subject to a concurrent report on the Family Hub model), our Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, our Adult Education (CLS) service, and our network of Gateways. The Council's network of library buildings is not part of this decision (other than with respect to co-location) and is subject to a separate review which responds to additional statutory considerations. Any requirement for a separate decision resulting from that review will be taken regarding the library network in the future, in line with our standard governance arrangements.
- 1.2 Of the services set out above neither the Gateway service, nor the Adult Education services within scope are statutory. The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities Service is not a statutory service in its own right but does constitute one of the ways in which we meet statutory requirements under the Care Act 2014, to promote individual well-being; to provide services to prevent, delay and reduce need; and to meet assessed needs for individuals and carers.
- 1.3 The Open Access/Family Hub service (subject to a concurrent decision) is not in its own right a statutory provision; however, it does include aspects that contribute towards our statutory provision to deliver universal Health Visiting services, youth services and Best Start for Life provision under the Children Act 1989 and the Childcare Act 2006.

Rationale for the review: financial issues

- 1.4 The rationale for the KCP is clear. The programme contributes to meeting the revenue savings as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). To reduce risks across our corporate estate and capital programme, the KCP reduces the Council's capital liability to the maintenance costs of such a large physical estate. Further details are given below in respect of the Council's financial position and strategy, and the Best Value statutory duty. Whilst delivering savings in line with the MTFP has been a key driver, the KCP has taken into account the usage of our current buildings within the Needs Framework (detailed at 1.6 and 3.1 – 3.8 below). By reviewing usage within the Needs Framework, it is possible to understand both demand and need for services. As set out within this paper the KCP promotes and supports the delivery of valued services through a range of methods, depending on the scale and nature of community need. The KCP achieves savings for the Council while providing the right services, in the right way for our communities.

Rationale for the review: environmental issues

- 1.5 The Council has adopted a Net Zero 2030 approach, and the KCP delivers a reduction in our physical footprint, thus reducing the KCC's carbon footprint. The changes proposed under the Kent Communities programme would need

to be considered given the financial situation, regardless of the Net Zero commitment. Whilst it is true that the primary driving factor is the requirement to achieve MTFP savings given the overarching financial context, the reduction in carbon emissions is a secondary factor.

Methodology

- 1.6 To analyse the changes which might be made to deliver the financial savings required by the Council, the reduction in carbon emissions, and their potential impact, the KCP developed a Needs Framework, which identified the differing levels of need for our services across every ward in the county. The analysis of need for our services underpins the KCP and allows for co-location of services in areas of high need and the retention of buildings to protect service delivery where most needed across the county. A full explanation of the Needs Framework is included in section 3.1 and at Appendix A.
- 1.7 There are four Critical Success Factors for the programme that have been agreed by the Strategic Reset Programme Board. These relate firstly to the financial challenges faced by the Council (which have grown since the rationale was agreed) and secondly to the Net Zero commitment. The four critical success factors are:
- Less costly estate leading to reduction in revenue costs (responds to financial challenge).
 - Reduction in pressure on the backlog maintenance budget (responds to financial challenge).
 - Reduction in carbon emissions linked to the physical estate (responds to Net Zero commitment).
 - Increased co-location sites (responds to financial challenge).

Interaction with the Family Hub Transformation

- 1.8 This report details the proposed physical locations of the Council's Open Access Children's Centres and Youth Hub (subject to a concurrent report on the Family Hub model). A separate decision proposes what the specific services delivered under a Family Hub model would be, following public consultation on the potential model. It is important to acknowledge that the Family Hub Model is being progressed at broadly the same time as the Kent Communities programme, and there is therefore some inevitable overlap between each set of decisions and each consultation. It is not possible to fully separate these, and hence Members are asked to consider and note the feedback from the Family Hub Model consultation on the proposals, insofar as they are relevant to the Kent Communities programme proposals. For the reasons set out below, it is considered that we would still be looking to rationalise our estate around our understanding of need, including for the current Open Access Service, because of the significant financial considerations faced by KCC. Insofar as is possible, these proposals have been drafted with the current state of the Family Hub Model in mind. As set out below, the proposals do not imply that later changes cannot be made to the corporate estate or to the location of services. Due to the inevitable overlap between these two programmes (KCP and the

Family Hub Model), it will be important for the Council to undertake a post-implementation review to ensure that the proposals implemented under each programme are working as intended.

Consultation and consideration of responses

- 1.9 The proposed KCP model was subject to a public consultation between January and March 2023. A consultation report has been included at Appendix B and the response received has been taken into account when developing the options set out in this Key Decision report. The response to the Family Hub service model consultation, held between July and September 2023, has also been carefully considered when developing the options for decision. A draft response to the Consultation for publication is included at Appendix C.
- 1.10 A breakdown of consultation responses by building is provided at Appendix G to assist decision makers. The consultation response needs to be considered alongside the renewed policy and financial context (outlined in section 2) the Needs Framework (outlined in section 3) and impact on residents.

Feasibility studies

- 1.11 Feasibility studies have been undertaken by an external design and construction consultant on buildings where co-location of services is proposed. The feasibility studies were undertaken during summer 2023 and assessed whether the basic m2 floor space was available to accommodate the proposed co-location services within the identified buildings. The feasibility studies identified what facilities (baby change, confidential spaces etc.) would be required to enable the appropriate co-location of services. The financial detail within this report has been informed by those studies and the high-level cost analysis provided by the consultant. An estimated total maximum figure of £5.6m of capital investment is required to deliver the changes across the twelve proposed new co-location sites within the Kent Communities proposal.
- 1.12 The feasibility studies have been reviewed by the relevant service representatives from across the Council and the proposed co-locations are all accepted as deliverable in a way that does not undermine the delivery of any of the proposed services to be co-located. Subject to decision, further design work will be undertaken ahead of any construction activity. This work will continue to be informed by the relevant service representatives, so that the ongoing development of the co-location sites following decision protects the viability of the individual service delivery.

Production of this report and developments post-consultation

- 1.13 This report sets out the steps taken to develop the KCP options presented for decision and recommends a revised estate model informed by the Needs Framework, the response to both the public consultations and the feasibility of the proposed retained buildings. Risks to the implementation of the proposed model have been included for consideration. The report also includes where greater reliance on outreach and digital services is proposed, based on the need analysis.

- 1.14 Since the consultation was launched, the Council's budgeting process has identified significant projected overspend in the 2023/2024 budget, which would have a serious impact on the financial sustainability of the Council, and its ability to deliver both statutory services and discretionary services. Section 2.1 below sets out the context provided by Securing Kent's Future, which has been developed since the consultation closed.

2. FINANCIAL AND STATUTORY BACKGROUND

Securing Kent's Future

- 2.1 On 17 August 2023, Cabinet agreed the provisions set out in the report 'Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy and Financial Reporting'. This report explained that there has been '*significant deterioration in the financial and operating landscape facing the Council since Framing Kent's Future was adopted.*' It goes on to explain that there needs to be '*a strong focus from elected Members, the Corporate Management Team, Directors, Heads of Service and all our staff to recognise that this spending challenge is now the fundamental policy priority of the council and to respond accordingly.*' On 5 October 2023, Cabinet considered 'Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy'. This report set out the Council's strategy for achieving both in-year and future year savings to assure a more sustainable financial position for the Authority and set out new strategic objectives focused on putting the Council on a financially sustainable footing. Securing Kent's Future represents a fundamental shift in the strategic priorities of the Council since the inception of the Kent Communities programme and the agreement of the methodology (Needs Framework), the Rationale and Critical Success Factors.
- 2.1 As set out in the Budget Recovery Plan (Cabinet – 5 October 2023) the financial challenge cannot be understated. Urgent management action is required across the short term to balance the budget in-year and significant action is required in the medium term to provide the stable financial foundation required to be confident in the sustainable delivery of our services. Every decision the Council takes needs to be considered in terms of this fundamental policy priority. Failure to do so risks the need for more drastic action to balance the Council's budget.
- 2.2 The Securing Kent's Future Report and the Financial Recovery Plan from October 2023 include details that are relevant to the Kent Communities programme. The reports outline that a key part of the Recovery Plan is to make '*Further savings and income plans for MTFP.*' With this in mind, any decision by members on the options set out within in this report needs to give due consideration to the revised policy framework and the financial challenge facing the Council, balancing this consideration against the impact of changes on residents, and the consultation response.

Best Value Duty

- 2.3 Section 3 of the Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Plan sets out why the Council must prioritise our Best Value duty under s. 3(2) of the Local Government 1999 and associated statutory guidance. The best value duty requires us to “*make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which [our] functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.*” The Securing Kent's Future report states that our Best Value duty must frame all financial, policy and service decisions in the future and that best value considerations must be explicitly demonstrated within decision making. Further details of how the Best Value duty operates in relation to the KCP are set out in the following paragraphs.
- 2.4 In summary, whilst financial factors such as revenue savings and reduction of backlog maintenance liability are clearly captured within the Critical Success Factors, Best Value has not been a driving force in its own right. However, it is considered that the Kent Communities programme *does* achieve a consideration of Best Value in the way the programme balances economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and the Needs Framework itself considers the usage of each building to deliver best value outcomes.
- 2.5 The Council does not consider that a further consultation is required in light of Securing Kent's Future and the Financial Recovery Plan. The same questions would be asked, and the responses which have already been obtained are as relevant now as when the consultation was launched. The Council therefore emphatically does not consider that the consultation responses are overridden or made irrelevant in any way by this updated financial context. In light of the difficult decisions required in order to return the Council to financial sustainability, the Kent Communities programme is even more crucial, to both the Council's financial future and to ensuring the ability of the Council to deliver services including those within the scope of this review, and the data and feedback obtained via consultation is therefore even more crucial. It informs both the choices to be made, and an understanding of the impact of the choices and the ways in which they may be mitigated.

3. KENT COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

Needs Framework

- 3.1 In order to develop the proposals for consultation in the most appropriate way, we looked at the needs for our services across the county by considering a range of data which we called the Needs Framework. The framework looked at service needs in the 271 wards across Kent, and this structure was then used to map the likelihood of need for our services and to determine which areas of focus are required within each of our districts.

- 3.2 The data which we used for the Framework focussed on indicators that were most relevant to the services within the scope of the consultation and these included:
- Deprivation
 - % of the population aged 0-15
 - Deprivation Affecting Children
 - % of reception age children who are overweight or obese
 - % of deliveries to teenage mothers
 - % of low-birth-weight live babies
 - % of people over 65 living alone
 - Deprivation Affecting Older People
 - Long term unemployment
 - Ethnic diversity
 - % of pupils achieving a pass in English and Maths at GCSE
 - % of people who report a long-term illness or disability
 - Population growth
 - Population density
 - Digital exclusion
 - Transport connectivity
 - Broadband speed
- 3.3 Data was gathered for these indicators for each ward across the 12 districts and applied a score of 1 for the lowest 20% and 5 for the top 20% to those adversely impacted by each of the listed indicators. This gave us a total score for each ward, allowing us to categorise wards from greatest to lowest overall need. Specific combinations of indicators for each service were considered to understand the profile of need in different areas. This approach gave a view of likely need across the whole county, from which we created a first draft of buildings we would propose retaining and those we would propose to vacate.
- 3.4 The Needs Framework was the starting point and guiding principle for the draft proposals, but the final consultation proposals were the result of many months of refinement following collaborative workshops and meetings between service teams, the KCC property team and a dedicated project team. The information gathered using the Framework was used as the basis for conversations with service teams about how our existing buildings could meet the identified needs.
- 3.5 Service teams contributed their working knowledge of localities across the county and its residents by contributing additional data sets, including service usage figures, where available. This allowed the Programme Team to refine the first draft of proposals, ensuring that what was put forward reflected service specific, service user and other practical considerations.
- 3.6 Additional specific data provided by the service team for Adults with Learning Disabilities was only available at District level, so the ward-level framework was not as applicable to Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities as other services. This was because it was more difficult to combine the initial indicator data with the service specific data for this service. However, this

service places a greater emphasis on being in community settings where clients can experience proximity to the wider community. That meant expanding the opportunity to co-locate and/or using other buildings for outreach.

- 3.7 Through ongoing conversations with both service teams and the KCC Property team, further consideration was given to whether the proposed network of permanent buildings would meet the identified need by the Framework. A further key step in the development of our proposals was to look at practical considerations relating to our estate, including building condition, accessibility, and any lease arrangements in place.
- 3.8 The Needs Framework resulting from the process outlined above is a complex tool that considers general deprivation and demographic data, service specific data, expert opinion from service delivery teams and the property specific perspective. This tool informed the model put forward for consultation.

The revised proposals in light of the consultation

- 3.9 It is important to note that the KCP models detailed in this decision rely on the KCC estate to respond to the need identified within the Needs Framework as it currently stands. Decisions made about the estate now do not rule out future decisions and enable locality-based decisions to continue. The estate, its footprint, and its use will be reviewed in light of need and any other relevant considerations. As the Family Hub Transformation progresses, some review will be required to ensure that the KCP models are still appropriate. As detailed in later sections the Needs Framework will be regularly reviewed with partner agencies to inform combined decision making about future service provision across the full range of delivery methods, including from our own physical estate. Further, the proposed models do not preclude KCC from considering changes within our estate management in the future – for example, additions or removals of parts of the physical estate, changing which services are delivered from which locations, and co-locating with other partners.
- 3.10 The draft model was subject to a public consultation between January 2023 and March 2023. The impact of the Kent Communities consultation feedback on the proposals, and feedback received during the Family Hub consultation, held between July and September this year, has been considered and is summarised in section 4 of this report.
- 3.11 Following the Kent Communities Consultation, the Programme Team have worked with the services and finance colleagues to determine five options for review.
- 3.12 The options set out consist of different levels of proposed retentions and closures of buildings, on a scale from additional closures above those consulted on, to closing between 45 buildings (as consulted on), to closing zero buildings, with intermediate steps (43 and 35 closures). The options have been assessed in terms of their cost, financial and non-financial benefits, cost-benefit, risks and the Critical Success Factors in Section 3 and the viable options have been identified.

- 3.13 The factors assessed within the options appraisal (cost, financial and non-financial benefits, cost-benefit, risks and Critical Success Factors) are all included in line with the KCC standard methodology for options appraisals which is adopted within our Project and Programme Management Toolkit.
- 3.14 The table below sets out the number of buildings proposed for retention and closure, by service across the options. Detailed lists of proposed building closures are included at Appendix D for all options. The Commissioned Public Health service will be delivered from the same buildings as set out for the Open Access/Family Hub service, except for Spring House which will be retained for Public Health use only. Therefore, the Commissioned Public Health Service will be delivered from one more building in Options 2, 3 and 4 than the Open Access/Family Hub service (i.e., 55 in Option 2 as opposed to 54 for Open Access/Family Hub). Details of a building-by-building summary of consultation feedback and proposed responses is set out at Appendix G.

Service	Proposed Buildings					Proposed Closures				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Open Access Children's Centres/ Youth Hubs	<	54	56	64	86	>	38	36	28	0
Adults with Learning Disabilities	<	23*	23	23	21	>	3	3	3	0
Adult Education	<	16	16	16	16	>	1	1	1	0
Gateways	<	10*	10	10	9	>	3	3	3	0

* - denotes changes required to Option 2 post consultation but not as a response to consultation feedback – these points are explained in sections 3.15 to 3.18.

Changes which affect the proposals

- 3.15 The Gateway Management Team have confirmed their funding envelope and without additional financial resource, cannot support the inclusion of Gateway provision across all of the co-locations suggested in the consultation. As such the proposals no longer include a Gateway provision as part of a co-location of services at Stanhope Library, Temple Hill Library or Cliftonville Library. Importantly, there is no additional removal of Gateway locations than that outlined in the consultation model and there were no comments received specific to the proposed co-locations at Stanhope, Temple Hill or Cliftonville. On 30 March the Strategic Reset Programme Board agreed that all options presented must be financially viable. To retain the additional locations consulted on would result in pressure on the service funding envelope which, if met, would require corresponding cuts to other service areas, the impact of which has not been assessed.

- 3.16 Under Business as Usual (BAU) provision, a change detailed in the consultation model has already been enacted regarding the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. In the consultation we proposed moving the service out of the Sevenoaks Leisure Centre and into the Sevenoaks Library (across the car park). Shortly after the close of the consultation the management company of the Sevenoaks Leisure Centre went into administration and so to protect the service delivery, the service moved to the library. This is considered a BAU move. The consultation document explained that some changes may need to be made on a BAU basis, for example as a result of the expiry of a lease or a health and safety issue arising.
- 3.17 Within the consultation document it was proposed that the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service would vacate Northgate Hub and the Prince of Wales Centre in Canterbury and consolidate their offer at Thanington. However, the Landlord has been clear that they will not allow the additional space within the Thanington location that would be required to facilitate the consolidation. Therefore, the plans to come out of the Northgate Hub are not achievable from a practical perspective. As such the removal of the service from the Northgate Hub is not a part of any option.
- 3.18 Another proposal in the consultation was to remove the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service from the Folkestone Sports Centre and use alternative provision at the Phase 2 Centre (14 miles away). Since the consultation, the service has been offered space in another location (Broadmeadow) which is an Adult Short Stay centre within the Adults Service. This centre is 1 mile away from the Folkestone Sports Centre and so represents a far better alternative option for service users. They will still have the option to utilise space at Phase 2, however they will have increased choice by also having access to space at Broadmeadow. This does not impact the financial position of the programme.

Summary of the Options

- 3.19 Option 1 in the table above represents a model that involves a greater reduction in the physical estate than was consulted on. The option is assessed in full in the next section, however this option would have a far greater impact on service users and would also require additional consultation (so could not be achieved within a timescale consistent with delivering MTFP savings), and therefore is not recommended.
- 3.20 Option 2 is the consultation model, with the specific required changes outlined in sections 3.15 – 3.18 above.
- 3.21 Options 3 and 4 are amended versions of Option 2, which respond to differing degrees to the consultation feedback. This section should be read in conjunction with the following section which summarises the public consultation, the feedback received, and how that feedback has been analysed. These Options balance the feedback from the consultation with the financial imperative set out under the provisions within Securing Kent's Future

(considered by Cabinet 17th August 2023 and 5th October 2023), as set out elsewhere in this document.

- 3.22 In seeking to respond appropriately to the consultation feedback a more detailed review of the public transport network has informed the options set out in the report. As part of the consultation, modelling was provided to assess the accessibility of the revised building network on public transport considering a 30-minute travel time. Greater analysis of timetable data was used to develop the post-consultation options that respond to feedback from residents. This analysis considered both an extended travel time of 35 minutes and the regularity of the service by applying a criteria that there should be at least one service per hour over the nine-hour period 8am to 5pm, which reflects the general service offering timeframe. It is appreciated that regularity of service is an important additional factor for residents above merely the journey time itself.
- 3.23 An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside of the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the amended criteria outlined in section 3.22.
- 3.24 Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.
- 3.25 Option 4 represents a model which goes further in the response to the consultation feedback and brings 10 buildings back into the model (the 2 buildings from option 3 and another 8). This option rules out the closure of a buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.
- 3.26 Option 5 is a 'Do Nothing' option and retains the current building network and service delivery model.

4 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Kent Communities Programme Consultation

- 4.1 A public consultation ran between 17 January and 26 March 2023 to give service users, Members of the public and strategic partners the opportunity to review our proposals in detail and provide their response. The feedback from the consultation has resulted in the development of additional alternative options (Options 3 and 4).
- 4.2 Throughout the consultation a schedule of proactive engagement events took place with service users, Members of the public and partners. A total of 158 hours of proactive engagement took place during the consultation period.

- 4.3 Throughout the consultation there was consistent engagement with KCC staff and the Trade Unions. Engagement with staff and the unions has continued throughout the period since the close of the public consultation.
- 4.4 A breakdown of the feedback received from the consultation is included within the Consultation Report at Appendix B. A draft of KCC's formal response to the consultation (to be finalised when decision making has been completed) is included at Appendix C. A detailed table summarising, building by building, the consultation feedback is included at Appendix G.
- 4.5 At consultation we set out that the rationale behind the programme was to reduce costs for the Council both in terms of what we spend on our physical buildings (known as our Corporate Landlord costs) and in terms of what we spend to deliver the services themselves (service costs) while prioritising service delivery for our most vulnerable communities. The consultation document also set out the requirement to reduce CO2 emissions from our estate in line with our Net Zero commitments. The feedback from the consultation demonstrates a desire from respondents to see KCC retain buildings within local communities and not to shift the delivery method towards outreach and/or digital provision, which is an understandable response from our communities.
- 4.6 As set out above and below, since the consultation closed the financial position for the Council is even more pressing than it was when the consultation was live at the beginning of 2023. The implication of retaining buildings beyond those identified by the Needs Framework would be a requirement to make greater cuts in other parts of the Council's operations, which could impact the delivery of other services.
- 4.7 The consultation explained the Needs Framework as the methodology underpinning the Kent Communities proposal. The Needs Framework used a wide range of data and indicators that when combined, profile the different level of need for services within our communities. The data included service-held metrics, such as user figures for each service. The consultation set out alternative methods for reviewing the estate and why they had been discounted.
- 4.8 As detailed in Appendix C, 44% of consultees agree with designing proposals based on where people have the highest need for services, while 42% disagree (12% undecided). 33% of consultees feedback that the usage of Children's Centres needed to be considered and the importance of the centres to those currently using them. The Council stands by its approach to the Needs Framework in this regard, as set out in section 3.1 service usage data was considered as part of the Needs Framework. 26% of respondents raised the issue of public transport accessibility and impact on non-car users, while 21% raised concerns regarding their ability to access alternative locations identified. The options presented for consideration by Members include two options that factor in the public transport accessibility as a response to this feedback.
- 4.9 The consultation set out our original proposals. This included the buildings that we proposed to retain and close in each district for each service in the

programme scope. The consultation model proposed the closure of 45 locations used for service delivery across the services within the programme.

- 4.10 The proposals also set out 12 new co-location sites. Co-locating services within appropriate buildings (informed by the feasibility studies referenced at sections 1.11 and 1.12) allows the Council to make more efficient use of the retained estate. It also improves the service user experience, one of the key benefits of the proposals identified ahead of the consultation, by providing access to a wider range of complementary services within a single location.
- 4.11 Appendix 7 summarises the consultation feedback by building for consideration by Members. However, by way of a summary, the main themes of feedback as it related to the building proposals are included here. 61% of respondents disagree with the proposal to have fewer buildings from which to deliver services. The impact of building closure on residents does require careful consideration by Members, and the range of Options for discussion in this paper seeks to provide Members with an opportunity to do so. The impact of closures does need to be considered alongside the wider policy and financial context of the Council.
- 4.12 Within the consultation response 48% disagreed with the proposal to co-locate services together within a single location, citing concerns around the appropriateness of sites for co-locating services. The co-location of services has been, and will continue to be, carefully planned with expert service managers so that services are co-located safely and appropriately. Indeed, the Council has examples of successful co-locations already, such as the Ashford Gateway and Bockhanger Library/Sure Steps Children Centre.
- 4.13 Respondents did outline concerns relating to the accessibility of public transport within their feedback – 21% of respondents raise concerns about their ability to access services at the alternative locations identified within the consultation document. For example, concerns were raised regarding the number of families that required support but do not have access to a car; lack of reliability of the public transport network and travel times to alternative locations. The options detailed in section 3 include options that amend the Needs Framework to take greater account (to varying degrees) of the public transport network analysis than was included at consultation (details at section 3.21 – 3.25).
- 4.14 Within the consultation 24% of comments refer to the concept of outreach being a good idea. However, there is a note of caution in most responses that it depends on the service delivered, the service being well advertised and accessible. 21% of respondents expressed the view that the outreach offer needs to be accessible/close to home. The Council's proposed response is that outreach service is part of an overall model that responds to the need of our communities and provides the flexibility to serve communities that may currently be underserved. The precise service offer will be co-designed with partners and will be informed by the Needs Framework.
- 4.15 During consultation many organisations, particularly District Councils, set out that they were unclear about our outreach offer and would welcome being involved in

the development of our outreach provision. As an example, in their response to a consultation question on outreach Maidstone Borough Council stated that they *'would welcome early opportunity to work with Kent County Council on identifying the needs of vulnerable residents and the ways in which they engage with services to ensure that services are accessible to them.'* As such, Section 7 details a co-design approach to outreach that would enable partners including Districts and other public sector colleagues to contribute both to the understanding of need and the service provision to meet that need.

- 4.16 Where residents have commented upon the accessibility of services, particularly in rural locations, the developing outreach model (outlined in section 7) is a key part of our response. The Needs Framework is an important tool that can be reviewed and utilised consistently to measure changing levels of service requirement within communities. A proactive, iterative co-design approach to the outreach offer addresses concerns about service accessibility. It does so by working with partners to best understand the changing needs of communities, particularly given the level of insight available to District authorities, and then agreeing the most effective use of outreach to deliver services to communities that would benefit from it. By delivering outreach directly within communities, utilising other centres such as parish or town halls, the requirement to travel to a KCC building is removed entirely.
- 4.17 As part of the feedback from the Community Services Consultation, 45% of consultees indicated that the most important consideration when accessing services online is the perceived ease of use/simple access/being user friendly. This was supplemented by feedback demonstrating that consultees wanted an option to access face to face delivery as well as online delivery. Residents do not see online services as a viable replacement for face-to-face delivery, rather an additional channel to give more options to access services. The Council's Digital Transformation Strategy is detailed in section 8 by way of a proposed response to this consultation feedback. It is important to point out that both the Kent Communities programme and the Family Hub model (subject to concurrent paper) consider digital/online provision as one part of a wider mix including the face-to-face service delivery whether that be in a permanent KCC location or a part of an outreach model.
- 4.18 The response of the programme to the feedback received is summarised in the preceding paragraphs and detailed in draft form within appendices for member consideration. Members should carefully consider the feedback from the consultation when making their decision. It is the view of the programme that by amending the Needs Framework to take account of the public transport analysis (as set out in section 3.21 – 3.25 and 4.13 above) that members are presented with options that respond to this feedback to varying degrees. The building specific feedback is also included at Appendix G. Given the policy and financial context it is difficult to consider each building on an entirely individual basis and doing so would jeopardise the Needs Framework methodology which underpins the programme. By focusing on the public transport analysis, we have sought to apply a fair and reasonable criteria to the entire model, amending the Needs

Framework itself, rather than focus on criteria relevant to individual buildings – for example, those sites with the highest number of comments.

Family Hub Model Consultation

- 4.19 This decision is coordinated alongside the Family Hub Model Key Decision. A public consultation on the Family Hub Model was held between 17 July 2023 and 13 September 2023. The Family Hub consultation focused specifically on ‘*what*’ the Family Hub service offer is, compared to the Kent Communities consultation that focused on ‘*where*’ the services are delivered. The consultation set out the mandatory requirements required by the DfE and included what discretionary activities KCC could choose to offer, depending on feedback.
- 4.20 Whilst the Family Hub consultation primarily focused on setting out the service offer under a Family Hub model, the consultation did invite people to express views on the locations of the buildings.
- 4.21 All feedback from respondents that dealt with building locations has been included at Appendix G, however a summary is included here. The primary themes of response in relation to buildings are the same or similar to those received in the Kent Communities consultation. The ease of accessing alternative services if certain existing centres were to close; and the accessibility of services more generally for more rural areas were the bases of the most common feedback. Given the similarity in the feedback received between the Kent Communities consultation and the Family Hub consultation the response outlined above at section 4.11 – 4.15 considers the feedback of both consultations appropriately. Similarly, the desire to see existing centres retained was also central to the feedback in the Family Hub consultation (26% of respondents raised this). The options presented later in this report do present Members with a choice to retain more existing centres within rural locations.
- 4.22 One element that does emerge from the Family Hub consultation is a sense of discomfort in accessing services online and a resultant desire from respondents to avoid face to face services replaced with digital provision. 13% of respondents indicated that they would be partly or very uncomfortable accessing services online. The Family Hub model is clear that digital/online services are not meant as a replacement, but one part of an overall mix of services. It is also the case that Family Hub will include digital support within the physical locations to help residents build confidence to access services using alternative methods. However, this response to the Family Hub consultation further reinforces the additional review of transport accessibility that is the main outcome of the Kent Communities consultation. The review of the transport network accessibility impacts the Kent Communities proposals as it results in the options that retain more buildings and reduces the requirement of residents to travel greater distances on the public transport network to access the services they require.
- 4.23 The feedback from both consultations is available within the appendices to this report and the Family Hub model report. The draft responses to both consultations are also available within Appendix C. Members are asked to

consider the consultation feedback alongside the other factors outlined within the report.

Petitions

4.24 During the Kent Communities consultation period seven petitions were formally submitted to KCC, and an eighth was not formally submitted. These are detailed in the table below.

Title	Signatories	Completed	Lead Petitioner
Save Our Children's Centres - Blossom and The Sunflower Centre	77	May 2023	Michaela Barnes
Blossom Children's Centre & The Sunflower Centre (Paper)	Over 1000	March 2023	Michaela Barnes
Keep Tunbridge Wells Children's Centres open in Rusthall, Southborough, High Brooms and Broadwater	3	April 2023	Jayne Sharratt
Save our nursery – Explorers nursery site, Ramsgate – Priory Children's Centre	1102	April 2023	Kim Hammond & Clair Jones
Save Our Canterbury Childrens Centres	173	March 2023	Mel Dawkins
St Mary's Children's Centre (Paper)	351 Change.org (196 signatures)	March 2023	Frances Rehal
Save Callis Grange Children's Centre (Paper)	221	April 2023	Jennifer Matterface
Save New Ash Green's Children's Centre	Not formally submitted		

4.25 The impact of retaining all locations that are the subject of a petition listed above would be a loss of savings for the Corporate Landlord of £325k which, when deducted from the estimated £1.37m saving identified in Option 2 (the consultation option) would leave an overall Corporate Landlord Saving of £1.04m.

4.26 Of the locations subject to the petitions above, three are reintroduced into the model under option 4 where (as set out above) the reanalysis of the public

transport network as a response to the consultation feedback results in Sunflower CC, Apple Tree CC and New Ash Green CC being retained.

- 4.27 The Council recognises the strong feelings of users of these centres and other residents who have signed these petitions. Those views have been taken into consideration alongside the consultation responses. The Council considers that it is important to take a principled approach to deciding which centres should be prioritised for closure, as adjusted to take account of public transport accessibility. While volume of signatures does not in itself directly indicate greater need for a centre, or greater impact on users in the event of closure, the Council has considered whether the size of the petitions indicates a greater need than previously assessed.
- 4.28 Appendix G sets out the rationale for the decision on each building, including those that were subject to petitions. Respondents to the consultation did highlight whether usage had been adequately taken into consideration (33% of respondents commenting). The Council stands by the original assessment made, since usage data was included within the data provided by CYPE while the Needs Analysis was being developed (more information at section 3.1). For convenience, the usage figures are also detailed here. Blossoms Children's Centre (over 1000 online and 77 paper responses) is in a ward with a need score of 42, which is the lowest need score of any ward with a Children's Centre in Dover District. It does however have high usage figures – reaching 1626 individuals based on 2019 (i.e., pre-Covid) data. The current Deal Youth Hub is 1.3 miles away and would serve the existing community utilising Blossoms. Whilst considering the high usage, given the low need score and the proximity to the current Deal Youth Hub the proposal across all options remains to exit Blossoms Children's Centre.
- 4.29 As shown in the table at section 4.24, there was also a petition relating to the Explorers Nursery and Priory Children's Centre service (1102 responses). The Children's Centre is proposed to be relocated 0.3 miles away within a co-location at Ramsgate Library. This continues to serve the same community that currently access the Priory Centre. The Nursery provision remains unaffected by the Kent Communities Proposals and as is instead subject to the existing terms of its lease agreement with KCC. This will be managed under the Council's standard estate management practices.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Following the public consultation and review of the responses received, the Programme Team, in collaboration with the Cross Directorate Team and supported by the Strategic Reset Programme Team, have developed the range of options for consideration that are detailed at section 3.15 to 3.18 above.
- 5.2 As part of the options appraisal each option has first been assessed against two sets of Pass/Fail Criteria that assess whether the option achieves our Critical Success Factors and whether it responds to the Needs Framework. This reflects

the rationale and the methodology that seeks to achieve the savings required. Each option has then been ranked against a wide variety of factors including the financial and non-financial benefits as well as risks. The detailed Options Appraisal is available at Appendix E, however the implications of proceeding with each option are set out below.

- 5.3 This method of appraisal is necessarily broad. It seeks to achieve an objective appraisal of the options as a decision-making tool. The options appraisal should not be considered as a standalone factor, however. Rather, this options appraisal should be considered alongside all other factors outlined within this report.
- 5.4 Based on the detailed appraisal set out in Appendix E, Options 1 and 5 are discounted due to receiving a Fail in one or both of the Pass/Fail appraisals.
- 5.5 Options 2, 3 and 4 are all considered viable. There is a difference in the financial considerations between the options in terms of the Corporate Landlord Revenue saving and there is no difference in the saving attributed to ASCH. There is a difference between the options in the savings achieved by CYPE, the implication of which is that savings would need to be made elsewhere within the service to meet the shortfall. There are significant differences between the options in terms of the potential capital receipts and the reduction in the backlog maintenance liability.
- 5.6 Option 1: 'Go Further' would result in a level of impact on service users that has not been assessed fully and so cannot reasonably form part of a decision. This option would also require further consultation work ahead of any decision and would result in an unacceptable delay to benefit realisation. It would also not respond to the views expressed during the consultation. Option 1 does not achieve a Pass against the Needs Framework appraisal as it is a reasonable assumption that to 'go further' buildings would likely be under threat in areas of higher need. The implications of proceeding with this option would mean that a decision could not be taken at this stage.
- 5.7 Option 2: 'Consultation Model' delivers the best viable revenue saving and therefore reduces pressure to find alternative savings solutions elsewhere within the Council. Of the viable options, Option 2 meets the Needs Framework in its unamended form (i.e., not amended in line with consultation responses as it is in Options 3 and 4) and performs best against the Critical Success Factors. Our Best Value duty considerations and the financial challenges facing the Council may be considered the most important factor meaning that, whilst the consultation feedback has been carefully considered, the decision is taken to proceed with the option as set out at consultation. This option does respond to the feedback from partners regarding outreach provision as set out in section 4.15. The option protects the MTFP savings of the services in scope and delivers the CLL MTFP savings estimated from this Phase of the programme.
- 5.8 Option 3: 'Minor Amendments' does not represent much difference between Option 2 in terms of revenue savings in terms of the CLL revenue savings. However, the service model implications of retaining additional buildings does

impact the savings realised by the Family Hub service team. Option 3 meets the amended Needs Framework (when amended to give slight weight to the public transport analysis in response to the consultation feedback). Proceeding with Option 3 would mean that whilst overall we are delivering the financial and non-financial benefits, there would be a requirement to find alternative savings elsewhere to meet the MTFP saving target. The shortfall is estimated to be c£100k for the CLL and c£44.8k for Open Access. Option 3 does demonstrate a response to the consultation by reviewing the transport accessibility and making changes as a result. It also responds to the feedback from partners regarding outreach provision as set out in section 4.15. The response to the consultation is balanced against the financial challenge.

- 5.9 Option 4: 'Major Amendments' demonstrates a much more significant response to the consultation, meeting the amended Needs Framework in response to the consultation (when amended to give greater weight to the public transport analysis in response to the consultation feedback). However, proceeding with this option would mean a lower savings realisation. The shortfall for CLL is estimated as c£260k and c£179.2k for Open Access. This would likely impact other parts of the Council's operations either within this Directorate or across other areas of the Council's service offer as alternative savings solutions will need to be found to make up this shortfall.
- 5.10 Option 5: 'Do Nothing' does not make any change to the physical estate and does not respond at all to our needs analysis. This option is not considered viable as it does not pass either of the Pass/Fail appraisals. Proceeding with Option 5 would mean that alternative solutions need to be found to deliver the entirety of the financial and non-financial benefits the programme is designed to deliver. This will impact other service areas and will almost certainly impact statutory service delivery.
- 5.11 The Options Appraisal summarised here is one consideration for Members, alongside the overall financial challenge the Council faces, the Equalities Impacts and the consultation response. Based purely on the detailed analysis in Appendix E and summarised above, the preferred option with which to proceed is 'Option 2: Consultation Option'. The next preferred viable option is Option 3, and it is noted that there is very little difference in the scoring between them. Option 4 is also considered viable, although it should be noted that when considering the ranking scores, Option 4 does not provide the same level of benefit as Option 2 or 3, most notably resulting in a shortfall against MTFP targets for both CLL and CYPE which would need to be met elsewhere (impacting other service areas).
- 5.12 **Members are asked to consider the options appraisal set out above, the relative importance of each factor considered within the options appraisal, and the implications of proceeding with each option in light of all of the available information including the consultation feedback throughout the Committee hearing and Cabinet Decision process.**

6 SERVICE IMPACTS

- 6.1 The five options set out above have different impacts on the provision of services from physical buildings across the different services within the scope of the programme.
- 6.2 As explained above in 3.19 and 3.26, Option 1 and Option 5 are not considered viable. Therefore, this section focuses on the relative impacts on the service provision between Options 2, 3 and 4.
- 6.3 The Gateway service is not a statutory service, as set out at section 1.2. As detailed in the table at 3.14 above, the model for the Gateway service is common across Options 2, 3 and 4. The service will be delivered from 10 locations, all of which are co-location sites with other services and partners. The locations have been determined by the Needs Framework and the availability of sites that can facilitate the co-location with other services whilst ensuring there is no growth required in the revenue budget to deliver the Gateway service. Where services are proposed to move location, there is no planned reduction in service hours.
- 6.4 As set out at section 1.2, the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service is not in itself a statutory function. The proposed model is, as is the case with Gateways, common across the three viable options (2, 3 and 4). Each option helps to protect the £2.2m MTFP saving identified for this service. The saving has already been realised as the service has not established itself in some locations following the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been driven by changes in service user requirements since the pandemic. As such the KCP model simply formalises the changes already made by the service in response to the changing needs of its user base. No additional savings are achieved but by making these changes the Council can protect the saving made by the service and remove the likelihood of future growth in the budget requirement.
- 6.5 As set out at section 1.2, CLS (Adult Education) service is not in itself a statutory function. The CLS Service model is common across the three viable options as is the case with Gateways and Adults with learning Disabilities services. CLS is a demand-led service and as outlined at consultation stage will seek to secure space to deliver offer as needed – primarily within the existing estate, but by seeking outreach alternatives where needed. The CLS service will retain the same number of locations, however, will come out of the Broadstairs Memorial and Pottery Centre and co-locate into Broadstairs Library. This reduces the running costs of multiple buildings for the Council.
- 6.6 The Open Access and Public Health / Family Hub services (subject to concurrent report) represent most of the change for the services and between the options outlined. As set out in section 1.3 there are statutory elements to the service delivery which will continue to be delivered under the Family Hub model.
- 6.7 Whilst the detail around the proposed Family Hub model is contained within the Family Hub Model decision reports, a summary is provided here for convenience.

It is important to make clear the distinction between the service provision and the buildings. Service provision and the buildings footprint are different, albeit closely related, considerations. The Family Hub model sets out a hybrid whole family approach including universal and targeted support for children, young people (0-19 years of age and up to 25 for SEND) and their families. This will include a community based universal offer to provide information and advice on child and adolescent development. This access to universal advice complements existing universal services accessed through partners such as schools, Health Visitors and GP's. Family Hub sites in each district will deliver a range of Start for Life and partnership services and will work with the voluntary and community sector to provide access to a wide range of services.

- 6.8 Where an existing building, which provides current Open Access Children's, Youth or Public Health services closes, the Universal Start for Life Services will still be provided from other physical locations within the district area, in line with the retained buildings set out in each option for consideration. The Need Analysis identifies areas for Outreach provision as set out in section 7 below. It is not the case that where an existing building closes, outreach provision is to be automatically offered as a mitigation for that community. Instead, the Needs Analysis looks at all existing communities and identifies where outreach provision is likely to be the most effective method of provision. Section 7 below goes into more detail. All residents will be able to access advice and guidance online either from home or from within one of the Family Hub locations.
- 6.9 The approach to Outreach and Digital encouraged by the Family Hub Model means that the provision of services is no longer so tightly constrained by the physical estate.
- 6.10 Each of the options set out in the Family Hub Model is deliverable across each of the five options set out in this paper for consideration.

7 OUTREACH PROVISION

- 7.1 Outreach provision takes many different forms but is essentially the delivery of a service away from a permanent, dedicated KCC premises. This could mean home visits for public health teams, detached youth work in the community, fixed term parenting courses from a village hall or alternative KCC setting – for example a library.
- 7.2 The strength of outreach is in its flexibility: it aims to meet people where they are – delivering our services precisely where they are needed, not forcing our most vulnerable residents to come to us. It allows for timely interventions by way of 'pop up' services where needed. As a result of this flexibility, outreach provision is resource intensive and therefore more targeted.
- 7.3 Our Needs Framework has indicated where outreach provision may be the most suitable method of service delivery. It is not the case that where a building is

proposed for closure, outreach has been proposed as a mitigation. The programme has sought to understand the levels and nature of need for our services and then proposed a solution using the different service delivery mechanisms available to us (physical buildings, outreach and digital).

7.4 The following information sets out the outreach offer proposed for each service.

7.5 Open Access Services:/Family Hub Model (subject to concurrent paper on Family Hub model – see other paper)

7.5.1 Outreach is a key part of the existing offer and will continue to be a fundamental pillar of the service offer as the service seeks to engage those families that have typically been less likely to access services, meaning that Universal and targeted services could be delivered in a range of ways such as:

- Parenting Education programmes in local community buildings
- Sport for children with additional needs in local community buildings
- Access to digital support at Leisure centres
- Education, Employment and Training support in a school
- Online counselling through Zoom
- Pop up activities, information, and advice at community events
- Information and advice at local activities, such as play groups
- Early Language development at the Family home
- Support for community groups to deliver specific services

7.5.2 The Kent Communities programme changes the way outreach provision is planned and delivered (7.5.3 below sets out how the change has been developed). There are four specific categories of need within the model that indicate a requirement for outreach provision. Four categories have been identified as areas for focus for any potential outreach activity subject to the provisions detailed later in this section:

- i) Specific 'edge-of-town' communities falling outside the 20 min walking distance but high proportion of families and young people living in deprivation sitting outside the boundary and therefore '0-19' outreach activity is required.
- ii) Larger communities 'whole towns' that see a high cumulative 0-19 deprivation linked need across the whole area but not enough to warrant a whole building.
- iii) Rural communities with high levels of deprivation that may otherwise be cut off, with cumulative level of need requiring specific 0-19 outreach provision.
- iv) Areas where specific flexible detached youth provision is required – often 'in the field' and not linked to specific building locations.

7.5.3 To determine the four categories identified above an analysis was undertaken on the revised network by identifying communities that sat outside of a 20 minute ‘pram-push’ catchment of a proposed centre. The highlighted communities were then assessed to identify which LSOAs (Lower layer Super Output Area) have 50 or more 0–15-year-olds living in income deprivation. This identified village locations with higher levels of deprivation that required service provision and the specific edge of town communities outside of walking distance from a proposed centre. It is also suggested that larger communities that do not have a centre within the proposal but do show a cumulative build of need across a larger area is a category for outreach.

7.5.4 The table below is indicative and provides an example of areas for each of the four outreach categories outlined in paragraph 6.5.2.

Outreach Type	Geographic based example (illustrative only)
Edge of town community	East of Faversham, Whitfield
Larger area with cumulative need	Sevenoaks, Broadstairs
Rural village location	Marden, Leysdown, Lydd
Flexible Detached Youth	Flexibly deployed as required

7.5.5 The Needs Framework will continue to be monitored and updated to ensure that the Council continues to be agile and responsive to the evolving needs of the communities we serve. By reviewing the Need data regularly, the CYPE Open Access team can identify where the greatest investment in outreach provision is around the county. This will be an agile process which can change as required each year and will include support for community groups to deliver their own services where requested.

7.5.6 The specific outreach activities to be funded will be determined by the local area manager within the service given their deeper understanding of the requirements of the community.

7.5.7 There will be the opportunity for community partners, through the LCPG (Local Children’s Partnership Group) or other frameworks, to contribute their understanding and assessment of the specific requirements of each community and the delivery of those services. This will ensure that where specific needs are identified there is a shared understanding and co-designed partnership approach to the delivery of multi-agency outreach. Further details are included within the separate Family Hub Key Decision report.

7.5.8 It is proposed that the needs analysis that has underpinned the work on the Kent Communities programme is reassessed at regular intervals and that service managers work with partners to allocate service provision appropriately as need fluctuates. This continued reanalysis of need will inform not just future decisions about a co-designed outreach proposal, but also decision around our estate.

7.6 Other services in scope:

- 7.6.1 Outreach provision already accounts for approximately 50% of the service offer for Adults with Learning Disabilities because a large part of the service offer centres on the needs and wellbeing of the clients and getting out in the community allows for greater independence. The service is directly responsive to the client needs and therefore outreach activities are planned accordingly. Increased investment of approximately £224k in outreach will allow greater opportunities for clients to access specialised equipment and skills.
- 7.6.2 Community Learning and Skills (CLS) are not proposing to change their current outreach model. Service demand is largely consistent across the county; however, provision already exists to venues as needed to deliver courses where demand emerges.
- 7.6.3 Gateways as a service are tied to specific locations and that is not proposed to change.

8 DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

8.1 The Council's existing digital offer will continue, as well as plans for Digital Transformation across the council as outlined within the draft Digital Strategy 2023-26. The Digital Strategy (due to Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee, January 2024) sets out our plans to bring about Digital Transformation in KCC and is an overarching framework that encompasses our current and future digitally focused strategies and plans. The vision is to ensure that "People's digital experiences of KCC are accessible, inclusive, clear, trusted and designed with the user in mind to make their experience as positive as possible. They leave feeling confident, empowered, and respected". Four strategic ambitions are stated; Improve residents' digital experience; Simple, secure, and shareable; Well used and used well; and Data led. The strategy is underpinned by Digital Design Principles:

- Start with user needs, design services around the service user.
- Buy once, use many times.
- Design with data insight and analytics built in.
- Keep it simple, share and iterate.
- Consistent, not uniform.
- Support and upskill staff to embrace digital.

8.2 Activity identified within the digital strategy includes service engagements for 'Digital discovery' to identify and exploit digital opportunities to improve our services. A specific engagement was conducted to investigate a dedicated booking application that is specifically aimed at facilitating the increased use of co-location sites by partners that this programme requires. The booking app

would allow for common spaces to be booked out by the co-located services to help organise and manage the shared use of key facilities for service delivery.

- 8.3 Scoping work has been undertaken that assesses the requirements of different services that will be sharing co-located buildings. That scoping work has informed the information included below, setting out the investment in terms of time and resource required to facilitate this facility.
- 8.4 Our digital transformation Team has assessed the various requirements of the services that would be co-locating across our estate and have indicated that one off investment of circa £73,000 and on-going annual costs of circa £49,000 would be required to further scope, develop, test, install and train staff for the booking app facility. A period of approximately 18 months will be required to undertake the work required.
- 8.5 The precise expenditure and timeframe required will be subject to a Business Case which will be submitted to the Strategic Technology Board for agreement. This will include the options covering the staffing resource with the specific skillset to deliver the agreed solution.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE OPTIONS

- 9.1 As detailed above in sections 1 and 2, the rationale for the Kent Communities programme focuses among other factors, on the need to make revenue savings within the Corporate Landlord budget and to facilitate revenue savings across our service areas.
- 9.2 The requirement to secure revenue savings was further emphasised on 17 August and 5 October 2023, when Cabinet adopted the recommendations within the report 'Securing Kent's Future'.
- 9.3 The rationale also includes the requirement to reduce the pressure on the backlog maintenance cost linked to our buildings and to reduce our CO2 emissions from our own physical estate. For convenience, the CO2 savings are summarised here and detailed within Appendix E.
- 9.4 The Corporate Landlord MTFP Savings target is £2.9m and the anticipated revenue saving for the preferred option is £1.37m.
- 9.5 The table below sets out the financial impact of each option. Gateways and CLS did not have MTFP targets and having worked through the financial modelling with these services, no savings are meant to fall out. There is no growth in their budget as a result of the KCP changes.

Impact	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
CLL Saving	Highest	£1.37m	£1.27m	£1.11m	£0
Maintenance Reduction	Highest	£6.34m	£5.85m	£4.84m	£0
Capital Receipts (based on professional desktop valuations)	Highest	£3.8m	£3.8m	£3.2m	£0
Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities Savings*	Highest	£2.2m	£2.2m	£2.2m	£2.2m
Family Hub Service Savings*	Highest	£1.5m	£1.45m	£1.32m	£0
Estimated CO2 saving (tonnes)	Highest	977	938	798	0

*Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities have already achieved this saving and the KCP changes formalise the estate reduction around the service changes already made therefore preventing base budget growth back post savings realisation.

- 9.6 Due to the co-location of services proposed across all the options there is an estimated CLL saving of c£199k within the CLL savings figures detailed in the table at 9.5.
- 9.7 Further savings against the CLL MTFP target are linked to additional phases of the Kent Communities programme which will progress over the course of the next 12 months.
- 9.8 As set out in the Options Appraisal (Section 5) the cost of implementing the preferred option will be met from existing approved budgets.
- 9.9 There is a potential financial risk liability of up to £2.3m in clawback liability within Option 2, reducing to £1.8m in Option 3 and £325k in Option 4. Mitigations are outlined within section 11. There are other more minor risks associated with the preferred option. This includes currently unquantifiable liabilities such as redundancy or TUPE costs as clauses within third party contract agreements.
- 9.10 The current cost of the programme to date is £2.36m.

9.11 The table below sets out the cost of implementing the preferred option:

Cost Item	Revenue	Capital	Funding Options
Programme Costs to date	£2.36m		SRP Reserve
Capital Investment for Co-locations		£5.6m	SRP Capital Fund
Potential Clawback Liability Risk		£2.3m	Options Appraisal to mitigate risk
Total		£7.9m	

9.12 The backlog maintenance bill for the buildings in scope of the programme is estimated to be £42m. Option 2 represents a reduction of circa £6.34m in the backlog maintenance bill, reducing to £35.6m. Option 3 reduces the backlog maintenance bill by an estimated £5.85m (to £36.1m) and Option 4 reduces the backlog maintenance bill by an estimated £4.84m (to £37.1m).

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Consideration has been given to KCC's statutory duties in relation to the provision of services affected by the proposals in this report. There is a nexus between these proposals, the Family Hub Programme, and commissioned youth services (to a lesser degree). KCC has retained external legal advice and Counsel in relation to these proposals and advice has been provided to the operational team on an iterative basis and advice provided to decision makers. The legal risks will need to be balanced against the requirements of the proposal and wider benefits of implementation.
- 10.2 The proposals outlined in the Kent Communities include changes for the Gateway and CLS services which are not statutory.
- 10.3 The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities services is not in itself a statutory service, but does but does constitute one of the ways in which we meet statutory requirements under the Care Act 2014 to promote individual well-being; to provide services to prevent, delay and reduce need and; to meet assessed needs for individuals and carers. The changes proposed do not affect the delivery of our statutory requirements.
- 10.4 The elements of statutory provision delivered under the Children Act 1989 and the Childcare Act 2016 in relation to the current Open Access services and Public Health services are, from an operational perspective, retained within the proposed Family Hub model (subject to concurrent paper) and are designed not to be undermined by the changes within the Kent Communities Programme. This is because these services are still to be offered to residents of Kent following any decision on the Kent Communities Programme.

10.5 In line with KCC's obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty a full Equality Impact Analysis was undertaken by each service. The draft EqlA for each service was included as part of the material during the public consultation. The EqlAs have each been updated by the services following review of the consultation feedback. The EqlAs for each service and for the Programme as a whole are included at Appendix 6. More detail regarding the EqlAs is provided at Section 12 below.

10.6 Whenever considering changes to our services as part of our general Duty of Best Value, the Council has an obligation under the Duty to Consult (Section 3 (2) of the Local Government Act 1999) to consult the public on the changes at an early and meaningful stage in the development of the new plans. Section 4 above sets out how KCC have demonstrated compliance with its Duty to Consult.

11 RISKS

11.1 The table below sets out the key risks associated with the implementation of the Kent Communities programme.

Risk	Mitigation
Clawback: Sure Start centres included capital grants at inception that are subject to clawback by the DfE if the asset is not used for Children's provision for a defined period following the grant.	Total potential liability of £2.3m capital clawback. This will be factored into the Options Appraisal when determining the plan for surplus assets with other uses considered that fulfil the criteria that the building must be used for Children's provision during the liability period.
Capital investment required impacted by inflation: The capital investment required to deliver the co-location sites has been estimated at £5.6m. Whilst this does include a contingency figure, increased inflation rates may impact the funding required to deliver the co-locations that result in surplus assets.	Contingency figure built into estimate at timer of decision. As projects are approved following key decision each individual project will be subject to KCC standard cost and risk management procedures including the appointment of a qualified cost consultant.
Options Appraisals: Subject to our adopted policy for disposal of assets, any building that is potentially surplus to requirements is subject to an Options Appraisal to determine whether there are any other uses the Council may have for the building. Should the Options Appraisal identify	Any options appraisal that significantly impacts the savings realisation will be considered by the Estate Strategy Board and if necessary, brought back to the Policy and Resources committee for formal consideration by Members before agreement.

<p>other Council uses for an asset, this may decrease the savings realisation for the Corporate Landlord.</p>	
<p>Unknown costs linked to implementation: It has not been possible to fully quantify some costs in advance of the decision being taken. These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Costs associated with redundancy liability to third party contractors (cleaners in buildings that are proposed for closure). 2. Costs required to provide over and above ordinary support for site clearance and relocation/removal of equipment. 	<p>Any additional cost implications that impact the overall savings realisation or cost-benefit analysis of the preferred option will be considered at the Future Asset Board and any recommendations made to the Strategic Reset Programme Board where appropriate. Following decision, any engagement with third parties that has not been possible pre-decision (to protect against pre-determination risks) will be prioritised and any significant change to the benefit realisation will be reported back to the relevant Board ahead of implementation. It is the assumption of the programme that revenue costs for implementation will be met by existing core budgets.</p>

11.2 Where it is not possible to mitigate risks effectively, and there is a resultant impact on the savings realisation specifically (for example if an Options Appraisal suggest an alternative use for a site which has a savings figure associated with its disposal) this will be reported to the relevant Board for consideration.

12 EQUALITIES

12.1 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken by each individual service in scope of the Kent Communities programme in advance of the consultation. These EqlAs assessed the impact of the consultation model on residents with one or more protected characteristics. The full set of EqlAs were included as part of the consultation material for review and comment by resident, partners and service users.

12.2 Since the consultation, the service EqlAs have been updated following a review of feedback from the consultation paying particular attention to equalities concerns raised.

12.3 A whole programme EqlA has been developed which summarises the service EqlAs.

12.4 The service and programme level EqlAs carefully consider the feedback from the consultation and any equalities impacts that arise from the response from residents. The impacts are set out for each protected characteristic and

explained fully. Any mitigations are detailed and an assessment of whether the impacts are justified is given, when taken in relation to the policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates.

- 12.5 Broadly, equalities impact affect residents that experience one or more of the following characteristics: gender, age, disability, race and ethnic background, and religion. The full set of EQIA's set out the impacts in more detail. The most significant impact identified on the protected characteristics is the requirement to travel further, possibly using public transport, or the requirement to walk further to access services. Some protected (age, disability, race) characteristics will be impacted more by the relocation of services than others, in that navigating around unfamiliar locations may prove difficult.
- 12.6 The positive impact of co-location opportunities is set out in the EqlAs, as is the extended outreach provision which will serve residents with protected characteristics in areas that do not currently find it easy to access services.
- 12.7 It has been assessed that the impacts on residents with protected characteristics will decrease depending on what option is chosen by Members. Option 1 would have the greatest negative impact. Option 2 would have the second greatest level of impact. Options 3 and 4 reduce the impact on residents with protected characteristics by reducing the number of building closures and therefore reducing the instances in which residents would need to travel further to access services.
- 12.8 The impacts, when considered alongside the mitigation measures detailed within the EqlAs and considered within the overarching policy and financial context on which the Council currently operates, are considered to be justifiable.
- 12.9 The service EqlAs and the programme EqlA have been subject to the council's EqlA approval process.
- 12.10 The EqlAs are included at Appendix F. Members are asked to consider the Equalities Impacts on residents with protected characteristics alongside the other relevant factors detailed within this report.

13 GOVERNANCE

- 13.1 The Full Business Case (FBC) for the Kent Communities programme has been reviewed and approved by the Strategic Reset Programme Board on 2 November 2023.
- 13.2 Ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 30 November 2023, the relevant proposals will have been discussed with Members at an All-Member Briefing and debated publicly at the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee on 22 November 2023.

- 13.3 An update will be provided at Cabinet containing the key considerations and comments following the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.
- 13.4 The risks outlined in section 11 will be carefully monitored by the Programme Team during the implementation period. If any risks impact the deliverability of the decision made by Cabinet, then it is proposed that a report with an updated recommendation will be taken to the relevant Cabinet Committee for consideration.
- 13.5 Other decisions, including relating to the disposal of surplus assets, will be taken during implementation in line with the Council schedule of Delegated Authority.

14 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services and Cabinet on the proposed decision to:

- a) Consider and note the feedback from the Kent Communities Consultation on the proposals, as well as responses to the Family Hub Consultation, insofar as they are relevant to the Kent Communities proposals, alongside the amended policy and financial position set out in the report 'Securing Kent's Future;'
- b) Consider the options as set out in the decision report and confirm an option to be implemented including agreement of:
 - i. The network of buildings to be utilised to support the delivery of following services:
 - Open access youth and children services – including Public Health
 - Adults with Learning Disabilities
 - CLS – Adult Education
 - Gateways
 - ii. The decommissioning of services at those buildings which are no longer to be utilised to support the delivery of the services outlined above.
 - iii. The co-design of outreach services with partners.
- c) Approve expenditure from capital budget to enable adaptations to the agreed network of buildings in order to facilitate the co-location of multiple services;
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Directors of Children Young People & Education (CYPE), Growth Environment & Transport (GET), Deputy Chief Executives Department (DCED) and Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) to design the staffing model to support the changes as agreed in part b of the

decision above, undertake the necessary staff consultation and implement any changes as a result; and

- e) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements to facilitate the implementation of the decisions.

15 APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Needs Framework Information
- Appendix B: Consultation Report
- Appendix C: Draft Response to Consultation Feedback
- Appendix D: Proposed Buildings Retained and Closed by Option
- Appendix E: Detailed Options Appraisal
- Appendix F: Equalities Impact Assessments
- Appendix G: Breakdown of consultation responses by building
- Appendix H – Proposed Record of Decision

16 CONTACT DETAILS

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CONFIDENTIAL

The Needs Framework



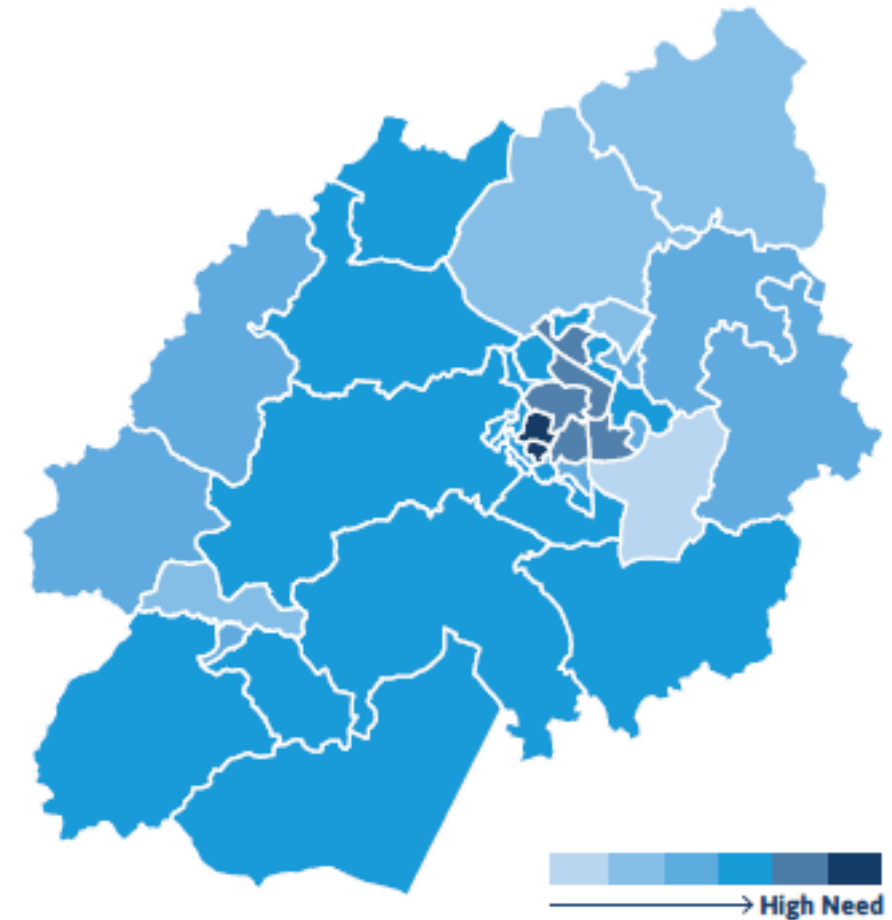
Page 191

COMMUNITY
Services Consultation

The Design Method

- Create a needs framework using agreed data sets
- Discuss need and how best to meet it with services
- Agree design principals
- Audit the presence of our buildings in wards with high need
- Discuss and agree opportunities for colocation

Page 192



The Process

Design Framework Layers

Layer 1 analyses the communities and their strengths and challenges. This is done using a wide range of indicators to detail the demographics of the area and additional factors such as deprivation, education levels and isolation.

Layer 2 seeks to understand the place factors which impact those living in the area and ultimately how they access services. These include considerations such as internet speed and transport connectivity, as well as population growth and density.

Layer 3 provides service specific insight and is applied after the other factors have been considered. This varies by service depending on data availability, but may include service user feedback, local plans and income generation data.

How we did it...

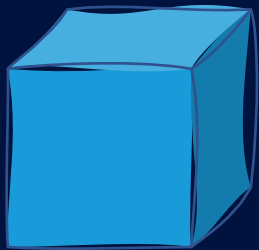
- Data led exercise, using clear metrics to build our understanding of need in different communities.
- Sense checked our data with the service teams to ensure our interpretation of the data was sound.
- Service input additional metrics to develop the model.
- Iterative process with services and Infrastructure teams to identify a building network model that best meet the needs identified.
- Public consultation to socialise the model and gather feedback on the impacts of the model and the proposed closures on service users, partners and residents.

Justification of Needs-based approach

Page 194

- Within our Council Strategy '*Framing Kent's Future*' Kent County Council has committed to understanding and acting on people's needs. This approach will ensure that the Council uses the taxpayer's money in a way that has the maximum impact for communities.
- In designing the proposal we have focused on identifying the areas with the highest need for our services. Our proposals identify how the council would then deliver services to meet the needs of communities identified as 'higher need and 'lower need'.
- We have focused on the 12 localities within Kent (organised around the existing District Council boundaries). To identify the level of need within a community, specific indicators have been used against each service. These are detailed on the following slides.
- For each service, indicators from layer 1 and 2 of the design framework have been selected which are relevant to identifying the need for the service and assessing the suitability of locations.
- Through discussion with services, the blend of sub-services delivered through physical presence, outreach and digital means have been identified.
- Based on this insight, suggestions have then been made as to where the service could deliver each sub-service, collectively providing the service's design.
- Using this process we have been able to identify the areas of higher and lower need. In discussion with the services we are identifying how best to meet the needs of the various communities, whether the indicators demonstrate that need as higher, or lower.
- Where a service provision is required in a building permanently, we have looked to utilise the buildings already owned by Kent County Council. Wherever possible we have opted to use the building located as close as possible to where the higher need is identified.

Ward-level data



Indicator

Indicator	Open Access	Public Health	Community Learning and Skills	Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities
Deprivation affecting children and older people.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long term unemployment.	✓	✓	✓	
Ethnic diversity.	✓	✓	✓	
Educational attainment.	✓	✓	✓	
Long term illness and disability.				✓
% of ward population aged 0-15.	✓	✓		
Reception age children who are overweight or obese.	✓	✓		
Deliveries to teenage mothers.	✓	✓		
Low birth weight infants.	✓	✓		
Over 65s living alone.			✓	
Population increase.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Population Density.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital Exclusion.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Transport Connectivity.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broadband Speed.	✓	✓	✓	✓

*The exception to this is Gateways which were placed last in the design, once we had identified the need for multiple services.



KENT COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITIES CONSULTATION – WRITTEN REPORT

PREPARED BY LAKE MARKET RESEARCH



CONTENTS

Background and methodology	3
Executive summary	7
Consultation awareness	11
Service usage	13
Response to proposals to deliver services	34
Other comments on consultation proposals	69
Response to Equality Analysis	72
 <u>APPENDIX</u>	
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Ashford	76
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Canterbury	83
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Dartford	93
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Dover	107
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Folkestone & Hythe	118
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Maidstone	129
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Sevenoaks	137
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Swale	145
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Thanet	160
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Tonbridge & Malling	168
Impact of Part A 'Leave' proposals – Tunbridge Wells	169
Impact of Part B 'Leave' proposals	183
Impact of Part C 'Leave' proposals – Thanet	186
Impact of Part D 'Leave' proposals	189
Summary of public / engagement event attendance	191
Demographic Breakdown	193

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Background

Kent County Council are proposing changes to the way we use our buildings to deliver some community services. These services are Children's Centres and Youth Hubs, Public Health Services for Children and Families, Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education), and Gateways.

Proposals have been designed by Kent County Council considering where there is greatest need for services. They include:

- Having fewer permanent buildings, meaning that some of our buildings would close - wanting to keep buildings in areas where they are needed the most.
- Co-locating more of our services, meaning more than one service would be available from some of the buildings visited.
- Continuing to deliver some services by outreach, which means they do not take place in a dedicated or permanent space but move around to when and where they are needed.
- Ensuring residents can continue to access services and information online.

Earlier this year, KCC launched a consultation to understand the views residents and stakeholders.

Consultation process

On the 17 January 2023 a ten-week consultation was launched and ran until the 26 March 2023. The consultation provided the opportunity to find out more and provide feedback.

All proposals for the whole of Kent were detailed in a consultation document. The proposals were also broken down into 12 district/borough documents to enable people to easily see the proposed changes just for their area. A short animation video was also produced to succinctly show what is being proposed and why.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact the proposals could have on those with protected characteristics. The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited respondents to comment on the assessment that had been carried out.

All information about the consultation was stored on the consultation webpage:

www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation. Paper copies of the consultation documents and questionnaires were available from children's centres, libraries, gateways, adult education venues, and venues for Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities, as well as upon request.

How people could give their views

The questionnaire was the main way for people to provide their feedback about the proposals. This questionnaire was available as an online form, as a Word document that could be downloaded (and emailed to us or printed or posted), as well as paper copies in community venues.

Respondents were also welcome to give feedback by email, letter or telephone.

Twenty-four public drop-in events took place (2 events per district). Day time and evening sessions were available to accommodate people's work or care commitments.

Youth Hubs led engagement activities with the young people using their services to explain the proposals and encourage their input. This was done in a range of ways such as group discussions, filling in forms, and creating videos.

Other engagement included briefings with:

- Councillors (KCC and district/borough councils)
- KCC staff
- Local Children's Partnership Groups
- Partner organisations (NHS, Midwives, Voluntary and Community Sector Steering Group)
- Trade unions

Additional Engagement

In response to feedback, a further 20 engagement sessions were undertaken to ensure that views were heard about impacted centres where either the response level may have been lower than anticipated or where issues had been identified. This included visits to children's centres, youth hubs, and SEND groups (for people with Special Education Needs and disabilities). Phone calls took place with families/carers of people using Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities to obtain their views.

To raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, the following was undertaken:

- Press release
- Social media campaign
- Newspaper advertisements
- Posters at community venues (along with paper copies of the consultation material)
- Direct promotion with people that use the services impacted by the proposals
- Emails to stakeholder groups and partner organisations
- Inclusion in newsletters such as KELSI (for education professionals in Kent) and the NHS newsletter
- KCC's residents' newsletter
- Email to registered users of KCC's online engagement platform

Social media promotion reached over 816,000 people across a range of platforms. Impressions (the number of times promotional posts appeared on people's social media feeds) was over 1.7m. The social media promotion resulted in over 11,300 click through to the consultation webpage.

The webpage had 75,879 page views made by 25,965 people. Documents on the consultation webpage were downloaded 9,224 times.

Points to note

- Consultees were invited to comment on the proposals and each of the buildings impacted and were given the choice of which questions they wanted to answer / provide comments. The number of consultees providing an answer is shown on each chart / table featured in this report.
- Consultees were given a number of opportunities to provide feedback in their own words throughout the questionnaire. This report includes examples of verbatims received (as written by those contributing) but all free text feedback is being reviewed and considered by KCC.
- This report includes feedback provided to each of the buildings marked as 'leave' in the consultation documentation with the exception of New Beginning's Childrens Centre in Gravesham. The only comments received for the New Beginning's Childrens Centre were from consultees who entered the same open comment for all buildings marked as 'leave'. All feedback provided for other buildings are being reviewed by KCC. Responses to the impact questions for each of the proposed 'leave' buildings varied. Please note that for any of the specific building impact questions with less than 30 consultees answering, results are presented in terms of number of consultees answering instead of percentages.
- Feedback received by the KCC team via email has been reviewed for the purpose of analysis and free text comments have been included where applicable in this report.
- Participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses.
- Response to this consultation does not wholly represent the individuals or stakeholders the consultation sought feedback from and is reliant on awareness and propensity to take part based on the topic and interest.
- KCC was responsible for the design, promotion, and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research was appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

Profile of consultees responding

1,776 consultees took part in the consultation questionnaire; 1,521 received via online submissions, 227 received via a hard copy questionnaire and 28 via Easy Read versions of the consultation questionnaire. The KCC team also received feedback via email / letters. 27 emails / letters were passed to Lake Market Research to review and include comments in this report accordingly.

The table below shows the profile of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire only. The proportion who left this question blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

RESPONDING AS...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
As a Kent resident	1,379	78%
As a KCC employee (Kent resident)	114	6%
On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)	36	2%
On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school or college	33	2%
As a Parish / Town / Borough / District / County councillor	29	2%
On behalf of a friend or relative	22	1%
On behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity	16	1%
As a representative of a local community group or residents' association	15	1%
As a resident from somewhere else, such as Medway	11	1%
As a KCC employee (non-Kent resident)	10	1%
As a Kent business owner or representative	8	1%
Other	40	2%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	63	4%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAGE OF SERVICES UNDER CONSULTATION

- 50% of consultees answering use Children's Centres. 46% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Children's Centres. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (92% and 93% respectively).
- 16% of consultees answering use Youth Hubs. 15% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Youth Hubs. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (83% and 86% respectively).
- 41% of consultees answering use the Health Visiting Service. 35% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Health Visiting Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (82% and 82% respectively).
- 11% of consultees answering use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. 12% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 68% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (22% and 27% respectively).
- 10% of consultees answering use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 9% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 71% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 25% respectively).
- 17% of consultees answering use Adult Education services. 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (72% and 72% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 23% respectively).
- 20% of consultees answering use Gateways. 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (66% and 65% respectively) but a significant proportion reported that they use both in person and online services (21% and 24% respectively).
- 64% of all residents taking part in the consultation and answering indicated they use at least one of the services under consultation.

RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS AND PERCEIVED IMPACT OF BUILDING CHANGES

- ‘Designing proposals where people have the highest service need’ – 44% of consultees answering agree and 42% disagree; 12% neither agree nor disagree.
- ‘Proposals to co-locate services’ – 39% of consultees answering agree and 48% disagree; 12% neither agree nor disagree.
- ‘Proposals to have fewer buildings’ – 29% of consultees answering agree and 61% disagree; 9% neither agree nor disagree.
- There are significant differences in response to proposals with a higher proportion of disagreement amongst female residents, residents aged 25-49, residents who have children / expecting children and residents who use at least one of the prompted consultation services. However, it should be noted that 47% of resident consultees who do not currently use any of the prompted consultation services disagree with the proposal to have fewer buildings.
- Consultees were invited to comment in relation to specific buildings and describe the impact the proposed changes would have on them or someone in your household. Response to all proposed ‘leave’ buildings have been included in this report. Consultees expressed concern that they use these services frequently and they are seen as a lifeline that provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being within walking distance and indicate they won’t be able to access the proposed alternative(s) as they are either unable to drive / use public transport or the public transport commute is too long / unreliable / sparse. Consultees also express concerns that proposals will have a detrimental impact on users’ mental health / development.

MISSING DATA IN UNDERSTANDING WHERE SERVICE NEED IS HIGHEST

- 35% of consultees answering via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment.
- The most common feedback is to review data on children’s centre usage / understand the importance of the children’s centres to those currently using (33% of consultees commenting), the availability and cost of public transport and the potential impact on non-car users (26%), consider the impact of proposals on the mental health of users / outcomes for those no longer able to access services (23%).
- 21% have concerns for whether users will be able to get to alternative service provision as they can’t walk to those outlined and need to access services closer to home.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CO-LOCATING SERVICES

- 77% of consultees answering via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment.
- The most common feedback is whether users will be able to get to alternative service provision as they can't walk to those outlined and need to access services closer to home (51% of consultees commenting).
- This is followed by the availability / cost of public transport and recent service reductions (33%) and the practicality of co-located services / groups (22%) and the suitability of proposed buildings / setups (19%). 21% commented on the need to consider the impact of proposals on the mental health of users / vulnerable / for those no longer able to access services.

PERCEPTIONS OF DELIVERING SERVICES THROUGH OUTREACH

- 46% of consultees answering via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment.
- References to the concept of outreach being a good idea features in 24% of comments made. However, the majority of these comments also contain a cautionary note such as it depends on the service delivered, the service is well advertised and accessible to all to use.
- There are concerns that outreach services need to be accessible to potential users, either via locations close to home / easily accessible by public transport (21%) and the type of services being considered are often used 'as they need them / without much prior planning' and in a familiar place and therefore consideration needs to be given for how outreach services are organised (17%).
- 16% commented the suitability of the buildings needs to be taken into account in line with service delivery required for the services under consultation. 14% commented that the services under consultation will need to be assessed carefully to see if they are suitable for an outreach service compared to the service offered now.
- 12% commented that potential outreach services need to be regular and offered as a committed service so the current service offering isn't diluted and users are familiar with the services regularity.

ACCESSING KCC SERVICES DIGITALLY AND IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ACCESSING ONLINE SERVICES

- When asked for feedback on accessing KCC services digitally (not linked to the services under consultation). 64% of consultees answering indicated they feel confident about doing things online.

- A proportion of consultees indicated the safety of using technology to access services and the security of personal information is a concern (13% selecting), as well highlighting that KCC's digital services and information are too difficult to use (10%) and they do not feel confident in using technology (9%). 10% indicated that paying for devices and internet connection is too expensive and 8% indicated their internet is too slow.
- Consultees indicated that the most important consideration when accessing services online is the perceived ease of use / simple access / being user friendly (45%). This is followed by having an option of face to face service delivery / consultees indicating they prefer face to face access to services (23%). Clear information (12%), reliable links that work and compatible devices (12%) and security / safety / privacy (11%) are also important.
- 16% believe online access to services isn't an inclusive approach and cited the elderly, those with access issues and those unable to use online services as examples to illustrate their views. 11% commented that online delivery needs to be appropriate for the service in question.

FAMILY HUB MODEL PROPOSALS

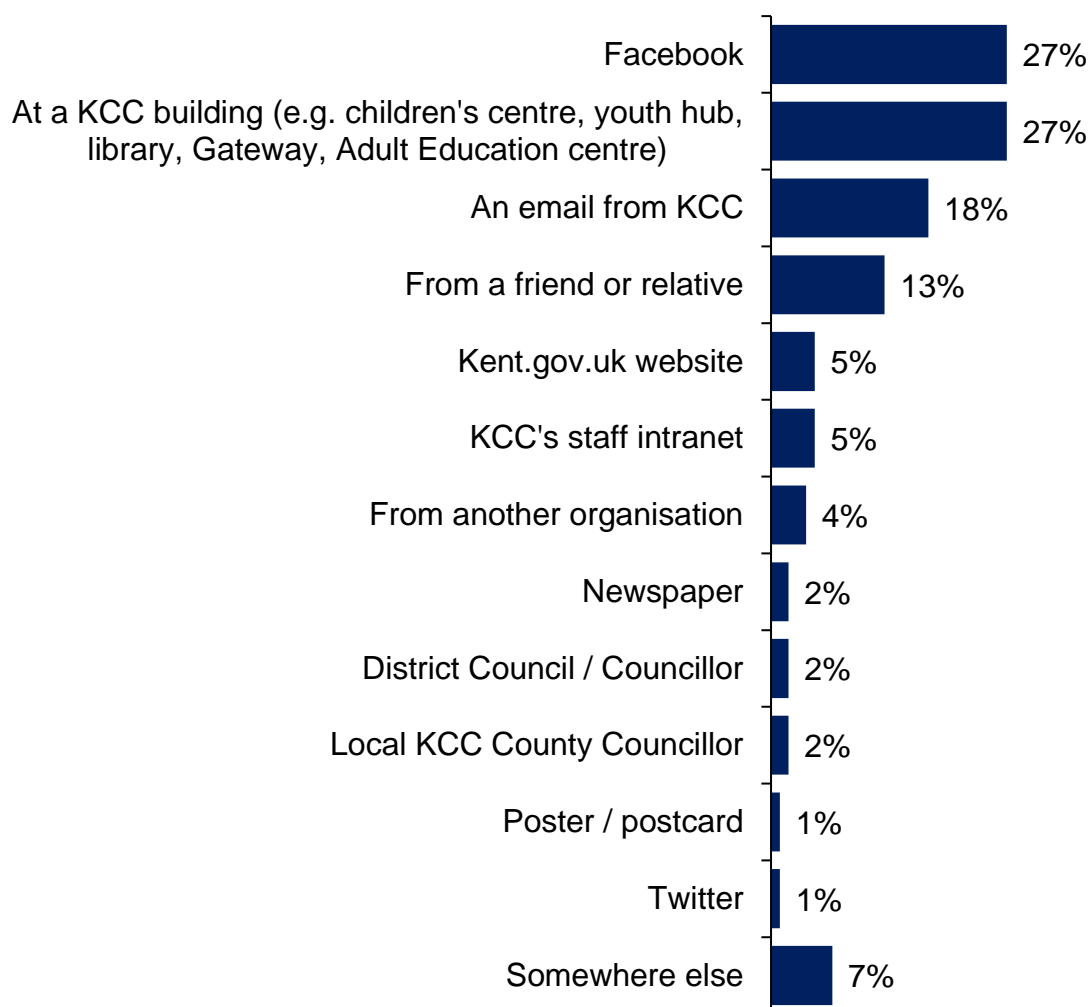
- 34% of consultees answering via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment.
- The most important consideration put forward for attention in the Family Hub transition is users being able to get there / travel there / location (46%). This includes consideration that some would prefer to, or only be able to, walk to reach the location or access via convenient and reasonably priced public transport.
- This is followed by ensuring access is possible for everyone that needs to (with consideration of different age groups / demographics and possible needs - 27%). This includes provision of service for all concerned and the equipment / space setting / staffing for all needs.
- 24% believe it is important that individual services provided under the Family Hub offering isn't diluted / remains distinct for each user group.
- 21% expressed concerns about the suitability of proposed space / buildings for the services under consultation and 18% expressed concerns about the compatibility of the range of services being provided in one place.

CONSULTATION AWARENESS

- The most common routes to finding out about the consultation is via Facebook (27%) and at a KCC building, e.g. children’s centre, youth hub, library, Gateway, Adult Education centre (27%).
- 18% indicated they found out through an email from KCC.
- 13% indicated they found out through a friend or relative.

How did you find out about this consultation?

Base: all answering (1,606), consultees had the option to select more than one response.



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Facebook	436	27%
At a KCC building (e.g., children’s centre, youth hub, library, Gateway, Adult Education Centre)	434	27%
An email from KCC	295	18%
From a friend or relative	207	13%

SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Kent.gov.uk website	83	5%
KCC's staff intranet	73	5%
From another organisation	70	4%
Newspaper	34	2%
District Council / Councillor	32	2%
Local KCC County Councillor	25	2%
Poster / postcard	15	1%
Twitter	9	1%
Somewhere else	112	7%

SERVICE USAGE

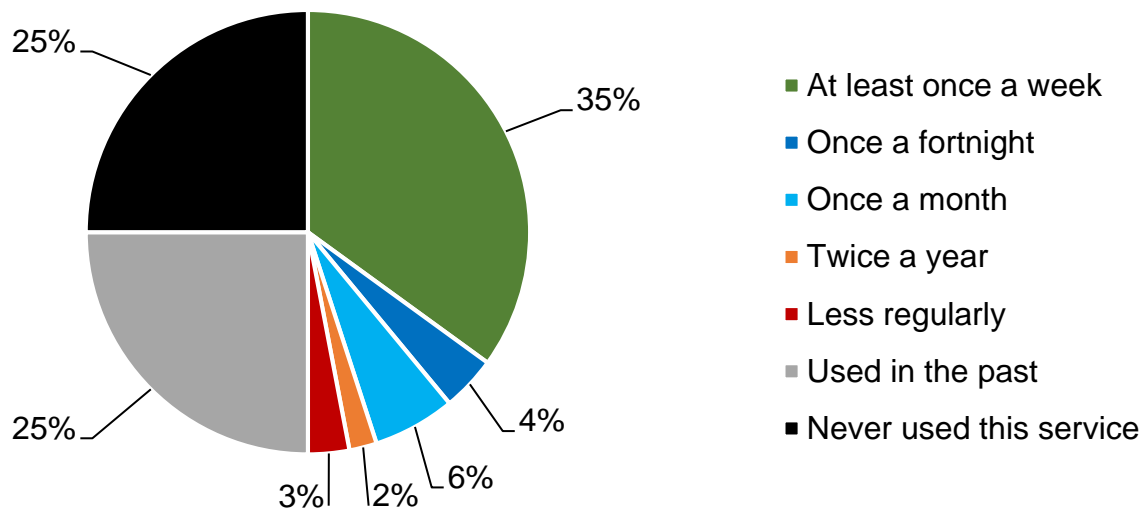
This section of the report summarises current and historic use of each of the services referenced in the consultation, as reported by consultees.

CHILDREN'S CENTRES

- 50% of consultees answering indicated they currently use Children's Centres. 45% of consultees answering indicated they personally use children's centres at least once a month (35% at least once a week, 4% once a fortnight and 6% once a month).
- 25% of consultees answering indicated they have used Children's Centres in the past and 25% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use Children's Centres...?

Base: all answering (1,518)

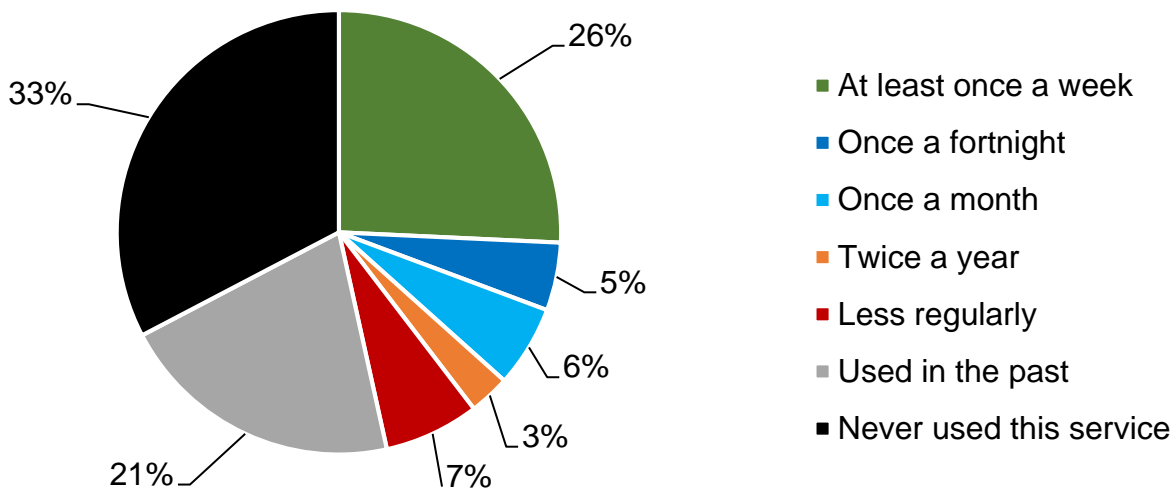


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	524	35%
Once a fortnight	60	4%
Once a month	94	6%
Twice a year	37	2%
Less regularly	46	3%
Used in the past	372	25%
Never used this service	385	25%

- 46% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Children’s Centres. 37% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (26% at least once a week, 5% once a fortnight and 6% once a month).
- 21% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used Children’s Centres in the past and 33% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use Children’s Centres ...?

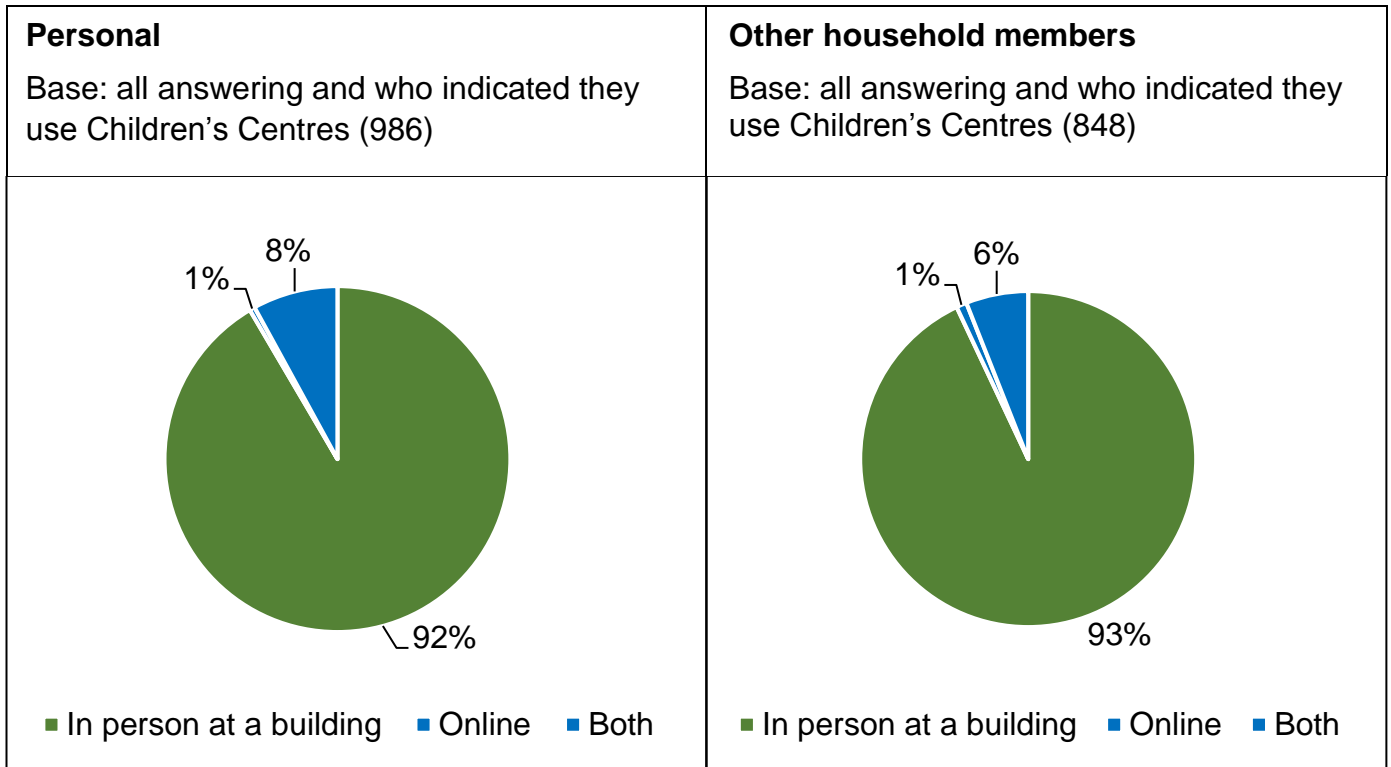
Base: all answering (1,484)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	381	26%
Once a fortnight	68	5%
Once a month	94	6%
Twice a year	46	3%
Less regularly	96	7%
Used in the past	315	21%
Never used this service	484	33%

- 92% of consultees who personally use Children’s Centres indicated they use them in person at a building. 8% use Children’s Centre services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 93% indicated they use them in person at a building. 6% use Children’s Centre services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use Children’s Centres…?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	903	92%
Online	8	1%
Both	75	8%

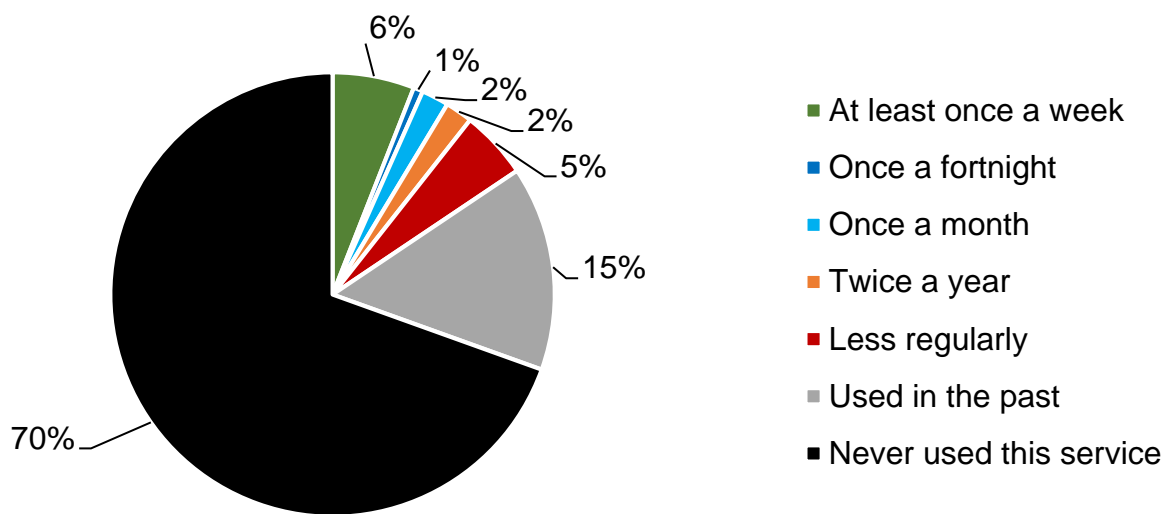
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	787	93%
Online	8	1%
Both	53	6%

YOUTH HUBS

- 16% of consultees answering indicated they currently use youth hubs. 9% of consultees answering indicated they personally use Youth Hubs at least once a month (6% at least once a week, 1% once a fortnight and 2% once a month).
- 15% of consultees answering indicated they have used Youth Hubs in the past and 70% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use Youth Hubs...?

Base: all answering (1,405)

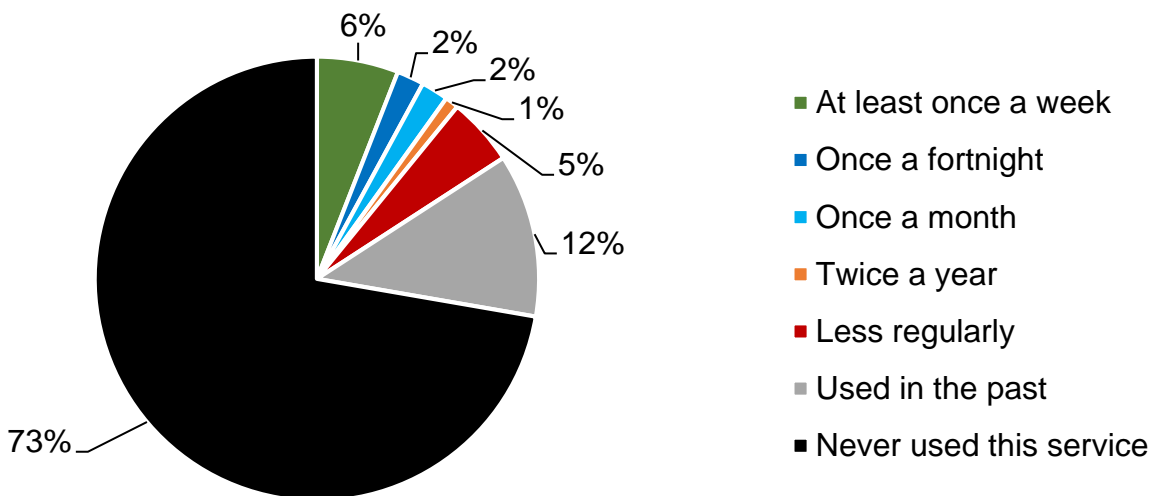


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	89	6%
Once a fortnight	10	1%
Once a month	22	2%
Twice a year	28	2%
Less regularly	71	5%
Used in the past	208	15%
Never used this service	977	70%

- 15% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Youth Hubs. 10% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (6% at least once a week, 2% once a fortnight and 2% once a month).
- 12% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used Youth Hubs in the past and 73% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use Youth Hubs...?

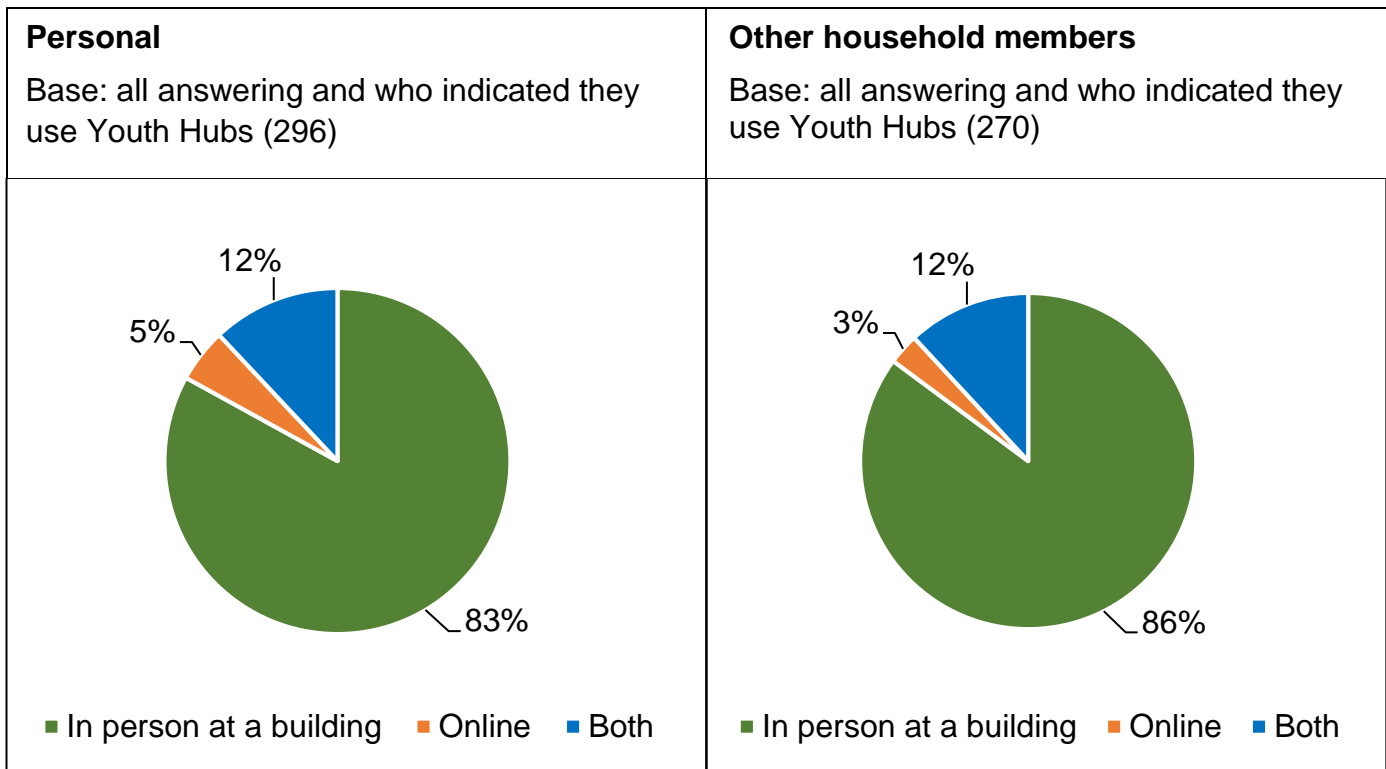
Base: all answering (1,407)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	81	6%
Once a fortnight	22	2%
Once a month	34	2%
Twice a year	14	1%
Less regularly	64	5%
Used in the past	162	12%
Never used this service	1,030	73%

- 83% of consultees who personally use Youth Hubs indicated they use them in person at a building. 5% use these services online and 12% use these services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 86% indicated they use them in person at a building. 3% use these services online and 12% use these services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use Youth Hubs...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	246	83%
Online	15	5%
Both	35	12%

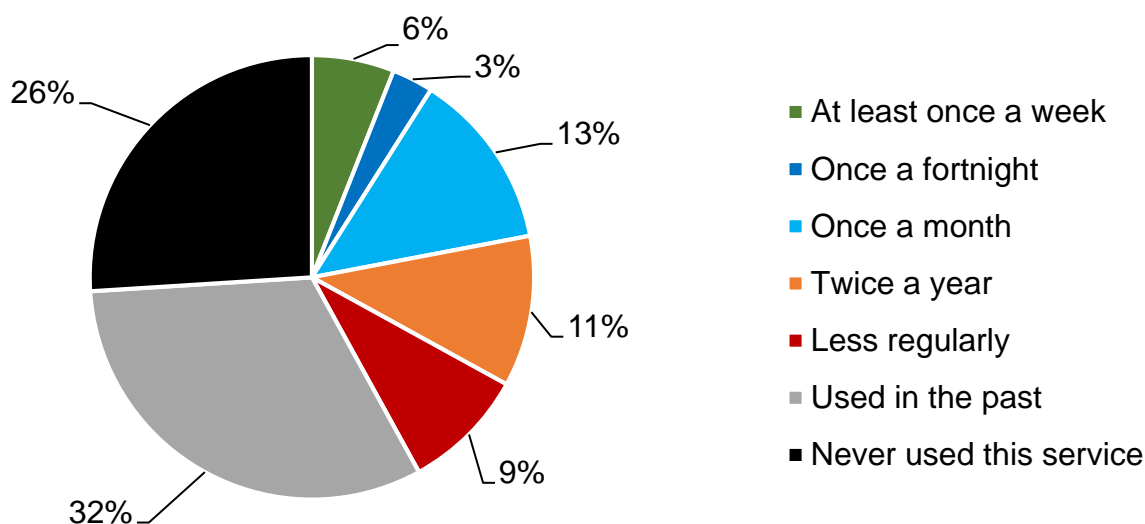
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	231	86%
Online	7	3%
Both	32	12%

HEALTH VISITING SERVICE

- 41% of consultees answering indicated they currently use the Health Visiting Service. 22% of consultees answering indicated they personally use the Health Visiting Service at least once a month (6% at least once a week, 3% once a fortnight and 13% once a month).
- 32% of consultees answering indicated they have used the Health Visiting Service in the past and 26% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use the Health Visiting Service...?

Base: all answering (1,461)

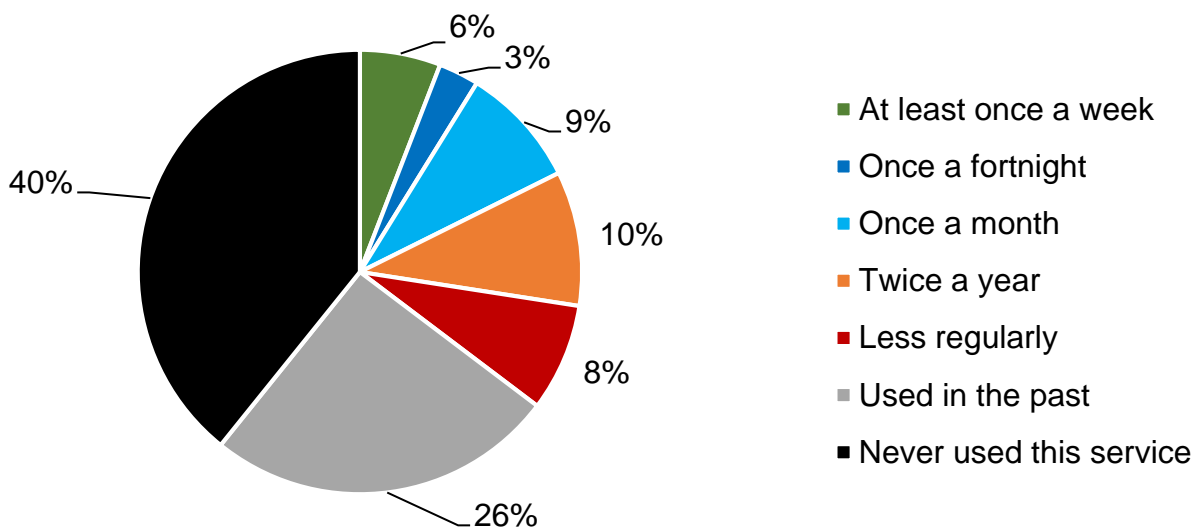


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	88	6%
Once a fortnight	43	3%
Once a month	190	13%
Twice a year	154	11%
Less regularly	128	9%
Used in the past	474	32%
Never used this service	384	26%

- 35% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Health Visiting Service. 17% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (6% at least once a week, 3% once a fortnight and 9% once a month).
- 26% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used the Health Visiting Service in the past and 40% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use the Health Visiting Service...?

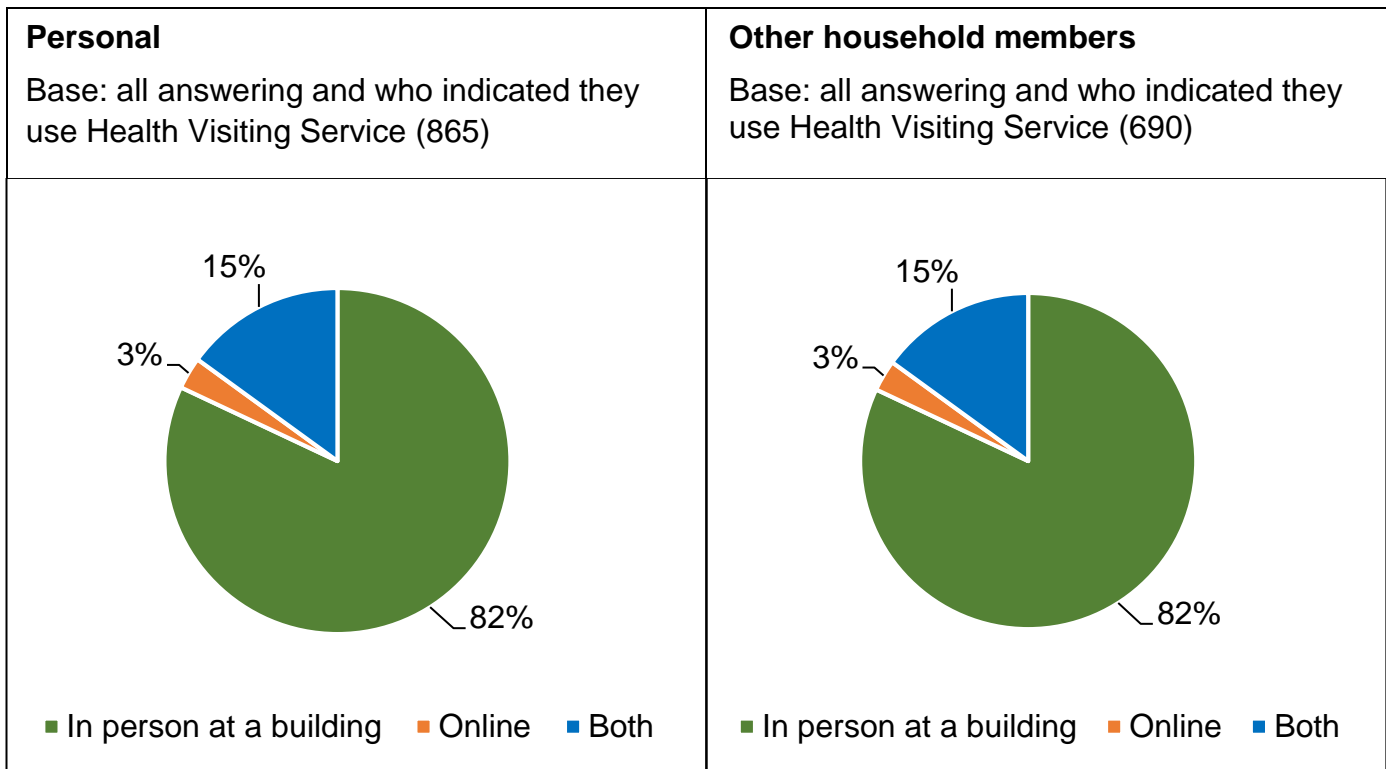
Base: all answering (1,428)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	80	6%
Once a fortnight	40	3%
Once a month	122	9%
Twice a year	136	10%
Less regularly	115	8%
Used in the past	366	26%
Never used this service	569	40%

- 82% of consultees who personally use the Health Visiting Service indicated they use them in person at a building. 3% use these services online and 15% use these services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 82% indicated they use them in person at a building. 3% use these services online and 15% use these services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use the Health Visiting Service...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	710	82%
Online	27	3%
Both	128	15%

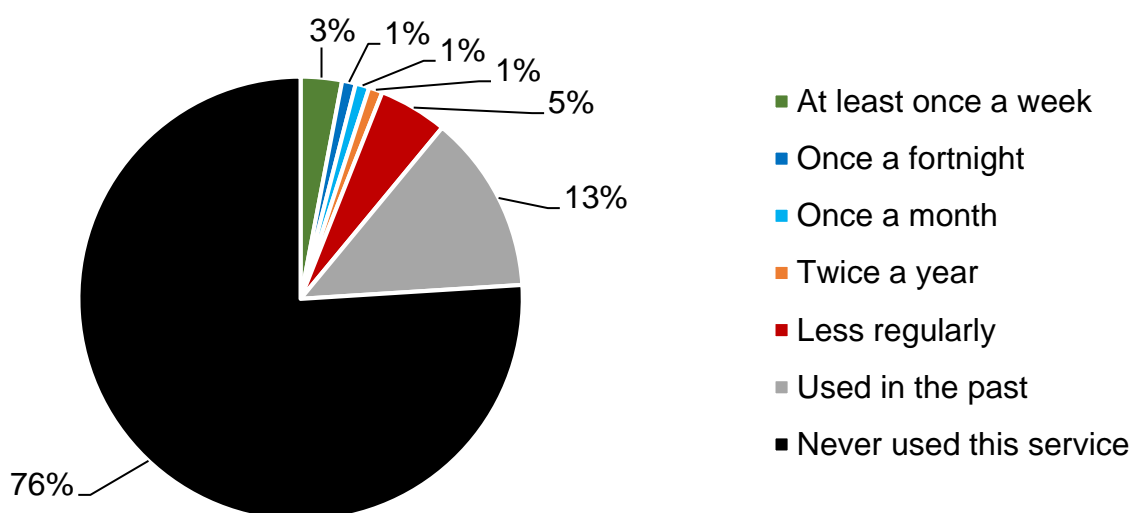
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	566	82%
Online	18	3%
Both	106	15%

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

- 11% of consultees answering indicated they currently use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. 5% of consultees answering indicated they personally use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service at least once a month (3% at least once a week, 1% once a fortnight and 1% once a month).
- 13% of consultees answering indicated they have used the Children and Young People's Counselling Service in the past and 76% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service...?

Base: all answering (1,409)

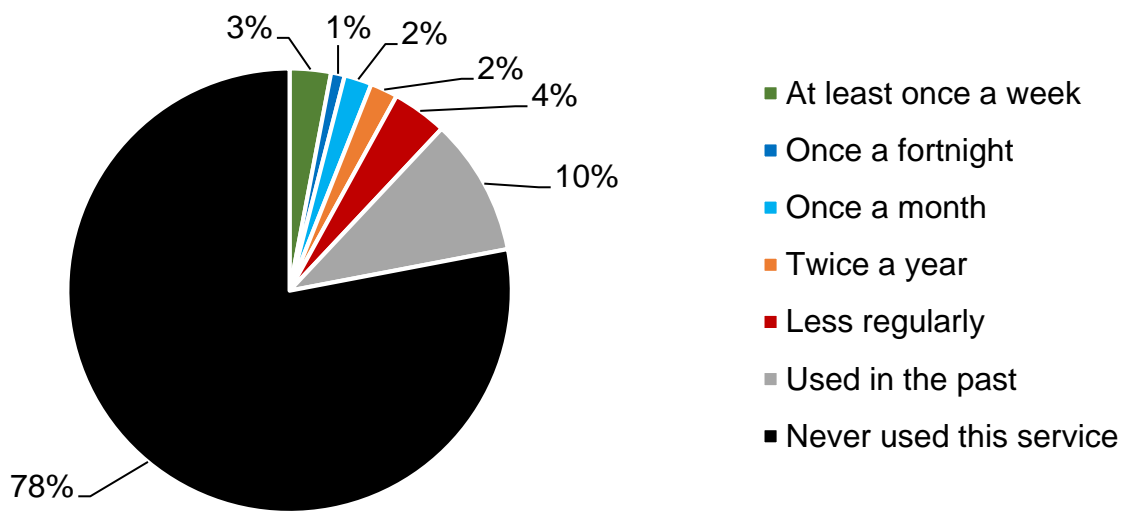


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	36	3%
Once a fortnight	15	1%
Once a month	20	1%
Twice a year	15	1%
Less regularly	73	5%
Used in the past	178	13%
Never used this service	1,072	76%

- 12% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Children and Young People’s Counselling Service. 6% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (3% at least once a week, 1% once a fortnight and 2% once a month).
- 10% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used the Children and Young People’s Counselling Service in the past and 78% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use the Children and Young People’s Counselling Service...?

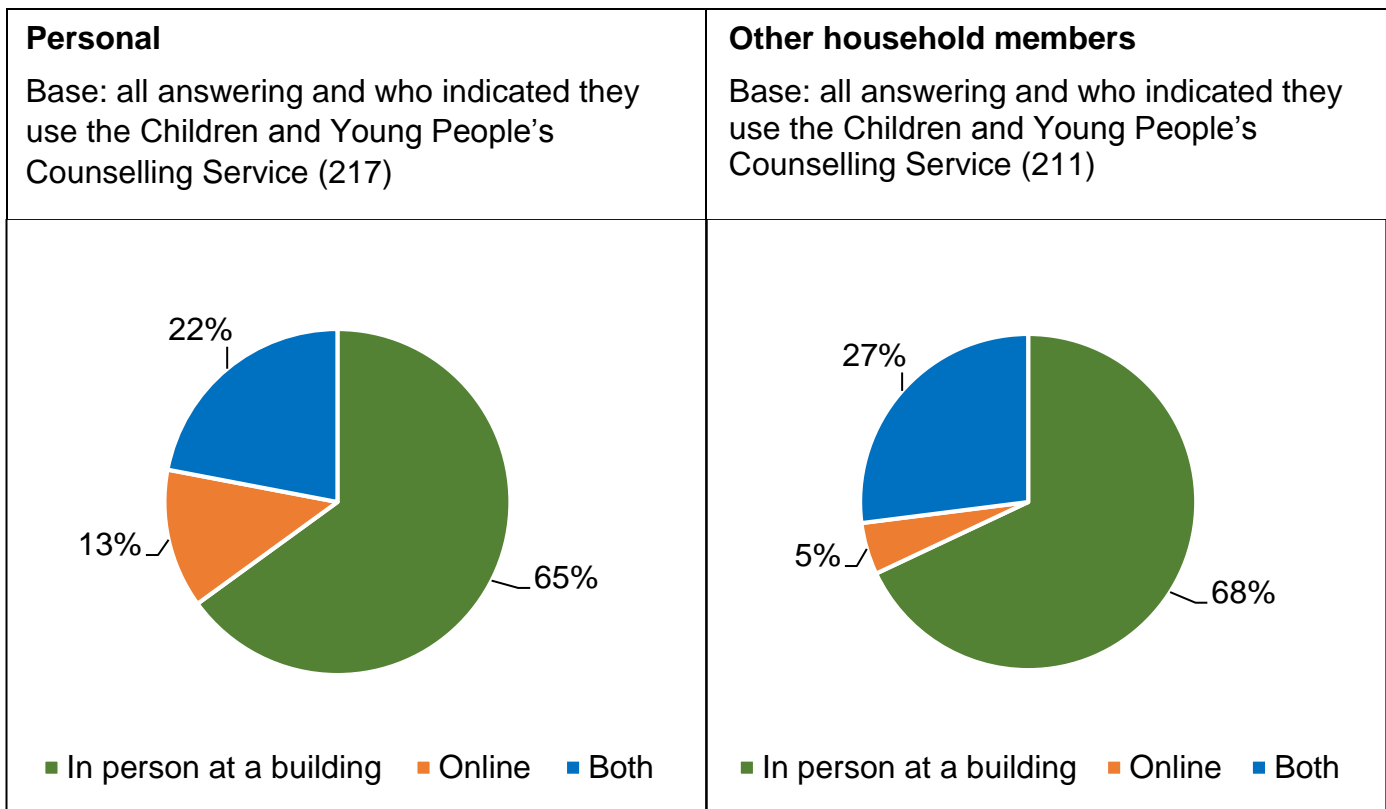
Base: all answering (1,405)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	36	3%
Once a fortnight	16	1%
Once a month	31	2%
Twice a year	23	2%
Less regularly	63	4%
Used in the past	146	10%
Never used this service	1,090	78%

- 65% of consultees who personally use the Children and Young People’s Counselling Service indicated they use them in person at a building. 13% use these services online and 22% use these services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 68% indicated they use them in person at a building. 5% use these services online and 27% use these services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use the Children and Young People’s Counselling Service ...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	140	65%
Online	29	13%
Both	48	22%

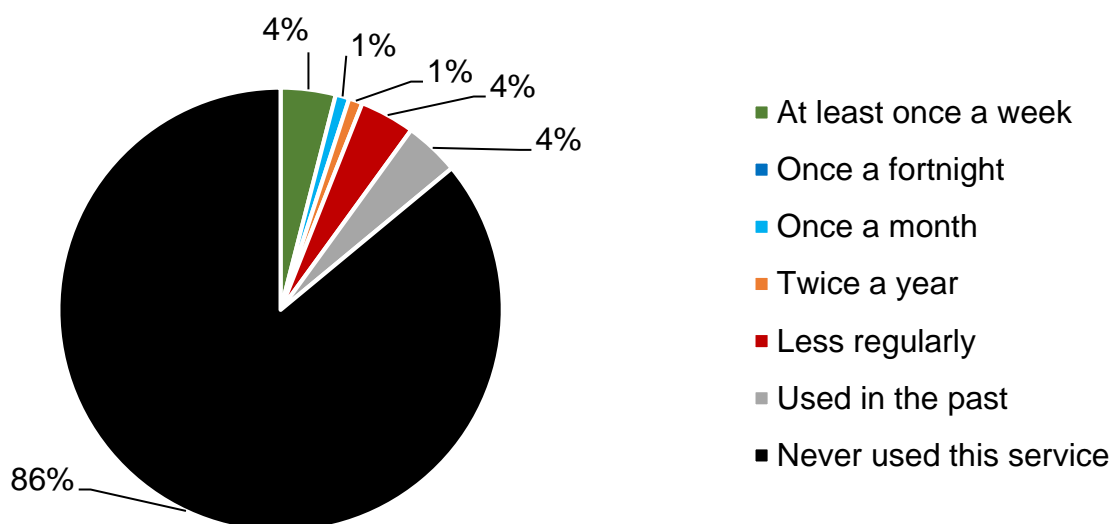
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	143	68%
Online	11	5%
Both	57	27%

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

- 10% of consultees answering indicated they currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 5% of consultees answering indicated they personally use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities at least once a month (4% at least once a week and 1% once a month).
- 13% of consultees answering indicated they have used Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities in the past and 76% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities...?

Base: all answering (1,425)

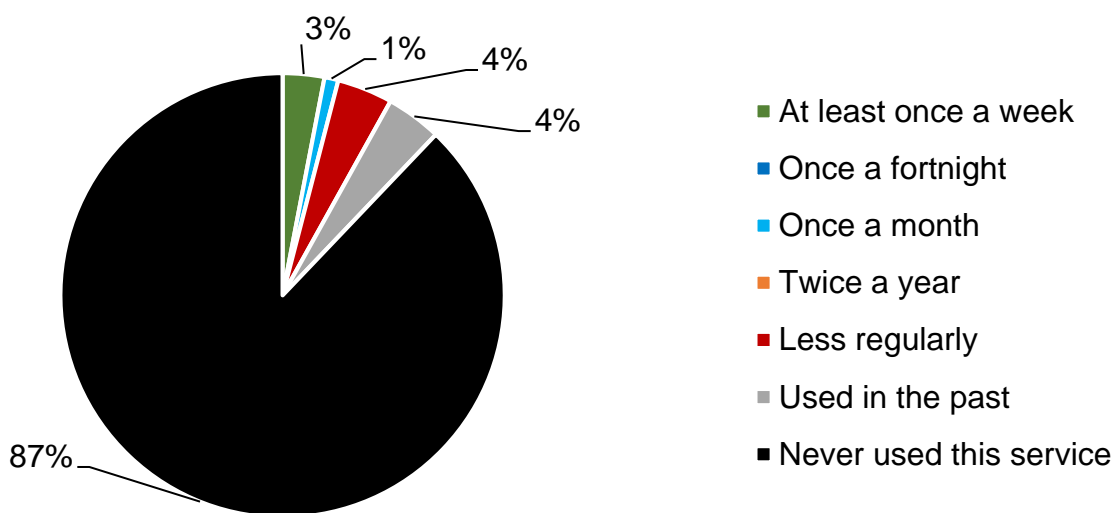


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	55	4%
Once a fortnight	5	0%
Once a month	17	1%
Twice a year	10	1%
Less regularly	61	4%
Used in the past	55	4%
Never used this service	1,222	86%

- 9% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 5% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (3% at least once a week and 1% once a month).
- 4% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used the Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities in the past and 87% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities...?

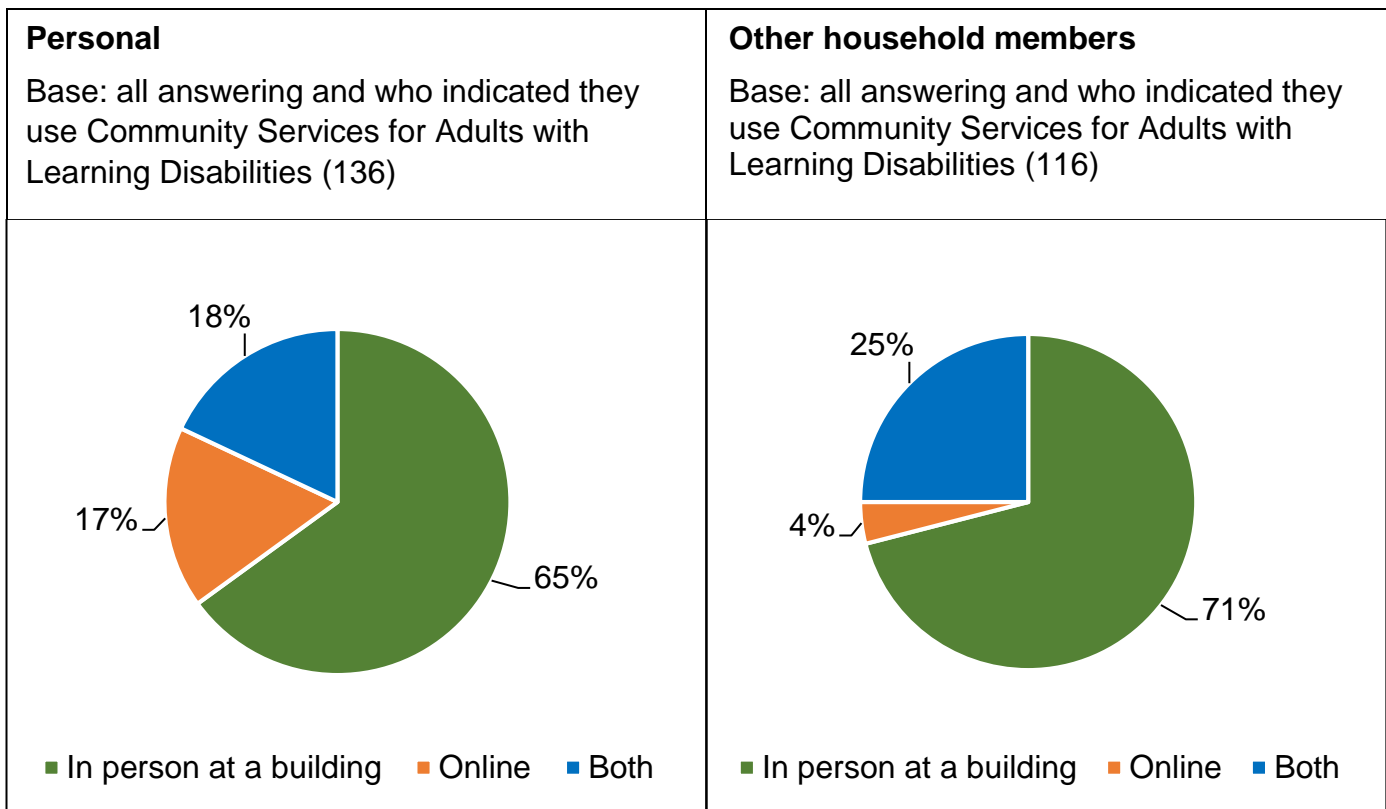
Base: all answering (1,401)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	46	3%
Once a fortnight	5	0%
Once a month	15	1%
Twice a year	6	0%
Less regularly	53	4%
Used in the past	51	4%
Never used this service	1,225	87%

- 65% of consultees who personally use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities indicated they use them in person at a building. 17% use these services online and 18% use these services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 71% indicated they use them in person at a building. 4% use these services online and 25% use these services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	89	65%
Online	23	17%
Both	24	18%

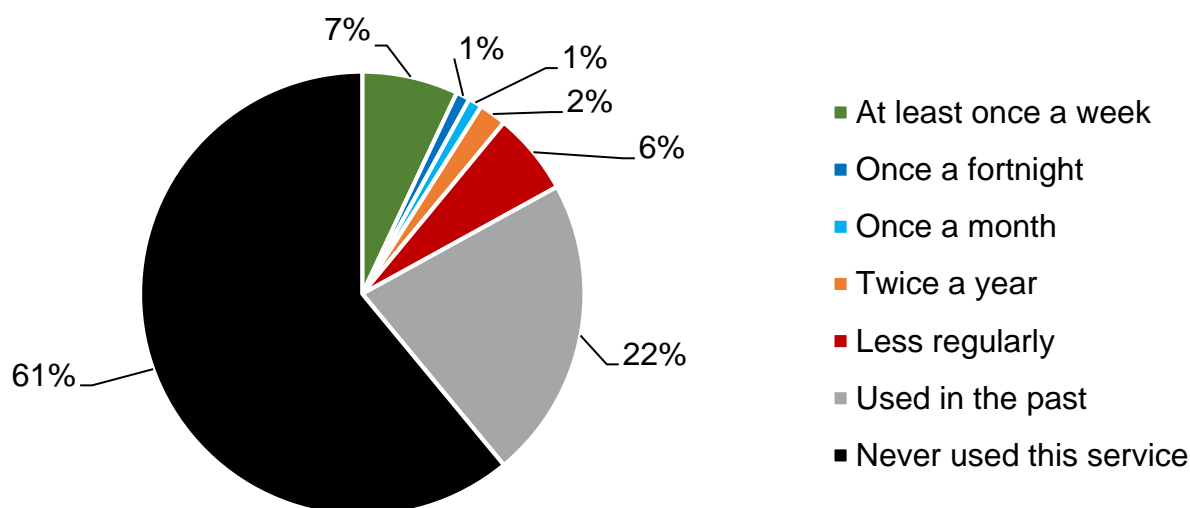
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	82	71%
Online	5	4%
Both	29	25%

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS - ADULT EDUCATION

- 17% of consultees answering indicated they currently use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services. 9% of consultees answering indicated they personally use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services at least once a month (7% at least once a week, 1% at least once a fortnight and 1% once a month).
- 22% of consultees answering indicated they have used Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services in the past and 61% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services...?

Base: all answering (1,458)

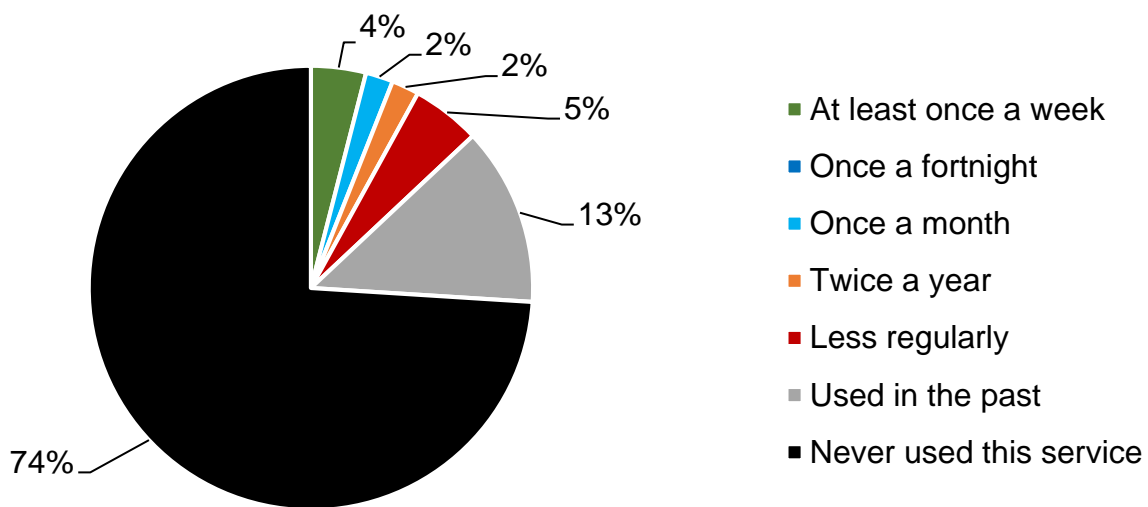


SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	102	7%
Once a fortnight	12	1%
Once a month	21	1%
Twice a year	33	2%
Less regularly	82	6%
Used in the past	315	22%
Never used this service	893	61%

- 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services. 6% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (4% at least once a week and 2% once a month).
- 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used the Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services in the past and 74% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services...?

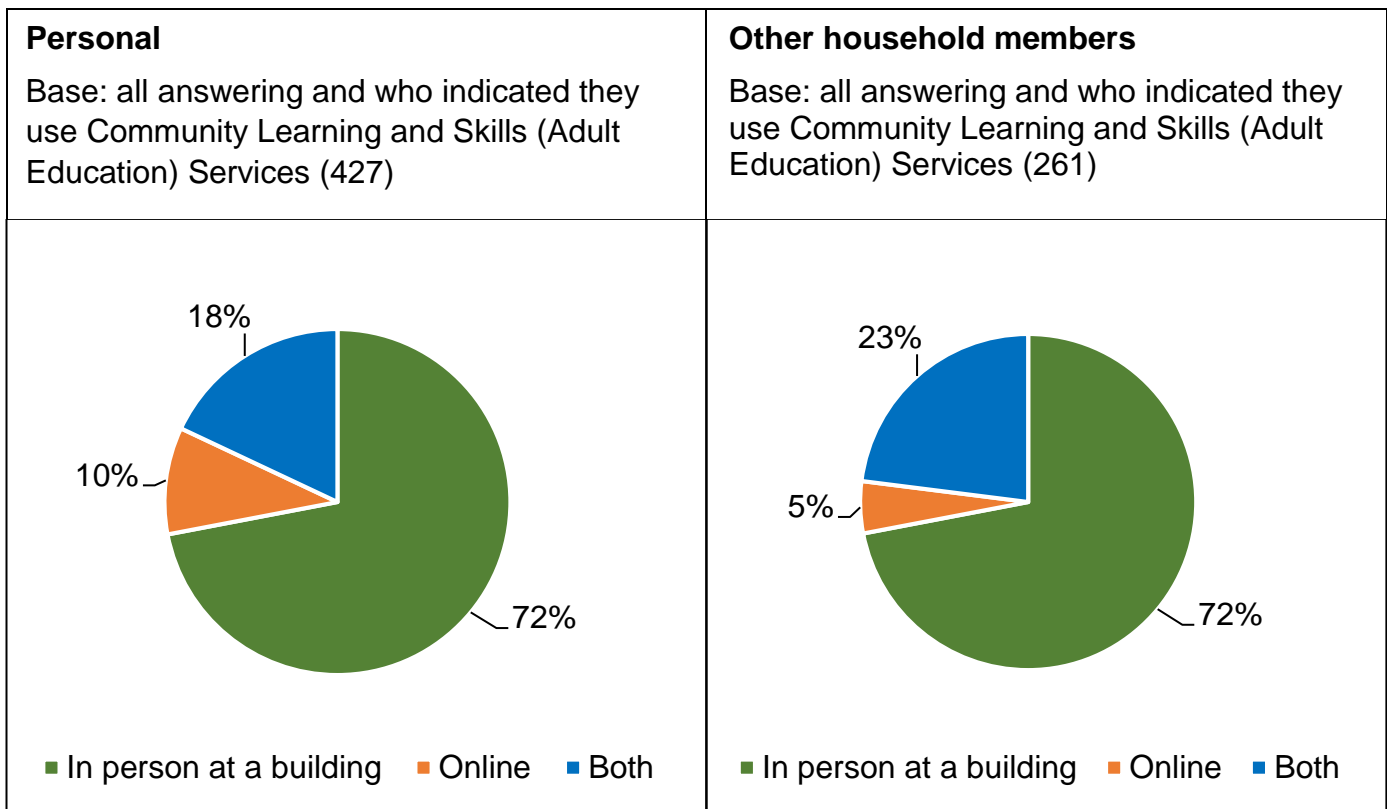
Base: all answering (1,414)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	51	4%
Once a fortnight	7	0%
Once a month	24	2%
Twice a year	30	2%
Less regularly	65	5%
Used in the past	187	13%
Never used this service	1,050	74%

- 72% of consultees who personally use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services indicated they use them in person at a building. 10% use these services online and 18% use these services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 72% indicated they use them in person at a building. 5% use these services online and 23% use these services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services ...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	309	72%
Online	41	10%
Both	77	18%

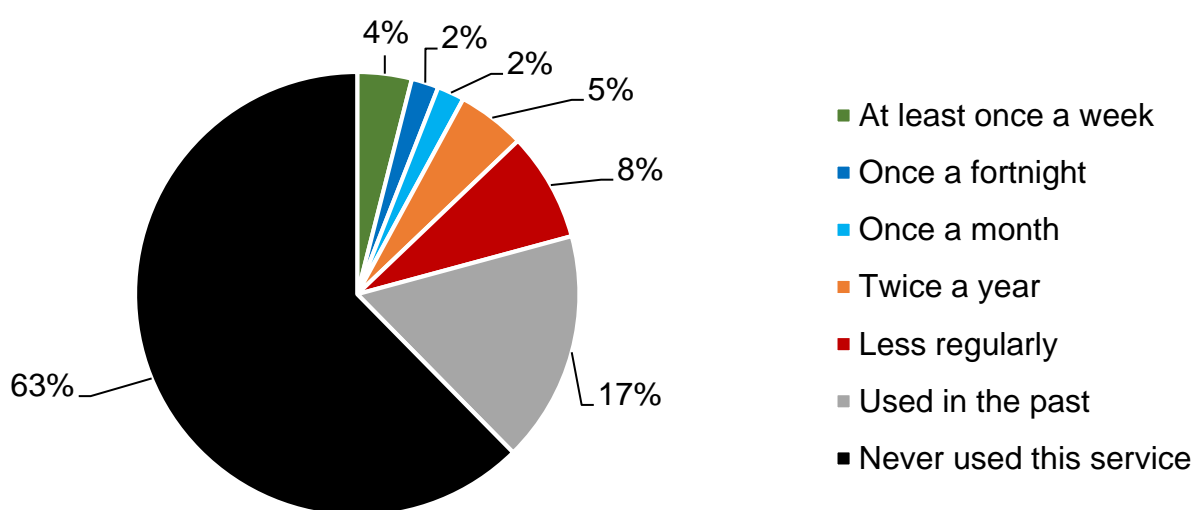
OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	189	72%
Online	12	5%
Both	60	23%

GATEWAYS

- 20% of consultees answering indicated they currently use Gateways. 8% of consultees answering indicated they personally use Gateways at least once a month (4% at least once a week, 2% at least once a fortnight and 2% once a month).
- 17% of consultees answering indicated they have used Gateways in the past and 63% indicated they have never used them.

Frequency of use - personal - Please tell us how often you use Gateways...?

Base: all answering (1,437)

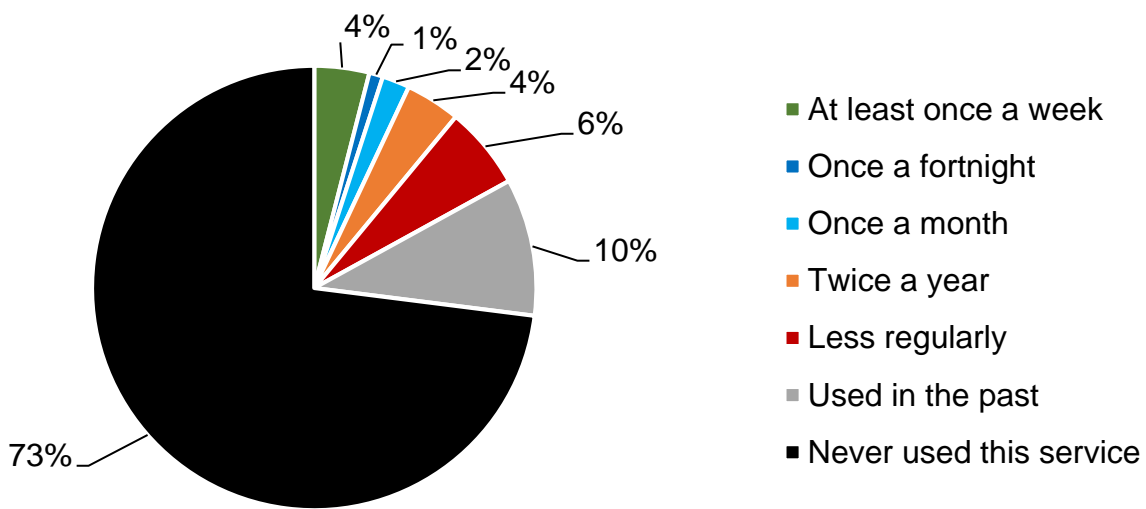


SUPPORTING DATA TABLE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	57	4%
Once a fortnight	24	2%
Once a month	30	2%
Twice a year	71	5%
Less regularly	108	8%
Used in the past	243	17%
Never used this service	904	63%

- 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways. 7% of consultees answering indicated use is at least once a month (4% at least once a week, 1% once a fortnight and 2% once a month).
- 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members have used the Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education) Services in the past and 74% indicated other household members have never used them.

Frequency of use - other members of household - Please tell us how often other people in your household use Gateways...?

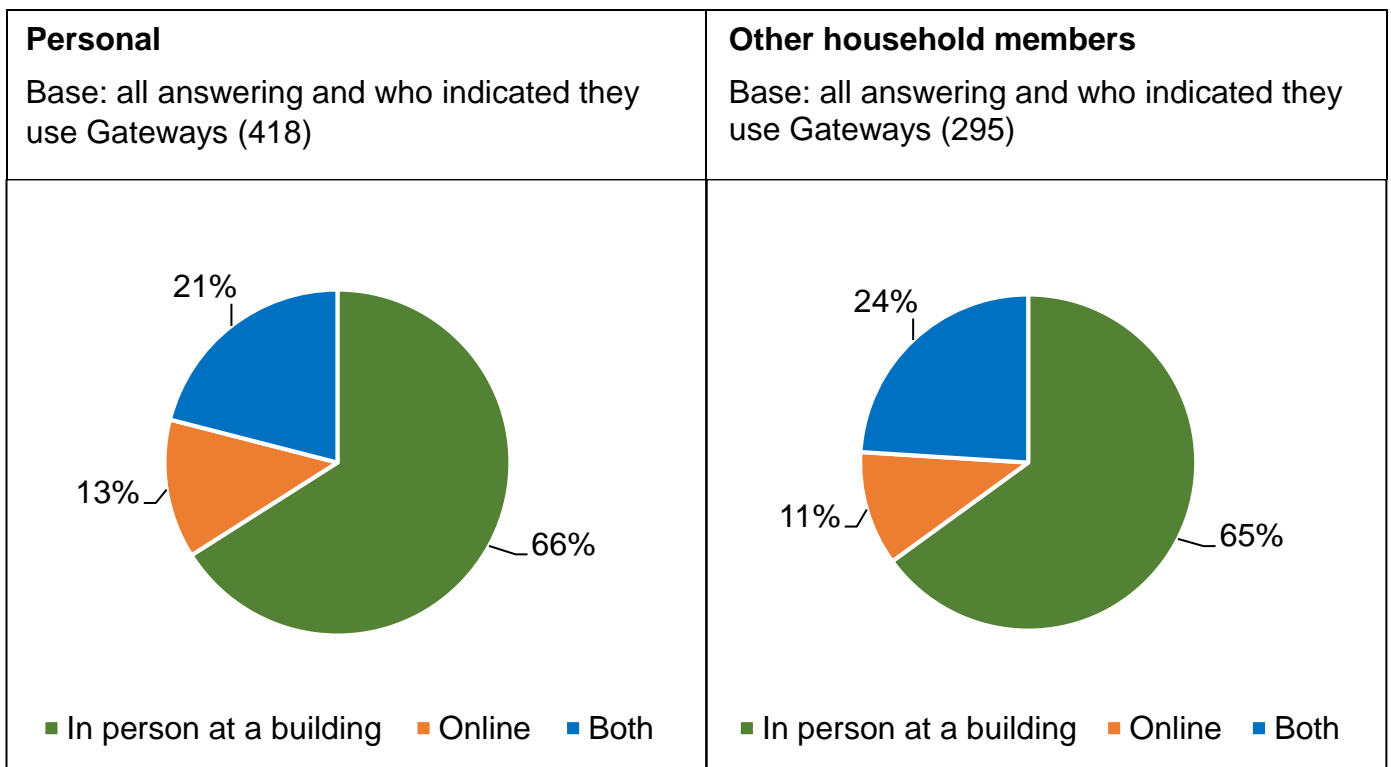
Base: all answering (1,399)



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
At least once a week	49	4%
Once a fortnight	16	1%
Once a month	29	2%
Twice a year	50	4%
Less regularly	89	6%
Used in the past	139	10%
Never used this service	1,027	73%

- 66% of consultees who personally use Gateways indicated they use them in person at a building. 13% use Gateway services online and 21% use Gateway services in person at a building and online.
- Amongst other members of the household, 65% indicated they use them in person at a building. 11% use Gateway services online and 24% use Gateway services in person at a building and online.

Type of use - Please tell us how you use Gateways...?



PERSONAL - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	277	66%
Online	53	13%
Both	88	21%

OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS - SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
In person at a building	192	65%
Online	33	11%
Both	70	24%

RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS ON HOW TO DELIVER SERVICES

This section of the report summarises feedback from consultees with regards to the proposals put forward to deliver services.

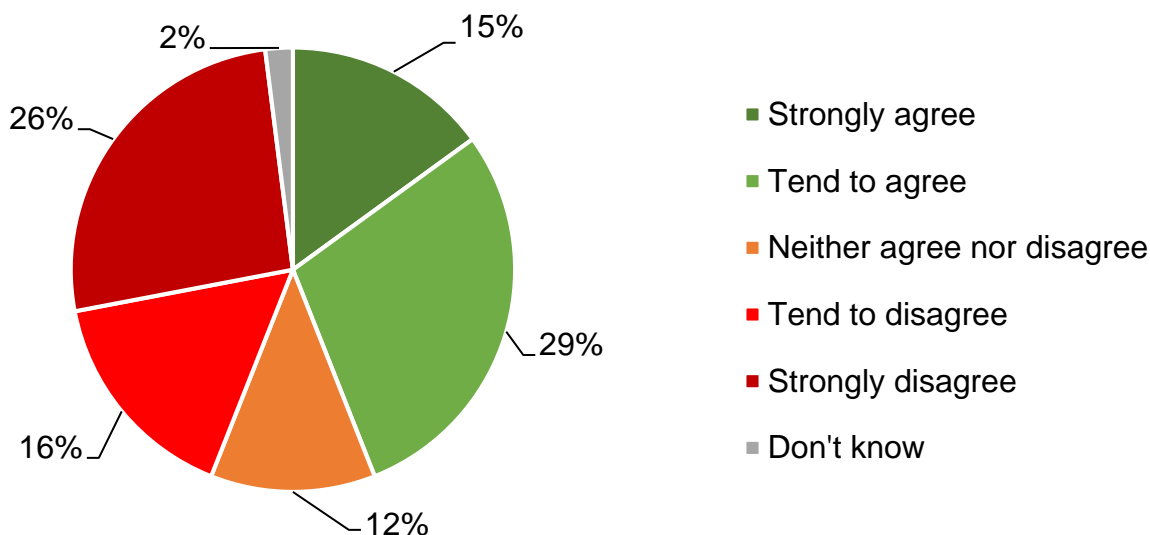
DESIGNING PROPOSALS WHERE PEOPLE HAVE THE HIGHEST SERVICE NEED

- Views are polarising with 44% of all consultees answering indicated they agree with designing the proposals by looking at where people have the highest need for services (15% indicated they strongly agree).
- 42% of all consultees answering indicated they disagree with this approach (26% indicated they strongly disagree). 12% neither agree nor disagree.

We have designed the proposals by looking at where people have the highest need for our services. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach...?

Base: all answering (1,589)

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	702	44%
Net: Disagree	665	42%



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Strongly agree	240	15%
Tend to agree	462	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	185	12%
Tend to disagree	253	16%
Strongly disagree	412	26%

Don't know	37	2%
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There are significant differences in agreement with the approach taken by demographic:

- A higher proportion of female residents disagree with the approach (44%) compared to male residents (21%).
- Agreement with the approach taken increases with age with 28% of residents aged 25-34 agreeing with the approach and 66% of residents aged 65 & over agreeing.
- A higher proportion of residents who have children or are expecting children disagree with the approach (47%) compared to residents who do not have children (16%).
- 48% of resident consultees who use at least one of the prompted consultation services disagree with the approach. 31% of those who do not currently use these services disagree.

We have designed the proposals by looking at where people have the highest need for our services. How much do you agree or disagree with this approach...?

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW - BY DEMOGRAPHIC (number of consultees answering reported in brackets)	Net Agree %	Net Disagree %
Male resident (160)	65%	21%
Female resident (756)	44%	44%
Resident aged 25-34 (217)	28%	60%
Resident aged 35-49 (300)	47%	42%
Resident aged 50-64 (210)	56%	29%
Resident aged 65 & over (152)	66%	22%
Resident who have children / expecting children (659)	41%	47%
Resident who do not have children (171)	71%	16%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (251)	32%	55%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	30%	56%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	39%	48%
Resident with children aged 11-19 years old (161)	48%	40%
At least weekly user of one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (624)	35%	50%
Currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (1,030)	38%	48%
Do not currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (559)	55%	31%

Out of the 14 consultees completing the Easy Read version of the consultation questionnaire, 7 indicated they agreed with the approach and 5 disagreed. 2 indicated they were uncertain.

There are differences in agreement with the approach taken by organisation type:

- Of the 14 Parish/Town/Borough/District Councils who completed the consultation questionnaire in an official capacity, 11 indicated they agree with designing the proposals by looking at where people have the highest need for services. 2 disagree.
- Of the 28 Parish/Town/Borough/District/County councillors who completed the consultation questionnaire, 14 indicated they agree with the approach. 8 disagree.
- Of the 31 educational establishments who completed the consultation questionnaire, 13 indicated they agree with the approach. 15 disagree.
- Of the 31 charity, voluntary or community sector organisations who completed the consultation questionnaire, 14 indicated they agree with the approach. 14 disagree.

MISSING DATA IN UNDERSTANDING WHERE SERVICE NEED IS HIGHEST

Consultees were also given the opportunity to comment in their words on any data they believe has been missed out but should be used to understand where need for services is highest across Kent. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 35% of consultees answering via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment at this question.

- The most common feedback put forward by consultees is to review data on children's centre usage / understand the importance of the children's centres to those currently using (33% of consultees commenting), the availability and cost of public transport and the potential impact on non-car users (26%), consider the impact of proposals on the mental health of users / outcomes for those no longer able to access services (23%).
- 21% commented on whether users will be able to get to alternative service provision as they can't walk to those outlined and need to access services closer to home.

We have used a lot of data and information to help understand where need for our services is highest across Kent. This is shown in the consultation document. If you think we have missed out any data that should be used, please tell us what it is.

Base: all answering (613)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Data on children's centre usage / importance of children's centres needs to be understood	204	33%
Availability and cost of public transport / impact on non-car users	162	26%
Consider the impact on mental health of users / outcomes for those who won't be able to access the service(s)	138	23%
Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	127	21%
Data on everyone / not just deprived areas / everyone can be in need / someone will always miss out	114	19%
Survey the users / your data doesn't tell the full story	68	11%
Object to the closures / changes / venues / services	68	11%
Planning for the future / future needs / increase in housing will mean increase in demand	64	10%
Suitability of space / building / is it fit for purpose	26	4%
Data is out of date / affected by covid / not from pre-pandemic levels	22	4%
Midwifery services data	22	4%
Data on climate impact / sustainability of buildings / carbon emissions / net zero	11	2%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Times of sessions / groups	4	1%
Comments related to cost impacts / cutbacks / spend	18	3%
Something else	19	3%

Some example verbatims from the key themes of usage and transport can be found below:

“Any data showing how much use the existing services and locations are used, in particular whether residents from the high need wards have accessed.”

“Have you looked at what percentage of the community use these services? Which centres were slowest to reintroduce services post-pandemic, which may affect current use levels? What other services are available in the local area - e.g. smaller communities will be worst affected because there are fewer alternative services available in the area.”

“I think you should talk face to face to the people that use it and understand their journeys and experiences rather than relying on statistics that don't tell the full story and can be misrepresented and miss key points.”

“You haven’t collected data showing the true picture because you are missing and failing those who need services since you stripped them back due to Covid. You don’t know who needs what and where because you haven’t been offering anything actually needed.”

“Your data is probably erroneous and probably don’t give a true idea of how many people use these services. Since Covid the services across the children centre therefore automatically less people will use and there are less services available close to home. These children are really good to help parents especially when they have questions about baby newborn and young kids and can help reduce people queuing to the GP (which is a shamble in itself) and other health services. Therefore less pressure on the NHS nationally and also combat depression & other future issues etc.. where mums go and meet other mums m, learn best practices, share ideas & concerns help babies socialise & communicate which is key in development.”

“The Beaches Children Centre is placed at the eastern side of the Isle of Sheppey which is surrounded by 15 of 16 holiday parks. Beaches Children’s Centre is located in an area of isolation for many people due to; lack of footpaths, an unreliable bus service, and shops that shut for two months of the year due to losing its custom when the holiday parks close. If Beaches closed and a family from the Leysdown area would like to attend a toddler session at a Children’s Centre, they would have to get the bus to either Sheerness or two buses or a bus and a train to Queenborough to the proposed Queenborough library. It would take a family 41 minutes from Leysdown via bus to sheerness to get to Seashells. It would take a family to get from Leysdown to the Queenborough Library, between 1hr 10 minutes and 1hr 27 minutes. The challenges families may face when travelling with their family from Leysdown/Warden to Sheerness or Queenborough are as follows - Public transport not turning up on time and missing the session, the cost public transport, no

public footpaths so no option to walk and the group being fully booked and being turned away even after travelling for long period.”

“Concern has been raised over the failure to include metrics on how services are used and how the service users and staff are likely to access the proposed facilities. The indicators used to form the analysis are descriptive of the service user, but do not explain how they’re likely to behave, which in turn may impact the effectiveness of the needs-based angle that KCC is taking. An example of this would be the inclusion of “public transport connectivity”; connectivity doesn’t necessarily mean that users will use public transport when travelling to a location, regardless of its proximity, especially given the cost of public transport, the recent cuts to bus routes and potential future cuts, and preferences towards private car use. Team members also expressed concern over the failure to include carbon reduction as one of the indicators that formed part of the community needs analysis, as whilst this is included as a potential metric for determining which buildings to close, it is not considered to be a community need, even though it could be argued that it is.”

“Car ownership and access to public transport. Individuals and families who require support may not own a car or have access to a car at all times of the day. Many work or have caring responsibility for children, parents and therefore time limited. In 2021 22% of households did not have a car. www.gov.uk/government National Travel Survey. Does the data collect also consider the % of households without access to a car being greater or less in the areas of greatest need? Did the data take into account accessibility of public transport in the areas of greatest need to new centres? (journey times) Did the data look at the cost of transport and would the increased cost impede essential use of the service? Did the data look at the cost of transport and would the increased cost impede essential use? Did the data compare the age of people who access a service? What is the impact on the young, less able and elderly?”

“We believe that this was a really difficult task, but perhaps the analysis is lacking some local knowledge about the challenges faced by communities with public transport links and about the directions in which families travel to access services. In some cases it seems that decisions were based on population density, but not always in the same way (keeping rural centres and asking large populations to travel there OR keeping town centres and excluding those living in rural areas). It also seems that travelling across District lines hasn’t always been considered as an option. In some cases typical public health data can lead to services being funded in areas of high deprivation, when actually the need for those services may be needed by more people in areas of lower deprivation (breastfeeding support after birth as an example).”

“Information on travel time to receive healthcare (health visiting/ maternity services) and poorer health outcomes. Impact of moving services online which have commonly been face to face until the COVID19 pandemic. Research which shows improved outcomes for mothers using children’s centres such as better mental health, Improved early education in the home and reduced parent child dysfunction interaction. The effect of increasing levels of deprivation and child poverty on outcomes for mothers and children. Travel info mentions outgoing but not return journeys and does not take into account issues with using buggies etc on public transport. The increased risk of online or virtual appointments in women being able to disclose domestic abuse and other crimes. Information concerning the cost of poorer health outcomes for women and children due to closures.”

Some example verbatims from the perspective of impacting the mental health of users / outcomes for those who won't be able to access the service can be found below:

“Number of people accessing services does not perhaps give the whole picture. Those accessing, do they have financial resources to travel to other locations, do they rely on those services for mental health/warmth/comfort/social/support generally. What is the impact of removing those contact points? This is not an issue that can be fully assessed with data on activity and perceived local deprivation.”

“You cannot deprive less populated areas as transport is expensive. This will help mother's mental health as well as children's wellbeing. Deprive because there are less people will only put more strained in their mental state.”

“You have not looked at mental health. As someone who suffered from post-natal depression, Blossom's children centre was invaluable to just 'pop along to' when I was having a bad day. You are proposing for our closest centre to be 8 miles away, which if you can't drive is a 25 minute bus ride. This would not help someone with mental health issues.”

“There are still many families in high need of our services, they cannot afford to travel or are too anxious to travel to what would be their next nearest centre. I have mothers with serious mental health struggles who only just make it out of their house to walk 10 minutes to their nearest centre in Tenterden. They would never get on a bus or taxi/car to travel to another centre. Closing the only two rural centres in Ashford and leaving all three centres in the town is a badly made decision as you are missing out on so many families by doing this. Closing one centre in Ashford would've made sense.”

Some also commented on data not considering potential increases in population or closures / reductions in children centre services affecting the data used to base proposals:

“The significant rise in of new builds that are now occupied in Faversham area. When you looked at your data there were very few residents as the properties had not been finished. Now along with social housing the significant number of residents has potential to influence your service requirements and building purposes..”

“The Ray Allen Centre located on Stanhope Road, Ashford, TN23 has been closed for around 5 years. When it was open it was a much used and valued centre. You will not have any relevant data as it has been closed due to lock-down and then proposed development that is occurring in the area.”

Specific verbatim feedback from Parish / Town / Borough / District Councils in an official capacity and Parish / Town / District / County Councillors can be found below:

“5 of the 8 children's centres are proposed to be cut in Dartford. This area has a steadily expanding population and a young demographic, as people raising families are attracted to

the rail links to London and very good schools in this area. We need to see an increase rather than decrease in services for children and families.”

“Upcoming developments in Northern Sevenoaks where population will increase significantly if they are approved by the Local Planning Authority. Also landscape and topography needs to be considered regarding accessibility. Relocating a service in town where public will have to walk up a hill or use bus services to access it is not going to increase the amount of people that can use it, but rather decrease it.”

“Availability of public transport and timings to get to and from the new location of the services. Recently published census data.”

“The public transport data is out of date. The information in the consultation suggests travel times to proposed buildings but this must be looked at again. The data does not look at the regularity of busses, I included travel times to all KCC building instead of looking at the buildings and sufficiency in more detail. The information does not include estimates refurbishment costs. This is a cost saving exercise and it would be self-defeating if the cost to refurbish the proposed building are not included. There is no information regarding the proposed increase in car usage. There is no equalities assessment regarding the proposals.”

“We believe that there is something missing with regards to the decisions made around the closure of the two children's centres (Dymchurch Children's Centre and Lydd Children's Centre). This has not considered the transport issues or associated costs in accessing the remaining alternative provision. This area is very rurally isolated, coupled with high levels of deprivation, means that the alternative provision is out of reach for the majority of users. We would like to KCC to reconsider this proposal and work with us on either retaining the provision as is, or to look to suitable premises for alternative delivery. Buildings such as libraries, where the general members of the public frequent, are not suitable buildings to incorporate services designed for babies and very young children. It would be useful to get a better understanding of the transport link data that has been used, and also whether Free School Meals is included in any of the data sets. Is adult data excluded where children's services are being looked at? Has there been an assessment of other buildings that children's services (co-located services) could be operated from, e.g. schools or community centres/village halls? If so, what reinvestment back in terms of funding is being considered for this?”

“It is noted that a public transport catchment area methodology has been used which relies on a database which is updated on a quarterly basis. The data used for the consultation is based on a snapshot in time. Bus services are known to frequently change and/or are subject to being reduced or cancelled (and would be difficult to bring back once they are lost), and it is therefore not known going forward how reliable these transport services will be. Such changes could have serious implications for some users in reaching service destinations. Some journeys may also not be direct and involve a change enroute to a service building and may not run at suitable frequency or times of the day, also to the detriment of service users. Therefore if the above methodology is used, a suitable review mechanism should be built in. The consultation suggests travel times of 30 minutes on public transport. It takes no account of other users; i.e. bus companies' restrictions on the number of pushchairs on each bus (maximum two or none if a wheelchair user is already aboard). Where alternative services are shown to be located within 10 minutes walking distance, it is not apparent that the issue of topography has been considered. Tunbridge Wells is well known for its undulating topography, and this may make walking (or indeed

cycling which is not mentioned as a form of transport in the consultation documents) difficult for some service users. In addition, given that the proposals have been designed looking at where service users have the highest need, it is important that the level of need is monitored and reviewed on a regular basis given that service needs and circumstances for a particular ward or area may change over time.”

“Children in poverty data. Data doesn’t always define exactly what is happening within communities due to transient communities and those who do not interact officially with services and therefore you should be mindful that there are communities in Swale that you may not have captured through this process.”

“The ability of many households to travel to proposed alternative venues will be challenging. Many vulnerable households will face longer and more costly travel with likelihood of this reducing their ability or willingness to engage with services and activities. In some areas of the borough bus services only run only at peak times reducing opportunities to travel at other times of the day and on occasions buses may be unable to stop to pick up passengers if already full.”

“Journey times on buses or trains cost money, vulnerable families have limited finances. Bus timetables have been significantly reduced because of KCC cuts, therefore limiting the access these families need to reach towards support. Train journeys to Maidstone, give no direct access to Shepway Childrens Centre, a bus journey would be needed following a long walk from Maidstone East to the bus station depot. At the entry point of the train, there are no accessible points for buggies or pushchairs. Only the Shepway Children’s Centre has very limited accessibility by road, rail or bus, not Cranbrook Library – just check the bus and train timetables. Shepway Children’s Centre as outlined above is not readily accessible within a 30 minute public transport catchment. Basic bus timetables have NOT been consulted before making these broad inaccurate statements that 96% of residents can travel from the closed centre to the replacement. As KCC we have a statutory function to meet the needs of vulnerable families. Forcing families to rely on public transport when they will have a significant journey time and a cost which they can’t afford. In reality the most certain outcome will be that these journey’s will not be made. The practical outcome will be that these families will not seek support for themselves and the vulnerable children will be lost to the system, until they reach school. Then KCCs problems begin. The children’s needs will be identified late, as a result, an increasing percentage of educational, behavioural and medical need, will place more strain on all of the services. As well as increasing the number of EHCP plans, adding to our budgetary challenges.”

“Kent County Council have made a very clear statement as part of this consultation. It says, “our proposals have been designed by considering where there is greatest need for our services.” However, the reasons for the proposed changes appear to be primarily about property rather than need. The consultation document talks about the needs of residents in each individual ward in Maidstone. The consultation document recognises that there are more deprived wards than others but fails to recognise the impact of the proposals on those wards. The needs-based assessment that accompanies the consultations identifies High Street Ward and Shepway (North) as two of Maidstone’s most deprived wards. It is proposed that two children’s Centres will close in Maidstone - in East Ward and Marden and Yalding Ward as well as the relocation of Adult Education from High Street Ward to Heath Ward. In assessing ‘need’ we are not confident that this has been considered as comprehensively as we would have expected for a number of reasons.”

PROPOSALS TO CO-LOCATE SERVICES

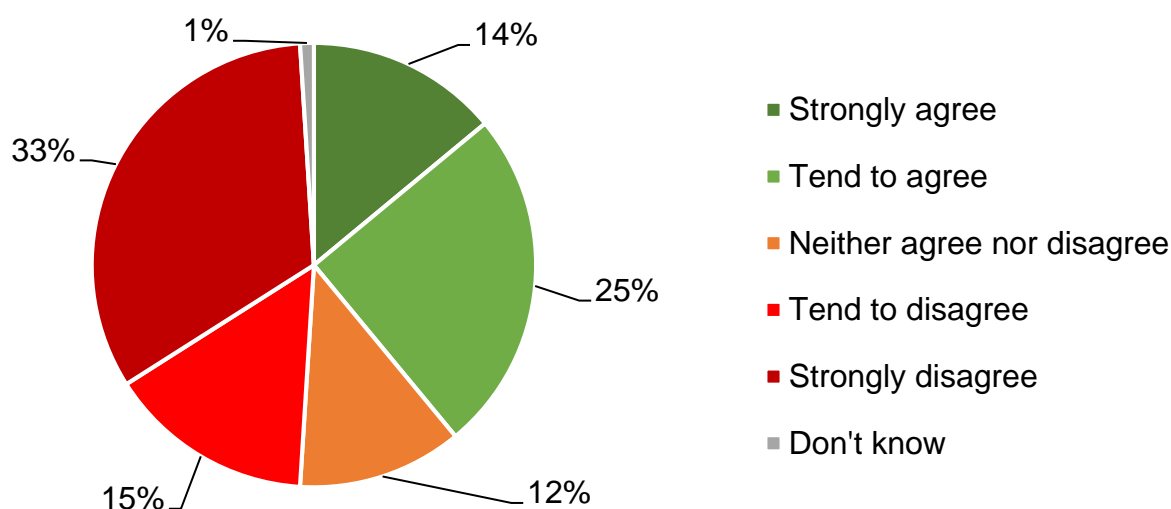
- Views are polarising with 39% of all consultees answering indicating they agree with the proposal to co-locate some services as explained in the consultation document (14% indicated they strongly agree).
- 48% of all consultees answering indicating they disagree with this approach (33% indicated they strongly disagree). 12% neither agree nor disagree.

We propose to co-locate services from more of our buildings. This means people will be able to access more than one KCC service from some of our buildings. Proposed co-locations are shown in the consultation document.

How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to co-locate some of our services, as explained in the consultation document...?

Base: all answering (1,583)

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	611	39%
Net: Disagree	764	48%



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Strongly agree	215	14%
Tend to agree	396	25%
Neither agree nor disagree	191	12%
Tend to disagree	240	15%
Strongly disagree	524	33%
Don't know	17	1%

There are significant differences in agreement with the proposal to co-locate some services by demographic:

- A higher proportion of female residents disagree with the proposal (49%) compared to male residents (26%).
- Agreement with the proposal increases with age with 22% of residents aged 25-34 agreeing with the proposal and 68% of residents aged 65 & over agreeing.
- A higher proportion of residents who have children or are expecting children disagree with the proposal (52%) compared to residents who do not have children (22%).
- 54% of resident consultees who use at least one of the prompted consultation services disagree with the proposal. Whilst comparably lower, it should be noted that 37% of those who do not currently use these services also disagree with the proposal.

How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to co-locate some of our services, as explained in the consultation document...?

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW - BY DEMOGRAPHIC (number of consultees answering reported in brackets)	Net Agree %	Net Disagree %
Male resident (160)	61%	26%
Female resident (749)	38%	49%
Resident aged 25-34 (217)	22%	63%
Resident aged 35-49 (299)	33%	52%
Resident aged 50-64 (205)	55%	31%
Resident aged 65 & over (151)	68%	25%
Resident with children / expecting children (653)	34%	52%
Resident with no children (173)	68%	22%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	22%	61%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	19%	68%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	35%	54%
Resident with children aged 11-19 years old (160)	51%	38%
At least weekly user of one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (624)	25%	58%
Currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (1,028)	32%	54%
Do not currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (555)	51%	37%

Out of the 13 consultees completing the Easy Read version of the consultation questionnaire, 4 indicated they thought co-location was a good idea and 4 disagreed. 5 indicated they were uncertain.

There are differences in agreement with the proposal to co-locate some services by organisation type:

- Of the 16 Parish/Town/Borough/District Councils who completed the consultation questionnaire in an official capacity, 8 indicated they agree with the proposal to co-locate some services. 6 disagree.
- Of the 28 Parish/Town/Borough/District/County councillors who completed the consultation questionnaire, 11 indicated they agree with the proposal. 12 disagree.
- Of the 31 educational establishments who completed the consultation questionnaire, 9 indicated they agree with the proposal. 18 disagree.
- Of the 31 charity, voluntary or community sector organisations who completed the consultation questionnaire, 13 indicated they agree with the proposal. 17 disagree.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN CO-LOCATING SERVICES

Consultees were also given the opportunity to comment in their words on what they believe to be important when considering co-locating services. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 77% of consultees responding via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment at this question.

- The most common feedback put forward by consultees is whether users will be able to get to alternative service provision as they can't walk to those outlined and need to access services closer to home (51% of consultees commenting).
- This is followed by the availability / cost of public transport and recent service reductions (33%) and the practicality of co-located services (22%) and the suitability of proposed buildings / setups (19%).
- 21% commented on the need to consider the impact of proposals on the mental health of users / vulnerable / for those no longer able to access services.

What do you think is important for us to consider when co-locating services...?

Base: all answering (1,347)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	684	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	449	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	295	22%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	280	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	258	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	189	14%
Parking	118	9%
Comments referencing objections to closures	93	7%
Demand for the services / including potential future demand	66	5%
Timing of sessions / groups	48	4%
Potential cost implications of co-location / concern about cutbacks	44	3%
Impact on / concern for staff (e.g., having to travel about more / accessibility concerns / how staff will manage co-location)	41	3%
Commented that it's a good idea	31	2%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net zero pollution will pass on to end users / more people travelling	24	2%
Maximise use of KCC buildings / existing buildings where possible	15	1%
Ensure people know where to go / communicate changes / locations	15	1%
Outdoor space provision	9	1%
Other	26	2%

Some example verbatims from the key themes of users being able to get to alternatives / needing close location of services and public transport concerns can be found below:

“Additional services that run from the centres, including EKHUFT maternity services which are already extremely busy. Travel needs of those closest to the centres marked for closure - often seeking support at the most vulnerable times so travelling can be a block to accessing that.”

“The key point must be the infrastructure for people to access the services. Many disadvantaged people or suffering mental health issues, really don't need to added stress of having to pay and use public transport. There could be a possibility of "service pop ups" on stated day of the week for offering drop in service in the manner of MP Surgeries. This mobile service would then be offering a far reaching approach to all residents of Kent.”

“Transport. Many people who access your services may not have access to a car or drive. It would isolate people if transport wasn't good. A new mum wanting to access a health visitor or breastfeeding support may have had a C-section or traumatic birth and if the chosen location is a distance from their home they may decide not to make the journey.”

“It's all about access. Merge services in a building that is not accessible would be pointless. I remember the NHS created some walk-in centres that patients could only walk-in to if they had a car to drive there in the first place. Most people who the service was aimed at did not have cars.”

“The proposed closures affect fifteen settings that currently operate from Children's Centres. If these settings were to close as a consequence, we would lose 648 places that could be offered at any one time to children. However, because many children attend nursery part time, the total number of children on roll at each of the nurseries could be much higher, so this presents as a significant loss. We are also concerned that where services are being co-located at other Children's Centre sites where there is existing nursery provision, that these settings could also be affected by the plans. A further thirty-three settings could be impacted with places for 1162 children at any one time, which again could be a significantly higher number of children if many are attending part time places.”

“Access. A lot of families where I live either have to walk or take public transport to children centres and closing these will stop some families accessing support. I really think the bigger impact on businesses as well as families is important. I have accessed midwifery

and Health Visiting care at children centres. Having to travel further would make attending appointments more difficult and impact on those services which are already struggling.”

“Ease of access, parking and transport. Closing blossoms where there is free parking on roads, good transport links, near a school is a mistake . It is not clear where children's services such as baby groups would be located, but if its dover that is not good. People join those groups to be part of their community, make new friends to go for coffee with and rely on each other through those early years it's not helpful to merge towns for that reason. Blossoms is a fantastic asset, which we all pay tax towards. The government should answer to your increase in costs, not us.”

Some example verbatims from the key themes of the practicality of co-located services / groups and concerns regarding building / space suitability can be found below:

“Space available to accommodate both the activities and services provided, and the staff who need somewhere to work from. Home working has proved difficult for some staff, but there is just no longer the space available for office based working. Also how the various services can actually work in the same environment. It may be difficult for adults with learning difficulties to be in the same place as noisy children and lots of people coming & going.”

“Less opportunity for children when existing locations are closed that have excellent facilities to be replaced by inadequate places e.g. Temple Hill library has no outdoor play area which is an essential requirement if early Yeats’s provision. Children from low income homes are less likes to have gardens and outside spaces. The proposal to move provision to the library takes this away.”

“Getting the balance correct for each service. Placing adult social care in a library area where each service would not benefit each other is not right. Youth centre in a library again is not a good balance. Both services benefit with space for their user and resources. Libraries are too confined, restricted and quiet which prevents the services to operate freely and enjoyable for the adults and youths using them.”

“Early conversations with District Councils to identify opportunities and sites for co-location is important. It is disappointing that this hasn’t taken place in advance of or as part of the development of current proposals. It is extremely worrying that the co-location of the alternative service provision for users of Marden Children’s Centre is Cranbrook Library and this is not yet confirmed.”

“Childrens centres are designed with children in mind with dedicated rooms a joint location may not have. Will also not have room for storage for resources used by multiple groups so would have to cut resources available to children.”

“Privacy and confidentiality of those using the service. If the location is multi-purpose, this greatly increases the chance that someone will be put off accessing much-needed services for fear of being seen by someone they know. This is a very, very serious concern.”

When filtering response on consultees who use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member), feedback is broadly consistent in terms of key themes identified:

- Whether users will be able to get to alternative service provision as they can't walk to those outlined and need to access services closer to home (51% of consultees commenting).
- Availability / cost of public transport and recent service reductions (31%)
- The impact of proposals on the mental health of users / vulnerable / for those no longer able to access services (24%)
- The practicality of co-located services / groups (23%) and the suitability of proposed buildings / setups (18%).

What do you think is important for us to consider when co-locating services...?

Base: Currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (864); responses 5% and over reported

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Users being able to get there / travel there / close location of services	444	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	270	31%
Practicality of co-located services / groups (e.g., children's centre in same space as library)	201	23%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	204	24%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	153	18%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	128	15%
Parking	70	8%
Comments referencing objections to closures	69	8%
Demand for the services / including potential future demand	43	5%

PERCEPTIONS OF DELIVERING SERVICES THROUGH OUTREACH

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide any comments about delivering services through outreach in their words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 46% of consultees responding via the consultation questionnaire provided a comment at this question.

- References to the concept of outreach being a good idea features in 24% of comments made. However, the majority of these comments also contain a cautionary note such as it depends on the service delivered, the service is well advertised and accessible to all to use.
- 21% of consultees answering commented that outreach services need to be accessible to potential users, via locations close to home / easily accessible by public transport.
- 17% of consultees answering commented that the type of services being considered are often used 'as they need them / without much prior planning' and in a familiar place and therefore consideration needs to be given for how outreach services are organised.
- 16% of consultees answering commented the suitability of the buildings needs to be taken into account in line with service delivery required for the services under consultation.
- 14% of consultees answering commented that the services under consultation will need to be assessed carefully to see if they are suitable for an outreach service compared to the service offered now.
- 12% of consultees answering commented that potential outreach services need to be regular and offered as a committed service so the current service offering isn't diluted and users are familiar with the services' regularity.

If you have any comments you would like to make about delivering services through outreach, please tell us...?

Base: all answering (807)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Comments referencing it's a good idea (unspecified / for some services)	190	24%
Users need to be able to get there / travel there / close location (for staff and users)	172	21%
Services under consultation are used as people need them / daily / need a permanent place / familiarity	137	17%
Consider the general suitability of the building(s) used	128	16%
Services need to be assessed carefully to see if they are suitable for an outreach service / alternative offering	117	14%
Services need to be committed / regular / service not diluted	98	12%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Needs to be advertised well / users know when / where / not missing anyone	82	10%
Disagree with proposals / don't close or make changes to current service provision	61	8%
Concern about storage space for equipment / resources	56	7%
Use existing buildings / why close one to use another / costs to hire	55	7%
Perception that outreach isn't good / doesn't work	48	6%
Comments referencing a need for more outreach services	42	5%
Vulnerable users / disabled being able to get there / alternatives meeting their needs	32	4%
Belief this will result in closing down services altogether	24	3%
Comments referencing face to face access is best	13	2%
Other	28	3%

Some example verbatims from referring to the outreach concept as being a good idea can be found below:

“The idea is perfect. Your examples of execution are poor. This ends up in lists and huge wait times and the most needy losing support.”

“Very common practice for decades in rural areas. Improve performance, make more use of public buildings during normally closed hours such as libraries and schools. Consider availability of churches and similar faith properties.”

“Outreach is great and we should do less online and more outreach as it is a better preventative model.”

“Outreach works and promotes community and discouraged car travel and allows active travel routes to deliver folk to local centres. Also keeps the local community halls open with a purpose.”

“The outreach services are amazing and they should remain available. However, there isn't always a health visitor at these services, so relying on such services without additional help available is not sensible where a person may be at risk.”

“Outreach is good in theory except it becomes a service you have to book in for rather than a place to go to when you need it! Will outreach be face to face or online?!!”

“Outreach is great but often relies on those delivering the outreach to use their own transportation to bring resources - as a result resources are often limited or not of the quality you would have ‘on site’. It also is a problem for storing resources and them being cared for properly.”

“Delivering of services through outreach would be beneficial for service users in accessing services. Outreach is essential for inclusivity and ensuring that those who need services most can access them to support reduction in health inequalities. The proposed outreach does not consider enough of Sheppey within the Swale borough. Consideration for outreach on the East of the Isle of Sheppey has not been included in the consultation, leaving a gap in service provision for an area that has a population with high need. The cuts to the voluntary and community sector within Swale and Sheppey in particular will have an additional impact to the needs of residents on the island, and therefore this must be considered when assessing co-location and delivery of services on the island.”

Some example verbatims from referring to some of the anticipated challenges with outreach services relating to the services under consultation can be found below:

“Many children and young adults with disabilities need consistency and reliability and this includes where the venue for a service is. Other considerations need to be taken into account. Is the facility going to be used at the same time by other members of the public. Many disabled adults and children are very vulnerable for a variety of reasons so the need to keep them safe is greater than the general public. Also, many will have sensory issues around lighting and noise and busy environments, which will need to be taken into account, as well as parking to allow easy access for those with physical disabilities and mobility problems.”

“It’s unattractive. Likely to be very confusing for those with anxiety learning disabilities and autism. Would not have attended the alternatives suggested as an isolated new mother due to distance and location on busy roads. Having a disabled child meant public transport was not possible and no parking at many sites. Walking along 2 miles of constant traffic also dangerous and impossible with young children.”

“It needs to be in a place that is central, a town, a centre that has a nursery where parents can use other services at the same time, ask questions when taking their child to nursery.”

“Outreach is great, should be done in conjunction with a base, so that everyone knows where they can go if they are in need of a service. Outreach not always possible or well publicised.”

“The use of outreach services is often not well publicised or advertised and the signage for those access venues is poor so people don’t even know the outreach services exist. Those venues are sometimes not fully accessible and lack parking. Having permanent locations is comforting- families know where to go, the setting becomes familiar, the staff become familiar and this helps build up lasting trust between families and service providers that is invaluable and cannot be replicated in outreach settings.”

“Outreach is important for those who cannot access services through centres but it's not good enough. Temporary basis means at some point it will be withdrawn leaving people with the same issues they had before it was available, we need permanent and reliable services.”

“You would need to reach a certain number of people who require access closer to their community before this is arranged. Again, this is not going to benefit those that use these services as needed and when needed and those people may need to wait numerous weeks

to get the support they are seeking when it could have been more easily available to them if their local services were not closed.”

“Please consider the impact on the service users’ disabilities, e.g. an autistic person will not respond to change, needs advanced notice, look of the building etc even a change within the building from one appointment to the next can be hard to manage.”

“Health visiting services need to be in a more permanent place and serve the local community/ward rather than the whole of the town district. Outreach needs to be buggy accessible, in a place with good transport links and parking that is nearby or onsite.”

“The location of centralised services needs to be appropriate to the area of highest need within the locality, ensuring that the site can be accessed not just by car but by all other forms of transport, including good public transport links for those who do not have access to a car or cannot afford taxis, as well as cycle or footpath links. The service offer provided by the hub should be appropriate to the needs of the location. A measure of the issues facing the local demographic should be taken to ensure that the provision is being provided on a factual basis and not just because it is a nice to have or seen as a requirement by a small number of residents. Detailed consultation with the local residents should take place to find out how they wish to access the services, including opening hours and what the offer looks like. When co-locating a number of services into the same location, it is vital that the appropriateness of specific services working alongside each other is considered. For example mixing a young person service with that of probation will lead to safeguarding issues and mixing youth services aimed at teenagers within children’s centres, as teenagers feel uncomfortable accessing them. The layout of the site can assist in alleviating some of these issues, as if there are opportunities to section off areas with separate entrances and/or utilise parts of the building when others are not open, although any options should be very carefully considered.”

“That as a minimum, the same level, standard and frequency of service is still provided. There could be more users and visitors to a particular building as a result of co-location and this may result in a busier service with more waiting times. Therefore, the provision of adequate resources is a key consideration. Ease of accessibility for all users – distance, topography and the ease of using a particular mode of transport including public, walking and cycling. There are concerns about confidentiality, residents’ willingness to ‘share’ with other services, which may reduce access rather than improve it.”

“One of our major concerns is that the move to outreach will leave services with no structure and we will start see them disappear or reduce over time as we have seen with some of the facilities not being re-opened after Covid.”

Some examples of delivering outreach services were put forward which identify potential ideas / suggestions for consideration:

“I have delivered outreach and the constraint's on a toddler group ,stay and play group are many ,the equipment ,furniture, child size would need to me moved and stored or moved to another location, but toys would be packed away at the end of every session and moved to another location ,there would be no child centred displays on the walls ,no child size toilet facilities and hand wash basins ,no child centred facilities .there would be limited facilities for parents ,no baby changing rooms ,no safe area for small toddlers to crawl and roll.”

“Outreach services will be critical to maintaining and growing services in the community, particularly where it is proposed to close permanent venues. The consultation has scant information on where or how these outreach services will be delivered. Many community venues, such as village halls, already have busy schedules and may not be able to accommodate extra activities. Social interaction is important for young families and delivering outreach services in the home will reduce the ability of families to form peer networks and support each other. We would like to be reassured that there will be sufficient skilled staff to deliver a comprehensive outreach service in both urban and rural areas of the borough.”

“The opportunity for outreach in Eastern Sheppey is very Limited. Warden Bay Village Hall is used full time from the local nursery. An outreach group was delivered previously from 2019-2020 from the Guide Hall in Eastchurch however this came with many challenges;

- 1. The families that we reached was low in numbers even with significant advertisement through Facebook, the timetable, leaflet drops to all local houses.**
- 2. Storage- we were not able to store any resources so we had to ensure the staff that were delivering the groups could transport the resources in their personal vehicles. We was not able to provide an enabling environment due to these restrictions therefore families preferred the centre.**
- 3. Safeguarding- there were many risks with the venue due to the old radiators being too hot , the swinging doors allowing children to push them back and forth and the other rooms from the building being freely accessible.**
- 4. Outreach is time consuming with travel and ensuring that we had enough time at the hall to warm it up and set up- This session took 2 people x 3.5hrs = 7hrs for a 1hr delivery session.**

Outreach can work well if the venue has capacity to store resources, these resources will need to be available to store at the different locations if not they will need to be purchased. Outreach requires more time due to the staff it requires and the time it requires to set up, this could have an impact on the service delivery.”

“They did this with Lilypad children's centre. It never reopened on Minster primary school site so they used to use new road community centre. It was better than nothing but so many people were there and the building was much smaller. Plus staff had to drive here and there between centres carrying toys and food around. Bizarre choice.”

“We deliver some outreach services, using the local library and outdoor spaces. As a rule, outreach services are less well attended. The library is difficult when delivering a service for families with numerous children. in a purpose built centre, we are able to contain the children in a safe, secure environment. Travelling to and fro for outreach becomes costly for staff travel expenses and we are reliant on staff good will to transport resources in their own vehicles. I would suggest we need a vehicle that is fit for purpose i.e.: with storage for play and learning resources to be transported to any outreach sessions. There are health and safety issues with manual handling when moving equipment regularly. we would need to transport a large range of resources to ensure high quality delivery of services. alternatively or maybe additionally it would be good to have one or two permanent outreach sites where we could store some resources.”

“This is great for rural areas and Cranbrook team have worked outreach to Hawkhurst. But a) of services are based in Tunbridge Wells how often will staff "outreach", where will they have access to space to write notes, eat lunch, go to the toilet. Have locality bases gives teams a direction and focus on that area. They build community and get to know the families locally and see them grow. If team are centrally based, it's more likely to mean different staff members covering activities that do take place and therefore the consistency to build trust and relationships diminish, having a negative impact on the families you are trying to reach.”

Some consultees provided verbatims indicating they were unsure what the outreach services would look like in practical terms and how it was going to be advertised / managed over time:

“It is unclear from the proposals how outreach will change in Maidstone, and how it will impact service delivery in Maidstone as the current consultation is only outlining changes to property, which for Maidstone is the closure of two Children's Centres and the relocation Adult Education.”

“An increased journey time to a Children's Centre for some of our most vulnerable families will impact on their ability to attend valuable activity groups aimed at children's early learning and development, as well as reducing parent isolation and improving parenting skills. The increased travel time could be a barrier to some for attending vital appointments, such as child development checks. Recent feedback from providers has included a post Covid-19, sometimes marked, delayed identification of additional need, due in part to the necessity of some of these checks being conducted virtually, or by telephone during the pandemic. Would virtual checks be reintroduced for those families now unable to access their nearest children's centre?”

“The efficiency and effectiveness of any outreach is all about local knowledge. I would like to know how much 'on the ground' information is gleaned about specific service in specific areas from both users, volunteers who help facilitate them and paid employees on the front line. How much 'joined up' work will happen when multiple agencies are involved. When 'amalgamated' how will budgets that have already been cut be 'ring fenced' or protected to ensure that outreach remains in place in some form. How much do you know about where people meet together, which includes other than community halls. There are a myriad of private owned spaces which provide services, members clubs such as bowls, tennis etc., social clubs, small church halls etc., run by the community for the community. How much consideration will be given to a full audit of 'temporary' spaces which are accessible by public transport for example. No point in having services that no one can get to.”

“The concept of Outreach is fine but with an ever changing demography here in Dartford we need to keep this potentially most agile way of delivering services under constant review. The needs of different areas will morph over time and I'd like to see a regular review process in collaboration with the borough to ensure we're constantly feeding what we know into future planning. If we get Outreach wrong we'll be chasing those potentially in need rather than being ahead of what they need. Gateways and hubs make it easier to signpost users and to pick up if they may need other services as well. Outreach must be integrated with this knowledge.”

“As part of this consultation, you have provided us with little information or details of what outreach services will look like as part of the proposals. You have designed the proposal which includes closing vital buildings without providing the information required to understand where or what outreach will replace the much needed services. The locations for delivery of outreach are crucial as not only do we have high levels of deprived and vulnerable families, but many of these families also live in rural locations with minimal access to public transport. You have stated that outreach will be ‘demand led’, however you have not provided us with details on how this will work practically. You have also not provided evidence on how you intend to respond to high levels of demand without physical locations for residents to visit – we have an example of this already within a town centre and youth outreach – with no suitable physical buildings within the area, the outreach offer is limited in its impact. The detail lacking in your proposals around what the outreach services will look like, does not allow us to have a true picture of how you are going to support residents and so therefore leaves us extremely concerned that there will be gaps in service provision.”

“It is noted that the document states that the exact location of the new proposed outreach venues cannot be confirmed at this time as no firm decisions have been made on the proposals; as this will be subject to community need and availability of community premises. We consider that more certainty will be required in this regard before the permanent closure of any existing buildings which offer existing services.

It is also noted that the consultation document mentions that some outreach services could be provided at existing library buildings, or by home visits which could be more comfortable and convenient for some users to access support and guidance. However, the consultation documents also indicate that this is yet to be decided (post consultation) and the level of service provision is currently unknown. We also have concerns that libraries may not be appropriate for some uses – for example children’s activities may be too noisy or there may not be enough private rooms/space for confidential/sensitive meetings such as counselling. In addition, there could be cost implications for KCC in adapting the space/library building to be used.”

ACCESSING KCC SERVICES DIGITALLY

- Consultees were asked to indicate how they felt about accessing KCC services digitally from a list of pre-defined statements. Please note that this question was asked generally and not specifically in relation to the services under consultation.
- 64% of consultees answering indicated they feel confident about doing things online.
- The safety of using technology to access services and the security of personal information is a concern for some (13% selecting), as well as a perception of KCC's digital services and information too difficult to use (10%) and not feeling confident in using technology (9%).
- 10% of consultees answering indicated that paying for devices and internet connection is too expensive and 8% indicated their internet is too slow.
- A small proportion of consultees linked the question to children service provision and commented that certain activities are not suitable for online delivery.

Accessing services digitally means using a computer, mobile phone, tablet or other device to look up information about services or to join sessions or activities virtually. Please select from the list below the statements that may apply to you about accessing KCC services digitally...?

Base: all answering (1,476), consultees had the option to select more than one response. Themes will over 30 responses reported.

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
I am confident about doing things online	983	64%
I don't think it's safe using technology to access services. I'm concerned about the security of my information	197	13%
Paying for devices and internet connection (including mobile data) is too expensive	159	10%
I find KCC's digital services and information too difficult to use	157	10%
I don't feel confident using technology	137	9%
Prefer face to face / socialising / more personal / building relationships	135	9%
My internet is too slow	114	8%
Children's / babies activities cannot be carried out online / reducing not increasing screentime	55	4%
I don't know how to do it	50	3%
I don't have a device (computer, mobile phone, tablet)	42	3%
Digital exclusion / not everyone can access the internet	42	3%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
I don't have the internet at home	41	3%
Some activities are not appropriate / suitable online	36	2%
Detrimentially affect elderly / disabled / vulnerable people	35	2%
Affects mental health / isolation / loneliness	34	2%
Digital poverty / lack of devices / broadband / unreliable service	33	2%

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ACCESSING SERVICES ONLINE

Consultees were also given the opportunity to comment in their words on what they believe to be important when accessing services online. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 61% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

- The most important consideration when accessing services online is the perceived ease of use / simple access / being user friendly (45%). This is followed by having an option of face to face service delivery / consultees indicating they prefer face to face access to services (23%).
- 16% of consultees commented that they believe online access to services isn't an inclusive approach and cited the elderly, those with access and those unable to use online services as examples to illustrate their views.
- 12% of consultees commented that clear information is important and 11% commented that security / safety / privacy is important.
- 12% of consultees commented that online access needs to be reliable with links that work and devices that are compatible.
- 11% of consultees commented that online delivery needs to be appropriate for the service in question.

What is important to you when accessing services online ...?

Base: all answering (1,079)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Ease of use / simple access / being user friendly	487	45%
Still need to include face to face option / preference for face to face	249	23%
Online isn't inclusive (elderly / those without access / unable to use)	175	16%
Clear information	171	16%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Reliable / links that work / device compatible	130	12%
Security / safe / privacy	120	11%
The service delivered needs to be appropriate for online delivery	118	11%
Able to speak to someone / contact number if needed	106	10%
Up to date information / accurate	64	6%
Interactive / book online	28	3%
Other	28	3%

Some example verbatims from the theme of ease of use / simple access / being user friendly can be found below:

“The information is clear, easily available and there is a route to contact a person should further clarity or information be required.”

“Clarity in the format. KCC's digital platform is so cumbersome and complicated. Far too many text boxes and writing, not engaging or user-friendly at all. Just long lists of text, and links. I find it hard to navigate, I wouldn't be surprised if others who are less used to working on websites get lost trying to find information.”

“Finding information quickly, receiving a quick response or being kept up to date. Confidence that my inquiry doesn't go into an abyss and having a contact number in case I need to speak to an actual person.”

Some example verbatims from the theme of still needing to include face to face options / having a preference for face to face access can be found below:

“That the service is appropriate to be delivered online. Covid should have taught us (especially for children's development) that as much content and sessions should be delivered in person, for long term benefit.”

“That online services are used selectively or as an alternative for those unable to meet in person. Meeting in person is preferable for many, and human contact is important!”

“It's only useful for certain things and some information. It does not replace human contact and connection. Families being able to get out, see other people and interact together in a meaningful way.”

“I would not want to access services online, I like to go in person for my child to socialise and make friends, and it is important for my mental health i can access in person services. If you are sat behind a screen you can feel very lonely and unsupported and put on the spot to communicate.”

Some example verbatims from the concerns put forward regarding inclusivity can be found below:

“I'm fine but you're not considering the elderly, and those with disabilities and mental health and learning needs. Online isn't inclusive. Having Apps for everything isn't inclusive for these individuals . Think about the longer term consequences of the decisions you make.”

“Online services will only be available by the more well to do residents. The people most likely to need help are either computer illiterate, do not have a smart phone and are poor at technology.”

“Accessing services online is not always accessible. It's not easy for the elderly, the disabled or the technologically illiterate to use and this is a very real form of discrimination known as the digital divide. Telling your service user families to 'just go online' sounds simple but for many families this is an unreasonable request. The cost of living crisis is also a factor- having broadband access at home is a luxury some cannot afford now. Online provision is often patchy, with no real human connection built in. There's also the data protection issue- can families trust their data isn't being scraped and sold to the highest bidder? Personally I might find online services functional but for so many families this just isn't the reality and I much prefer in person contact with service providers of all kinds.”

“There are people that are at an age or a disability or due to financial reasons are unable to access digital services. There needs to dedicated digital champion in these outreach hubs that is available to help show and teach the community to access services as it will allow them to be move involved.”

“Four wards in the borough scored highly in respect of poor digital connectivity. These are all rural wards that will be affected by the proposed closure of Little Explorers and Bluebells Childrens Centres. We understand the move towards more online services and information, however for many this option will be difficult to access due to a lack of broadband or slow speeds. There must be careful assessment of how digital services are used and expanded so they do not result in increasing isolation for those who are less able to use digital technology or would derive greater benefit from in-person services and opportunities to share experiences and learning with other families.”

“Careful consideration needs to be given to the types of services that can be delivered online and the risks to vulnerable groups, such as mothers and small children, who benefit from face-to-face contact and engagement with trained staff, particularly around safeguarding interventions. We feel that there is a lack of assessment and consideration of Digital Inclusion. Digital Inclusion extends well beyond broadband speed and into the affordability of both Wi-Fi/Internet access and devices which allow people to access services reliably online. If services can't be accessed online due to digital exclusion, it places a burden on other organisations i.e. groups and organisations across the Voluntary and Community Sector.”

“I think it's important to be confident about privacy. However, there are some services that just don't work online. Particularly for someone who is suffering from mental ill-health, what you need is personal connection which really cannot be achieved in the same way online.”

“The development of a digital offer to support the Family Hub model could also impact those most vulnerable families with children under five, who may also be experiencing

digital poverty. According to an NCFE article and Ofcom data from 2021, two of the groups least likely to have home internet access, and just behind those aged over 65 years, are lower income households and the most financially vulnerable.”

When filtering response to this question on consultees who use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member) only, feedback is broadly consistent in terms of key themes identified:

- Perceived ease of use / simple access / being user friendly (44% of consultees commenting).
- Having an option of face to face service delivery / consultees indicating they prefer face to face access to services (26%)
- Online access to services isn't an inclusive approach and cited the elderly, those with access and those unable to use online services as examples (17%)
- Clear information (16%)
- Online delivery needs to be appropriate for the service in question (13%)
- Access needs to be reliable with links that work and devices that are compatible (11%)
- Security / safety / privacy (10%)

What is important to you when accessing services online ...?

Base: Currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (671); responses 5% and over reported

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Ease of use / access / simple / user friendly	295	44%
Still needs to include a face to face option / face to face access is better	172	26%
Online isn't inclusive (elderly / those without access / unable to use tech)	111	17%
Clear information	106	16%
Reliable / links that work / device compatible	77	11%
Security / safe / privacy	69	10%
The service delivered needs to be appropriate for online delivery	88	13%
Able to speak to someone / contact number if needed	66	10%
Up to date information / accurate	35	5%

RESPONSE TO FAMILY HUBS MODEL PROPOSALS

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide any comments in their words on what they believe to be important to consider when transitioning to the Family Hub Model. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 34% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

- The most important consideration put forward by consultees for consideration of the Family Hub transition is users being able to get there / travel there / location (46%). This includes consideration that some would prefer to, or only be able to, walk to reach the location or access via convenient and reasonably priced public transport.
- This is followed by ensuring access is possible for everyone that needs to (with consideration to different age groups / demographics and possible needs - 27%). This includes provision of service for all concerned and the equipment / space setting / staffing for all needs.
- 24% of consultees commented that they believe it is important that individual services provided under the Family Hub offering isn't diluted / remains distinct for each user group.
- 21% of consultees expressed concerns about the suitability of proposed space / buildings for the services under consultation and 18% expressed concerns about the compatibility of the range of services being provided in one place.

What do you think is important for us to consider when we transition to the Family Hub model...?

Base: all answering (602)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Users being able to get there / travel there / location	277	46%
Access for all (ages / demographics / needs)	166	27%
That services aren't diluted / remains distinct for each group	147	24%
Concerns about suitability of space / building / fit for purpose	126	21%
Concerns about compatibility of services in one space	109	18%
Object / bad idea	82	14%
Parking / free parking	34	6%
Good idea	22	4%
Other	31	5%

Some example verbatims from the key themes of users being able to get there / travel there / location and access for all can be found below:

“The distance between sites for the villages. Without having the availability of reliable, regular public transport in rural areas, most families would not be able to reach these new hubs.”

“To provide these services near homes in the communities not town centres. Children of young age will not benefit from this if they need to travel. Parents may not allow their children to use the service due to the new location. It is a shame that children are going to be affected due to the over-spending of a county. More children have moved to the area from London Boroughs and services are being removed or moved to location that may not be safe for all ages.”

“Consider the highest need children and families. How will they get to the Family Hub? Are there transport links available? Are mothers expected to push a buggy with a toddler and a baby for an unrealistic distance? Will the new location make access for some impossible? There is no mention of outreach services to the highest need families. Will this be offered? If there is no outreach than the levels of inequality will increase as those most in need will be unable to access services. We need to be mindful that there are no hard to reach families just hard to reach services and those planning and developing services need to bear this in mind.”

“I think in theory this is a great idea but it’s not right for our community unless some other things are changed first. We need cheaper and more reliable public transport. Currently it’s expensive to take a return bus trip and on occasions you’re lucky if the bus arrives on time. This could be stressful if you have an appointment to get too. If this isn’t dealt with first you would be isolating those who do not drive and forcing those who do drive to use their car when climate change is at the forefront of many peoples’ minds.”

“The engagement of services planned to co-locate early on - they will support with the planning of any practical and logistic issues, as well as ensuring their families needs’ are considered. Accessibility of locations for those who need parking, or those who rely on public transport - do not expect families to be happy about navigating multiple buses with young children and babies, families will not choose to spend an hour travelling to locations.”

“Communicating the move to residents is essential. This needs to be a thorough campaign using both modern and classic methods of communication. Explaining the benefits of such a move not financially but tangibly for the user will be advantageous. We outlined the improvements to accessibility and the safe storing of prams. These are two key benefits of using the hub over the centre.”

“This consultation asks parents to consider the suitability of a Family Hub model without any assurances as to what services we can guarantee are in them. The fact that the transport modelling identifies not one, but two or three potential hub locations which are accessible by public transport indicates that they intend to run each service quite differently and parents in Whitstable can reasonably be expected to travel to services in Herne Bay, Canterbury and Whitstable. The people they meet in these services will not be able to provide a coherent network of peer support in the way that would happen if you were meeting regularly with people who live closer to your own home.”

Some example verbatims expressing concerns about the suitability of space and compatibility of services in one space can be found below:

“There is a big difference between a 1 year old and a 15 year old. How these services operate in practice to provide vulnerable new mothers a safe space to seek advice is vital otherwise some may be put off seeking face to face help in those early months and years.”

“It is hard enough to find and access these services, with already incomprehensible waiting times for support. Why on earth would you make them more difficult to access - to make the waiting times shorter as more people give up with trying to access?”

“0-19 is a vast age range! I don’t want to take my one year old where there are also teenagers around. That doesn’t feel safe or like a calm and child-friendly environment! Please, send one of your staff members to a children’s centre and then to a youth hub and the difference will be very obvious. There is no way I’d be taking my young child anywhere where there are teenagers also accessing services. I want a space specifically catering to small children that has been designed to minimise risk to children and with their development and safety in mind.”

“Rural locations still need a local provision. 8/9 miles is not an acceptable distance to access services. Youth services can also be negatively impacted by the addition of baby/toddler services. Are youths 12+ really going to use a service where there are babies and toddlers around? No. And so they are displaced.”

“The needs of the different groups you would be serving. Putting potentially vulnerable young people next to people with new babies is entirely inappropriate. They are vulnerable in different ways and need to be in entirely different spaces.”

“Children suffering severe mental health trauma are not going to be comfortable with noisy kids being around! And noisy kids are not going to understand the considerations needed for those with special needs. I don’t believe it is safe, especially for the youngest babies / toddlers to be around children with severe learning difficulties that unfortunately can be aggressive when distressed.”

“I think it looks like you’re throwing everyone under the age of 19 in together even though the difference in the kind of help an 18 year old needs to that of a three year old is massive, just to save money I believe it will be to the detriment of the children in the local communities.”

Some consultees expressed a desire to collaborate, broaden the potential service offering and make improvements to proposals:

“Co-design with the district/borough authority as there is further opportunity to co-locate other local services from these hubs. We need to design these services from a user perspective and boundaries/differing responsibilities of KCC/borough/district mean little to most so we need to work together to deliver the services residents would expect to see in one place.”

“Consultation and communication with stakeholders on suitable services, which could include a whole host of support networks (police e.g. CSU/CSP for Domestic Abuse,

Drugs and Alcohol advice, OneYou Kent for Health provision and many other services). This requires detailed conversations and will be dependent on the suitability of the building as to what services can be put in. Can KCC advise how the detailed conversations around this are to occur with stakeholders and residents in order to give a more fully informed answer to this question. Consideration also needs to be given to transportation and access to any hub created. There may need to be satellite hubs, which could be located in other existing buildings (funding would be needed). The £4million sum that has been quoted for reinvestment back requires more attention. Can KCC give more detail on the savings that will be made from closing such significant and large numbers of buildings across Kent? It is highly likely that more money from the savings made will be needed to develop the new models of working. How much of the Transformation Status funding can be used to top up the reinvestment amount?"

"The Family Hub agenda gives opportunity for us to broaden our work to include wider links and opportunities for integrated working with the extended age reach and we are keen to work with KCC to ensure all children and families receive the support they need including those in the early years and of school age. We would like to work collaboratively with KCC to consider the longer-term requirements for children's centre/Family Hub estate and the integration agenda to ensure the needs of families in Kent are met. For many years children's centres have provided an integrated family hub where holistic care can be supported, and it should be considered that the wider utilisation of ad hoc estate would not create the same sense of community. These provided an opportunity for families to meet and seek support but also for services to identify those who may need more help. As part of the Family Hub development there is an opportunity to create a branded image for the Start for Life/Family Hub offer. At present, with the delivery of services from multiple sites there is a risk services lose their identity and families aren't able to access a range of services "under one roof".

There are operational concerns that the current proposals do not account for the increased occupation within Family Hubs for these programmes to be successfully delivered. Access to venues with onsite creche facilitated to run co-delivered group interventions as part of the Family Hub delivery plan was recognised as an important consideration. Many of the sites visited do not have access to on-site creche facilities which are provided within the current children's centre footprint.

Midwifery are a key partner in the delivery of family hubs and therefore would welcome the opportunity for strategic discussions regarding the location of services in the future as the family hub model evolves. Feedback from our colleagues tell us that the practical day to day aspects of delivering their role are important and with the Kent Communities Programme we would like to encourage the continuation of District-level discussions to enable staff to have access to the facilities they require – in some areas this may be as simple as storage solutions for resources and in others having access to on-site parking."

"I understand the Needs model and how it works but I also think if you are looking for long term all areas need to be considered. Mental health of children in particular from the pandemic doesn't always fall into the Needs areas and is in fact all areas. If you are providing good sensible options that are open to all then this will be a plan that will not only safeguard the future of our children but also that of the county. It is also an opportunity to think outside the box! To look not just at the way the UK works in its models but further and to lead from the front in being innovative and not choosing safe options."

PROPOSALS TO HAVE FEWER BUILDINGS

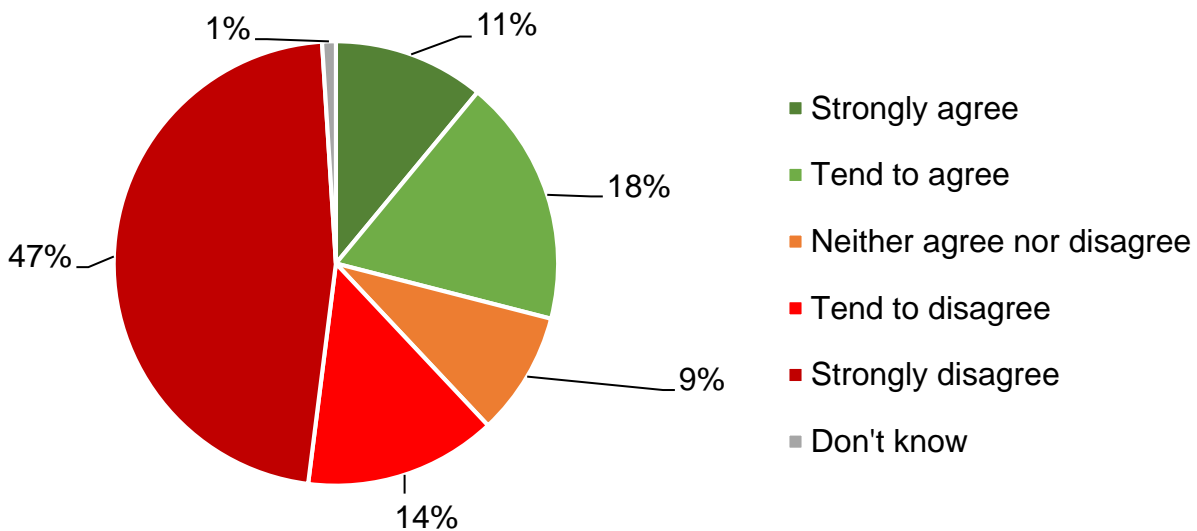
- 29% of all consultees answering indicated they agree with the proposal to have fewer building (11% indicated they strongly agree).
- 61% of all consultees answering indicated they disagree with the proposal (47% indicated they strongly disagree). 9% neither agree nor disagree.

Our work so far has led us to propose working from fewer permanent buildings, meaning that some of our buildings would close. This is because we need to reduce our costs and reduce our carbon emissions. Using the Needs Framework to design where and how we deliver services means we will be able to meet community needs with fewer permanent buildings.

How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to have fewer buildings?

Base: all answering (1,603)

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Net: Agree	466	29%
Net: Disagree	973	61%



SUPPORTING DATA	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Strongly agree	173	11%
Tend to agree	293	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	149	9%
Tend to disagree	226	14%
Strongly disagree	747	47%
Don't know	15	1%

There are significant differences in agreement with the proposal by demographic:

- A higher proportion of female residents disagree with the proposal (62%) compared to male residents (34%).
- Agreement with the approach taken increases with age with 13% of residents aged 25-34 agreeing with the proposal and 58% of residents aged 65 & over agreeing.
- A higher proportion of residents who have children or are expecting children disagree with the proposal (67%) compared to residents who do not have children (30%).
- 68% of resident consultees who use at least one of the prompted consultation services disagree with the approach. Whilst comparably lower, it should be noted that 47% of those who do not currently use these services also disagree with the proposal.

How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to have fewer buildings?

AGREEMENT OVERVIEW - BY DEMOGRAPHIC (number of consultees answering reported in brackets)	Net Agree %	Net Disagree %
Male resident (161)	54%	34%
Female resident (760)	28%	62%
Resident aged 25-34 (220)	13%	81%
Resident aged 35-49 (301)	25%	66%
Resident aged 50-64 (210)	44%	41%
Resident aged 65 & over (152)	58%	27%
Resident with children / expecting children (653)	23%	67%
Resident with no children (173)	60%	30%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	12%	83%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	11%	82%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	22%	70%
Resident with children aged 11-19 years old (160)	37%	46%
At least weekly user of one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (624)	16%	76%
Currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (1,028)	22%	68%
Do not currently use at least one of the prompted consultation services (personal or other household member – residents only) (555)	42%	47%

Out of the 15 consultees completing the Easy Read version of the consultation questionnaire, 5 indicated they agreed with the proposal to have fewer buildings and 8 disagreed. 2 indicated they were uncertain.

There are differences in agreement with the proposal to have fewer buildings by organisation:

- Of the 15 Parish/Town/Borough/District Councils who completed the consultation questionnaire in an official capacity, 5 indicated they agree with the proposal to co-locate some services. 8 disagree.
 - Of the 27 Parish/Town/Borough/District/County councillors who completed the consultation questionnaire, 10 indicated they agree with the proposal. 16 disagree.
 - Of the 31 educational establishments who completed the consultation questionnaire, 7 indicated they agree with the proposal. 20 disagree.
 - Of the 32 charity, voluntary or community sector organisations who completed the consultation questionnaire, 10 indicated they agree with the proposal. 21 disagree.
-

OTHER COMMENTS ON CONSULTATION PROPOSALS

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide any other comments or options they think should be considered in the proposals in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. 46% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

- A vast range of comments were provided by consultees at this question. However, the most common are a perception that proposals detrimentally affect families / children (31% of consultees commenting) and objecting to proposed closures / changes to the services under consultation (22%).
- 20% of consultees expressed concerns for the services under consultation and that they are vital to the community / a lifeline to users and that service provision that is either walking distance of access on reliable / cost effective public transport is crucial (20%).
- 9% of consultees expressed a desire for savings to be made elsewhere and 9% commented that the services under consultation were already oversubscribed and need more funding / not less support moving forward.

Please tell us if there are any other options you think we should consider, or if you have any other comments you wish to make about the proposals in this consultation...?

Base: all answering (808)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Detrimentially affect families / children	254	31%
Object to proposed closures / mergers / changes in services / don't close centres	175	22%
Services / centres / vital to community / lifeline / don't cut services	164	20%
Accessibility is crucial / within walking distance / on public transport routes (consider cost & availability)	163	20%
Negative impact on mental health / socialisation / development	92	11%
Make savings / cuts elsewhere	73	9%
Services already oversubscribed / need more not less / more funding	70	9%
Detrimentially affect elderly / disabled / vulnerable	68	8%
Criticism of consultation in general / data / survey / need to consult with users by other means	66	8%
Will new venues have the same facilities / have sufficient resources / be large enough / less provision / oversubscribed	65	8%
Long term costs / consequences - NHS / schools/education / social services	51	6%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Offer more services / appeal to more people / increase usage / longer opening hours	49	6%
Location suggestions / specific centre suggestions (excluding centre closures)	46	6%
Relocate facilities/services into other existing buildings	46	6%
Add paid for services / donations / raise funds / rent out space	43	5%
Concerns over what will happen with buildings / more housing / renting out / kept empty	40	5%
Understand cuts have to be made / the need for KCC to save money	39	5%
Detrimentially affect lower income households / cost of living crisis means more support needed	37	5%
Work with / form partnerships with other organisations / other LA departments	37	5%
Net zero is a fallacy / emissions will increase / more people in cars driving to services/centres	34	4%
Increased population / new homes / development not considered	30	4%
Refurbish / update existing buildings / make them greener / energy efficient	29	4%
Availability & cost of parking / parking is essential	24	3%
Special consideration should be given to rural areas	23	3%
Incompatibility of groups / facilities / privacy	22	3%
Must be central location / present in each district	20	2%
Agree with proposals / close some centres / streamline services	19	2%
Implications for staff / concerns over staff	19	2%
Lack of infrastructure in area supporting development	16	2%
Offer mobile services / home visits / scheduled visits to different areas to offer services	15	2%
Safeguarding / security concerns	13	2%
Advertise services more / may lead to increase in usage	13	2%

Some example verbatims from the key themes of detrimentally affecting families / children and objecting to proposed closures / mergers / changes in services / don't close centres can be found below:

“While I fully appreciate that costs need to be cut at a time when costs are rising and local authorities are chronically underfunded, it feels like smaller communities are being disproportionately affected by these plans.”

“Priory being one the busiest centres should be reconsidered when talking about closing. All children centres are a valued part of families with young children from child development checks to being able to collect food parcels.”

“Please, please I urge you reconsider your decision to close the youth hub at the Bridge. This will affect a lot of children negatively as they rely on this weekly. My daughter suffers terribly with anxiety since covid and this is a bit of a lifeline for her.”

“Please don't cut support to kids and those with additional needs. Think long term not just how long you're in your job. Align your proposal with projected housing, transport, and population increase in the areas.”

“During a time when vulnerable families and disabled need more services, cutting them in rural areas does not make sense. Ashford have a multitude of centres in close proximity. However, closing the Little Explorers centre, which is far away from any other permanent centre, would be detrimental to the health and wellbeing of these groups. The service needs to remain and show that the surrounding villages of Ashford Borough have the same right to local care, as those closer to Ashford.”

“People with learning disabilities depend on regular routines, familiar faces and people who understand their needs in detail. When any of these support services change the impact on disabled people is often greater than imagined. This seems unfair when life opportunities are already limited.”

“It is likely that parents (with limited time) will not engage in the consultation process. The consultation document is 116 pages long. This does not include the district design document EqIA. Additionally, you have to complete an online registration to complete the consultation questionnaire which takes added time and is an unnecessary barrier. In addition to this, we cannot establish why West Borough Children's Centre is not offered as an alternative to East Borough Children's Centre as part of the proposals. It is the same distance from East Borough as the nearest alternative (Sunshine Children's Centre) and closer than the second option offered (Greenfields in Shepway). It also has better transport links. It is currently closed Monday-Thursday, only opening on a Friday from 8.30-16.30.”

RESPONSE TO EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the equality analysis conducted in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. It should be noted that 18% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

- Of those answering, the most common considerations put forward are ensuring the services are accessible / walking distance / access via suitable public transport (24%).
- Those commenting raise concerns for how the proposals will affect specific groups of residents who are disabled / have learning difficulties / SEN (15%), young people / children / families (15%) and low income households (11%).

We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments below...?

Base: all answering (316)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Services need to be accessible / walking distance / public transport / additional costs / parking provision	77	24%
Effect on disabled / those with learning difficulties / SEN	47	15%
Significant impact on young people / children / families	46	15%
All services / buildings should be open / accessible / inclusive of everyone (unspecified)	35	11%
Effect on low income households	35	11%
Will buildings be inclusive / suitable to offer current services / accessible (disabled)	32	10%
Concerns over impact on those with mental health issues / isolation	31	10%
Online must be inclusive - how to reach all groups, elderly, etc., / digital poverty	24	8%
Discriminate on age / gender specifically women	19	6%
Diversity is irrelevant to this / don't go too far with equality/diversity	19	6%
Effect on elderly	17	5%
Effect on vulnerable (unspecified)	15	5%
Proposals disadvantage everyone	13	4%
Disadvantage ethnic minorities / English as a second language / refugees / travellers / LGBTQ	13	4%
All considered appropriately / fine as is / no concerns	12	4%
Buildings could be unsuitable for different types of activities mixing	7	2%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Impact on rural communities	6	2%
Centres encourage community cohesion / people mixing	6	2%
Increasing population not adequately considered	5	2%
Long term costs / consequences - NHS / Schools/education / social services	5	2%
Don't close centres	5	2%
Criticism of consultation	19	6%
Is this consultation reaching everyone - on paper / online / easy read	17	5%
Other	25	8%

Some example verbatims from the key considerations identified can be found below:

“Please consider the impact this will have on women - the main care givers and users of this service. Already on reduced income due to maternity leave, or not able to earn due to the costs of childcare. This will impact their mental health.”

“Making people go further isolates families who cannot travel for physical reasons or cannot afford to travel, effecting mental health, meaning more pressure on GPs and mental health services.”

“You should consider the equal right of allowing people to access these facilities in person. Not assuming everyone will use the internet/online to access these services, because some cannot afford or access this way. You are also making it more difficult.”

“Most of the people that will be truly affected by the closure will probably not complete this questionnaire, there is a lot to it and it probably should be simplified for some people.”

“This is a joke. These children centres help the minority with disabilities. Not to mention the vast amount of women it supports. The closure of these centres’ insults women and children.”

“Not everyone has the same capacity to travel from their home to a service in a different town/area, the proposal would lead to further inequality between those who can and cannot.”

“Public transport is expensive and unreliable. families do not have money to travel by these means. they are struggling to feed their families and keep them warm. Families who have a child with an additional need struggle to leave the house and would not use public transport due to the child's behaviour and other passengers’ attitudes even if they could afford the fare. you have not considered any of this and never do. speak to a few families who have an autistic child and live their life for a few days before saying a 30 minute public transport journey followed by a walk is suitable.”

“Although I've read the proposal with regards to your equality and diversity I don't think you realise the effects closing certain children's centres can have on individual families in the area with a disabled child.”

“Closing local centres in the areas will discourage people to access care and thus contributing to health inequalities.”

“The needs of disabled people cannot be met and fully understood using a virtual approach. Many disabled people have impacts on their ability that are only understood by a face to face approach.”

“The EqlA for the proposals is considered to cover all the expected equality and diversity characteristics of an EqlA. However, in considering these characteristics against the proposals, particularly the closure of buildings, the EqlA document does highlight how this may be problematic for some groups with specific characteristics e.g. age - the closure of children's centres for young children could disproportionately impact the 0-5 age group receiving support in relation to their development milestones associated with health, education and parent bonding. And for teenage parents who are less likely to hold a driver's licence and have access to a private vehicle, they will be more reliant on family/friends, public transport or walking to access services, which means they may use a service less frequently, resulting in a negative impact on young parents and their children if they are unable to access a centre. Mitigation measures and alternative provision are identified but these are mainly outreach and co-location services, the full details of which are not yet known as mentioned above.”

“We feel that more could be done in terms of engagement with Maidstone to ensure that the needs assessment is accurate, and data led. The impact of the proposals on areas of deprivation has not been considered; High Street Ward and Shepway North have been completely overlooked. We would also like to highlight our concerns about our Gypsy and Traveller Communities who access Children's Centre services in rural wards like Marden. We would like to be assured that they are engaged with and supported as part of these proposed changes to ensure that they have access to these services.

In terms of the EqlA completed as part of these proposals, there is no information on any direct promotion of this consultation to targeted groups i.e. centre users. Previous research with these groups is referred to in the EQIA and EQIA states that gaps in the data will be filled through this consultation process e.g. religion.

The recent census data (2021) should be used to evaluate need, not only in the wards where the Children's Centres are closing (Marden & Yalding and East) but in the wards that will be most impacted by the decisions. For example, East Borough Children's Centre is located on the periphery of High Street Ward. Its users are not going to be geographically ringfenced to East Ward. Its service users are most likely to come from High Street Ward which is the most deprived ward in Maidstone borough.”



IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - ASHFORD

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Ashford.

BLUEBELLS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 32 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 78% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 66% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users also praised the facilities provided in relation to the alternative(s) proposed (38%) and value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (25%).
- 16% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (32)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	25	78%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	21	66%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	12	38%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	8	25%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	5	16%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	9%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	2	6%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	6%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	2	6%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Our lives will dramatically change for the worse if they close bluebells as it’s our closest children’s centre and my kids are there every single week. It’s like a second home to them. All week long my toddler waits for the messy play session. She has grown in confidence since attending bluebells. As a baby born in the first national lockdown when all the facilities & groups were closed it’s been a long process supporting this era of toddlers into becoming more social as they spent 2 years shut away at home in a bubble of 6 people only, the messy play sessions, stay & play, baby sensory etc has helped massively in helping combat lockdown syndrome, these kids already had a massive disruption to the start of their lives and now they’re coming back out into the public and children’s centres are open again after what seemed like an eternity now to find out the centre might be closing is a big shock, unbelievable, it has made me feel incredibly sad and at a loss because we value bluebells so so much. I am gutted and I know the kids will be too.”

“Myself and my 3 year old attend a minimum of 1 session and maximum of 3 sessions at Bluebells each week. The staff are familiar with us and we have now built a rapport with them. We have tried other groups and locations but this one fits my son the best and has the best facilities for his needs. He likes consistency and so sticking with 1 centre for multiple sessions works brilliantly for him. The fact it has outdoor space too and a local park/field nearby is great for the summertime to extend our time out of the house.”

“I visit Bluebells at least twice a week. I have found it invaluable for supporting me as a new mum. I take my baby to groups as well as make appointments to see the Health Visitor there. It is much easier to get to than other children's centres where I would need to travel through the town. I feel it is important to keep centres in more rural areas as well as towns. I see many of the same parents at the centre who also use it frequently as would not necessarily be able to attend other centres.”

“Fewer people able to access vital services and play groups, particularly in the light of the cost of living crisis.”

“Has been an absolute life saver for me when I was coping with 3 years of school refusing with my son. Provided useful courses that I could attend (only because location was close). Was able to sign post for additional help/services. Additional support from other parents attending courses AS LOCAL. Would have received NO HELP if this facility in this location hadn't existed.”

“As a Public health assistant we will do development checks on babies and children from Bluebells. Personally I think it is not a good decision to close this centre. There are loads of rooms there that aren't used at the moment that could be utilised more proficiently.”

LITTLE EXPLORERS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 34 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 76% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 62% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (41%).
- 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (34)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	26	76%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	21	62%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	14	41%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	9	26%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	6	18%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	4	12%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	4	12%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	9%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	2	6%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Use this every week for parent toddler group and would hate to see it disappear. have used for over 11 years and know lots of families that live here who also benefit from the groups. so many new houses being built you'd be better investing in the building that getting rid of it and expecting people to travel.”

“I have found Little Explorers in Tenterden to be a vital source of support for me when pregnant and now since my son was born (he is 14 months old). The groups run by the lovely staff are invaluable. And the support has been vital.”

“I myself cannot drive so it’s useful to have a health visitor I can go to as I can't get to Ashford. My sister in-law has just had a new baby and will need to frequently visit a children's centre for her baby and she also cannot drive.”

“I won't have a place to go and see other mums. My son won't have a place to go and learn how to interact with other babies. It is important for us mums to have a place where we can find support which you might lack at home. For our mental health as well. It is difficult enough having a baby, not to add if I have to go to Ashford to access this services without having a car.”

“You are proposing to close the only two rural centres we have in the Ashford District. Doing so will result in families living in these rural areas who do not have access to money for a bus/taxi/car or even if they did feel confident enough to take this step and travel. KCC are not thinking about the people who will be left in these rural areas, leaving 3 big centres in Ashford town is a badly made decision.”

“Reduced ability to access services, especially those who are vulnerable and have lower income, who do not have access to car and cannot afford unreliable bus services.”

“No local service, other services proposed will be beyond reach due to time it takes to get to alternative services with a limited transport service and the cost incurred. Parents will miss out on the opportunity to build friendships in their local area possibly creating isolation. Children will not be taken to activities and this impacts on their development and the longer-term success in education. We talk about the importance of first 1001days in a child live and early intervention and prevention and then the service that provides this is being removed.”

“The rural communities will be severally negatively impacted with the closure of this centre. Our internet for some families is basically non-existent, buses are scarce and unreliable. Closing services in a growing area, such as Tenterden with one of the largest population, expecting them to travel a larger distance than anywhere else is insulting. Whilst Ashford have many centres left open in close proximity, the families of this growing town, will have to up their carbon footprint and travel further distances to get the same opportunities. There are many families in rural poverty in Tenterden and are known to the services. Expecting them to travel over 11 miles whilst others in the borough are expected to travel 2 is an insult to those on the outer borders.”

“Already been impacted by reduced hours at Little Explorers as I've needed to meet a client in Tenterden but have been left with nowhere to meet her on the days that she is available. She's very isolated and would have benefited from being linked into the children's centre. The referral was from social services and is part of her CP plan however it is looking as though we will not be able to provide the support needed due to lack of space to meet her and inability to travel into Ashford. Closing the centre entirely would mean more clients are unable to access our support fully.”

RAY ALLEN CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 27 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 48% of those providing a comment noted the centre provided much needed support / services for local families in the area and 37% commented the centre is essential / seen as a lifeline.
- Comments referenced the good facilities provided in relation to the alternative(s) proposed (22%).
- 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on the community and 19% expressed concerned they will have a detrimental impact on residents' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (27)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Provided much needed support / services for families / children / babies	13	48%
Essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	10	37%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	6	22%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	6	22%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	5	19%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	3	11%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	2	7%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	1	4%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	4%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere /insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“There are many people who have been affected by the continued closure of the Ray Allen Centre. There is no local drop in for those with pre-school children and no advice centre for young mums which there once was.”

“The centre is a crucial hub for the Stanhope community,. This is one of the most deprived areas of Ashford where Children’s Centre support can have an amazing impact on young people, The community have suffered since the centre ‘temporarily’ closed due to Covid. We’ve been eagerly awaiting its reopening only to hear now it’s been earmarked for closure. It’s unacceptable to expect our poorest residents to pay bus / taxi fares to reach alternative provision at the Willow Centre. Stanhope deserves and needs its own children’s centre.”

“The Ray Allen Centre was our closest centre and closed several months ago. We were led to believe that this building would be replaced and services re-established. There is no Children's Centre in Stanhope now, which is one of the most deprived areas of Ashford.”

“Hugely. It would be a massive loss. It’s been a hub for twins and multiples meeting for many years and without it my life would have been much harder. My mental health would have been severely impacted without this centre.”

“The closure of the Ray Allen centre has been very difficult: prior to the closure I spent a lot of time seeing clients and running groups out of the Ray Allen Centre. Its closure has meant that we no longer run the young people's domestic abuse group in Ashford as we don't have a venue to use. This means YP in Ashford miss out on this service which often has enabled them to feel confident and comfortable accessing other groups run out of the Ray Allen Centre. The closure of the Ray Allen has also impacted on young people engaging with my service - they often struggle with anxiety and the Ray Allen is the closest centre to them, they have struggled to attend other centres. Given the majority of our referrals come from social services or early help this has also impacted on joint working with these agencies.”

“It has been closed for so long now but was a lovely building that the library could have moved in to as well as a gateway and space wouldn’t be an issue. Neither would the anti-social behaviour that currently happens outside the library on the ball court where all the kids hang out. Unfortunately, now it has been empty for so long, the building wouldn’t be able to be utilised this way. I'm worried that combining two more services into the Stanhope Library would be very cramped, especially as the only space it has is the carpeted area downstairs, the large community room belongs to Moat housing as it is their building and the library rents space from them.”

“The South Ashford area includes three wards with an IMD score over 20. The Ray Allen Centre in Stanhope has successfully provided a range of services to support these more deprived communities. Since the commencement of the Stanhope PFI, crime in the area has reduced dramatically and the improvement at the John Wallis Academy has seen it move from a failing school to good and an outstanding rating for the nursery. The Ray Allen Centre has played a pivotal part in these achievements, itself rated as outstanding by Ofsted in 2012. As a valued and well used community resource staff at the centre have coordinated multi-agency support for vulnerable families, delivered improvements in parenting skills, including teenage parents which have helped children’s development that supports improving their educational outcomes. As a result of various activities and links with other professionals there was a fall in the proportion of children with communication difficulties, an increase in participation in physical activity and healthy eating activities contributing to reducing obesity. With adult education offers on site, and use of a crèche for children, adult literacy and numeracy improved, leading to increased confidence as parents developed additional skills that help to secure employment.

Users of the Ray Allen Centre have found long term friendships which were particularly important for new families to the area in reducing isolation. The community garden was highly valued as a resource that was open to all providing a safe open space. As well as young families, other groups used the centre, for example a lunch group for older people who themselves supported the centre through making items, such as story sacks, for use in activities with the children. Greater clarity is sought on whether the proposal to provide a family hub at Stanhope Library is intended to replace the provision of a new Ray Allen Centre and if so we question whether the library offers suitable premises to maintain and enhance the scope of these services to Stanhope and the wider South Ashford community.”

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - CANTERBURY

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Canterbury.

JOY LANE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 47 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 60% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 51% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (40%).
- 38% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (47)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	28	60%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	24	51%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	19	40%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	18	38%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	12	26%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	9	19%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	8	17%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	6	13%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“We attend stay and play at Joy Lane every Thursday. This group has been a lifeline to me, my children and my mental health. After having a difficult pregnancy and birth during the height of covid with my second child, I couldn't wait to get back to this group with my children. I suffered from bad post-natal depression after my second child and i feel that being able to attend bumps to walkers at Joy Lane, like I did with my first, would have benefitted me so much, but unfortunately the centres did not open in time. I cannot afford to pay for weekly groups for my children so the stay and play session at Joy Lane, which we walk to, is a godsend. My child did not settle well at nursery so this group as part of her weekly socialising.”

“Having this children's centre has been so important in getting me and my kids out of the house. We have really struggled, particularly over the winter, because it is too expensive to heat our home and use the electricity so we have been looking for places to go. Discovering these centres has improved our quality of life, giving us somewhere to go where the kids can play and stay warm and interact with other kids. I think, particularly the kids impacted by the covid restrictions over the last few years that have not been able to enjoy normal socialisation, need centres like these to access to make friends, improve their social skills and develop alongside their peers. Were we to lose the stay and play at the Joy Lane centre it would leave a big hole in our week.”

“I have close friends and family who use the centre for the children's groups. If Joy Lane Children's Centre closes, Whitstable Youth Hub is a 25 minute walk from Joy Lane which causes a problem for the families that do not drive or have access to a car. A lot of families use this centre regularly who do not drive, this will affect their ability to attend children's groups to socialise - a lot of parents/carers feel isolated and this is their way to socialise with other parents and the staff - if there is not a Children's Centre within walking distance these facilities will not be an option to them anymore, also for midwife and health visitor appointments. It would be a huge shame for the service users if it was decided for this building to be closed.”

“We use Joy Lane and Swalecliffe children centres more than three times a week, if these were to close it would have a massive impact on my children as they would have nowhere to go to interact with other children and professionals. They would miss out on learning and development help and overall would impact their day to day life. Myself would also be affected as this is a chance for me as a parent to interact and get advice and help about my child's development, I live alone with no family near so this groups really help me as a mum to talk about any issues I have and help with my children.”

“Joy Lane is the closest to the Lucerne Drive estate, an area of dire need. Children from there attend Joy Lane school, which is already a long walk from Lucerne Drive. Bus services from there are scanty and expensive into the town. So closing the Joy Lane centre and transferring services to the Harbour end of the town would seriously impact families on the Lucerne estate. Please reconsider this proposal.”

“As a person who lives in an area of deprivation, i know how hard it is to travel. The closest school to that area is on the same site as Joy Lane CC, therefore families are able to access that centre, either by walking or a low cost quick bus journey. Families from that area will be cut off otherwise. Having an outreach on that estate is not enough, they should be entitled to more than just an hour a week. Families from that area struggle with a number of

things. I have seen from being that Joy Lane CC that the families that come to our centre from that area need our support. People with small children are not able to walk far, or with the current climate people are unable to afford buses, taxis' or even to put petrol in their own car. That area is cut off. People from the local estates access the children centre, they feel welcomed and are 10 minutes away which seems like an easy walk if you are a new mum. If you have to travel 20/30 minutes to a centre, you are less likely to attend and access that support."

"Please re-consider closing BOTH Children's Centres and relocating to the Youth Hub. New mothers should have a protected, private space (with ample parking!) in order to access baby groups, breastfeeding support and health visitor appointments. Some of these could potentially also be held at the Youth Hub but as long as quality, privacy, ease to get to etc are not compromised. You should not give up your protected space for new mothers, particularly as you could bid for contracts for perinatal health services (such as the new mental health and pelvic health hubs) to be run out of these spaces."

"This building was the old Joy Lane Junior School it sits on the whole school site behind locked gates. The main school is undersubscribed and has space anyway and for the school to take on this building paying for heat and light is unrealistic. The building can't be sold and would have restrictive use for any group (Where is the financial gain in closing it you can't sell it so you would have to mothball it, costly and unnecessary). The security and maintenance costs outweighs ruts closure. Think again. The travel time to the proposed Family Hub is unrealistic."

"The demographics of Whitstable have changed a lot in the last ten years and there are now a lot of second homes and more affluent families - but we must not forget that two of the wards of greatest deprivation in the Canterbury District are in Whitstable. Joy Lane CC has never been in quite the right place - it is midway between the two areas of deprivation (the Lucerne estate and the Grimshill estate) so we have always tried to provide outreach groups on these estates as we recognise that some of the families living there cannot or will not travel. We currently do not have the capacity to run outreach groups in these two places so families are being expected to come to us. If the services we run from Joy Lane are moved to the Youth Hub we will be expecting these families to travel even further. Whilst an extra 1.5 miles does not sound a lot on paper, in reality, it is enough to deter people from walking to it or getting on the bus with their small children. The same applies to Swalecliffe CC - the Long Rock Estate is the area of deprivation and is very close to the centre. Whilst Whitstable Youth Hub is only a couple of miles away it will be enough to deter families from coming regularly. If the service moved to Whitstable Youth Hub changes would need to be made to make it fit for our purpose - this would mainly be in the form of storage for Children's Centre resources. Also a clinic room for health services. The Coastal midwifery team currently use Joy Lane Children Centre all day every day - and have two rooms to run clinics and also do their admin as they have no other base. They would need to be housed in the new Family Hub."

SWALECLIFFE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 29 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 79% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 69% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (34%).
- 24% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (29)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	23	79%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	20	69%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	10	34%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	7	24%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	5	17%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	5	17%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	4	14%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	3	10%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	2	7%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Devastated. We have used this children centre for the last 8 years. It is in walking distance and not easy just to drive to Herne bay for another centre. Why would you close both of the 2 children centre in Whitstable yet leave 2 open in Herne Bay?”

“Another group that we use weekly and have really noticed not having it the last couple of months that it has been closed for maintenance. This group was my lifeline when i had my first child, getting out and meeting new people and other mums in the same situation as me. This is a desperately needed centre for services.”

“Swalecliffe children’s centre is an amazing service which my children really look forward to every week, they learn new things, interact with adults and children and also really helps develop their education and skills.”

“I think it is essential that the building continues to benefit local families and young children. Ideally this would mean a fully open Children Centre, but if not then for the building to be passed to the school to expand their current franchised nursery provision who already use half of the building. There is no separate entrance for the building and so it could not be used for other purposes than either nursery/primary school age children or parent support work. We would be happy to maintain spaces for children centre work to continue to take place on our school site at the same time as part of the agreement if required. Schools need to work with the children's centre services as both parties' benefit, but most importantly vulnerable local families benefit. The key thing is that the building must continue to benefit local families as per its original purpose. It is not simply part of the estate, but an important part of the fabric of our school grounds, and a really important asset to our local community.”

“Both me and my child use the services at Swalecliffe. If this was to close this would impact us massively as this centre plays a big part in my child’s development and social skills. It would also impact me as a parent as this is a great place to get adult interaction and advice. Swalecliffe children’s centre is a safe place to take my child, for him to make friend and to get us out of the house. It is an amazing centre and doesn't deserve to be shut down.”

“I have used this centre previously for Prenatal appointments, Post natal appointments, Health visitor checks, Baby Groups and Training courses. Looking at increasing my family in the near future I am concerned about losing this facility, (ideally located next to my children’s school) and having to drive in an either pre or post-natal vulnerable state to Canterbury, which is becoming increasingly busy, when I could take a walk to either Whitstable centre. Helping both my mental health and carbon emissions.”

A petition to oppose the closure of Joy Lane and Swalecliffe Children's Centre has been created and received over 500 signatures. Email feedback received by the KCC consultation team also referenced a survey conducted by parents locally:

“The timetables at Joy Lane and Swalecliffe are a shadow of what they formally were. In November 2016 there were 26 ½ hours of structured activity at Joy Lane. By January 2019 this had dropped to 19.5 hours of structured activity a week, in March 2023 it was 9.5. Outreach sessions in areas of high deprivation on the Grimshill and Lucerne Estates no longer run and the relocation of the community midwives from both services to Estuary View Medical Centre has led many parents to no longer consider them a place they can just ‘pop in’ for a chat with staff. Whole rooms in Joy Lane Children’s Centre haven’t been reopened and with a limited timetable 1 in 5 of the parents we have survey reported that they had been turned away from services in the last year because of their limited capacity. Limited usage of the current services is a deliberate result of reducing the level of provision and there is no detail as to whether the new family hub will meet or exceed the hours available on both sites combined. Current utilisation figures are an inaccurate measure of need as the pandemic has left many feeling isolated and unable to ask for or seek help. Articles in the British Medical Journal show that the withdrawal of community midwifery services in the pandemic has left many parents to disengage with services because they are unaware of, or unwilling to engage with, support which is available to them.

The consultation considers change to be justified if 85% of the population can access the alternatively listed services within 30 minutes by public transport. However we believe that the unwillingness to guarantee 100% of people can access services is because people in areas of greater deprivation will disproportionately suffer. The consultation suggests that parents using Joy Lane could reasonably be expected to travel to both Briary Children’s Centre (5.8miles away) and the Riverside Youth Centre (6.9 miles away). Parents accessing Swalecliffe Children’s Centre can be expected to travel to Riverside Youth Centre/Briary Children’s Centre (3 miles away). We have identified the 14 highest areas of deprivation in Whitstable as identified in the 2021 Census - output areas in which at least 40% of the population have one measure of household deprivation. Using the tool TravelTime we identified a starting point within each area and plugged in the recommended alternate venues they may have to travel to outside of the town. In 6 of the 14 areas residents were not able to travel to the recommended alternative provision listed below within the 30 minutes - not accounting for any delay in the bus or waiting time. We would thereby call on Kent County Council to guarantee that all services will remain in the town and parents will not be expected to travel outside of it.”

RIVERSIDE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 42 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 67% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 52% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (31%).
- 31% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (42)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	28	67%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	22	52%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	13	31%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	13	31%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	13	31%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	10	24%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	7	17%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	3	7%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	3	7%
Use nursery / nursery is need	2	5%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	2%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The riverside has been a lifeline for my son and I, being a first time mum and not having many friends with babies, it has meant I have had the opportunity to meet other mums in a similar position. My son loves attending the Stay and Play sessions, I really do believe they have helped him to become more social and develop quicker, as he’s been able to interact

with other babies. The drop in clinics have also been invaluable, the staff there are lovely and very helpful. We have used them at least once a month and they're always busy when we attend. I really do feel that if services like these are cancelled, then there could be a rise in mental health issues. I found being a first time mum overwhelming and my mental health suffered until I found out about places like Riverside."

"I use riverside the most as it is closest to me. It's important to have the health visitor there and it's close enough that I can be on time to collect my daughter from school when the health visiting clinic ends. I also saw my midwife there, which was easier than the hospital to access. I use the classes there also. If I had to travel further I probably would not attend these clinics or classes, which risks an impact on my mental health."

"Childrens centre was a life saver to me as a new mum - I had the opportunity to meet others, connect and see someone if I needed to. If the proposals get rid of all the Whitstable and Swalecliffe hub's then where will people go? I would not have caught a bus to another town - I would have struggled on my own! Mothers at risk of mental relapse, post-natal depression are not going to have a place that is accessible!! This will have a significant impact on mother and baby mental health."

"Massively impacted - co-locating the current Riverside Children's Centres into the youth centre will likely reduce the space available and therefore the service provision. The clients at Rising Sun rely on the space and services available at the Riverside for emergency safeguarding drop ins, parental support and even discounted meal options. It is a lifeline for many families. I feel that co-locating these targeted, specific services into the youth centre will reduce the effectiveness and reach of the services. Therefore creating yet another barrier for our clients and many others to engage with support services."

"Riverside centre has been a central hub for many years. The building is purpose built and well used and loved. This will be devastating to the community around there because the youth centre does not have the same provision and openness about it. What does it say about the community that a purpose built building specifically for families is to be decommissioned/torn down and land sold off?"

"I have previously worked as a Health Visitor and access to the services provided by Children Centre's are fundamental in meeting key stakeholders objectives in meeting their requirements in relation to early intervention and the healthy child programme. Not having services close to families requires them to travel, at some expense and inconvenience. At this current time of financial hardship, expecting families to find £5.70 to travel to a children centre is inequitable. Health Visiting Service has KPI's to meet regarding attendance to it Universal Offer - this is unlikely to be met if families are expected to travel to a Children Centre outside their area. In addition to this midwifery services are provided from Children Centres - is it fair to expect a mother of a 10 day old baby to travel on the bus for an hour for an appointment? In my experience, I do not want to be over dramatic, but Children Centre's have saved lives of many women and their children. I have experienced women presenting to a children centre, using their attendance as a mean to flee domestic abuse or to seek intervention for their mental health crisis. These women would have been unlikely to seek that help if it was not close to them. I appreciate the need to reduce the financial burden upon KCC and agree with closing one children centre in an area where there are 2 - such as Herne Bay. However, I feel that to leave areas with none will have a significant impact on the health and well-being of children and families. I believe that KCC are short sighted in their approach and are only looking at the pound signs. If children are not able to

access key services there will be financial burden upon NHS and KCC resources in the future to address the missed opportunities in the fundamental first 1000 days.”

“Riverside CC is not easy for us to use as CCs, due to their being only 1 room. This should be seen as our 'flagship' site, but the building isn't fit for purpose due to the limited rooms.

The busiest time in the centre is the health clinics. The building is packed. We would really need to consider this if moving over to the youth centre.”

APPLE TREE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 17 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some also highlighted the convenience of the building location for access.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“We attend stay and play at Apple Tree on a regular basis. Considering the size of the centre, it is always busy and is quite clearly needed for the Chartham village community.”

“Valuable in providing groups for Chartham residents to access- support for adults and interaction for children.”

“This was the first children's centre I have found and it was such an eye opener to me. It led me to also finding out about Joy Lane which has become a staple in our week. Before coming to Apple Tree I did not know these centres were around and it has really broadened my children's social circle and helped us to get out of the house when we feel that there is nowhere else that we can go, especially now with affordability issues limiting our options.”

“All these centres are essential hubs for the community. Their spaces are welcoming - they make you feel safe and supported. The staff get to know you, and you feel like you can reach out if needed. The classes are really well set up and bring families together.”

“As a County Councillor I understand what the impact will be from closing the Apple Tree Childrens Centre. This Childrens Centre is in a primary school. It is an ideal location for families to access services. By closing this you will make it harder for families.”

“I understand the need to consolidate for costs and carbon footprint. But by closing one centre you increase the carbon footprint, costs for everyone that uses the centre. For everyone sessions taken by a health visitor/early years worker for 8 people attending that would increase car journeys, parking, costs. All the buildings are in towns. Chartham is one of the largest villages with a growing population. It is easily accessible to neighbouring villages. As a centre it could host health visitor appointments, routine maternity appointments and even support with children for children starting school or reception with the skills they need. As a new mum the baby groups have been essential in supporting me to meet people and talk informally about my baby's development. I can't afford bus fares into town and juggle siblings with school pick-ups. The centre is affordable and walkable.”

- 15 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some highlighted that the centre has been closed and this could affect consultation contributions.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“An invaluable resource to its community which provides good value for money.”

“We do not use this service anymore but know many friends and family who use it now and will continue to in the future.”

“This has not been open as a Children Centre for some time so I feel this may affect members of this community completing the consultation. Young people accessing provision in Hersden have said they would prefer to come to a building.”

“Will be an awful loss. We would not have the space and support of so many wonderful staff and courses. This would mean less ability to care for our children and more anxiety and decreased mental health wellbeing.”

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - DARTFORD

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS, HEALTH VISITING AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Dartford.

BRENT CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Children's Centres and Youth Hubs

- 75 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 67% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 65% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (37%).
- 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- 16% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (75)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	50	67%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	49	65%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	28	37%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	19	25%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	14	19%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	12	16%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	10	13%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	9	12%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	8	11%
Proposed library is not a suitable alternative	6	8%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	1%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“All of these centres are needed by the local community. As a manager of a national charity it is essential that people are able to access these services without having to travel long distances.”

“Some midwife/newborn baby checks are run here. This centre is accessible with the many busses running to and from the town centre. When you have a newborn, it can be hard to get out and about. Some members of the public do not drive and would otherwise not be able to get to these services.”

“People will lose access to a central facility and instead be forced to use inappropriate co-located services elsewhere in the borough and more than likely be put off using them completely.”

“They will lose access to the facility as the proposals are to move the services to an inaccessible location. This centre is in the middle of Dartford, in walking distance from housing and the town centre, near bus stops and the station.”

“This will have a devastating impact on our most vulnerable, hard to reach families who rely on support. The ability to work with a team member face to face is essential to some of our parents who would be lost without this. Children's lives will be impacted if these community hubs for children close.”

“I am a single mother with a 6 month old. I have moved to the area in august 2022 alone. I have no friends/family in the local area and heavily rely on weekly baby groups/music group and stay and play and baby massage sessions. This has given me a sense of belonging and I have seen a huge development in my child. I have made new friends and my mental health has improved. I have attempted to join Oakfield but public transport is inconvenient and buggy storage is not safe and clean (outdoors), it is a 25 minute walk from town which is not suitable for my child. I have made good friendships and have received excellent support from staff. It would be a shame to have this removed from all mums but especially me and my child after already having a difficult transition. I am happy and settled and look forward to groups, maybe a little more than my baby. It would be devastating to have Brent closed as all my support network would be lost.”

“The Brent Childrens Centre on Overy Street is located in a ward which has a deprivation rate of 33% as measured by the most recent census. It is situated in an area of high population and population growth, close to Town Centre with good public transport links. It is there one of the most accessible centres within Dartford. Dartford has a rapidly growing population – increasing at three times the rate of the national average. The closure of this centre will leave a significant area of Central Dartford without a dedicated Children’s Centre. This will place huge pressure on the proposed Community Hub facility at Temple Hill – a location we also have significant concerns about.”

“Location! Location! Location! The Brent Children’s Centre is in the heart of the town, it has a high footfall with a vast local community. I appreciate that the building is not owned by KCC therefor an unnecessary overhead. The suggestion that it be closed but the families can go to Temple Hill Library/Hub which is up a large hill if walking from central Dartford. or Oakfield Children’s Centre just doesn’t make sense. Temple Hill library is extremely small. It is in a nice location if you live on ether Temple Hill, The Bridge of Phoenix Quarter. However, to use the library as hub in place of Brent, Temple Hill and Darenth Children’s Centres along with the Dartford Youth Centre. It is such a small place that I wonder if this building has been looked at personally or just chosen of just from a financial spreadsheet on cost cutting alone. An alternative building in the location of the town area indeed makes sense if is a cheaper option. Keeping Knockhall Children’s Centre when it is only just a few minutes from Swanscombe Centre doesn’t make sense, the footfall and depravation in the Greenhithe/Knockhall area is not as high as in other parts of Dartford. Swanscombe (which is a lovely large centre in the middle of an area of need) I understand keeping Swanscombe. I wonder if Knockhall is being kept as it is a cheaper option rather than keeping a more even placement of children’s centres in Dartford and keeping one in the heart of Dartford. Although the Centre is called Brent is serves the very heart of the town with extremely high footfall and high depravation. Apart from Oakfield Children’s Centre which is right over one side of Dartford district and Swanscombe and Knockhall which are near the bearders of Gravesham district there will be nothing for Dartford central area where footfall and deprivation are high, please could you explain? Has the Temple Hill Library been visited in person to understand it’s suitability as a Community Hub? It is extremely small.”

Health Visiting Service

- 40 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (53%).
- 28% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 38% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (40)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	21	53%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	15	38%
Currently provides much needed support / services for families / children / babies	11	28%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	7	18%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	6	15%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	10%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	1	3%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“We see lots of families for drop in weigh clinics and development reviews that live in more deprived areas of Dartford. We have a high level of vulnerable families that just wouldn't travel out to Swanscombe and Knockhall. Knockhall is half the size of Brent and the less space there is the less space we have to deliver our service.”

“It is vital that families have a safe space that they can attend for appointments and services. Health visiting were a vital service that kept families safe during the pandemic. We cannot expect families to travel far distances for appointments as this is not feasible, economically and practically. Health visitors also need suitable clinic space and so this is a key consideration in their future set ups.”

“Brent Children's Centre is the most central town centre site - health visitor services being combined with town centre shopping seems to make sense. If this service is removed we

would like to discuss co-location of such services in another local authority owned town centre building which is used 7 days a week by the community.”

“We will no longer be able to attend the children’s sessions, as the other centres are too far for us to access. If we were to have another child, losing the midwifery, health visiting and breastfeeding services would also make things harder. I have tried to attend other buildings for appointments in the past, but my work and childcare arrangements mean that this is a real challenge. Potentially, this would mean taking holiday time just so that my husband or I could look after our older children whilst the other parent took the younger child to the appointment. Having a central location means that it is easier to combine tasks and fit them into the day.”

GREENLANDS CHILDREN’S CENTRE

- 28 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 32% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 16% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (28)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	15	54%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	12	43%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	11	39%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	7	25%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	6	21%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	6	21%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	5	18%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	11%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This is a local children’s centre & serves many residents in Darenth providing vital access to midwives & for socialising, if this is closed access to other locations could be limited.”

“We provide care for a caseload of over 250 women in this building , antenatal appointments through 40 weeks of pregnancy . We serve women in the da2 6 , da2 7 and da2 8 . The proposed distance to Knockhall and Oakfield would impact their accessibility to care . This could potentially have a financial impact and /or a health impact if they are unable to attend appointments elsewhere. Plus the suggested alternatives already serve a caseload of that postcode.”

“I use this service often, I don’t know any other mothers than the mums that attend this group, without them I’d feel lonely. Money is also tight and many don’t have access to the toys they have at the groups or afford to do anything else with their babies.”

“This is the closest centre for me to access health visiting services which is already not within walking distance or easily accessible by public transport, I just won’t bother attending appointments if they are too far away.”

“This a quite a remote area, not easy for public transport now the buses have been cut, so how will the local residents get the support they need? It won’t affect my family as we are now all adults but what about those young families in the area.”

“My household will not be affected but I am very aware that the residents of Darenth and South Darenth are cut off from the main towns of Dartford and Swanley. South Darenth is further impacted by half of the area coming under Dartford District control and half under Sevenoaks, giving a sense of not belonging to any community. Bus services are poor and infrequent and many roads are country lanes with no pavement. For those residents who do not have access to a car, visits to seek advice and support become impossible.”

MAYPOLE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 22 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 32% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 16% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (22)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	7	32%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	7	32%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	6	27%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	5	23%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	5	23%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	4	18%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	3	14%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	14%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Pregnant women need to be able to access midwifery services easily. They are often vulnerable and need to attend their appointments to check on the health of their baby and themselves. I am concerned that without these local services there could be negative pregnancy/birth outcomes.”

“This will have a devastating impact on our most vulnerable, hard to reach families who rely on support. The ability to work with a team member face to face is essential to some of our parents who would be lost without this. Children's lives will be impacted if these community hubs for children close.”

“The proposed alternatives are not big enough to house all the health professionals required along with up to 15 mothers / children / prams at one time. The travel for some families would be almost impossible and care would be compromised.”

“Maypole is at the very edge of Dartford close to the border with Bexley. The location is a highly residential area and the centre is already co located with a school and nurse on site. Whilst Oakfield is a reasonable distance it does not offer the access and facilities of Maypole.”

TEMPLE HILL CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 60 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 62% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 47% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users praise the facilities currently offered (32%) in comparison to proposed alternative(s).
- 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- 18% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (60)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	37	62%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	28	47%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	19	32%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	15	25%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	14	23%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	11	18%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	10	17%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	5%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	3	5%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	2%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Temple Hill already has a lovely building for its Children's Centre, it is located in the same building as other services which parents are able to use. Moving the children's centre to the library will have a negative impact on our local community. There is not enough space at the library, there are no toilets or baby changing areas, no safe storage for pushchairs, the

number of people allowed to attend will decrease due to the size of the venue. No outside space to allow children to experience outdoor play & learning. People trying to concentrate in the library will be disturbed by the groups being held. Services have already been cut at Temple Hill; this community needs more children's services not less."

"This children centre is at easy access to me and my newborn. Closing these buildings would make it inconvenient and less likely for me to access these services. I have found them to be great for my mental health and my developing baby."

"If these services close, there will be a huge knock on effect that I am not convinced have really been thought about in enough depth. Children shape the future we say all the time. If that is true, then we can't be taking the very services away that are enabling them to thrive. These services support their motor skills, social skills and so much more. It also brings parents(many of whom suffer with post-natal depression) out of isolation and creates a space that is positive and social."

"We use Temple Hill children's centre every week. My child is disabled and this is one of the only places he feels able to attend. This cannot be replicated in a library; it is not an appropriate space to replicate what takes place in the children's centre. You say you are keeping the children's centre where need is greatest- in Dartford you are keeping Oakfield, Swanscombe and Knockhall. I don't believe this represents the greatest areas of need in Dartford- you are just keeping the cheapest options. This is completely short-sighted. I don't think anyone at the council making these decisions understands what the Children's Centres provide. This is targeted work which prevents larger and more costly problems from arising. You are trying to fool people by saying it's you will be providing the services from the library but the library is not suitable. It's not a space for children- especially those with additional needs. You are cutting services for vulnerable people. I often hear from conservatives that these services are only used by middle class people anyway- this is short sighted. Children's centres do provide support and assistance for those facing socio-economical hardship but it also supports those with SEND, domestic abuse, mental health issues- which can affect anyone. A councillor told me 'you can't be sentimental about bricks and mortar'- I'm not, I don't care about the building but you will not be providing a service for my son if this is taken away or anyone else in my area who needs support."

"Temple hill is a ward with High deprivation. The current centre is located within a purpose built facility in the centre of the ward. The centre is already co located as a Doctors surgery, Church and Community Cafe are in the same building. the centre has 2 well-appointed playrooms with access to outside space. Regular children's groups are held there in conjunction with other agencies. The building is in the centre of the community with parking access , but easy walking distance for this population. The Childrens centre is already in a building that offers a family hub, with holistic support."

"I am speaking as someone who has worked with the most hard to reach families in Dartford. Whilst I understand that this particular building may not be value for money, there is a need for providing a permanent base for Dartford families to access services. Also closing the nearest centre, Temple Hill in Dartford's most deprived area is another blow. Dartford families will not travel to Oakfield and many will not access services at local libraries as they are not seen as a safe space plus children's centre staff will not be based there for those simply knocking on the door for support eg domestic abuse. This is further isolating the families that need this support the most. Previous outreach has not seen the same footfall as that of the children's centre."

“The Temple Hill Children’s Centre is currently located at The Living Well - a successful and popular shared space with the GPs surgery, a church and community centre. It has a kitchen, separate male, female and disabled toilets which have adequate space for parents to change a baby. The proposed new location for the Hub at Temple Hill library only has one toilet, which is accessed on request. There is nowhere to change a baby and no obvious additional space for children to play or for parents to meet and socialise or for support groups to be held. We do not feel it is an appropriate location for a Children’s Centre and certainly not an adequate replacement for a popular existing location.”

Midwifery data for the Dartford area has been put forward expressed concerns at the proposed plans for children’s centres:

“KCC is proposing to close 4 key Children’s Centres in Dartford: Darenth, Maypole, Brent and Temple Hill. This would leave just three Centres for all the community midwifery care: Swanscombe, Oakfield and Knockhall. The consultation document makes no mention of community midwifery services which would be affected by the plans. The essential healthcare activity provided by community midwives cannot be accommodated by just three centres. Maternal and neonatal health relies on the provision of accessible, regular antenatal care. The plans disproportionately effect people in the most deprived postcode areas who are already at risk of poorer health outcomes. Prior to closures, the 7 centres provide 217.5 hours per week community midwifery care capacity. Following proposed closures, available capacity would be vastly reduced to 112.5 hours. The care activity would need to be accommodated in other buildings, which would not support the wider health and social care strategy for integration. In the Dartford area, there is a high concentration of IMD decile 1 and IMD decile 2 areas. Women and babies from these postcode areas are at higher risk of poorer health outcomes, which is well documented and has driven the development of the ICB Maternity Equity and Equality Plan. Women from these areas are more likely to DNA (miss) appointments, and missed antenatal care increases the risk of stillbirth and other poor maternity outcomes. Forcing women to travel further is likely to increase DNA rates. The average distance will be increased from 2.6km to 3.3km.”

THE DARTFORD BRIDGE LEARNING AND RESOURCE CAMPUS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 73 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 53% of those providing a comment indicate the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline to current users. 25% comment the centre provides much needed support / services for users.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (38%).
- 23% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- 16% express concerns safety concerns regarding alternative provisions and the suitability of access of potential users.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (73)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	39	53%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	28	38%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	18	25%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	17	23%
Safe place / alternative venue is not safe / would not use due to safety concerns	12	16%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	6	8%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	5%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	4	5%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	4%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	3	4%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	2%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Facilities for disabled adults are a rarity To have a facility in a highly residential area is invaluable. Dartford library cannot offer the same opportunities as a resource centre.”

“Youth club at Dartford Bridge is central to children who live here and to parents of those children. Many parents will not be able to take kids to youth clubs if it is re located. Our children will miss out.”

“My daughter attends the above youth group twice a week and loves it. She has dyslexia and it affects her ability to make and maintain friends. This youth group has helped greatly with this as it has introduced her to other children she may not have otherwise met. It would affect her greatly if this service was no longer available.”

“A lot of us have this on our doorsteps and some won't be able to travel to different locations. If we move to Temple Hill there will be problems with traffic. There are some here with ASD's, the change in location will be too unsettling and cause anxiety.”

“I have been coming here since I was in primary school and this is the only place I can have fun and be social without worrying. All my friends come here. I'd be really upset to see it close. I believe the building should stay open to help more young people to break out of their shell and feel safe here. Also, so many kids only learn social skills because of this sort of club. It's the only one local. We've got great friendships to feel safe with staff and other people. It wouldn't be the same as another youth centre.”

“It will be inconvenient for my child to attend another building. He will therefore miss out on the youth hub he currently attends if Dartford Bridge moves to another building. My son has a really enjoyable time at the youth hub it will be a real shame if this closes. The people who work at the youth hub in my opinion are amazing and great with the children doing an outstanding job and working hard. We could not be without this hub or the people.”

“I think the Youth centre should stay where it is because some children do not have a youth centre to go to that make them feel safe and this youth centre does that. I feel like if the youth centre is moved some children may not be able to get there or feel comfortable moving location. It is also easier to travel to from our homes and when finishing at such a late time some people may not feel safe travelling in the dark. Temple Hill is not the safest place so I feel it is a better idea to keep the location of this youth centre where it is.”

“I think the youth centre on the Bridge is perfect as young children that live on the estate have this hub to go to where they are safe and close to home. If the hub moves to Temple hill they won't have many to places to go as parents will not want their children walking through Temple Hill to get there. Temple is not safe as the bridge estate this would increase potential danger to young people attending.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Oakfield Childrens Centre. 3 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about closures and the impact this would have on getting children 'nursery ready' and proposed co-locations with Brent and Temple Hill closures in particular.

Accessing safe and warm spaces and needing separate sessions for parents of children with disabilities or SEN is considered important.

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - DOVER

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS, HEALTH VISITING AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Dover.

BLOSSOM'S CHILDRENS CENTRE

Children's Centres and Youth Hubs

- 131 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 74% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 59% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (41%).
- 37% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (131)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	97	74%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	77	59%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	54	41%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	48	37%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	38	29%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	31	24%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	28	21%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	28	21%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	22	17%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	19	15%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	14	11%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Blossom’s Children’s Centre is somewhere that I have visited and used A LOT since my first born in 2019. I am very familiar with the centre and the services in which it provides. I have visited the centre 1-2 a month, and I’d also like to mention that my children attend the nursery inside of Blossoms. Removing this centre would impact not just my family, but hundreds of others who I know also disagree with this proposal. It is easily accessible, for a start. It holds a wide range of services from health visiting to children/baby groups. We already lack things like this in the county, especially Deal/Dover area. And now you want to remove a permanent, stable facility and make it more difficult for people to access by co-locating and constant moving of these services? It doesn’t make sense. I’m sorry to hear that the government is running out of money but I do believe there are more important factors out there than could be looked into / removed, rather than affecting the young lives of our children and making it more difficult for parents/carers..”

“Blossom Children’s Centre is a short walkable distance from my home and as I don’t drive that means I can frequently attend sessions at the centre. It moving to the Youth Hub will mean further to walk or the need to get the bus. I know the centre is a safe environment for me and my child, making us both feel relaxed and able to enjoy activities and use services like the HV (features like the manned reception, door locks/secure entry system, additional locked internal door to access rooms, etc.). I am not confident the same level of safety and security could be achieved at the Youth Hub and I would not feel comfortable using space that is shared with young people, particularly those who have behavioural issues, complex support needs or youth offenders. The children’s centre has certain features like heated floors that I doubt could/would be replicated in the Youth Hub turned Family Hub. The heated floors help ensure a comfortable environment for babies and their parents/carers, especially as so much time is spent on the floor or at a low level. We wouldn’t have been so comfortable doing baby massage without this, or during the baby groups. The centre is also an incredibly colourful and stimulating environment, with bright posters and children’s artwork on the walls; it feels like it belongs to the children – it’s their space and they can explore/experiment/express themselves freely and safely there. The Youth Hub turned Family Hub would not be able to replicate this as to accommodate all age ranges the space would need to be kept almost like a blank canvas, with age/group appropriate decoration/equipment etc only being brought out/uncovered for specific sessions.”

“Blossoms provides a good local service to Walmer, especially Mill Hill. Its location adjacent to a state school suggests an opportunity to make use of it still as an educational asset while maintaining the health visiting and classes. Due to its location and access it’s not suited to other uses very easily. While Deal is not far on paper - for those with very

young children the bus service is poor and much less accessible in comparison to a relatively shorter walk to Blossoms. New family homes are currently being constructed at volume on the outskirts of Walmer, likely to increase the 0-5 population significantly in the next five years.”

“Enormously. I cannot state strongly enough how devastating the impact of the closure of Blossom would be. My children have both developed enormously through the social interactions provided to them through the baby and toddler groups at Blossom. This was never clearer than when the first lockdown hit and I witnessed first-hand the "backward" step my son took due to the sudden loss of interaction with his peers at 18 months old. The outgoing, confident and 'clever' child becoming timid and reserved due to lack of interaction with peers. Blossom stepped in again to save the day with the amazing Nursery which would also no doubt be lost, Brambles, housed within the Blossom centre. Economically it was a huge stretch for us to pay for childcare. We struggled with this but did so for our children's benefit but if the groups had been available it would not have been necessary. It was done purely due to the absence of groups. So many parents will not have that option, not the financial positioning to pay for the paid for children's groups locally. The cost of travel to Dover will be exclusionary and so these children will not have the educational benefits of play with peers, nor the opportunities for help which come from parents being permitted a forum to express their concerns. My partner is autistic but will utilise groups with our daughter within the locality. He does not drive and is disabled by public transportation. In short, he will be excluded in a way which is tantamount to discrimination.”

“I don't often do surveys but i have felt nothing but disappointment with our council to even think about closing Blossoms in Deal. It is a lovely new building, great facilities, great staff, my little girl absolutely loves going there, one of her first words was 'Blossoms'. It's a great community where kids can socialise and learn new skills from each other. The thought of going to an overcrowded centre and online services, we won't even bother with it just like a lot of people we have spoken to. Blossoms have benefited a lot of children from around the area, with increasing population around the Walmer / Deal area the council want to shut down centres just like they did with Walmer School. A nice new building, wanting to 'save money'. Think about all the money you have wasted building them not to use them. It really is disgusting.”

“I use Blossoms for baby groups which are so important for the wellbeing of myself and my baby. I've used Blossoms in the past for parenting courses, adult education and the nursery that shares the building. If you remove Blossoms you remove invaluable support for me and my children, I have a disability and I've received years of support from Blossoms.”

“This centre is a lifeline to families with young children. I attended the baby and toddler groups with both of my children when they were young, and my now 8 year old is autistic and struggling with his mental health. The children's centre are still providing support and advice for him. They are working on building his confidence and self-esteem. Without this service, I dread to think where he would be with his mental health. As a parent to very young children, the baby and toddler groups provided much needed socialisation for both my baby and me, during a time I found very difficult due to anxiety and depression. The staff are so friendly and supportive and provide such a nurturing environment and provided easy access to advice from health visitors. I honestly believe it would be extremely damaging to our community and society as a whole if our children's centre were to close.”

“I’ve used this centre a lot through my pregnancy and my son’s early years. It’s well located for me and a nice venue with friendly approachable staff. I wouldn’t want to lose the centre to have to travel to Dover or nearby, it wouldn’t be cost effective. An outreach service like in a village hall etc, offering the services Blossom offers would not be as private or professional.”

“New houses already approved KCC mean many more children in Walmer need localised services. Swathes of new housing and growing populations desperately need this LOCAL vital service.”

“You are closing a centre in a town which is expanding. I have taken my son there to be seen when I struggled to see a GP. The more support families can access in the early years would mean less support later on. Ultimately saving KCC money. The funding and service cuts to children’s services has already had a drastic negative impact and KCC are wanting to cut more services.”

“I would say the building is one of the most suitable in Dover area for a family hub model. Numerous rooms, space and booked out almost all of the time, groups and services are busy and the only centre with a bespoke garden which would be a shame to lose.”

“We strongly urge Kent County Council to reconsider the closure proposal for the following reasons: 1) Blossoms Children’s Centre contains a day nursery, primary school and Sure Start centre on a single site, giving comprehensive cover for families in Warner. The alternative provision is either not available, or located at some distance, which requires a bus ride (if available), and the manhandling of a pram on and off a bus. 2) Moving the facility to the Deal youth hub, fails to consider the differing needs of 0-8 year olds and 11-17 year olds. The Deal youth hub consists of a single large room with 3 smaller side rooms for specialised services. There is no room for the younger children on site. The educational material available for 11-17 year olds is inappropriate for younger children. In our opinion it will be impossible to separate both age ranges within a single building given the limited facilities available at the Deal youth hub. 3) Where will the specialist equipment located at the light and sound sensory room, at Blossoms be relocated, as this was only purchased recently. There does not appear to be adequate room to locate this valuable equipment at the Deal Hub. 4) Relocating the Children’s centre to the Deal Youth Hub, will require a baby changing facility to be fitted, is this in the relocation plan? Where will it go? 5) Blossoms hosts a weekly visit from a Health Visitor, where and how will this valuable service be located at the Deal Youth Hub, as it requires a private room for consultations to take place? This would be a list amenity to new parents if it was no longer available. 6) During the holidays when the hub is open to 11-17 year old children, how will baby classes continue? Losing the baby classes or not catering to the needs of 11-17 year olds would represent an unsupportable loss of amenity for the children of the area, in both age ranges.”

“The Youth Centre building down in Park Avenue, has one central hall, and a number of rooms off it. It would need a lot of modification to make it suitable for both a children’s centre AND a youth centre. All changes and building works will cost money. I understand you do have money for modifying buildings, but with the population growth in Deal, maybe you should consider leaving Blossom AND providing a smaller children’s centre in Deal. Particular problems with sharing spaces at the Youth centre will occur in the holidays, when the youth workers have a full program of activities for teenagers. What happens to the children’s centre programs then with the large entrance space? Where are the teenagers to meet?”

Health Visiting Service

- 91 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 52% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 48% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (42%).
- 19% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (91)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for families / children / babies	47	52%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	44	48%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	39	43%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	38	42%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	19	21%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	17	19%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	17	19%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	15	16%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	10	11%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	7	9%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	7	8%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Blossoms is ideal for parents living in Deal to access a HV face to face. Not every parent drives and to be honest the transport isn't the best and services have been cut. It's

important to be able to access a HV face to face and taking blossoms away from the parents in deal would be detrimental to the service.”

“Midwife appointments are held here; you can get advice easily - it is vital to the people of Deal. It is the only Children's centre located in Deal in which you can have midwife appointments and health visits. I use it regularly.”

“Having health visiting services locally is invaluable. If people have to travel further for weighing clinics, advice and general appointments, they may be unable to attend due to travel costs. This is unacceptable. These services NEED to be accessible. It is unbelievable that it is even a consideration to close children's centres and limit access to health visitors.”

“As a new parent having Blossom Children’s Centre in Deal with regular sessions is vital for my mental health and being able to take my baby to these sessions to socialise and also get advice. You have just invested in an amazing sensory room here also only to threaten to close it. The logic isn’t there. You will be cutting us off from support groups in a town we are comfortable visiting.”

“I do not understand who you are planning to try to put different services all in one place but are planning to close a building that already has a lot of the services in one place. The health visitors helped me when I had post-natal depression but it took a lot of courage for me to go there and ask for help and I don't know if I would have been able to do that if I would have had to take a bus/train 8miles to another town first in order to do that.”

“It is a safe, clean and professional environment which provides privacy when speaking to the HV. I've attended a community HV space today and didn't feel I could talk about my private and emotional wellbeing due to being in an open room.”

“The Health Visiting service is extremely popular in this community. Due to its proximity and walk-in availability, the service that runs from 9-11:30am has a constant flow of babies and parents. These babies are weighed and receive a general examination by Health Visitors whilst parents receiving advice from breastfeeding, weaning, sleeping etc. The face to face interaction allows Health Visitors to take action upon any signs of mental health or domestic abuse. This takes a huge pressure of the NHS. If the Health Visitor service is moved out of Blossoms, parents would be discouraged to make the journey. Blossom offers a safe environment and is accessible to many without the hassle of public transport, parking or traffic.”

Children and Young People's Counselling Service -

- 57 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 52% of those providing a comment noted they use the centre frequently / it is seen as a lifeline (for counselling and other services) and 51% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- 32% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (21%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (57)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use centre frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	32	56%
Currently provides much needed support / services for families / children / babies	29	51%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	18	32%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	12	21%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	9	16%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	9	16%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	7	12%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	7	12%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	7%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	4	7%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	5%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“I was unaware of this service but believe there is a great need for this during post covid. The mental health impact lockdown has left a lot of children needing this service. Again, regardless of what building, the service needs to be accessible for the community.”

“Counselling services are imperative. If we don’t have this or the offering is reduced people will suffer.”

“We will be devastated to see it go. Knowing that the building and staff are there as a safe space if we have any concerns or need support has been invaluable during our son’s first year.”

“No support , affecting one’s mental health further increasing post-natal depression anxiety socialisation of babies and children’s affecting development and milestones.”

“You will be cutting people off from using services, from socialising and finding somewhere to go and meet new people. After lockdown we need to build our community up, not tear it apart by removing more services.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Deal Library. 18 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about the potential loss of the sensory room at Blossom Children’s Centre, the centre being considered safe and secure, access to alternative transport, new development in the area and the established relationships with staff. An attendee commented that as it is a small building, it is ideal to take deaf child to as it's small and less overwhelming than bigger centres.

SUNFLOWER CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 40 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 63% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 58% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (48%).
- 43% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (40)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	25	63%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	23	58%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	19	48%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	17	43%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	12	30%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	9	23%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	6	15%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	3	8%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	8%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	5%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The Sunflower Children's Centre serves the local community of Elvington, an area of high deprivation. A Children's Centre in this locality is an essential lifeline for many struggling local families. Travel, even to the nearest villages is increasingly difficult as a consequence of the recent cessation of bus services.”

“My daughter and I visit the Sunflower Centre every week. They really have been an integral part of her development so far. The groups are always full of engaging activities and the staff are always on hand for advice or just a friendly chat when you need support. When possible The team take on board the individual requests of the children for activities. We both look forward to our visits and miss them in the holidays when they don’t run. We don’t always have access to a car so will not be able to access the groups if they are moved to the town. All of the staff at sunflower are absolutely amazing and it would be a massive shame for the local community if the centre was too close. From the moment you walk through the door at sunflower and are greeted, you instantly feel welcome and at ease, which is really important for any parents who may feel nervous about attending groups. When I first started attending the groups I didn’t know anyone there, but we have made friends with lots of the other parents and children. Please don’t take sunflower away from our community.”

“Hugely. We go there at least 3 times a week, unless ill. It has helped me emotionally so much after having my daughter. It is a safe haven somewhere we feel safe and secure. It's a support network we wouldn't and many others in the village wouldn't have without it. There's nothing else there for us. Public transport is awful. It is good for our mental health. Not to mention how amazing it has been for our children, they are growing and learning so much from Sunflowers. Please reconsider. Look elsewhere.”

“I know myself and friends use this provision for their children. I travel to this location as my daughter enjoys the safety and environmental of this centre. My friend loves in the village and finds it a quick walk to access this for her son. The staff at this centre are amazing and attempt to encourage others to attend this centre but I've found that the advertising for this centre and that people are able to access children's centres out of their area are limited.”

“Sunflowers Children Centre is able to provide services and support to a very remote area. Currently Elvington/Eythorne has one bus a week go out to the villages so it is not an easy option for families to travel to another centre as you're proposing, this could really exclude people who do not have other forms of transport and stops them from accessing vital services for them and their children. I strongly disagree with the possibility of it closing. I write this with my sister in mind who lives in Elvington and is currently pregnant, she does not drive. She has recently been made aware of the current activities and groups and is hoping to access these once her child is born in the summer. Again if sunflowers closes she would really struggle to find somewhere else or to travel to another children's centre.”

“Without this even with the most groups aimed at mother and babies, my ASD child would have nothing as only group can get too due to transport or non pathed roads making accessibility high priority when considering removing. Also able to talk to friendly non-judgemental staff about everyday issues or other services that could help. Without them myself and children with ASD would be left in most vulnerable state and would be left with nothing and be forced into a more isolated situation.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, an engagement event took place at Sunflower Children’s Centre. 9 people attended.

- Concerns were raised about ability and distance to travel to alternatives and/or outreach, the quality of local transport and the importance of the service given to the local community to date.

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS – FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Folkestone & Hythe.

HAWKINGE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Children's Centres

- 48 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 71% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 69% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (33%).
- 33% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (48)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	34	71%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	33	69%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	16	33%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	16	33%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	12	25%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	8	17%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	8	17%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	7	15%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	5	10%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	2	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“A devastating blow to new mums in Hawkinge. That centre gave me a reason to get up each day, i attended several groups there each week with both my children, I would not have done this is I had to of travelled. Getting to Folkestone isn’t the answer to this. New mum suffering depression isn’t likely to get a bus if they can’t drive. Devastating to Hawkinge to lose a great facility.”

“By not being able to walk to your local centre which serves the town of approximately 10,000, then being forced to ever use public transport or to drive a 5 mile round trip to another centre in another community which will increase the demand in that centre therefore decrease in the availability of appointments and sessions delivered. Absolute insanity!”

“You cannot underestimate the impact on people without transportation as a result of closing this building. Currently a community midwife makes use of it which was a wonderful way to introduce me to services provided there. Equally this centre is used by people in the rural community. Every activity I have gone to here has always been full and so I would be amazed to see how those services could be redistributed without more people missing out! People with limited or no transportation will be impacted greatly.”

“Closing this centre will reduce the councils individual carbon footprint but massively increase the counties! Rather than have a small number of staff attend the site the whole community would need to travel somewhere much further away. Public transport is barely an option for this area as it’s u reliable and takes an unreasonable amount of time. It’s taking your carbon footprint away and increasing a while communities which needs to be calculated it’s a poor excuse. The negative effect this will have on the mental wellbeing of the vulnerable children in this area is unnecessary and unacceptable.”

“Hawkinge is a town and needs services. It is growing, so why remove services? We would struggle to reach Folkestone at appointment times as the services are not all on the bus route and travelling with small children is difficult if there are health worries.”

“Again these are a huge part of my daughter week, we attend 2+ classes a week and they are times where she can be with other children playing and learning, they’re massively important for her development.”

Health Visiting Service

- 33 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 64% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 36% comment that it provides much needed support / services.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (33)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	21	64%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	13	39%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	13	39%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	12	36%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	6	18%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	5	15%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	12%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	3	9%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	2	6%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This is the most important for us personally. We rely on these groups for company, learning and development. They have been a huge part of my life since having my daughter and I believe they bring structure and enjoyment to a lot of mums in our local area. We would be lost without this facility.”

“When I was pregnant, the midwife appointments were local to Hawkinge. This not only helped with the practicalities (when at RVH I had to park a distance away and struggled to walk to the appointment), but also allowed me to meet other local parents. The children’s

groups in Hawkinge are fantastic and help build the community of young parents. It would be such a shame if we all got grouped together in Folkestone because fewer friendships would continue outside the groups.”

“This centre was a lifeline when I had new-borns. It was a hub for new parents in the community. It will be a huge loss to our town.”

“If you close Hawkinge children's centre I won't be able to take my daughter to her Friday session. Until lockdown hit I was taking her to 3 sessions a week there. I loved that I didn't have to drive or get a bus anywhere else and this worked so well for me with a child under 6 months. I'm now pregnant with my second and am so happy that I can have midwife care where I live rather than being forced to have to go to Folkestone. I also know I have 2 sessions I can take my new baby to without having to travel. I have made friends both with people who work at the children centre in Hawkinge and other mums who have attended there. Those mums live in Hawkinge so I can meet them. I have used the Folkestone children's centres but never found them as nice as the Hawkinge one. There are so many mums and dads in Hawkinge, you would really be taking from us by closing the Hawkinge centre. We would be so impacted if you closed it as I don't think I would feel like taking either of my children to a different centre. The ease of just walking to my centre in my town rather than having to factor in all the time to have to go to Folkestone and get to the centres there.”

“You state that part of your decision making process was driven by reducing carbon emissions. How on earth does closing a centre in Hawkinge that people can walk to, which forces them to make a 5 mile round trip = reducing emissions. Absolute jibber jabber. Denying our community the facility to visit a local centre is not acceptable.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Wood Avenue Library. 11 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about ability and distance to travel to alternatives, the local area having a high level of need and what potential outreach solutions will look like.

LYDDLE STARS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 40 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 40% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).
- 30% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (40)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	28	70%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	16	40%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	12	30%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	12	30%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	10	25%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	9	23%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	7	18%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	7	18%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	4	10%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

"I think the closure of Lyddle Stars Children Centre could have a devastating effect on our son. We currently come twice a week to the centre to join in the activities and socialise. Although New Romney offer more sessions we don't go as it is always quite busy sessions. My son is autistic and doesn't tend to do well in busy classes, which is why Lydd has been so perfect for us. The staff are lovely and know him so well and he's able to safely explore without becoming overwhelmed. I think pushing Lydd and Dymchurch into New Romney is

a mistake as you will create sessions that will need to be booked, meaning many will miss out or like myself just unimaginable for my son to attend.”

“Lydd children centre gives me a reason to get out of my house. If the building closes I am worried about my mental health it can impact on.”

“Even though this centre is a part time centre, more and more families are starting to access the building and services. It is also quite a distance from the nearest centre that is proposed to remain open and this means families are going to have to pay travel costs to get to the centre.”

“As a parent, I have used the midwife & health visitor services and consequently parent groups. I have also enjoyed the local community events that the children’s centre have organised. As a Teacher at the adjoining school, we have a close working relationship with the children’s centre, who play a vital role in supporting the parents of our Nursery children. As a deprived area, it is vital these services remain open for those that live locally and who need to walk to these services, because the effort, cost and logistics of a parent taking a child in a buggy or other on public transport to an outreach centre or similar is just not feasible.”

“Massively. The groups/support in the area are next to none without the children's centres. The staff have become a part of the community who people trust and feel they can approach for help/support/understanding. Without the Centre there would be no groups for me to attend with my socially deprived toddler (due to lockdown). We rely on these groups for his social development, interaction and entertainment. I rely on them for peer support, expert help, signposting and a sympathetic ear when needed. These centres provide such a huge lifeline to EVERYONE in the community from all walks of life. They are a safe place, a social place, a helpful place and so much more. Without them we will literally have nothing locally for our children and parents. The maternity and child health clinics that run from the centres are invaluable, without them you would find many families disappear or fall through the cracks as they are vulnerable and it takes a lot to attend, if they have to catch a bus or taxi it probably wouldn't happen. Money is short for everyone right now and if it's a choice between feeding your children or paying a bus fare then the children would win.”

“Since reopening from lockdown the figures for families attending the centre have increased greatly, people are making good friendships and the children are happy and confident in the environment that we are providing to them. We have one child who is Autistic and he has become so confident and is developing because of the environment, he is aware of his surroundings and mum does not have to worry about him hurting himself as he now has a routine when he attends the groups. Some of these families do not drive or are able to get public transport to other centres due to bus routes and the amount of buses running being cut. This will have a huge impact on the development of these young children who come here before starting nursery, they have now got friends that they will go through the school journey with together. Parents are getting to meet other parents that live nearby and arrange social meetings and without Lydd'le stars this will not happen. One parent who has a 4 month old said this centre is the only place they can come and be with other people that are going through the same journey as them and without it they will have no one.”

“Lydd'le Stars has only been allowed to open on a part-time basis since the end of lockdown. This has resulted in restrictions on the number of groups delivered, and services

accessing the buildings. Many have gone without this vital component in their hour of need for too long. It's time for some investment in this service to this community which has suffered generations of deprivation, has a high SEND need and return to a full-time service. The alternative if it closes is an increased need which will be more serious, have greater consequences and our extensive pressure on other KCC services, particularly Social Services. These families will not travel to other centres but others will travel to it. Although on school site it is completely independent and can lend itself to do many services.”

“This will not directly affect me or my family but to close this Children's Centre will mean that families will need to travel 4 miles to New Romney, which can be impossible and expensive on public transport, especially as Lydd is relatively isolated. If the building needs to close then the services provided need to either be co-located or hire facilities for sessions so that they can be available to local residents.”

“This is the only accessible hub within walking distance. It provides community activities, school holidays activities, as well as health visitor and speech therapy support, in addition to midwifery support. If this was lost, the children of Lydd would be so impacted. My child would have no activities within walking distance and for free. Even if using a car that would still cost at least £4 to travel to New Romney the only planned centre to leave open for a community which covers 100 square miles of Romney Marsh, as also planning to close Dymchurch. How on earth do you think one centre will ever the capacity for that number of children?”

“There is very little help for anyone in Lydd. The public transport is inadequate and unreliable. It is very difficult to use public transport to access services anywhere else. If services are cut in Lydd families who don't own cars may be unable to access children's centres altogether. This means they may not be able to improve their understanding of their children's health, wellbeing and development. It would have a negative effect in the mental and physical health of families in the area.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, an engagement event took place at Lydd’le Stars Children’s Centre. 30 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about the potential lack of safe and suitable venues for outreach (Lydd library is perceived to be too small for example), the location of the centre to current users, the importance of the outdoor space the centre offers, concern about parking and space at New Romney and concern about local public transport.

DYMCHURCH CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 28 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 68% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 64% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (25%).
- 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (28)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	19	68%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	18	64%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	7	25%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	7	25%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	5	18%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	4	14%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	11%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	2	7%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Hugely, my daughter and I visit regularly, meeting other friends there. The baby groups we attend are hugely important for both my daughter’s development and my mental well-being. Being able to have time with likeminded people and be out the house is a saviour for us.”

“This is our closest centre. Not having access to this would put me off using the service at all. It’s very central and convenient to the local people.”

“It is the families in need of support in the Dymchurch area who will feel the biggest impact, this has been the case for many years now, there are not enough services offered at Dymchurch for families to engage in and therefore they do not register. There are more and more families being relocated to the marsh and they simply cannot find the support, with many of them unable or unwilling to travel to New Romney or even further to Folkestone. Many of them cannot afford public transport and do not own a car The most needy families are the once who are impacted the most by the loss of children's centres in general without relocating what they do have to even further away.”

“My baby would not have social interactions with other children. I am new to this area and already find Dymchurch a very isolating lonely place to live. If I did not go to the Children’s centre. Which I go to all sessions held there weekly. My child and I would not interact with other children/ adults. As an early years trained educator, the importance in early development is social and emotional, it is detrimental to the foundations of children’s life. You see the effects of lock down on speech and language and children’s ability to socialize. By taking away things such as the children’s centre you then create problems elsewhere as there becomes a percentage of children who do not gain this early socialization, being involved in singing (start of speech and language development). My daughter 9 months is very clingy and doesn’t like to be separated from me. Going weekly to Dymchurch Children’s Centre, she has become more confident and seeing familiar faces of people who attend, has really grown in confidence and will happily leave my side and interact with other children and adults. No other place we go does she do this. With no children’s Centre in Dymchurch, a very rural village my daughter will not meet and socialize and I also would be very isolated and lonely.”

“Less access to health visitors which should have never been separated from the Doctors surgery. So if you are taking local health care away then put them back in the drs surgery! The early years are the most important years of anyone’s life by taking support and guidance away from people it would be putting many at risk, parenting skills are not always easy and without the correct guidance children would face an uncertain future, especially in a deprived area. Parents need support I am talking as a grandmother who accessed the services when bringing up my own children without the support from health visitors or early years groups I would have struggled.”

FIVE - SHEPWAY YOUTH HUB

- 16 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some highlighted that the centre is needed to provide somewhere for young people to go in the district.
- There appears to be some confusion over the proposed re-location of the service provision.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“I have been going for 6 years and it’s just the best place and taking this away is the worst idea possibly a lot of young people benefit from this service.”

“Folkestone Youth Hub should remain open it is imperative for youth in the town to have a hub where they can go for help/advice and support and to access support and youth groups.”

“This building is proposed to close. I think the youth service is vital for the young people it serves and their families having previously been a client of this service/centre. I don’t know where I would be without the support, guidance and opportunities of them.”

“There are no youth hubs in Folkestone/Hythe District if this is to close. Young people need their own separate space away from children's centres. Placing 0-18 year olds together in one building is not appropriate.”

“I feel the move to Folkestone Early Years will be positive as it will give us more outdoor space for the young people using the facilities, but I feel there will have to be some modifications made to accommodate our service.”

“The closure of Shepway Youth Hub, as a safe secure place for young people to meet, socialise and where early interventions sessions take place, thereby promoting good mental health and wellbeing replaced with an outreach service. The Shepway Youth Hub building is going to remain open for Early Years use, why can't it continue as a Youth Hub in the evening?”

- Separate conversations took place with some of the young people aged 9 to 18 who currently attend the Hub. It is estimated that at least 37 young people gave feedback on the consultation in this way.
- There was some positive feedback in that the service will still be available, there could be opportunities for more space / outdoor space and a family hub environment is appealing.
- Some concerns were raised about adjusting to a new setting / environment / change, staff jobs being impacted and not wanting online session formats.

- They expressed a desire for more support regarding mental health / emotional wellbeing, cost of living and finding jobs, and support that is close to home in terms of distance. Some would like to be involved in planning the format / layout of new space and would like to see a welcoming environment that includes notices and space for particular activities (e.g. music, sport).

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - MAIDSTONE

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Maidstone.

EAST BOROUGH CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 33 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 42% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 39% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (36%).
- 21% comment that the centre could be used by the school or for other activities to keep the centre open.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (33)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	14	42%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	13	39%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	12	36%
East Borough could be used by school or for other activities	7	21%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	12%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	4	12%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	4	12%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	4	12%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	9%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	6%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This is one of the centres I have been coming to since my children were babies. The services they provided got me out the house and out the rut of post-natal depression. I have been coming here for 6 years and if it was to close it would be a huge shame as this isn't far from town and a very good access to it.”

“I cannot get to any other children's centres as they are too far to walk to and there are no buses from near my house to get to any of the others. With the cost of living crisis, their free stay and play sessions are an absolute lifeline of engagement for myself and my daughter.”

“Every week I attend under 1s stay and play and have since my baby was 5 weeks old. This has been fundamental in me coping as a first time mum as I was able to meet other mums in a similar situation. Every week this is a very busy session so I feel it is disappointing to be losing such a lovely venue that is serving the community well.”

“We will not be able to go to there every Monday. This is the only place which my family used regularly in the last 8 years. I moved to the area and I've been friendly welcome. I met new friends in there and I got lots of support. It was our place of meetings with other mums. Now we are not going there every week cause kids are at school but every half term we are using their services. I don't drive, buses don't go everywhere and I can afford taxi to take kids to different children centre. This is the only place in this area and shouldn't be close. You should do more services in here like before pandemic and not shut it down.”

“The residents within East Ward will face a long and quite frankly dangerous journey to access the proposed co-located services. Given that it is widely known in delivering public services those at most risk and in most need are often backwards in coming forward to access services these proposals are basically giving up on them.”

“Living in Barming, I already have to drive to east borough and pay to park. If this one closes I will have to go all the way to park wood. I did this last week. It was so busy I spent an hour and a half waiting just to have my baby weighed. There was no parking. Why living on this side of Maidstone do we have to drive all the way across Maidstone to the more deprived areas.”

“The alternative Children's Centre for East Borough users, as indicated in the consultation document, is Sunshine Children's Centre which is an approximate 27-minute walk from East Borough Children's Centre. The other alternative is Greenfields in Shepway which is an approximate 45 – 48-minute walk from East Borough Children's centre. Whilst both alternative options for East Borough users are more accessible in terms of transport links than Marden, the change is significant. An issue that needs to be highlighted regarding East Borough Children's Centre is its location on the periphery of High Street Ward. Its users are not going to be geographically ringfenced to East Ward. Its service users are most likely to come from High Street Ward which is the most deprived ward in Maidstone borough.”

Children's Centre

- 49 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 63% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%).
- 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).
- 29% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (49)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	33	67%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	31	63%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	19	39%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	17	35%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	14	29%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	10	20%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	9	18%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	5	10%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	3	6%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	2	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Marden children’s centre services a rural area with poor transport links (other than the train station). Marden has lots of families, expanding new build housing, pockets of deprivation. Many residents here will not use the proposed Greenfields or Cranbrook hubs if they don't own a car, as they will not be able to get to them and it is not practical for families with young children to catch a bus to these venues. Parents will only use services that they can easily access. I feel strongly that the services offered by Marden children's centre need to continue to be offered in Marden but these could potentially be co-located in Marden library for instance.”

“Marden Children's Centre is a lifeline to many parents. Enabling parents to make connections with other parents, get advice, reduce parental loneliness and gain confidence in a relaxed atmosphere. Activities are varied and support holistic development of children under 5. The proposed changes to using Cranbrook's facilities instead, is unrealistic in many cases as this is impossible to reach by public transport - Paddock Wood or Staplehurst are more realistic.”

“You are alienating rural communities with little to no transport as it is. You cannot expect poorer families being able to access in the middle of Maidstone without a good transport network in place.”

“Removing this children’s centre effectively provides us with no alternative. The centre has been a life saver (literally) for parents in Marden. It has strengthened the community and is an essential service that should be provided for families in Marden.”

“It would have terrible effect on the community. My son enjoys going to the stay and play and has previously used the baby massage and under 1 groups. There are limited other groups in the area. Given the scale of house building and people with young children in the area this will be a big loss to the community. Cranbrook is difficult to access on public transport, especially as there is no step free access at the train station, and even by car is about 20 minutes away so not very local.”

“Marden is a village with a high need and some villages services were already combined into the Marden centre previously. Many people that access this service do not have access to a car and the new services are located too far away for our unreliable public transport network. If the centre closes you will not access the people that you need to and the service will be impacted with higher cost in the future as needs weren't able to be fulfilled in early years. It is a small building in terms of KCC property assets and I fail to believe this is a carbon cutting exercise - this is just a cost reduction exercise. The centre's opening hours have been rationalised since COVID and this means that the carbon is not being effectively off-set, I would argue that a more intensive use of this site could have notable improvements for Children and would do better to off-set the buildings running costs - particularly if you were able to hire it out for other village users.”

“We believe that the KCC document does not make a valid case for that closure, nor does it provide sufficient data/evidence, to support such a closure of the sole Community support service south of Maidstone, in a rural area with an increasing population, particularly of young families and increasing GTT provision, with even faster increases in deprivation (as illustrated within the 2021 Census, which KCC have seemingly not considered important

data in coming to its conclusions). We urge KCC to take on board and heed the concerns raised in responses to this consultation.”

“It is clear, that no impact assessment has been made to consider how this closure will impact families, and even more so vulnerable families. There is no information on how alternative provision will be provided or indeed what it will look like. The proposal appears to be driven solely by property and not people and the needs those people might have. Marden whilst not the most deprived ward in the borough does have areas of deprivation. In Marden and Yalding ward we have 1249 households suffering from at least one level of deprivation, this represents 32% of households in the ward. There are 585 low-income families with a total of 377 children, 207 of those living below the poverty line. Health inequality data show that Marden and Yalding has higher than the borough average emergency hospital admissions for children under 19 (57 per 10k as opposed to 49 per 10k). The alternatives Cranbrook library (not confirmed) and Greenfield are simply not accessible to anyone without a car. The buses are unreliable, and the train is both expensive and in accessible for anyone in a wheelchair or with a buggy. Marden’s population has grown considerably in the last 10 years and is very much at risk of being earmarked as a future garden community with an additional 2000 houses. The need for a children’s centre is therefore increasing not diminishing, this despite limited opening hours of the existing centre. Closing the Marden Children’s centre would without doubt disproportionately affect the most vulnerable families in the ward and would compound matters in the borough by pushing those families on to the ward with highest levels of deprivation which is Shepway.”

“Marden has an increasing importance as a rural centre and has a growing population as well as an increased and increasing social housing need. The original proposals in the early 2000’s determined an absolute need for a Children’s centre in Marden due to the rising number of vulnerable families this need has not reduced, in fact the needs are increasing because of a growing population. KCC has since the pandemic reduced the opening times of the Marden Children’s Centre, which in itself is limiting the access which vulnerable families have for support. This change has proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, reducing opening time has reduced attendance, because support has been removed. This was a poor decision. The purpose of a Children’s Centre is to reach out and engage with vulnerable families, their newborn and the family element of support. Supporting young mothers with young children (0 to 3) will both identify their early need and encourage and engage regular social engagement so that the young children engage with other children. This has even greater importance since the long periods experienced as a consequence of the Covid pandemic. This also true for the young mothers. These Vulnerable families do not find it easy to either ask for help, or talk to strangers, who they see as ‘in authority’. So, even when they try to reach out, their own anxieties and ‘fear’ will for the large part, stop them from engaging. Reducing access times only exacerbates this problem. There is an equal failure to recognise the link between closure of a Children’s centre and the future increased need for EHCPs for vulnerable children when they start school because their needs as a whole will not have been identified early enough.”

“The report suggests that should the Children’s Centre close then residents would be able to access facilities in Cranbrook or Shepway. Neither of which are easily accessible by public transport from Marden and comes at a cost which is unrealistic for many families. Anecdotally we understand that Paddock Wood has been suggested which is accessible by train, but at a cost as well. Marden Station does not have step free access on the down line, thus making it almost impossible for parents with push chairs to return from Paddock

Wood by train. From a meeting with a KCC officer we understand that KCC proposes that Outreach services would be delivered to Marden at alternative venues. However publicly accessible venues in Marden are limited and there is no mention in the consultation document that any assessment of availability or suitability that has taken place. There is clearly a need for community services for children and young people in Marden, which is local, responsive, accessible (both in terms of location and opening hours) and meeting the needs of the local population. This is exactly what the Children's Centre has been doing. In the absence of any concrete proposals as to how or where these services could be delivered if the Children's Centre was to close then Marden Parish Council strongly believes it must remain open to deliver the services needed to support our families."

"We have identified that Marden residents will be disproportionately affected. The most vulnerable residents in Marden will be most affected. Residents who rely on public transport will have a significant journey time and an additional financial burden. It is likely that residents will choose not to make the journey. Additionally, there are significant access issues at Marden train station – making train travel with a pushchair almost impossible and therefore traveling by car to Tonbridge the only option. We have been informed and therefore have anecdotal knowledge that Tonbridge Youth Hub and Children's Centre is being suggested as a nearest alternative to Marden residents. However, this is not what is included in the Consultation. Cranbrook library is the primary alternative in the consultation documentation, despite the co-location of the Children's Centre not yet being agreed. Greenfields is the secondary alternative for Marden residents. If Tonbridge is a viable alternative, why is it not included in the consultation documentation?"

There has been a 55.8% increase in the number of 0 – 4-year-olds and a 23.6% increase in the number of 5 – 9-year-olds. This compares to an overall increase in population in Marden and Yalding of 21.6%, suggesting that the number of 0 – 9-year-olds is increasing faster than the rest of the population. There has been a 16.3% increase in lone parent households. In Marden and Yalding Ward there are 1,249 households suffering from at least one level of deprivation, an increase of 18.5%. Households of this type of account for 32% of all households in this ward. 10% of households in this ward have no access to a car or van for travelling."

Health Visiting Service

- 24 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 63% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%).
- 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).
- 29% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (24)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	14	58%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	12	50%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	3	13%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	5	21%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	3	13%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	13%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Marden Children's Centre is a lifeline for parents and young children in Marden. Travelling to e.g. Cranbrook is not possible on public transport with a baby. Without Marden children's centre families will be left unsupported.”

“We should be able to access more children’s services locally not less by closing this centre you are depriving the local community of a much needed service.”

“Removing this children’s centre effectively provides us with no alternative. The centre has been a life saver (literally) for parents in Marden. It has strengthened the community and is an essential service that should be provided for families in Marden.”

“We would have to travel a significant distance and spend significant time travelling to access the same services. It would be highly inconvenient. Also, it would be entirely counter-productive to have tens of people driving from Marden to access these services, given that one of the council's stated aims is to reduce carbon emissions. To ignore the increase in carbon emissions from those travelling to access the services would be duplicitous of the council, being generous.”

“It would have a terrible effect on the community. This is a vital service and it is important that people can access the services locally. Especially as post c section delivery you are not permitted to drive usually for 6 weeks.”

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - SEVENOAKS

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Sevenoaks.

NEW ASH GREEN CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 61 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 64% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 62% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (43%).
- 43% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).
- 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Children's Centre

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (61)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	39	64%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	38	62%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	26	43%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	26	43%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	16	26%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	13	21%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	12	20%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	11	18%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	6	10%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“My children and my own mental health rely heavily on the services the Children’s Centre provides. Having had two lockdown babies, the ability to be able to spend time with other children and access much needed resources face to face is beyond important.”

“We used and still use New Ash Green Children’s Centre for the past 9 years for all 3 of our children. Unfortunately, New Ash Green and neighbouring villages are pretty much cut off by bus services or trains, therefore making it difficult for families without a car to travel to further out centres you are proposing. New Ash Green is populated by families with children and local Children’s Centre is vital for the villages around.”

“This is a local village where people don’t tend to drive. They walk everywhere with young children. This is a lifeline to myself and others. to ask people to travel 8 miles away with a new baby or an active toddler is unacceptable.

“My daughter is expecting and does not drive. There is no reliable bus service from New Ash Green and loss of the Children’s Centre would leave her isolated. Therefore it will prevent her from living here.”

“My daughter is expecting her first child in August. Previously she would be able to get face-to-face support at the NAG Children's Centre on Tuesday mornings. To suggest that especially with a young baby, that she use Next Steps in Gravesham is ridiculous. There are four buses a day from NAG to get to King's Farm with two buses would be needed each way, four in total. There are no bus services to Dartford and Swanley so that rules all the Dartford and Swanley centres. There is a suggestion of an outreach service, but I have little confidence in such an offer.”

“New Ash Green is a family village and having the children centre within the village has a lovely community feeling. I have been visiting the centre for a few weeks now and i wouldn't have known about it If it wasn't for another mum at the primary school. It's a small centre which I feel is a perfect size for little ones to play and develop. It is used by so many families within the village and it would be so sad to see it go. The village hasn't got much going on for children and the centre is the most perfect place for little ones to interact with other children and develop their social needs. It is also nice for mums, dads and grandparents to get together in a happy environment with familiar faces from the area.”

“New Ash Green was designed as a self-contained community in a rural location. whilst much has changed in the 50+ years since its inception, the housing mix still favours first time buyers and lower income families. Consequently parts of the village display a markedly lower score on the Index of Multiple Deprivation than most other parts of Sevenoaks District. The rural location of New Ash Green means that access to facilities outside the village is difficult for those who do not have personal transport available at all times. Even the stated 31 minute drive time to the alternative children's centre will put it out of reach of parents who are likely to have a number of caring responsibilities. Recent

severe reductions in KCC-subsidised and commercial bus services mean that public transport is not a viable option for many purposes. This is acknowledged in the EqIA appendix where it is not that "No households are able to reach another centre via public transport, so households are likely to be reliant on private vehicles and our digital offer." But apart from the offer to consider feedback, no mitigation is offered. For the parents of young children, travel to appointments even as close as Longfield where car parking is limited, is time consuming and impractical when placed alongside other caring responsibilities. IMD and Census data will confirm this. The purpose built premises in New Ash Green are the most convenient for use by families, not only those who live in New Ash Green but also those from Hartley, Longfield and the surrounding area - a combined population of over 17,400 which is greater than the population of Swanley. No other buildings in the area which could be used for the satisfactory provision of outreach services in a safe and effective way have been identified as being available."

"I am particularly concerned about this closure as the nearest alternative suggested in the consultation is the Next Steps Children's Centre in Gravesham which is 8.3 miles away. In good traffic, this journey can be completed by car in less than 30 minutes. However, for parents relying on public transport, it would not be easily accessible as the door-to-door transport time would take in excess of 90 minutes each way. Closures where services are moved to the nearest alternative site will disproportionately affect families who are reliant on public transport and do not have access to a car. Using public transport to get to services is also an added cost for families on low incomes that rely on public transport and who need support services. It is therefore so important that, should KCC close the building, the services currently on offer at the Gravesham Next Steps Children's Centre, be provided at an alternative venue in New Ash Green."

Health Visiting Service

- 40 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 45% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 40% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (40%).
- 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (40)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	18	45%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	16	40%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	16	40%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	16	40%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	14	35%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	8%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development	2	5%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The nearest centre is then over 8 miles away. If anything there needs to be more clinics and groups here. The help from the Health Visitor is invaluable at the clinics and closing this centre would exclude a lot of people from that help. There are now very few buses from Hartley/new ash green, if any at all, as they have all been cut so getting to the next nearest centre by public transport probably isn't an option. New Ash also doesn't have a train station.”

“Local community needs the children's centre. It is well used and local young families would really miss it.”

“Having seen the impact of development reviews from the Health Visiting Team being conducted online or over the phone during vivid in terms of missed opportunities of early identification of SEND, I am worried that more children will fall through the net. I understand there will be some outreach provision in this area is planned however accessibility is key.”

“Children's centres should remain in purpose built environments to best serve children and family's needs, they should also remain within walking distance to families as the most vulnerable families will not travel. Children's centres should remain a safe space for families.”

“There is a deprived community here. It will not be able to get to the suggested facility in Gravesend with the poor bus service here. There are better alternatives in the adjacent library (which has land attached), the primary school or, very close by, a very underused youth and community centre.”

“Isolated as I walk every day to take my eldest to school then I use the free services provided to socialise with other parents and my child then socialises with children in our local area to make a friendship that potentially will see them through school and pre-school. My eldest got to enjoy this and has made some wonderful friends. I also met new friends who supported me as a new mum. To access health visitors locally without having to drive to Swanley (which is something I will not do). Inflation is rising and people in our community rely on FREE points of access to socialise and let our children play without the cost involved. Covid already cut our regular sessions and now it's potentially being taken away for good! With 2 young children and 1 on the way I'm very disappointed to see my local centre closed. Most people walk to this centre and if we had access to more sessions and days for all ages 0-5 I believe it would be cost effective and lowered emissions as you wish to do. I work as a nurse and since having my family I tend to now only use my car for work as we take advantage of our free classes locally and parks etc and lucky have a village I can meet other mums for coffee.”

SPRING HOUSE CHILDRENS CENTRE

- 21 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community.
- There is concern that the alternative(s) highlighted in the consultation document are not easily accessible via public transport.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“To know where to go when there is an issue, to be able to use the local services/ businesses that feel safe is a godsend. The transport links and parking in the area makes it feel like a safe environment. Mental health after having a baby is such a challenge.”

“I visit this every week to see other adults and children, to talk to the receptionist and the staff. They are all amazing and it is so lovely to come to a safe inviting space. I moved to Sevenoaks in 2012 and as a single mother fleeing domestic violence. If the children enter wasn't there I would have been so lonely in this new area with no one to help me. It takes a village and spring house was my village.”

“I would be unable to access other children's centres meaning it would be impossible for me to get my baby weighed regularly and my children would miss out on accessing all the amazing classes and events that Spring House run.”

“If this will also be closed the nearest children centre to attend for me and my family will be Edenbridge, which would take about 50 minutes to 1 hour, which is simply ridiculous and not feasible with small children.”

“Northern Ward residents will be significantly affected by this as they will need to travel further and uphill to access its services. This would cause a disadvantage to those with less mobility - for instance parents, carers and disabled people.”

“Although Sevenoaks is considered an affluent area, there are significant pockets of deprivation with several vulnerable families - travelling to Swanley or Edenbridge is not an option for the majority of them. Public transport to Edenbridge is not feasible.”

“Spring House Children's Centre is already a co-partnership agency used community location. KCC use the site which is owned by Health Visiting. We share their space. It is well used in a location where it is convenient for the public to travel to. It is set-up for Special Needs and disability and liaison with other agencies is effective. The proposal to remove Spring House as a Children's Centre is counter productive, in a deprived with numerous vulnerable families that WILL NOT TRAVEL to a pop-up community hub or into Sevenoaks to the Library. Vulnerable families that struggle with engagement WILL NOT ENGAGE IN A SHARED SPACE . Keep this venue due to Public Need.”

“There is no easy public transport link between Sevenoaks and Edenbridge meaning that non-drivers, such as myself, or those who are not confident driving immediately with a young baby will be left struggling to access services.”

SWANLEY CHILDRENS CENTRE

- 21 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community.
- There is some concern over the proposed re-location of the service provision and the suitability of co-locating services.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“Swanley Children’s Centre is a much loved centre locally and used for maternity services. This is a highly deprived area that requires a local service.”

“This would limit the groups I am able to take my twins to. Also this centre has always been busy when I have attended, which has been great to meet other local mums, whilst my babies are safe, happy, able to explore and engage with others.”

“My daughter is now aged 10. I was a new first time Mum at the age of 40 and the sure start centre was a massive part of my journey being successful. It is smaller, more intimate building with a personal touch that cannot be recreated in the Swanley link. I think had the service been in a more formal building I along with many other would not have attended. I was emotionally overwhelmed by having a little person to care for and they offered invaluable support. Allowed new parents to make friends with other new parent building a support network.”

“Swanley has significant areas of deprivation with several vulnerable families - mixing Youth and Children Centres services will create barriers for families as it will no longer be seen as a safe, dedicated unit.”

“I accept reluctantly, that due to the more versatile setting and provision at the Swanley Youth Hub in such close proximity; that it is unlikely that Swanley Children's Centre, in the same buildings' footprint as Children's Social Care at the Willows; will continue in its current setting and will move into the Youth Hub. I do not believe that there has been sufficient consultation with Midwifery and Health Visiting and the other agencies that use the Swanley Children's Centre, as it is currently already a jointly used community hub and with the currently proposals to close the Swanley Children's Centre and move into the Youth Hub; the currently best working practice of close working with Health and Midwifery will be lost unless they too are located in the Swanley Youth Hub. I believe that there also needs to be consideration of MORE Parking at Swanley Youth Hub due to more staff and public using the Hub. I also think families with young children will be reluctant and no longer travel the distance to the Swanley Youth Hub even though it is just a mile or so distance.”

- 16 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some commented that a reduction in staffing has contributed to a reduction in recent usage.
- There is concern that the alternative(s) highlighted in the consultation document are not easily accessible via public transport.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“West Kingsdown is the edge of our area and very far from any other children’s centres. This should be the reason it remains supported!”

“The local community will be severely affected.”

“If this will also be closed the nearest children centre to attend for me and my family will be Edenbridge, which would take about 50 minutes to 1 hour, which is simply ridiculous and not feasible with small children.”

“This is a classic case of 'chicken and egg' impacting upon service provision and service use. This was reduced to a part-time children's centre due to staffing, NOT lack of public engagement, lack of Staff. That led to a reduction in the provision of services, which led to a decline in use by the public. And so on. It is a well provided Children's Centre which again is already being used by other agencies, Midwifery and Health Visiting. This Children's Centre should be EXPANDED with guaranteed staff and provision for this remote community. It is wrong to remove this vital community hub that is located in a School premises.”

“We believe that the users of this provision will not access services in Edenbridge or Swanley due to distance required to travel.”

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - SWALE

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Swale.

BEACHES CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 54 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 61% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 52% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 37% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).
- 22% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (54)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for families / children / babies	33	61%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	28	52%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	20	37%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	16	30%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	12	22%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	10	19%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere /insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	9	17%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	8	15%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	1	2%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	1	2%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“We visit these centres 2-3 times a week for various activities. For myself it allows bonding with my child and reassurance amongst other parents. For my partner it creates a social network where she feels she can talk about the struggles and joys or parenthood in a friendly understanding atmosphere.”

“It serves people who live in a remote community. The facilities are excellent. Which is the same for many of the children’s centres across Kent. The equipment is amazing and people never know when they are open. They don’t deliver enough of a service as they are often closed. Seashells is fully open and delivering a wide range of services but is not assessable for all as the buses on the island are limited.”

“This would have impacted me greatly, as I have stated I have autism, anxiety, and depression. These permanent centres make me feel safe unjudged, understood and listen too. It’s like a community of parents in the same boat, I took my now 9 year old daughter to these centres and me, my daughter other parents and their children are still friends. The fact that these centres are safe and permanent gives me great comfort for my baby boy and myself. The facilities are great for helping me with his skills to grow and help for myself. There is a safe outside area for children to play in with no danger. If these get moved to halls etc we will lose that and not feel our children are safe as the places could get vandalised and the children will miss out.”

“Public transport is not very good on the Isle of Sheppey. Mums are not going to get the children on a bus to travel all the way from Warden to Queensborough for a one hour group. Also not safe on a bus as no baby seats. Discriminating against people who do not drive. There will be an increase in mental health problems if you close these centres. Still very upset the centre in Minster was closed. Need the groups to be easily accessible for mums to pop in. Not have to travel an hour or so on a bus! If mums are not working children need to go to the groups to see other children-especially if they do not go to nursery. Bad idea shutting them.”

“The proposal to shut Beaches Children’s Centre would have a huge health impact on the children of the East of the Isle of Sheppey. The Isle of Sheppey already has some of the worst clinical outcomes across Kent and Medway. Closure of this centre will mean that families will be unable to access services if they live in this area. Though the nearest centre is 8/9 miles, public transport options are not frequent and/or reliable, and 48% of the residents of the island do not have access to a car. GP access on the island can also be problematic for residents, with a GP to patient ratio at 1:3,626 it cannot be expected that the GP will be able to pick up the support for all patients.

There have also been proposals for budget cuts for the voluntary and community sector in Swale, which will already have a huge impact of the health and wellbeing of residents of the Isle of Sheppey. For those living in Sheppey, the voluntary and community sector provides an invaluable contribution to their standard of living, including supporting people with housing, food parcels, and community activities, to name a few. Cuts to both the VCS and cutting the children's centre will have an additional impact and will result in a significant rise in behavioural problems, poor educational attainment and the risk of children partaking in risky behaviours such as smoking, drinking, illicit drug use and sexual activity. All of which will have an impact upon both the children themselves and the system as a whole. Access to services in the Isle of Sheppey is already sparse, and therefore removal of the Children's Centre will be highly detrimental to the population."

"Beaches Children's Centre is a purpose-built Children's Centre that was donated by George Wharton, this Centres opening hours has been reduced since Covid and is now open two days a week rather than five days a week. Already this is having an impact on the families within the areas for example not being able to access the foodbank, Groups reaching full capacity and having to turn residents away. Beaches Children's Centre reaches a range of targeted families and supports them within groups and through the sensory room. The sensory room supports children through stimulation of their senses this room is predominantly used by families with babies or with children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Closing this Centre could have a negative impact on families that are vulnerable and struggling with mental health. Beaches Children's Centre is the only service that offers groups for children in the Warden/Leysdown area there are no other under 5's group within the area. Taking away this centre will continue to increase the isolation of families within the area and negatively impact the children on starting school being school ready."

"As you have stated within the consultation document, this children's centre is located in one of the areas of highest need within Swale. This area is second only to Sheerness as shown within your Needs Framework as being the highest levels of child poverty, high levels of obesity, older people in poverty and high levels of emergency hospital admissions. As well as the prominent levels of poverty, there are considerable educational needs and high numbers of preventable deaths. This data puts Beaches at the heart of a community that has considerable need, therefore we do not feel that it would be acceptable to close a facility that could be a lifeline or developmental support line for residents."

The location of the proposed Family Hub to replace Beaches is in Queenborough which is completely the opposite side of the Isle of Sheppey. This location is not easily accessible as it is connected mostly by miles of country lanes or roads that do not have safe public footpaths. Residents living in the location of Beaches that are vulnerable or living in poverty do not have access to a reliable public transport network to get them to Queenborough. The cost to families to get taxi's is unrealistic and the bus services are being reduced and cut which does not support a future plan for residents that they will be able to trust the bus services will still be available to use when the centre is closed.

Many residents that live in the location of Beaches, may live in caravans or belong to a transient population who may only engage with services by physically attending a centre as and when they need support. This can also cause data to be skewed of the area as data around these groups can be sketchy. The residents living in this location do not have a particularly reliable internet due to some very rural locations and there is a portion of this community who are digitally excluded. Some cannot read or write, therefore removing

access to a 'front door' could be extremely detrimental to these residents, especially if they can't afford to travel to Queenborough or do not have the means to get there.

You have stated that outreach will be delivered as a response to removing Beaches, however we know little about what this will look like and feel that it is unacceptable to present outreach as your response when you cannot reassure us that these particularly vulnerable residents have a way of accessing services easily or without cost. If you should choose to go ahead with the closure to Beaches, it would make more sense to locate the Family Hub in Sheerness as this is the most centralised location on the Island and although not ideal, residents can travel to Sheerness by bus from Leysdown or Warden Bay."

"Children in Sheppey already suffer from lack of youth services like youth clubs. Children under 5 deserve the best support. Reg health visitors, midwife support, addiction support face to face in their area not an hour non-existent bus ride away. All households will be affected."

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Sheppey Gateway. 10 people attended. Additional engagement events also took place at Beaches Children's Centre in which 7 people attended.
- In these events, concerns were raised about potential closure of Beaches, availability of public transport to access alternatives, long journey times, whether outreach will be suitable given the venues available (e.g. village hall is fully booked for nursery), rural isolation and local pockets of deprivation.

LADYBIRD CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 37 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 73% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 54% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 43% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).
- 19% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (37)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for families / children / babies	27	73%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	20	54%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	16	43%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	11	30%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere /insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	7	19%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	6	16%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	4	11%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	8%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	1	3%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“If this is closed then this is a massive mistake. Children and their families in this deprived area will suffer as this is vital to getting people together to socialise and child development. It would also mean a loss of jobs which is concerning in the current economic climate. Perhaps instead of closing it, promote these services and offer funding or charity support

for funds. I heavily relied on these services when I had my daughter and have wonderful memories. I will definitely be taking my 2nd child once she is born too and will be extremely upset if these services are removed! The island needs more things like this not less!”

“I will feel very isolated, I don’t like travelling off the island as I’m epileptic and I have a daughter at school so attending children’s centres on the island is my social network and I am able to watch my son play and interact with other children older and younger. Also been able to meet new mums who I can now call friends and on my days off work my son and I go to these settings and we play and interact with others which is great.”

“Closing down centres impacts people who need to have services local to them, This may be due to them being unable to drive or public transport being unreliable. It is also important for parents and children to meet people at groups local to them. With just one centre left on the Isle of Sheppey surely this will mean some people will be unable to access services and put more pressure on the remaining centre to cater for everyone.”

“We visit these centres 2-3 times a week for various activities. For myself it allows bonding with my child and reassurance amongst other parents. For my partner it creates a social network where she feels she can talk about the struggles and joys of parenthood in a friendly understanding atmosphere.”

“Local easy to get to. I have 2 children, one nearly 3 and one nearly a year old. Ladybirds has enabled me to have the confidence to get out with my 2 children. My eldest was a lockdown baby and was very shy and hadn't been many places until my 2nd was born. I was apprehensive about taking them both out but ladybirds enable me to get out of the house and socialise for myself as a stay at home mum but also as a safe space for my 2 children to go to.”

“This is a popular, well established and much needed facility attending to the needs of children, families and individuals living in the area of deprivation. If this centre closes, service users will suffer and their circumstances will deteriorate rapidly. The proposal to redirect service users to centres 3.3 miles away is unworkable.”

“Queenborough is noted as one of the other areas of deprivation located on the Isle of Sheppey, with most households being located around the area of Rushenden in Queenborough. Therefore, Ladybird’s is the closest most accessible centre for residents and currently provides services within walking distance to those who most need it. By removing access to this centre, residents would be expected to travel with the associated cost of travel and lack of reliable bus services this could impact on the existing work that is being done with families living in this location. We can see that you are suggesting a new Family Hub facility in Queenborough which would be accessible to residents in this location, however as it is currently this site does not provide appropriate facilities and without details of the proposed outreach services offer, we are concerned that there will be gaps in service provision. One of our suggestions, should the removal of this site go ahead, is to grow the availability of services available from Sheerness from either Seashells Children’s Centre or Sheppey Gateway. This would mean that there will be barriers through cost or availability of travel, but many residents travel to Sheerness regularly, where most shops, services and public transport all converge.”

ST MARY'S CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 81 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 49% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (52%).
- 27% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- 19% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.

Children's Centres and Youth Hubs

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (81)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	46	57%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	42	52%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	40	49%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	29	36%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	22	27%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	17	21%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	15	19%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	9	11%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	7	9%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	6	7%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This is our local children’s Centre which my newborn attends. I am concerned the closure of this facility will make it harder for us to access care, support and classes for my newborn daughter.”

“I’m disgusted to hear about the potential closure. I’ve been visiting regularly since I fell pregnant with my first child. I’m now in the late stages of my second pregnancy and have been regularly visiting St Mary’s Children’s Centre. The next closest children’s centre to me is in Herne Bay and each and every time I’ve had to go there it’s been a total nightmare. Traffic is horrendous in Herne Bay and it disappoints me that a service I could access on my doorstep could be closed. I’d hate having to drive to Herne Bay with all the stress it causes me to get there. How is forcing someone to take longer journeys cutting emissions.”

“This is going to impact the Faversham community massively. St Mary’s is a community hub for the families who attend there. They start at the midwife’s and come back for health once baby has arrived and then attend the group. It would be such a shame to see St Mary’s go. Not only is it Central but it also has great parking making it stress free when arriving. Bysing Wood’s accessibility is not great. This can then make a simple trip to the children centre (which is meant to be fun and stress free) a really difficult time. There is no parking for families and is a far walk from where you do park. The school is not helpful in showing parents how to get into the centre and when health visitors were working from here their parents were also unable to find the building as it is very hidden.”

“St. Mary’s has been a hugely useful and supportive centre for us and I know is used by so many families in huge need of support. Closing it would be negligent.”

“Shutting St Mary’s will put more strain in Bysing wood. St Mary’s is more central, easier to find and is accessible by public transport. There are dedicated areas which are easy to set up for activities and there is a central place where people who are struggling can go for support. It is a good place to see midwives and health visitors and there is always somebody there to support you.”

“This is the local hub for the ME138 area, it houses health visitor appointments and midwifery appointments along with free crucial baby groups for local parents and babies. I think, given the fact that Faversham has greatly increased in population it would be very detrimental to take this away. People already struggle to access services without removing the faculties for it.”

“This will affect future cohorts of mums and babies, my community, my children's school years. I do not want to live with the fallout of a community plagued by post-natal depression, mums and babies who have nowhere to go and socialise and play. This will impact on kids’ development, behaviour issues down the line and cost the council much much more in EHC plans, SaLT and behaviour interventions. Accessible services that are close and convenient for mums and babies are paramount to tackling social issues. It takes a village to raise a child and mums and babies should not be pushed into their homes and forced to parent without any peer support which is what will happen if St Mary’s closes. Services need to be close and convenient; access is so important for mums. It is not fair to close down public spaces for mums and babies to gather and be in.”

“Faversham's population is increasing at an alarming rate with all the new housing estates. It does not make sense that the town will only have one centre to cater for all. People who are unable to drive and live on the other side of town will be unable to access the services.”

“I currently use the St Mary's Children's centre several times a week with my baby son. If this was to close it would be a blow to my whole family. As it's the only area accessible to me by foot/public transport I will be unable to access any services. I feel I represent a key vulnerable demographics that will be disproportionately affected by the proposed changes. I have had many benefits from attending classes at St Mary's and am extremely concerned about the impact closing these centres will have on maternal mental health and child development. I am also concerned by the statement on the previous page that closing sites will reduce carbon emissions without any rationale provided to substantiate that claim- this is clearly a cost cutting exercise. I will be raising this issue with my MP and escalating further.”

“Parents are unclear about this consultation. Having spoken with a young father about the proposed closure of St Mary's Children's Centre he stated that no it was not closing as it stated in the literature that they were going to 'leave' it. The English used in the consultation document is unclear. Why not state that it is the intention of Kent County Council to close the centre so that it is clear to parents and there is no ambiguity. There is a real lack of understanding from those who drafted the consultation documents. The language used is confusing to at least some parents.”

“The stripping away of the community's assets and perhaps most especially its provision for children, is of concern to everyone in the community...or should be. Does the council not agree? Having spoken to some parents who use the children's centre at St Mary's recently I was intrigued to be told that there was going to be similar children's provision at Faversham library. Having studied the document I see this is not the case. Is it possible that parents have been misinformed or have misunderstood as some of the 'hubs' do seem to include such provision whereas it seems that the provision at Faversham library is only to be extended to include adults with learning difficulties? Have confusing messages been shared? If so this needs to be clarified in some way speedily.”

“This Children's Centre is located in an area of high density population, showing that there is a high need for access to multiple services. It is concerning that the locations of the nearest accessible centres are considerably further away, as Murston and Milton are located in the Sittingbourne area and this is shown as over 7miles from the ward. We can see that you have suggested Bysingwood Children's Centre as the closest alternative offer, however with a more densely populated area, the concern is that residents will struggle to access services. Bysingwood is a very small centre and so we have great concerns on how the centre will cope with the possible levels of access required if used as an alternative site. Again, this leads us to concerns about the levels of outreach support that will be put in place to replace this particular centre as Abbey Ward is flagged as somewhere that needs outreach provision and how easy will it be for residents to access a 'safe front door'.

Health Visiting Service

- 52 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 54% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (42%).
- 33% noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- 23% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (52)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	28	54%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	22	42%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	17	33%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	17	33%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	12	23%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	8	15%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	6	12%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	6	12%
Population increase / new homes will need these facilities / demand will increase	3	6%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	2	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This is the ONLY centre for the Faversham community that provides health care for young families with contact with midwives and health visitors. As a mother of two under 3, trying to get access to this kind of care is extremely challenging when I have to go beyond my community. To limit this service would be to endanger a generation of children and mothers.”

“Accessing the health visitors at St Mary’s is essential, they have been extremely helpful with myself and my son. There service is stretched and it can be very hard to get contact with the health visitors but having the clinics available at the centre is great.”

“People cannot afford public transport to other places; other centres are not close to public transport in other towns. More people will contact doctors instead of contacting their health visitor. Less people will go see their health visitor if the appointment isn’t in town. It isn’t practical to leave a whole town without a set place for appointments.”

“Mothers with young babies would have to travel further to access the health visiting service. There is a very effective health visiting service currently available for young families at St Mary’s children centre. Many parents have expressed support for this to continue.”

“Longer wait times to see the Health Visitor, detrimental to child health and parental mental health. If all services re located elsewhere will be more people trying to access the same place or location resulting in longer wait times, increased stress and poorer family outcomes.”

“Our closest children’s centre is St Mary’s and we walk to our appointments and St Mary’s closing would cause us problems as we don’t drive.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, engagement events took place at St Marys Children Centre. At least 11 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about Bysing Wood being proposed as an alternative as it is hard to find and doesn’t have the facilities to have multiple services in at the same time due to space constraints. The parking is considered less safe there as the school does not permit children’s centre users to use the car park.

GROVE PARK CHILDRENS CENTRE

- 21 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community and people's mental health.
- A couple commented on reductions in use due to the pandemic and this could affect consultation contribution.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“It’s a shame for this to be closing, it is near people that can’t travel further, it’s also nice for us to travel to a different venue and meet different people.”

“As a family during the cost of living crisis we are unable to afford to take our 2 young children to soft plays. It helps maintain mental health by taking our children to these centres so they can socialise, play and not miss out.”

“This will mean less vulnerable families has access to toys, peer interaction and information.”

“Closing down centres impacts people who need to have services local to them, This may be due to them being unable to drive or public transport being unreliable. It is also important for parents and children to meet people at groups local to them.”

“This Children’s Centre is located within reasonable distance of other suitable access points; however we are concerned as in other centres about the levels of services that can be offered from the nearest location which is Wood Grove. This site is already delivering a number of services, and we understand that they are very efficient in this, however by closing Grove Park will the numbers be unmanageable to allow access. Our continued concerns are echoed here with regards to the levels of outreach that will be put in place around the area to ensure that Wood Grove and Milton Court do not end up being over-burdened with numbers trying to access services.”

“This building has hardly been used since the pandemic. I fail to see how it can be considered in this proposal as its services have not reopened and we are not able access the resources there.”

NEW HOUSE YOUTH & SPORTS CENTRE

- 25 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 76% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for young people in the area and is/was used frequently / seen as a lifeline to 64%.
- Users comment on undertaking sporting activities at the centre and whether this will be available elsewhere (36%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (25)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for young people	19	76%
Used frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	16	64%
Undertake sporting activities / will these be available elsewhere	9	36%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	7	28%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	5	20%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	4	16%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	16%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This was a thriving youth hub and centre for fitness classes, basketball etc but it didn’t ever reopen after the pandemic. It’s a building that although large and I am sure needs renovating offered something different. If you are looking at multi centres and co locating do leisure centres come into that too? When we are looking at ways of keeping our young people active and promoting health this would be a really good, sensible option. I do also believe libraries can offer more with quiet "areas" rather than the whole area to allow for more groups of all ages and activities.”

“The new house youth and sports centre is a prominent part of the community. Its where disadvantaged children can go and gain advice. As someone that lives in the area of New House youth and sports centre, I fear that young people will not have that outlet and possibly turn to crime. Taking away the youth centres will not help the community or budget because where you're cutting the budget cost, the police will have to pick up the

slack. I am an adult that grew up in the sure start era and I am grateful to sure start every day because as a child they realised I had speech problems and if this was not recognised by the people at SureStart it would have delayed my academic achievements. By not having youth centres, children that have been delayed by the pandemic will be further delayed in academics because childcare is so expensive meaning that the first interaction with skilled adults won't be till the age of four potentially. As a person that is going into the education sector, I beg you please give children the foundations they need to go to school and progress.”

“Young people have limited services in Swale and this building serviced a large population of the young people. Young people have no access to free sport activity locally so this will be a massive loss for the residents of Swale.”

“Young people have been badly affected by the Pandemic and need support during a period in their lives when there are significant challenges. This service is long established and does what it says on the tin. It provides young people with a safe place to integrate and build skills. Young people will not take kindly to being uprooted and redirected to a children's centre in Milton Court and the idea of expecting them to travel between 5.2 and 8.8 miles to the other alternatives is impossible. The proposal is quite simply unworkable and it will lead to a deterioration in young people's mental health and social circumstances. It will also lead to disturbances including anti-social behaviour in the community due to young people not being able to access positive activities.”

“This building has been unused for quite a while now but this is a shame as I think lots of services could be brought to that building instead of reallocating away. It has a car park, wheelchair accessibility, rooms for social communities and activities, offices, etc.”

“As there are no KCC centres on the Isle of Sheppey and New House is being proposed to close where will my relations be able to access services for young people with additional needs to the same standard and where would they be able to engage in sports activities in a sports hall for free? The current Youth Zone is no bigger than a room at New House and has a ball court that has no permanent lighting and can only be used in 'fair' weather. The staff at New House were trained and professional, this cannot be said for all projects that run clubs for young people.”

“We are aware that the site closed due to the pandemic and has never fully reopened to pre-covid functionality. This has impacted youth services and young people who previously had a safe space to access, as well as being able to access a number of activities and services all from the same facility, this is no longer possible. We are aware that the youth teams work hard to try and accommodate activities in other locations, such as sports halls and school facilities, but this service is very inconsistent and not reliable. Also, by utilising various other facilities, there is no consistency which means that young people have to be aware of where things are taking place each week, and this is causing a barrier as previously they could just turn up and take part in any of the activities taking place in the one location. Issues such as size of alternative venue are impacting on service levels, meaning that some alternative venues cannot accommodate groups in the size they were able to accommodate previously and therefore resulting in some young people not being able to access the activity.

There have been several antisocial behaviour hotspots in Sittingbourne Town Centre since the closure of the site and it is hard for the youth teams as they have nowhere to refer the

young people to as a consistent ‘front door’, this is especially difficult in the winter when it is cold and dark. A number of locations have been trialled, but these are either deemed inaccessible by young people or are a way out of the town centre footprint. This was not previously considered an issue when New House was operational. Without a central hub for youth services, it has become a very disjointed service that does not provide consistency for our young people, and we are concerned that these issues will continue to increase without the consistency of a main centre.”

- Separate conversations took place with some of the young people aged 13-15 who currently attend the centre. It is unknown how many young people gave feedback on the consultation in this way.
- Some concerns were raised about losing the space and facilities available at New House in comparison to the proposed alternative.

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS - THANET

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Thanet.

CALLIS GRANGE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Children's Centre

- 43 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 24% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).
- 16% express concerns it would be difficult to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to travel to proposed alternative(s).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (43)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	26	60%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	24	56%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	13	30%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	7	16%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	6	14%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	9%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	3	7%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	7%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	2	5%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“It's the only children centre in Broadstairs. Removing this will deprive children and their families of development and support. Travelling from Broadstairs to Margate or Ramsgate as proposed is expensive and unaffordable.”

“There is a much lower than average car-ownership in this part of Broadstairs and we have lost bus services making it more difficult to reach other centres. Add in the cost of travelling that will impact on families on low incomes. There has been a massive reduction in what has been offered at the centre over the last few years so it has become a shell of what it was 10 years ago. Families in this part of Thanet need access to support, advice and facilities close at hand.”

“This area has a significant population of less fortunate residents, financially, educationally and with poor housing. These families need a place local to them for support, help and being part of a community.”

“These buildings were a lifeline for me when my children were babies/toddlers. Closing them could increase mothers' risk of postpartum mental health issues and feelings of isolation and listlessness.”

“Parents like me will have to pay for transport or for other children's groups to avoid isolation. The suggestion that reducing carbon emissions is a key priority does not take into account the emissions created by families having to travel to reach centres. Our bus services are atrocious and have room for 1 infant per bus. You're expecting families to own and afford to run a car - thus contributing to greater carbon emissions, and higher costs for families at a time when money is tight.”

“Due to Callis Grange being a part time Children's Centre I can understand the rationale for suggesting leaving the building but recognise this will impact the local community.”

Health Visiting Service

- 28 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 46% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (46%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (28)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	16	57%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	13	46%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	12	43%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	11	39%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	3	11%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	3	11%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	2	7%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The impact will affect many families who live close enough to use the service. Midwives and health visitor teams work out of these making sure most appointment are local families to support if they do not drive. Many families would not attend groups or appointments further away due to travel costs for them.”

“The closure of the centre will mean there will no longer be an accessible local health visiting team in our ward. This will have a negative impact on the children and families in my community. Parents will be less inclined to visit a health visitor if it means travelling 2 miles to access the service. This means parents will not receive essential advice about their child's health and dietary needs. The incidence of child health issues, such as obesity will increase and this will have negative consequences in our community, with increased strain on our health services.”

“How can disabled people travel all the way over to Margate when doing health visitor checks. 1 in 4 has mental health issues how will these people access services. They won't, children will suffer!”

“The health visitor is a hugely important person in the life of new parents and young children. To move any of these will cause undue anxiety and opportunities to intervene in abuse, welfare or social problems will be missed. Unacceptable.”

“Callis Grange Childrens' centre is located strategically within a deprived area & therefore I strongly support that this facility must remain. It is well served by a local bus service and is located within school grounds. Therefore this centre is convenient for parents with children who need its services. Also apart from health visiting services; this centre given its location & access has the potential to be used as a delivery hub for many other useful community services.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Margate Library. 5 people attended.
- Concerns were raised about the data used for Callis Grange decisions and it being in an area of high need/isolated area and neighbouring school would see an impact on child development.

Children's Centre

- 64 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 75% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 69% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%).
- 30% comment on using the nursery and that it is needed.
- 25% praise the facilities at the building and are concerned whether these will feature at proposed alternative(s).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (64)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	48	75%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	44	69%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	25	39%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	19	30%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	16	25%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	14	22%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	13	20%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	13	20%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	8	13%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	7	11%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“I have used the service for midwife appointments, breastfeeding clinic and for baby play sessions. It would impact us greatly is Priory were to close. I also worry about future pregnancies and having to travel further afield for vital support.”

“I use Priory for my daughter and have done since I was 4 months pregnant. She is now almost 2 years old. The staff are lovely, the atmosphere is welcoming, the access is fantastic. They take care of you and speak to you in terms you can understand. Losing Priory would be devastating. I take my daughter there once a week for play group. I don't drive and losing that socialisation opportunity for her would be heartbreaking. The other children's centres are all too far away I can't afford the travel and it's hard to arrange the travel.”

“My children love the play group they go to every week, it's local to us and us being in a flat with two children under 5 it helps it being local as we don't need to rush as much and the kids have enough time to wake up and have breakfast and get ready for the group, for example my daughter ages 2 has gained a lot of confidence, social skills with other children is learning to share with other children that isn't just her baby brother and is getting her to want to go to school to, she loves the group so much. If this group was to shut we wouldn't be able to go to another centre as I wouldn't have the money every week to get travel as we don't drive so it's not easy for us to get around.”

“This place has been a lifeline to me and friends with children and i would be utterly heartbroken for future mothers or fathers if they don't get the chance to have access to this amazing place. Especially those who have no outdoor space at home, when the centre provides this for them with an array of outdoor equipment/activities, so vital to young children and their physical development.”

“This centre is constantly busy during groups. The groups are well run with lots of equipment to help development. The staff are extremely supportive, and as a new mum, they were my lifeline that I would have struggled without! Removing this centre also loses the safe outdoor space that children need, especially those without gardens. It's a disgusting proposal in an already deprived area.”

“It would be such a loss to lose priory. It is well attended for both breastfeeding support and weigh in clinics. There is a real community feel that local parents all come together in this space and I think it would be detrimental to many parents' health and well-being. The developmental reviews are run out of priory and as it is so close to town the DNA rate is lower, saving the NHS money.”

“The loss of this building is a disgrace, leaving many families without a hub, a place of support, a refuge, a nursery. A place to ask for help and support, a regular building with different services within, in one place. Families who have individual needs, domestic violence, SEN, lack of food, need referrals to Early Help, groups, courses, all needing support. If it closes, these families will have nowhere to go, no stable place to visit especially if services keep changing where they are based all the time. Not all people want to use online services. It will also impact on working families, no childcare, they will lose their jobs.”

“Specialised resources will be lost, e.g.: specialised toys and equipment for children with special educational needs. The most vulnerable people in the community do not want to /

are not able to mix with the people who do not understand their needs and will not want to be accessing services from the mainstream places like libraries.”

Health Visiting Service

- 50 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 46% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 44% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (36%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (50)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	23	46%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	22	44%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	22	44%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	18	36%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	4	8%
Use nursery / nursery is needed	3	6%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	6%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	3	6%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	2	4%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	1	2%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The Health Visitor health clinic and breastfeeding clinic are useful to have close by and run weekly. These are always very busy and help support families. They have 2x weekly development checks and these are ensured to be the closest to the families’ postcodes as are aware of travel and cost of living many families can't afford to travel further. Families

are more likely to attend local centres than travel with young children as they can find this difficult.”

“My daughter uses the midwife’s service in this building, she is registered disabled, does not drive and part of her condition means she does not use public transport or taxi’s she would therefore not be able to access the service she needs.”

“I use the Health Visitors drop in to have my children weighed, I visit the feeding team and attend the Breastfeeding support group weekly. I used the centre for my midwife appointments while pregnant. I live in walking distance from Priory Children’s Centre and if the weather is bad there is ample parking. If I am redirected to Newlands or Ramsgate Library it would be too far to walk with 2 small children and there is not decent/safe parking at either of their sites. I do not feel the Health Visiting Service would be as supportive if offered online, nor is it efficient for them to increase home visits.”

“Health visiting service should remain in purpose built environments to best serve children and families’ needs, they should also remain within walking distance to families as the most vulnerable families will not travel. Health visiting services should remain within children’s centres to allow for collaborative working between services and signposting to groups and services within the centre. This should not be about buildings but the people the services support. There are plenty of KCC office buildings that are wasting our money by sitting half empty while staff work from home that should be reviewed before front line services are impacted upon.”

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS – TONBRIDGE & MALLING

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS AND HEALTH VISITING

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Tonbridge & Malling.

BURHAM CHILDRENS CENTRE

- 18 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s).

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“We would not be able to access the service It's a community and support for new parents. Why are you proposing this?”

“We would be very upset to lose Burham Childrens Centre. It is our closest children's centre to where we live. My three year old son and I love attending the Monday morning preschool group for social interaction and play.”

“Burham provides local stay and play and baby time sessions to the local area. Both of which I have and do attend with my little boy. These in person classes so close to the local community helped me and my little boy.”

“This centre is a crutch and lifesaver to so many families to meet other parents whilst your children are learning and socialising it is a place for families to make friends and speak to people in the same situations with the same struggles!”

“Burham always has high numbers within these groups and often is filled up. With it closing it makes the families in this area very restricted on where they are able to get to. There is not much within walking distance and the nearest centre is over an hour away.”

“This is local to my daughter and in area of extensive development. People from Wouldham, Burham and Eccles will have to go over To Snodland making provision inaccessible if have to use public transport with young children A viable alternative is required”.

IMPACT OF PART A 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS– TUNBRIDGE WELLS

CHILDREN'S CENTRES, YOUTH HUBS, HEALTH VISITING AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COUNSELLING SERVICE

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation in Tunbridge Wells.

HARMONY CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Children's Centre

- 49 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 69% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 65% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 37% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (27%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (49)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	34	69%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	32	65%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	18	37%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	13	27%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	10	20%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	9	18%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	6	12%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	6	12%

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Activities should be free / cannot afford to pay for activities	5	10%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	4	8%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“This was my local place where I met with my midwife, where my daughter had her checks and we have visited the play groups. It would be an incredible loss to the community to not have this service any longer. It’s a busy children’s centre and a great way of meeting other mums.”

“It would be devastating to lose the centre. I have used them for the last 3 years, and their help, support and socialising for myself and kids has been a life saver. If it closes, it will take away a great social outreach for us.”

“This centre is so important for mums in Rusthall. I used it weekly when I had two children under two and it was a lifeline for me when I was lonely and suffering with anxiety. It is essential places like this stay open for mums in the community who sometimes don’t know anyone to come together in a safe and friendly environment.”

“We cannot afford nursery for our youngest child due to recent circumstances. Stay and play etc is a great way for her to interact with other children her age. We do not have a car available during the day and it would make it much harder having to travel to a "hub". The chance of meeting local mums greatly reduces.”

“My daughter at the moment goes to the children's centres 3 times a week, it's built her confidence so much and her interaction with other children's and adults develops each week. Not to mention all the other skills she gains from learning, singing and playing. She would miss it so much; I would only be able to go once a week instead of 3 times if the other centres close.”

“Closing this building takes away a sage space and a community for many parents. Public transport is terrible in Tunbridge wells and can take a long time and various changes (which are very expensive) on buses to get to other centres. This may result in affecting children’s development as well as parents’ mental health if they are unable to easily get to a centre.”

“I personally will be very impacted on this. I live up the road and can't afford to take my baby to paid groups. I have an autistic son and so the limited time he is at preschool, there are not many places I can take my baby in that time, especially for free. The Harmony Children's centre is an amazing place, full of friendly people who care. I love going here and as a new person who has just moved to Rusthall, I feel really upset that this could be taken away from myself and all the parents who use and rely on this service. It's teaching children how to socialise from a young age and it's essential for us to get out and mix with others from the community. It will really be missed if taken away and will be a huge loss to the village.”

“Rusthall is located approximately two miles west of the Main Urban Area of Royal Tunbridge Wells and is a separate village settlement with its own independent services. We are very concerned that should the existing children’s centre close then alternative service provision would be a significant distance away- Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub being 2.2 miles away and Little Forest Children’s Centre being 3.6 miles away (with respective walking distances of 40 minutes and 1 hour 7 minutes). Again, this raises the issues in relation to increased distance and travel times and reliance on public transport, as well as additional topographical issues if walking or cycling between Rusthall and Tunbridge Wells. This would have the likely consequence of less visits and use of the service, resulting in detrimental impacts on child development and the health and well-being of other users, which is of serious concern to us. The consultation document indicates that outreach services could possibly be provided at Rusthall Library as an alternative. However, this is yet to be decided and the level of service provision is currently unknown. It is also questionable whether a library building would be suitable for some services as some children’s/youth activities could be too noisy, and there could be cost implications for KCC in adapting the space/library building to be used.”

Health Visiting Service

- 31 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 35% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won’t be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (26%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (31)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	11	35%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	11	35%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	11	35%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	8	26%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	13%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“My concern is for the parents who are struggling, but who do not have their own transport to go further afield. It can be difficult enough to just leave the house with a baby, let alone have to go to a place of support and comfort via different modes of public transport. Additionally, how will closing local centres reduce your carbon footprint, when most people will have to drive/go by public transport to a non-local centre? Harmony has been a lifeline for me, I'm beyond disgusted at the planned closure.”

“We live in Rusthall and the Children’s Centre has always been a god send, we can walk to it so no need to get kids in the car or on a bus. We’ve used it for midwife appointments, weigh clinics, HV checks, baby groups. Such a vital service for the village. We have some very disadvantaged families in Rusthall who would really truly miss the Children’s Centre”.

“Difficulty in reaching the vulnerable population in this deprived area. Will have impact on public health and safeguarding.”

“This is the only accessible venue for us and if it closes we will not be able to see a HV. The alternatives are not easily accessible by public transport from the villages.”

Children and Young People’s Counselling Service

- 31 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 40% of those providing a comment noted the service is essential / seen as a lifeline and 28% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (31)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Seen as essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	10	40%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	7	28%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	4	16%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	4	16%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	16%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	1	4%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“An additional burden on parents of low income in accessing service. Reduction in bus services already impacting access. Lack of local knowledge and awareness of need. Reduction of service as a sneaky step towards eventual further reduction or closure.”

“It is very reassuring and comforting having this service so close, will be a huge shame to relocate this vital service.”

“With youth mental health problems on the rise, the need for counselling services is at an all-time high.”

“This is a popular, well established and much needed facility attending to the mental health needs of children, and young people during what is regarded as a Mental Health Pandemic following Covid. If this centre closes, the mental health of service users will suffer. It would be beneficial to point out here that counselling alleviates symptoms of personal distress and suffering, enhances wellbeing and capabilities, increases personal resilience, improves the quality of relationships between people, and facilitates sense of self that is meaning to those involved within their personal and cultural context. therefore the loss of such a service would be disastrous. Services like these need to be increased not reduced.”

“We are very concerned that alternative service provision would be a significant distance away- Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub being 2.2 miles away and Little Forest Children’s Centre being 3.6 miles away (with respective walking distances of 40 minutes and 1 hour 7 minutes). This raises the issues and concerns in relation to access, public transport and topography and the detrimental impact this may have on health and well-being of the young service users affected. We therefore request that KCC reconsiders the option of closing this facility and keeps it open. As mentioned above, the consultation document indicates that outreach services could possibly be provided at Rusthall Library as an alternative. However, this is yet to be decided and the level of service provision is currently unknown. Again, it is also questionable whether a library building would be suitable for this service as it may not provide enough private rooms/space for counselling services, and there could be cost implications for KCC in adapting the space/library building to be used.”

SOUTHBOROUGH / HIGH BROOMS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 40 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 58% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 33% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (40)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	23	58%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	23	58%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	13	33%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	12	30%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	8	20%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	3	8%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	3	8%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	8%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	5%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“The children’s centres are a lifeline for a lot of people. Being able to drop in and see a health visitor was invaluable to me when I had my first baby. I have also used the stay and play and baby times which has been wonderful to walk to. Closing local children’s centres would take away part of the community and mean people can’t access these free services. Mum and baby groups are often expensive and in a cost of living crisis, the children’s centres become more valuable.”

“We go to the stay and play at the Southborough children's centre every week. My 1 year old loves it and it is hugely important to myself and her as a free space to meet with other mums and babies and find out important information. I do not have access to a car in the week so this is the only children's centre we can attend. Losing this resource will be devastating to many Southborough families.”

“Losing Southborough Children's Centre will have a massive impact on the local community. This is a very deprived area with families who are unable to travel to other venues either because of finance or poor mental health. I will also point out that families who are willing to travel, will drive, which increases emissions in the environment unnecessarily when they would happily walk to the local centre.”

“My daughter has SEN and we regularly attend the SEN play session on a Wednesday. If the centre closes and this session is moved to Cranbrook we will not be able to attend.”

“Closing this building takes away a safe space and a community for many parents. Public transport is terrible in Tunbridge wells and can take a long time and various changes (which are very expensive) on buses to get to other centres. This may result in affecting children’s development as well as parents’ mental health if they are unable to easily get to a centre.”

“We used this centre less but there are always activities and we are familiar with the area and parking, meaning we attend easily and frequently. I strongly believe that if you close these centres you’ll have more demand for mental health service from mothers on maternity leave who have felt isolated. People will feel isolated- especially first time mums.”

“Please let the school use the Southborough Community Centre. We have had a huge upsurge of families and pupils needing mental health support and for children who are struggling developmentally and still needing a pre early years’ experience or alternative provision in order to learn. As the SENCo we see an opportunities to be able to support some children with high needs SEN by having the additional facilities. Thus backing the LA’s plan to have children leave mainstream school for special schools.”

“Alternative service provision would be a significant distance away at Little Forest Children’s Centre which is shown to be 2.2 miles away (with an expected walking distance of 41 minutes). Again, this raises the same issues and concerns mentioned above in relation to access, public transport (although it is shown that 100% of households in this ward/area would be able to make a journey by public transport within 30 minutes it is not known how easy this would be or whether it is a direct route), topography, child development and health and well-being.”

Children's Centre

- 33 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 69% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 45% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.
- 30% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (24%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (33)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	17	52%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	15	45%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	10	30%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	8	24%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	6	18%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	4	12%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	4	12%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	6%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“We personally would be impacted as we frequently use the facilities at the Ark. It is a safe haven, a happy place, in quite a vulnerable part of town, and not personally, but to take away this hub could leave some women in a very fragile position.”

“We use this children’s centre regularly as it is in the same site as my children’s school. We have meeting here with Early Help, Together with Parents and other agencies as required to help my children with their additional needs. It is also used during school holidays for activities to help keep the children entertained at a low cost. This particular children’s

centre already serves a large community of underprivileged families. My children will not only struggle accessing services in new environment, but changing location will cause time constraints in relation to the distance from their school, meetings will be more difficult to arrange.”

“The Ark Centre is the only place I have been able to get to see a Health Visitor for my son. I have been going every month. I don't drive and cannot afford a bus or taxi (I also have two under two and find it extremely stressful). I also go there for the Play Group on Mondays; this has helped my mental health massively. When my heating stopped working, the staff welcomed me in. They have been a huge support to me. I have completed an adult education course and I'm currently doing another. It has helped me get back into work. Closing The Ark Childrens Centre will impact my mental health and impact me financially.”

“Accessing Sherwood from Showfields/Ramslye by bus with small children in tow presents a barrier. People are going to be seriously disadvantaged. Services need to be accessible otherwise they may as well not exist. This proposed change is not in the interests of Showfields/Ramslye residents, who currently have an accessible service.”

“Alternative service provision would be located a significant distance away- with Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub shown to be 1.2 miles away and Little Forest Children's Centre 2.9 miles away (with respective walking distances of 25 minutes and 58 minutes). Although it is indicated that 100% of households in this ward/area would be able to make a journey by public transport within 30 minutes, it is not known how easy this would be or whether it is a direct route (i.e. no changes or transfers are needed). There could also be additional topographical issues if walking or cycling. This means that service users with no access to a private motor vehicle may visit less frequently. We therefore has concerns that this could have an impact on child development in the early years and/or health and wellbeing related issues for parents/carers and other users. The consultation document indicates that outreach services could possibly be provided at Showfields Library as an alternative. However, this is yet to be decided and the level of service provision is currently unknown. It is also questionable whether a library building would be suitable for some services as some children's/youth activities could be too noisy, and there could be cost implications for KCC in adapting the space/library building to be used.”

Children and Young People’s Counselling Service

- 20 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 55% of those providing a comment noted the centre is seen as essential / as a lifeline and 30% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (20)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Seen as essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	11	55%
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	6	30%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	6	30%
Costly to travel elsewhere / insufficient public transport / increase carbon emissions	2	10%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	2	10%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	1	5%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	1	5%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“My son has counselling at the Ark. he is a nervous child but has settled into sessions and is familiar with the building. Closing and changing location might have a detrimental effect to his mental health as he will have to get used to another location.”

“Again, a familiar space for my extremely anxious child where she feels safe and comfortable and is on the same grounds as her school. Moving away from this is going to make things very difficult for us both and is likely to set her back.”

“Children of deprived households will suffer.”

“It’s an appalling decision & short sighted to close these services.”

“We have concerns that alternative service provision for this service would be a significant distance away- Tunbridge Wells Youth Hub is shown to be 1.2 miles away and Little Forest Children’s Centre 2.9 miles away (with respective walking distances of 25 minutes and 58 minutes). Users of this service are stated to be 0-19 years of age and will therefore be more reliant on getting a lift from an adult or using public transport. Although it is indicated that

100% of households in this ward/area would be able to make a journey by public transport within 30 minutes, it is not known how easy this would be or whether it is a direct route (i.e. no changes or transfers are needed). There could also be topographical issues if walking or cycling This means that service users with no access to a private motor vehicle may visit less frequently. We have concerns that this could have an impact on health and wellbeing and anxiety related issues. As mentioned above, the consultation document indicates that outreach services could possibly be provided at Showfields Library as an alternative. However, this is yet to be decided and the level of service provision is currently unknown. It is also questionable whether a library building would be suitable as it may not provide enough private rooms/space for counselling services, and there could be cost implications for KCC in adapting the space/library building to be used.”

CRANBROOK CHILDREN'S CENTRE

- 27 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 78% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 59% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline.
- 37% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.
- Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (27)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Currently provides much needed support / services for local families / children / babies	21	78%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	16	59%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	10	37%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk / access alternatives	8	30%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	5	19%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	5	19%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere / insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	4	15%
Health visitors / midwifery / maternity services offered currently / difficult to access elsewhere	2	7%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

"If this centre closes my son & I would be devastated. We love attending the weekly stay & play group. My son has learnt so many skills from this group & it's the highlight of his week. Many of us have arranged nursery around this group so we can still attend. The staff are all amazing; they are supportive & knowledgeable. This centre is a lifeline for so many parents. We need this centre."

"Every week we attend the stay and play session and the baby and you session. I'm a mum who struggles with their mental health and have to get out the house every day, otherwise I find it extremely hard. I've been taking my daughter since she was 3 months old and she is now 18 months old. Being able to access this services and take her regularly has had a

massive impact on her development and social skills. It has also helped me massively with my mental health and being able to take to Nicola, who runs the groups. Closing this children's centre will have a massive negative impact on not only my mental health but my daughter's development and social skills as I can't access any other buildings in Tunbridge Wells."

"Anyone living rurally relying on public transport are isolated already, getting to Cranbrook is not necessarily easy but much more accessible than Little Forest. The preschool in Cranbrook primary school is due to close in July, families will rely more on children centre services to support their children's development."

"Closing this building takes away a safe space and a community for many parents. Public transport is terrible in Tunbridge wells and can take a long time and various changes (which are very expensive) on buses to get to other centres. This may result in affecting children's development as well as parents' mental health if they are unable to easily get to a centre."

"Cranbrook Children's Centre has been a social lifeline for families like mine. By moving it to the library we risk ruining two important facilities and ending up with a 'worst of both worlds' situation. Here are some of the key issues to consider: - Cranbrook Children's Centre has an outdoor play area but the library has no suitable outdoor space. - Library users want peace and quiet but making noise is part of children's play. How can you achieve this in a shared building? - There is only one set of toilets in the building, which could be a safeguarding issue if adult library users need to enter the children's play space to use the facilities. - Some children's centre sessions involve the provision of snacks. Does the library have the facility to continue this? - Messy play is an important part of the children's centre sessions. Will this still be feasible/allowed to continue when the space needs to be turned around quickly for other outreach activities? - If the library is going to be used for multiple KCC services in a community hub, where will the toys be stored?"

Cranbrook cannot be 'swept' into plans for Tunbridge Wells; we are a small community and must be considered on our own terms. Consolidating multiple Tunbridge Wells centres will have a limited impact on local users. Closing our only children's centre and creating a shared hub will have a drastic impact on the quality and accessibility of services to our community. We do not have the breadth of free and paid-for activities that are available in larger towns. The variety and availability of children's centre services have already been cut back in Cranbrook: we no longer have a breastfeeding clinic and the number of play sessions have been reduced. Please do not dilute this further by making Cranbrook children's centre and library share one venue. No doubt the library could benefit from investment and further community services, but the children of Cranbrook deserve a dedicated facility where they can play indoors AND outdoors safely and freely."

"It is not clear whether the alternative provision, in the form of a new family hub, would be relocated to the existing Cranbrook or whether it would be at the proposed new community hub on Wilkes Field, off Stone Street which has not yet been built. It also needs to be confirmed whether the new hub is able to accommodate both the co-located community services and a new library. Further clarification of this and details of any interim arrangements for alternative service provision is therefore needed before we can comment on this particular proposal. It is suggested that it may be prudent to keep the children's centre service where it is until the new community/medical hub at Wilkes Field is built and the services could then be transferred there. It is also considered that at present, the

proposal to move the children's centre service to the existing Cranbrook Library building would fail to deliver KCC's stated objectives of saving money and providing outreach services to the community, as it is considered that the co-location of library and children's services would require substantial funds for alterations to the existing library building in order to make the two services compatible here."

TUNBRIDGE WELLS YOUTH HUB

- 9 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- Whilst comments are few, those who use the hub consider it valuable.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

"This is a very active centre able to accommodate small groups and that school age children can walk to, can drop in to, and feel safe and welcome. It is well connected for the station and would leave no provision that side of Tunbridge Wells if it were to close."

"Without this we would be left with very little support."

"We've moved from a big town to a small town . We want our children to be on a slower pace of life. To get away from technology and look after their mental health. By going to local groups and walks and being outside. When you take away these places life becomes hectic again."

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at the Southborough Hub. 8 people attended.
- Concerns were raised transport accessibility, willingness to travel and local pockets of deprivation.

IMPACT OF PART B 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation for Community Services for adults with learning disabilities.

NORTHGATE HUB

- 8 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“We will ALL pay for this - I am utterly distraught about any proposal to cut these services to our most vulnerable - a society is only as healthy as the way it takes care of its most vulnerable members.”

“No services in future when my disabled child will need them. He can't use public transport and we already use taxis as KCC has failed SEN children in multiple areas in the past. This is an extension of that disregard and de prioritisation.”

“Closing the Northgate hub will be detrimental as follows:- to the current people who use it and love it to Northgate Community Centre residents who use the centre every day and who welcome and love KCC Day Opportunities people.”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, a public event took place at Canterbury Library. At this event, an attendee expressed concern that there has been recent investment at the centre and that this needs to be made use of.
- At engagement events at Northgate Hub, there was concern expressed about how people would be able to travel between Prince of Wales Youth Club and Thanington.

FOLKESTONE SPORTS CENTRE

- 10 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“Loss of having a service in Folkestone will be significant, potential increase in costs of travel and transport to enable people to access services elsewhere.”

“Folkestone Sports Centre is a highly used resource with some unique facilities in Folkestone area e.g. swimming investment and further use seems more sensible.”

“My sister attends this hub on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I take her there and pick her up on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the staff being her back. If she moves further away, I don't drive so she would need transport. She also likes this front room.”

“Why have KCC taken the decision to move the services from Folkestone Sports Centre to a facility 14 miles away, which we do not believe is fit for purpose. Can we confirm where the clients are coming from to be able to access this resource?”

Engagement exercise – public events

- As part of the consultation exercise, engagement telephone calls took place with residents who use the ‘Front Room’ at Folkestone Sports Centre. 8 people were spoken to.
- Concerns were raised about a proposed 1.5 hour return trip to proposed alternative and whether this is appropriate for client base and carers, journey times impacting on carers’ wellbeing and their other commitments and perceived difficulty in coping with change.

SEVENOAKS LEISURE CENTRE

- 10 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“Disabled people rely on the centre for fitness and socialisation with others. Mental health and physical health is provided in this centre.”

“The present building has an easy access for those who travel by public transport and is not for them to walk keeping up their independence.”

“Proposal makes sense to use buildings so long as staff feel comfortable with the change in use.”

“As she is familiar with that area, it won't be a problem.”

“Moving to the library would not cause an issue as this is a familiar building to her.”

HARTSDOWN LEISURE CENTRE

- 10 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“Hartsdown has free parking, space and is perfect. Stop reducing what people have and telling them it's for their benefit.”

“This will impact on us in that it will mean receiving services from just one place instead of two areas that have different resources in the community and on site that make for variation and a good day. Instead of the same places to go every day.”

“The Adults with Learning Disabilities to close and place in a library or village hall, Why?? once again the already disadvantaged are punished and treated abysmally.”

IMPACT OF PART C 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS – THANET

COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SKILLS (ADULT EDUCATION)

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation for Community Learning and Skills (Adult Education).

BROADSTAIRS MEMORIAL HALL AND POTTERY

- 51 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.
- 61% of those providing a comment have concerned about the suitability of the alternative venue for the services provided.
- 33% of those making a comment indicate they use the service frequently and it is considered essential / a lifeline.
- 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.

Please tell us how you think you or the people in your household will be impacted by the proposal? Base: all answering (51)

	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Alternative venue not suitable - size/capacity / storage, i.e., pottery, fitness/exercise classes in a library?	31	61%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	17	33%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	13	25%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	8	16%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere /insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	8	16%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	7	14%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	6%

Some example verbatims to support the key themes can be found below:

“Have current users been informed of services disappearing completely in some cases? e.g. In Broadstairs, Adult Education classes in Pottery are proposed to be moved into

Broadstairs Library. As far as I am aware no suitable venue/equipment is available there for this activity. Also, the rooms currently available in Broadstairs Library are unsuitable for certain fitness classes currently held in the Memorial Hall by Broadstairs Adult Education; i.e. the library rooms are too small to allow adequate spacing and are already full of furniture. The Broadstairs Library building seems an unlikely venue to fulfil my current fitness class needs. As an early-stage arthritis sufferer I am advised to practise Pilates to maintain muscle strength. My partner is elderly but still enjoys pottery classes. If this venue disappears he is unlikely to travel to another so he will miss out on this social and creative aspect of his life.”

“Closing the centre is one thing but the proposed building to relocate to is not suitable for the activity eg the library in Broadstairs is far too small to house the Pilates class. When we were move there last year because of the exams we had to move the tables to create a space to do the Pilates - this goes against every health and safety rule. once we had cleared a space by shifting heavy tables, it was not big enough for the 12 people in the group. we were packed in like sardines.

“I have been using the building and pottery for around 40 years. both as a teacher and student. It is an important part of my life. It is important for Adult learning skills and community informal networking. Of course it was impacted by the pandemic, but life is returning and even mor appreciated by many in a way that online is not. The building itself has no doubt suffered from long term lack of maintenance. No doubt it should be modernized and install solar panels at least. Retired people and other users will become even more isolated socially and this becomes more subject to mental health problems.”

“People in my household consider these two buildings to be a crucial part of our community. They are a place to meet, socialise, be entertained and learn. Our community will be depleted if they close. The pottery in particular is a building I use for classes on a regular basis.”

“Broadstairs Library is not big enough to accommodate all the curriculum offered at Broadstairs Adult Education Centre, as well as offer Library services and services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Will have a detrimental impact on all three services and the service users accessing them. The majority of the courses at Broadstairs AEC are Creative or Health and Fitness and, as such, need large classrooms: - Pottery Studio - 80 sq m of teaching space (minimum), plus an additional 30-35 sq m of storage and kiln room, - Art/Craft Studios - need two of least 50 sq m, with additional storage. The current 'Craft room' is not large enough for most classes currently held at Broadstairs AE, - Health & Fitness - A hall large room (70 sq m) is needed for Fitness, Yoga, Pilates, Dance and Tai Chi.”

“I would not mind moving the Broadstairs site elsewhere but the Library is NOT a feasible option. We have 16 students in a Tai Chi class, 14 in a yoga class, across the week we generally have 10 art courses, 3 Latin and Ballroom classes, 7 keep fit classes, 4 sewing classes, + various guitar, crochet, mindfulness courses. There are also language classes that we had started to bring back into centre, plus counselling courses. And then there are the 12 pottery classes a week. Just where do you propose to put all these in the library which only has one room suitable for art and 2 small office like rooms (carpeted) for everything else. Not to mention the staff and where they will be, squeezed into the back of the toilets maybe.”

“I personally will be devastated by the closure of the Broadstairs pottery, it has had such a positive impact on my mental health and wellbeing. I love having a dedicated, supportive space in which to create things in clay. It makes me less anxious, more calm and generally feel good about myself. I will be so upset and lost if we lose this precious building and its offering.”

“Reduced access for education will cause lower educational attainments and lower socio economic prospects. This will impact on health and mental well-being for the future.”

“The closure and relocation of the Broadstairs Adult Education hasn't been thought through significantly enough. If the proposal is considering all the classes that currently take place at the centre then it would be obvious that the library is not a suitable alternative. There are many specialist subjects taught in the centre, they cannot be taught in general purpose rooms. The very speciality of them requires specialist equipment that cannot be moved and cannot be in a shared environment. That is why I say that the proposal hasn't been thought through. If there was a need to relocate and save money then my alternative suggestion would be to look at a site that could accommodate both the Margate and Broadstairs Adult Education. It could be an Arts Centre that allowed specialist subjects to be taught and have their own space to accommodate the activities. One such site that has been empty for years is the old University Campus in Broadstairs opposite St Georges School. This has a brilliant suite of rooms, accessible parking for all including disabled, is on a bus route, a cafe area and a defined reception area. The potential for this building is huge and would be a valued asset to any community. If you needed to relocate then may I suggest that this be a solution.”

IMPACT OF PART D 'LEAVE' PROPOSALS

GATEWAYS

This section of the report summarises impact feedback from consultees for specific buildings featured in the consultation for Gateways.

DOVER GATEWAY

- 8 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“I hope the same resources will be available in the Dover Discovery Centre Hub that was accessible in the Dover Gateway and the all multi professional services are available on a weekly fortnightly basis etc - This is such a good resource for the Dover.”

“Drastically under-utilised need to make sure it is not another white elephant.”

“If this is closed I can’t use it for work, information and it is easier to access.”

GRAVESHAM GATEWAY

- 8 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“The gateway support a wide area including Dartford as is not easily accessible for many people outside Gravesend.”

“I need to use both services KCC and also local council so it is easy to do both in the same building rather than having to walk around town.”

“I love using the services there and will be very disappointed if the gateway closes.”

- 11 impact comments were received via the consultation questionnaire.

Some example verbatims can be found below:

“Loss of yet another amenity like the Post Office.”

“Should be retained. This is a vital community resource that should be developed and not removed.”

“Accessibility, costs reliability. All support services must work in order for gateways to work. The gateways service needs an infrastructure that supports gateways by working not socially analysing people.”

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC / ENGAGEMENT EVENT ATTENDANCE

A number of public and engagement exercises took place over the course of the consultation. Where known, approximate attendance numbers can be found below:

Event	Number attended (if known)
Margate library	5
Little Forest Children's Centre	1
Tonbridge Youth and Children's Centre	Unknown
Southborough Hub	8
Larkfield library	3
Oakfield Children's Centre	3
Deal library	18
Little Hands Children's Centre	1
Canterbury library	8
Dartford library	2
Six Bells Family Centre	5
Folkestone Early Years Centre	1
Ashford Gateway	2
Milton Court Children's Centre	6
Wood Avenue library	11
Sheppey Gateway	10
Willows Children's Centre	Unknown
Riverside Children's Centre	1
Sessions House	7
Sevenoaks library	Unknown
Swanley Youth and Community Centre	3
Gravesend library	4
St Marys Children's Centre	11
Beaches Children's Centre	6
Sunflower Children's Centre	9
Lydd'le Stars Children's Centre	30
New Ash Green Children's Centre	30
Callis Grange Children's Centre	2
Priory Children's Centre	8
Folkestone Youth Hub	10
Apple Tree Children's Centre	8
Dover Youth Hub	4

Event	Number attended (if known)
Cranbrook Children's Centre	10
Marden Children's Centre	7
Harmony Children's Centre	15
Bluebells Children's Centre	14
Little Explorers Children's Centre	10
Front Room at Folkestone Sports Centre	8
West Kingsdown Children's Centre	14
Swanley Children's Centre	17
Spring House – Pathway Play	6

DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

The statistical breakdown of responses to the demographic questionnaire are included here:

Gender

Male 18%

Female 81.3%

Prefer not to say 0.7%

Same Gender as birth

Yes 99%

Prefer not to say 1%

Pregnant

Yes – 28 out of 870 responses

Religion

Christian 90.2%

Buddhist 0.3%

Hindu 0.7%

Jewish 0.7%

Muslim 0.7%

Prefer not to say 2.6%

Other 4.9%

Sikh 0%

Disability

Yes 14.3 %

No 83.5%

Prefer not to say 2.2%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual/Straight 89.7%

Bi/Bisexual 2%

Gay man 0.4%

Gay woman/Lesbian 1.3%

Prefer not to say 6%

Other 0.6%

Ethnicity

White English 87.6%

White Scottish 1.1%

White Welsh 0.5%

White Northern Irish 0.2%

White Irish 0.7%

White Gipsy/Roma 0.1%

Asian or Asian British Indian 0.4%

Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi 0.1%

Mixed White and Black Caribbean 0.1%

Mixed White and Black African 0.1%

Mixed White and Asian 0.4%

Black or Black British Caribbean 0.2%

Black or Black British African 0.1%

I prefer not to say 2.2%

Other 6%

White Irish Traveller 0%

Asian or Asian British Pakistani 0%

Arab 0%

Chinese 0%

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CONSULTATION FEEDBACK DRAFT RESPONSES

PART 1

Kent Communities Programme Consultation Draft Feedback Responses

Feedback on the needs-based framework	
Looking at the feedback to the consultation set out in the Lake report, the majority of	
Feedback	KCC response
whether KCC's approach to need properly reflects the actual usage of services	Yes - we looked at the numbers of people using our services and this data formed a part of the need analysis when we were considering the proposals. This is detailed on pages 17 and 18 of the consultation document.
whether children's centre usage data has been properly taken into account and whether KCC's approach to need properly reflects the importance of children's centres to users	<p>Yes – we looked at the numbers of people accessing our children's centre services. Additional data sets setting out the need for children's centres includes number of children eligible for free school meals, 0-19 social care referrals and other data sets. These were all included on page 18 of the consultation document.</p> <p>The consultation questionnaire was used to gather feedback and the consultation included proactive engagement sessions with service users. Feedback included the impact people felt the proposals would have on them, thus highlighting the importance. This has been considered when reviewing the proposals following the consultation.</p>
likely future increases in need in particular areas (such as Dartford) as a result of forecast population growth or recent housing growth (such as in Faversham)	Forecast population of 0–5-year-olds in 2040 was included within our data analysis.

whether the pandemic (and reduction in service provision during the pandemic) has affected the reliability of the data	The Need Framework relied on pre-COVID data as there was an acceptance that COVID-era and immediately post-COVID data would not be adequately reliable.
whether KCC should have considered data about access to a car in different areas when devising its needs metrics	As people may not have access to a vehicle, travel times to alternative buildings were estimated using public transport information, not car travel times.
whether KCC has had regard to the option of travelling across district boundaries to access services	Yes. It was recognised in the proposals that the nearest alternative location for some individuals may be across a District boundary – for example page 67 of the consultation document, where Next Steps Children’s Centre (Gravesham) is identified as a nearest alternative to New Ash Green Children’s Centre (Sevenoaks).
whether KCC’s public transport data is out of date (and takes into account any recent or planned service cancellations)	The transport analysis that accompanied and fed into the Need Framework included all known proposed changes to the public transport network at the time of consultation and decision. The transport analysis and the need analysis will be regularly reviewed in coordination to determine future service provision.
whether KCC’s approach to need will have a disproportionate effect on small or rural communities	The proposed model does not consider ‘rurality’ as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context.

Feedback which goes to overall proposals

Concerns about co-location	
Feedback	KCC response
co-location of services for children with other services (e.g. libraries and services for adults with learning disabilities)	Service representatives have been involved in the planning of proposed co-location sites, and feasibility studies undertaken to ensure that any co-location is appropriate for the services included. This will include refurbishment works to make sure spaces can be used appropriately by all relevant services.
the effects of co-location on partners (e.g. nurseries) who currently share children's centre sites	<p>The proposals set out at consultation do not impact partners within co-location sites. Where there are partners within co-location sites, these spaces have been protected in our planning to ensure the widest range of service delivery possible from the location.</p> <p>The proposals set out at consultation do not impact existing occupiers at sites proposed for closure who occupy the property under a formal tenancy agreement, such as a lease. In these cases, the continued occupation will be subject to the terms of the lease and managed within existing estate management policy.</p>
whether co-location will inevitably lead to reduced service provision in some areas (e.g. because of a lack of facilities such as outdoor play areas at some sites)	Service representatives have been involved in the planning of co-location sites to ensure that space within sites is efficiently used and/or shared so that service provision is protected wherever possible. However, there are some instances, for example in terms of outside play space, where it will not be possible to include within all co-location sites and this will have an impact on how services are experienced.
concerns about privacy and confidentiality where buildings are	Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some

multi-use	aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.
the suitability of particular buildings for the co-location of the proposed services	There are 14 buildings which have been proposed for co-location of services. Each of these buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.

Concerns about impacts on people who may no longer be able to (or choose to) access services	
Feedback	KCC response
impacts related to the lack of service provision itself	The Need Framework and the input from the service team results in a proposed model that responds appropriately to the needs of different communities. In some instances, there are areas of high need, where the type of need or the community means that a permanent KCC building may not actually be the best method of service delivery – it may be more effectively for the service to ‘go to them’ in different community settings rather than require service users to come to our building in the first place. The Kent Communities model is designed to provide access to the right services in the right way in the right location. The Need Framework will necessarily need to be reviewed as communities evolve over time and need changes. By working with our partner agencies we would expect to be able to

	continue to adapt our service offer in the future to ensure we are meeting the changing need as best as possible given the financial constraints the Council faces.
broader impacts, such as impacts on mental health. KCC should also consider the impacts on those consultees who have described services as a “lifeline”, and others who may be particularly affected as a result of not accessing the relevant services	The Programme team have considered various factors in developing additional options following feedback from the consultation. The options put forward for member consideration include two models that have been amended to increase access to physical locations based on the ease of access on public transport. This is a helpful metric that has been objectively quantified to influence the development of the other options. Beyond KCC buildings delivering services directly, the outreach model will provide services out in communities depending upon need – it is proposed that this provision is co-designed with partners including District Councils. The universal digital offer will provide signposting and online services where appropriate.

Concerns about broader impacts of longer travel distances beyond difficulties accessing services	
Feedback	KCC response
Financial impacts	We appreciate that some people may face an increased cost in order to access an alternative KCC building. However, we propose an outreach model that seeks to deliver services in the heart of communities where the level and type of need (according to the Need Framework) suggests that outreach would be the most appropriate way of reaching those who need services.

Time	Journey times as well as service regularity across the public transport network have been considered within the options to be presented to members.
Impacts on ability to access work	Once a decision is made on the way forward, any implications will be discussed in detail with staff in line with the Council's standard HR practices. The registered Trade Unions have been briefed throughout the course of the Programme.

Whether KCC has considered using non-KCC buildings for service delivery	
Feedback	KCC response
...in relation to co-location and outreach	The current proposal focuses on the KCC estate and seeks to utilise our buildings to best meet the different levels of need identified through the Need Framework. This model does not preclude us working with other organisations in the future and utilising buildings outside of the KCC estate to deliver services, as long as any future solution continues to respond to the Need Framework. It is acknowledged that a co-designed outreach proposal will likely make use of alternative buildings owned and operated by other organisations dependent on the Need Framework and the co-design with partners.
Consultees have suggested that district councils may have buildings which would be more appropriate for the co-location of services	The One Public Estate (OPE) programme supports locally-led partnerships of public sector bodies to collaborate around their public service delivery strategies and estate needs. As part of the One Public Estate network in Kent, it makes sense to consider

	joint building networks between KCC, District council partners and other agencies such as NHS and Police. The Need Framework allows us to continually review the levels of service need within different communities and collaborate with partners in the future where appropriate and where possible.
KCC should ensure that it considers non-KCC buildings (such as village halls) when deciding where to locate outreach	This forms part of our outreach modelling which we anticipate will be co-designed with other partners.

Concerns about the impact on other KCC and partner services	
Feedback	KCC response
whether increased difficulty accessing certain preventative services (such as early years services) may lead to greater pressure in the future on other services (such as SEN services, social services, or health services)	The Family Hub model is built on the understanding that preventative services are an integral entry point to other service provision delivered by KCC and other agencies. The Family Hub model will provide for much greater integration between KCC services and services from other providers (e.g. NHS) regardless of the delivery method (permanent physical building, outreach session, digital).
the impacts of building closures on partners who currently use the relevant buildings (e.g. comments about the closure of children's centres which are used by KCC social services for meetings with parents and children)	The Implementation period for the programme, subject to decision by Cabinet, would span across a number of years. If there is a decision to make changes, the KCC Property team will work with partners within our buildings to notify them of the changes and the likely timeline for implementation that affects them. Any KCC service provision that is required (such as Family Time) will be delivered in alternative locations – which is currently delivered from

	a range of locations, including some of KCC's office estate.
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Important demographic trends in the responses	
Feedback	KCC response
<p>In particular, women, younger people, and those with children are much more likely to disagree with the proposals (overall, but also with specific aspects of the proposals, such as co-location and the reduction in the number of buildings). KCC should ensure it has thought about why this is the case and whether this means that consultees feel more strongly about particular services (e.g. children's centres) or whether the impact of certain building closures (again, possibly children's centres) may be significant than others. If KCC does think that there is particular opposition to the closure of children's centres, it should explain why it will not reduce the number of closures (including why it will not close more of the other types of buildings instead).</p>	<p>The largest set of changes in the consultation proposals are for children's centres and youth hubs. Young people, women, and people with children are the biggest users of these services. It correlates that these groups have responded more negatively about proposals for building closures than other groups as they will be more impacted by these proposals.</p> <p>This is addressed in detail in the Equality Impact Assessments that accompany the decision papers.</p> <p>The financial challenge faced by the Council means that difficult decisions need to be taken across all areas of Council business in order to make required savings and deliver a balanced budget. Alongside the mitigation factors set out in the EqIA and given the financial and policy context, the impact is considered to be justified.</p>

Concerns about outreach	
Feedback	KCC response

the need to ensure that outreach services are accessible	Accessibility and suitability of buildings will be a key factor in choosing where to deliver outreach services.
concern that outreach provision may be unsuitable for some services (e.g. services accessed on an unplanned or 'as needed' basis)	The proposal will seek agreement from decision-makers for a co-design approach to outreach delivery, drawing on the knowledge and perspectives of partners including district councils, health and community partners. The Need Framework will play a key role in planning where outreach services are needed so that provision is sufficient for those that need it.
that the level of detail in the consultation raised concern about whether outreach would be sufficient to meet need	
concern that outreach venues do not have the right facilities	Outreach will be delivered from venues with the necessary facilities to ensure safe and appropriate provision for service users. Specific venues for delivery will form part of the discussion and co-design with partners.
views that outreach services need to be regular and a "committed offer"	Yes – consistency within the offer, all the time that the need remains the same, is a key element of successful outreach delivery.
concerns that outreach may lead to a diluted service, that outreach is generally less well attended, and that some elements of service provision cannot be replicated via outreach (e.g. familiarity and relationships)	Outreach provision will be planned so that it is effective and meets needs. It will be appropriately promoted so that attendance is as anticipated. Outreach will be delivered by staff that also deliver services in KCC buildings, helping to support familiarity and relationships
particular concerns related to health visitors and outreach provision	The Health Visiting team has been involved in the planning of outreach so that requirements of the service can be incorporated into the proposals.
concerns about the impacts of outreach provision on particular types of service users (e.g. those with SEND may need reliability in terms of where outreach is delivered)	Wherever possible, reliability and consistency of delivery – in terms of location and team delivering the session - will be maintained and a co-design approach to outreach with our partners will

	<p>help achieve this. We appreciate that some service users may find change difficult. We aim to support service users manage this change so that they continue to feel as comfortable as possible accessing services during periods of change.</p>
<p>concerns about how particular areas of Kent have been dealt with in relation to outreach (particularly Sheppey)</p>	<p>The service view of the level of need in Sheppey was that the best way to meet the need is to deliver services via outreach directly in communities rather than making residents come to a KCC building in the first place. However, following feedback in the consultation, some of the revised options address this concern by proposing the retention of the Beaches site. The proposal will seek agreement from decision-makers for a co-design approach to outreach delivery, drawing on the knowledge and perspectives of partners including district councils, health and community partners.</p>

Concerns about digital	
Feedback	KCC response
<p>inclusivity and accessibility (including for particular groups, such as the elderly, and those with disabilities and mental health needs)</p>	<p>A universal digital offer is not proposed as a replacement, but more as an alternative service offer for those that choose to access provision in this way. The Need Framework highlights where the level of need is such that the universal digital offer is the appropriate level of service with areas of higher need being the focus for outreach and provision from permanent physical locations.</p>
<p>that four wards scored poorly in terms of digital connectivity</p>	<p>We are aware that there are areas of particularly poor digital connectivity across</p>

	<p>the county. Many of these areas of more rural locations currently unserved by physical buildings but that would potentially benefit from a co-designed outreach model. There are separate programmes of work that seek to address this issue in a number of ways. However, digital provision is not seen as a replacement, rather a choice for residents who are able to access information in this way.</p>
<p>concerns that digital delivery may be unsuitable for some services (such as services relating to domestic violence, mother-and-children services, and children’s services generally where concern has been raised about children’s “screen time”)</p>	<p>Face to face services will still be available across the county, directed by the Need Framework. Digital provision is offered as a choice, rather than a replacement. Digital provision will provide important signposting so that residents seeking services such as domestic abuse support will be able to find relevant information in one location rather than having to navigate through a range of different websites. Within the Family Hubs digital offer there is also the development of virtual services.</p>
<p>concern that some service users may in general prefer to access services face-to-face</p>	<p>Face to face services will still be available across the county, directed by the Need Framework. Digital provision is offered as a choice, rather than a replacement.</p>

<p>Feedback on Concerns about the broader environmental impact of the proposals</p>	
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>KCC response</p>
<p>for example as a result of more people having to travel further to access services</p>	<p>The modelling has considered the public transport network throughout so that the network is accessible without relying on private vehicles. A greater reliance on outreach provision will mean that residents from communities that would ordinarily</p>

	have required greater travel distances will be able to access service provision without needing to travel so far. The digital offer will mean that for those that choose to, information and virtual services will be available online.
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Feedback on Whether the costs of the proposals have been properly taken into account	
Feedback	KCC response
for example costs relating to the adaptation/refurbishment of buildings	Yes – these costs have been factored into the modelling and have been informed by feasibility studies.
observations made by some consultees that vulnerable children will not be able to access services they need, leading to greater future costs	The range of Family Hub services will be available to residents across a wide range of delivery methods, including face-to-face, outreach and digital provision. The model has been designed using a Need Framework, so services will be available where there is a need for them. The Family Hub model integrates more closely with partners and so families with vulnerable children will be able to access the services they need.

Whether KCC should make savings in other areas	
Feedback	KCC response
This will obviously require careful consideration and goes to the point about budgets we discussed last	The services in scope, including the Corporate Landlord service, are all required to make savings in line with the Council's

week.	Medium Term Financial Plan. The proposals set out at consultation contribute towards those savings whilst also responding to the strategic objectives set out in Framing Kent's Future. The final decision paper will include a 'Do Nothing' option, which will allow members the option to choose not to make savings here, but this will need to be balanced by making savings elsewhere across the council's budgets.
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<p>Accessibility</p> <p>you have been looking at accessibility as a key part of the feedback, and that an alternative option is being devised. It would be helpful to understand what elements of accessibility related feedback have been into account and how these have led to the updated building lists/the revised option which is being worked on. It seems to us that "accessibility" covers various points from the consultation feedback such as:</p>	
Feedback	KCC response
whether bus timetables have been considered	Yes – this has been considered and explicitly informs the options being considered by members.
whether the nuances of particular journeys to alternative provision have been considered (such as the accessibility of particular train stations)	Condition and accessibility of facilities outside of KCCs control has not been factored in to the KCP model. However, accessibility of alternative locations will help inform the specifics of a co-designed outreach offer, using the knowledge and input of other partners to inform the model.
the difficulties of using public transport, beyond additional journey times (such as carrying prams and reliability of services	Regularity of service has been factored in and explicitly informs the options being considered by members.

availability of parking	The modelling has considered the public transport network throughout so that the network is accessible without relying on private vehicles or parking provision.
difficulties arising as a result of the topography of particular alternative locations	Topography has not been considered within the KCP model as the Need Framework relies on identifiers of need such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and demographic data.

Outreach	
Feedback	KCC response
It also sounds like perhaps some changes to proposed outreach provision were being considered, and again it would be helpful to understand which elements of the consultation feedback this is a response to.	The feedback received around outreach centred primarily around the requirement for more detail. Additional detail on what services can be delivered through outreach was included within the Family Hubs service consultation. As a result of feedback to both consultations the KCP proposal seeks endorsement from members for a co-design approach to outreach delivery, drawing on the knowledge and perspectives of partners including district councils, health and community partners. This will mean greater flexibility in the delivery model that allows services to adapt to changing need in the future.

Feedback relating to specific individual buildings
Included as a separate document.

Equalities-related feedback

Addressed in suite of Equalities Impact Assessments submitted with Decision Paper.

Critical success factors

Feedback

KCC response

I have seen reference in the document you have sent me to KCC's critical success factors. It would be helpful to know how these factors and the weightings for these factors have been arrived at, taking into account that the factors include a weighting to be attributed to having a less costly estate. I also wanted to check whether these factor are designed to be a tool to assist decision makers in reaching a final decision on the proposals?

The Critical Success Factors are used to evaluate whether the proposals meet the four challenges set out in the KCP Rationale. These are:

- Need to lower revenue costs
- Need to reduce backlog maintenance cost liability
- Need to lower carbon emissions from KCC estate
- Need to provide more co-location sites to improve resident experience.

PART 2

Family Hub Consultation Draft Feedback Responses

<p>The importance of safe spaces for young people (separate environment needed for older children to enjoy activities with young people their own age), concerns raised around mixing children with vulnerable young people who are potentially at risk of exploitation (e.g., gangs, county lines etc.); a lot of comments on the need for safe spaces in terms of no judgement around gender identity, sexual orientation, disability</p>	<p>This is part of the service consideration, but where appropriate buildings will provide confidential spaces. Space can be timeshared between service so that sessions that would create a 'clash' are not held at the same time and the spaces can be arranged to suit the needs of the specific service uses.</p> <p>This is acknowledged in the relevant EqlAs as well.</p>
<p>References to importance of children's centres in rural communities and how will people be reached otherwise, causing further isolation in rural communities; with a number of specific comments around outreach to more villages as a need</p>	<p>Outreach in rural locations has been highlighted in the consultation and as a response 'rural communities' has been specifically identified as a category for outreach provision. The specific service offer for any given location will be subject to further agreement between the service and delivery stakeholders.</p>
<p>Appropriate spaces/appropriate purposes for the type of activities proposed (e.g., the same space could be used at different times for different purposes but is this appropriate and is the space adaptable enough/is appropriate investment being made) - e.g., the same space used for very young children is then not appropriate for young people who may want to see information about LGBTQ, substance misuse etc., and then for activities for vulnerable adults; questions around how can this be balanced given collocation of services</p>	<p>This is part of the service consideration, but where appropriate buildings will provide confidential spaces. Space can be timeshared between service so that sessions that would create a 'clash' are not held at the same time and the spaces can be arranged to suit the needs of the specific service uses</p>
<p>The size of a space – if a building hosts multiple agencies/services, it may lose the feel of a local Children's Centre</p>	<p>The Family Hub model brings together partners to offer a wider range of complimentary services in a single setting. Where the Family Hubs are proposed to be co-located with other service areas, the spaces will be</p>

	<p>designed so that Family Hub service users feel welcomed. The ability to access services outside of the Family Hub offer – for example library services – from the same location is proposed to enhance the user experience.</p>
<p>Feedback from respondents around rurality – link to outreach; some comments draw to the potential scenario where those living in rural locations will end up being affected the most as won't have access</p>	<p>Outreach in rural locations has been highlighted in the consultation and as a response 'rural communities' has been specifically identified as a category for outreach provision. The specific service offer for any given location will be subject to further agreement between the service and delivery stakeholders. The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks as a result of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision.</p>
<p>Ease of access is vital for families, especially those without transport; a number of comments around how this will be mitigated and questions around how deprivation has been factored into provision (affordability of fares, transport timetables etc.)</p>	<p>The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks as a result of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision. Deprivation data was used to inform the needs framework which underpins the Kent Communities model.</p>
<p>The use of venues already in the community as people will feel more familiar and be more comfortable in using these</p>	<p>The Kent Communities proposal focuses on meeting identified need within KCC's network of buildings. So long as any solution can be justified in terms of meeting need, there is no reason why in the future opportunities to use alternative locations cannot be considered.</p>
<p>Services need to be local or else they will not be accessed by those who most need them. Rural centres like Cranbrook are vital in rural areas. Families who need the services and support the most will not travel to Tunbridge Wells or</p>	<p>The proposal is to relocate the Children Centre in Cranbrook to share space within the Library – approximately 0.1 mile away from the existing Children's Centre. Both the Children's service and Library service have been involved in the</p>

<p>equality far hubs. keep childrens centres open. they are so important to new parents</p>	<p>assessment of the feasibility of this proposal and are agreed that the space is suitable for both service uses.</p>
<p>Locality to areas not a major hub out of area. People and children need to be able to access it easily.</p>	<p>The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks as a result of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision</p>
<p>Depending on where they are located, it may become difficult for people to actually reach these hubs. It sounds like the services on our doorstep, within walking distance will be scrapped and we'll be forced to travel to a hub to access services- this will incur costs as well as time inconvenience and bad for the environment as I'll have to use my car instead of just walking.</p>	<p>The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks as a result of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision. Services from permanent 'KCC' buildings are only one part of the service delivery model. Alternative methods of provision include Outreach where services are delivered in the heart of communities, and online provision also make up the service offer.</p>
<p>Accessibility in terms of proximity to and frequency of bus services and cost of getting to the hubs.</p>	<p>The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks as a result of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision</p>
<p>The main thing that concerned me when reading the summary document, was that you are trying to make cuts to activities, groups and centres look like a good thing by covering it up with "family hubs". When in reality it is actually a huge cut to resources, the loss of childrens centres (which would then mean many families would lose access to these vital services if they don't drive for example, and with the cuts to the bus services on Romney Marsh too). I can see the sense in streamlining the services so everything is in one place to access, but this needs to be properly</p>	<p>The Kent Communities Programme has re-examined transport networks because of the consultation feedback received and this re-examination has been used to develop the alternative options for member decision. The Kent Communities Programme responds to the fact that Kent has too many buildings to manage effectively, and the services need to be able to staff the locations effectively and sustainably.</p>

resourced, with enough staff and funding to make it effective. Otherwise residents are just going to lose access to vital services they need.	
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BUILDINGS	Family Hubs (54)	Public Health (55)	Adults with LD (23)	CLS (16)	Gateway (10)	Notes
District						
Ashford	The Willow Children's Centre	The Willow Children's Centre	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway	
	Waterside Children's Centre	Waterside Children's Centre		Homewood School	Tenterden Gateway	
	Ashford North Youth Centre	Ashford North Youth Centre				
	Sure Steps Children's Centre	Sure Steps Children's Centre				
	Stanhope Library	Stanhope Library				New co-location with LRA
Canterbury	Riverside Youth Hub	Riverside Youth Hub	Swalecliffe Day Centre	Canterbury AEC		
	Briary Children's Centre	Briary Children's Centre	Northgate Hub			
	Little Hands Children's Centre	Little Hands Children's Centre	Thanington Hub			
	Poppy Children's Centre	Poppy Children's Centre				
	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre				
Dartford	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Yew Tree	Dartford AEC		
	Knockhall Children's Centre	Knockhall Children's Centre	Dartford Library			
	Oakfield Children's Centre	Oakfield Children's Centre				
	Temple Hill Library	Temple Hill Library				New co-location with LRA
Dover	Deal Youth Club	Deal Youth Club	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre as BAU
	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Walmer/Meadowside	Deal AEC		
	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)				
Folkestone and Hythe	The Village Children's Centre	The Village Children's Centre	Bridge Resource Centre	The Cube		
	Caterpillars Children's Centre	Caterpillars Children's Centre	Broadmeadow	The Pottery		
	Folkestone Early Years Centre	Folkestone Early Years Centre	Phase 2			
	New Romney Children's Centre	New Romney Children's Centre				
Gravesham	Bright Futures Children's Centre	Bright Futures Children's Centre	Milton Haig	Gravesend AEC	Gravesend Library	New co-location with LRA
	Northfleet Youth and Community Centre	Northfleet Youth and Community Centre				
	Little Gems Children's Centre	Little Gems Children's Centre				
	Riverside Childrens Centre	Riverside Childrens Centre				
	Little Pebbles Children's Centre	Little Pebbles Children's Centre				
	Next Steps Children's Centre	Next Steps Children's Centre				
Maidstone	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Maidstone House	Oakwood	KHLC	New co-location with LRA
	Sunshine Children's Centre	Sunshine Children's Centre				
	Greenfields Children's Centre	Greenfields Children's Centre				
	The Meadows Children's Centre	The Meadows Children's Centre				
	West Borough Children's Centre	West Borough Children's Centre				
Sevenoaks	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Eden Centre	Sevenoaks AEC	Eden Centre	
	Edenbridge Children's Centre	Edenbridge Children's Centre	Sevenoaks Library		Swanley Link	New co-location with LRA
		Spring House	Swanley Link			
Swale	Bysing Wood	Bysing Wood	Sheppey Gateway	Sittingbourne AEC	Sheppey Gateway	
	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Crawford House	Sheppey AEC		
	Milton Court Children's Centre	Milton Court Children's Centre	Faversham Library			
	Murston Children's Centre	Murston Children's Centre				
	Queenborough Library	Queenborough Library				New co-location with LRA
	Sittingbourne Library	Sittingbourne Library				New co-location with LRA
Thanet	Newlands Children's Centre	Newlands Children's Centre	Minnis Day Centre		Thanet Gateway	
	Newington Children's Centre	Newington Children's Centre	Cliftonville Library	Margate AEC		New co-location with LRA
	Birchington Children's Centre	Birchington Children's Centre	Broadstairs Library (as outreach)	Broadstairs Library		New co-location with LRA, Adults with LD and CLS
	Quarterdeck Youth Centre	Quarterdeck Youth Centre				
	Six Bells Family Centre	Six Bells Family Centre				
	Cliftonville Children's Centre	Cliftonville Children's Centre				New co-location with LRA
	Ramsgate Library	Ramsgate Library				New co-location with LRA
Tonbridge and Malling	Little Foxes CC	Little Foxes CC	Tonbridge Community Service	Tonbridge AEC	Tonbridge Library	New co-location with LRA
	Woodlands Children's Centre	Woodlands Children's Centre				
	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre				
	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre				
Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre		Amelia Scott (out of scope)		
	Little Forest CC	Little Forest CC				
	Cranbrook Library	Cranbrook Library				New co-location with LRA

OPTION 2 CLOSURES

BUILDINGS	Family Hubs (38)	Adults with LD (6) (3 considering BAU)	CLS (1)	Gateway (3)	Notes
District					
Ashford	Bluebells Children's Centre				
	Little Explorers Children's Centre				
	Ray Allen South Ashford Centre				
Canterbury	Apple Tree				
	Joy Lane				
	Riverside CC				
	Swalecliffe CC				
	Tina Rintoul				
Dartford	Dartford Bridge	Dartford Bridge			BAU
	Brent CC	TRACS			BAU
	Greenlands at Darenth				
	Maypole CC				
	Temple Hill CC				
Dover	The Sunflower CC	Walmer Centre		Dover Gateway	BAU
	Blossom Children's Centre				
Folkestone and Hythe	Dymchurch Children's Centre	Folkestone Sports Centre			
	Five (Shepway Youth Hub)				
	Hawkinge CC				
	Lyddle Stars Childrens Centre				
Gravesham	New Beginnings			Gravesend Gateway	
Maidstone	East Borough Children's Centre				
	Marden Children's Centre				
Sevenoaks	New Ash Green CC	Sevenoaks Leisure Centre			
	Spring House Children's Centre				
	Swanley Children's Centre				
	West Kingsdown Church of England Primary - CC				
Swale	Grove Park CC				
	Lady bird CC				
	New House Youth				
	Beaches Children's Centre				
	St Mary's CC				
Thanet	Callis Grange CC	Hartsdown Leisure Centre	Broadstairs AEC		
	Priory CC				
Tonbridge and Malling	Burham Children's Centre			Tonbridge Gateway	
Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook Children's Centre				
	The Ark Children's Centre				
	Southborough/High Brooms Children's Centre				
	Harmony CC				

BUILDINGS	Family Hubs (56)	Public Health (57)	Adults with LD (23)	CLS (16)	Gateway (10)	Notes
District						
Ashford	The Willow Children's Centre	The Willow Children's Centre	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway	
	Waterside Children's Centre	Waterside Children's Centre		Homewood School	Tenterden Gateway	
	Ashford North Youth Centre	Ashford North Youth Centre				
	Sure Steps Children's Centre	Sure Steps Children's Centre				
	Stanhope Library	Stanhope Library				New co-location with LRA
	Little Explorers Children's Centre	Little Explorers Children's Centre				Transport Criteria
Canterbury	Riverside Youth Hub	Riverside Youth Hub	Swalecliffe Day Centre	Canterbury AEC		
	Briary Children's Centre	Briary Children's Centre	Northgate Hub			
	Little Hands Children's Centre	Little Hands Children's Centre	Thanington Hub			
	Poppy Children's Centre	Poppy Children's Centre				
	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre				
Dartford	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Yew Tree	Dartford AEC		
	Knockhall Children's Centre	Knockhall Children's Centre	Dartford Library			
	Oakfield Children's Centre	Oakfield Children's Centre				
	Temple Hill Library	Temple Hill Library				New co-location with LRA
Dover	Deal Youth Club	Deal Youth Club	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre as BAU
	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Walmer/Meadowside	Deal AEC		
	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)				
Folkestone and Hythe	The Village Children's Centre	The Village Children's Centre	Bridge Resource Centre	The Cube		
	Caterpillars Children's Centre	Caterpillars Children's Centre	Broadmeadow	The Pottery		
	Folkestone Early Years Centre	Folkestone Early Years Centre	Phase 2			
	New Romney Children's Centre	New Romney Children's Centre				
Gravesham	Bright Futures Children's Centre	Bright Futures Children's Centre	Milton Haig	Gravesend AEC	Gravesend Library	New co-location with LRA
	Northfleet Youth and Community Centre	Northfleet Youth and Community Centre				
	Little Gems Children's Centre	Little Gems Children's Centre				
	Riverside Children's Centre	Riverside Children's Centre				
	Next Steps Children's Centre	Next Steps Children's Centre				
Maidstone	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Maidstone House	Oakwood	KHLC	New co-location with LRA
	Sunshine Children's Centre	Sunshine Children's Centre				
	Greenfields Children's Centre	Greenfields Children's Centre				
	The Meadows Children's Centre	The Meadows Children's Centre				
	West Borough Children's Centre	West Borough Children's Centre				
Sevenoaks	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Eden Centre	Sevenoaks AEC	Eden Centre	
	Edenbridge Children's Centre	Edenbridge Children's Centre	Sevenoaks Library		Swanley Link	New co-location with LRA
		Spring House	Swanley Link			
Swale	Bysing Wood	Bysing Wood	Sheppey Gateway	Sittingbourne AEC	Sheppey Gateway	
	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Crawford House	Sheppey AEC		
	Milton Court Children's Centre	Milton Court Children's Centre	Faversham Library			
	Murston Children's Centre	Murston Children's Centre				
	Queenborough Library	Queenborough Library				New co-location with LRA
	Sittingbourne Library	Sittingbourne Library				New co-location with LRA
Thanet	Beaches Children's Centre	Beaches Children's Centre				Transport Criteria
	Newlands Children's Centre	Newlands Children's Centre	Minnis Day Centre		Thanet Gateway	
	Newington Children's Centre	Newington Children's Centre	Cliftonville Library	Margate AEC		New co-location with LRA
	Birchington Children's Centre	Birchington Children's Centre	Broadstairs Library (as outreach)	Broadstairs Library		New co-location with LRA, Adults with LD and CLS
	Quarterdeck Youth Centre	Quarterdeck Youth Centre				
	Six Bells Family Centre	Six Bells Family Centre				
	Cliftonville Children's Centre	Cliftonville Children's Centre				New co-location with LRA
Ramsgate Library	Ramsgate Library				New co-location with LRA	
Tonbridge and Malling	Little Foxes CC	Little Foxes CC	Tonbridge Community Service	Tonbridge AEC	Tonbridge Library	New co-location with LRA
	Woodlands Children's Centre	Woodlands Children's Centre				
	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre				
	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre				
Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre		Amelia Scott (out of scope)		
	Little Forest CC	Little Forest CC				
	Cranbrook Library	Cranbrook Library				New co-location with LRA

OPTION 3 CLOSURES

BUILDINGS					
District	Family Hubs (36)	Adults with LD (6) (3 considering BAU)	CLS (1)	Gateway (3)	Notes
Ashford	Bluebells Children's Centre				
	Ray Allen South Ashford Centre				
Canterbury	Apple Tree				
	Joy Lane				
	Riverside CC				
	Swalecliffe CC				
	Tina Rintoul				
Dartford	Dartford Bridge	Dartford Bridge			BAU
	Brent CC	TRACS			BAU
	Greenlands at Darenth				
	Maypole CC				
	Temple Hill CC				
Dover	The Sunflower CC	Walmer Centre		Dover Gateway	BAU
	Blossom Children's Centre				
Folkestone and Hythe	Dymchurch Children's Centre	Folkestone Sports Centre			
	Five (Shepway Youth Hub)				
	Hawkinge CC				
	Lyddle Stars Childrens Centre				
Gravesham	New Beginnings			Gravesend Gateway	
Maidstone	East Borough Children's Centre				
	Marden Children's Centre				
Sevenoaks	New Ash Green CC	Sevenoaks Leisure Centre			
	Spring House Children's Centre				
	Swanley Children's Centre				
	West Kingsdown Church of England Primary - CC				
Swale	Grove Park CC				
	Lady bird CC				
	New House Youth				
	St Mary's CC				
Thanet	Callis Grange CC	Hartsdown Leisure Centre	Broadstairs AEC		
	Priory CC				
Tonbridge and Malling	Burham Children's Centre			Tonbridge Gateway	
Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook Children's Centre				
	The Ark Children's Centre				
	Southborough/High Brooms Children's Centre				
	Harmony CC				

BUILDINGS	Family Hubs (64)	Public Health (65)	Adults with LD (23)	CLS (16)	Gateway (10)	Notes	
District							
Ashford	The Willow Children's Centre	The Willow Children's Centre	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway	Ashford Gateway		
	Waterside Children's Centre	Waterside Children's Centre		Homewood School	Tenterden Gateway		
	Ashford North Youth Centre	Ashford North Youth Centre					
	Sure Steps Children's Centre	Sure Steps Children's Centre					
	Stanhope Library	Stanhope Library				New co-location with LRA	
	Bluebells Children's Centre	Bluebells Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
Canterbury	Little Explorers Children's Centre	Little Explorers Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Riverside Youth Hub	Riverside Youth Hub	Swalecliffe Day Centre	Canterbury AEC			
	Briary Children's Centre	Briary Children's Centre	Northgate Hub				
	Little Hands Children's Centre	Little Hands Children's Centre	Thanington Hub				
	Poppy Children's Centre	Poppy Children's Centre					
	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre	Whitstable Youth And Community Centre					
Dartford	Apple Tree Children's Centre	Apple Tree Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Swanscombe Children's Centre	Yew Tree	Dartford AEC			
	Knockhall Children's Centre	Knockhall Children's Centre	Dartford Library				
	Oakfield Children's Centre	Oakfield Children's Centre					
	Temple Hill Library	Temple Hill Library				New co-location with LRA	
	Greenlands at Darent	Greenlands at Darent				Transport Criteria	
Dover	Maypole Children's Centre	Maypole Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Sunflower Children's Centre	Sunflower Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Deal Youth Club	Deal Youth Club	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre	Dover Discovery Centre as BAU	
	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Walmer/Meadowside	Deal AEC			
	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)	Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)					
	Folkestone and Hythe	The Village Children's Centre	The Village Children's Centre	Bridge Resource Centre	The Cube		
Caterpillars Children's Centre		Caterpillars Children's Centre	Broadmeadow	The Pottery			
Folkestone Early Years Centre		Folkestone Early Years Centre	Phase 2				
New Romney Children's Centre		New Romney Children's Centre					
Gravesham		Bright Futures Children's Centre	Bright Futures Children's Centre	Milton Haig	Gravesend AEC	Gravesend Library	New co-location with LRA
		Northfleet Youth and Community Centre	Northfleet Youth and Community Centre				
	Little Gems Children's Centre	Little Gems Children's Centre					
	Riverside Children's Centre	Riverside Children's Centre					
	Little Pebbles Children's Centre	Little Pebbles Children's Centre					
	Next Steps Children's Centre	Next Steps Children's Centre					
Maidstone	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Info Zone (Youth centre)	Maidstone House	Oakwood	KHLC	New co-location with LRA	
	Sunshine Children's Centre	Sunshine Children's Centre					
	Greenfields Children's Centre	Greenfields Children's Centre					
	The Meadows Children's Centre	The Meadows Children's Centre					
	West Borough Children's Centre	West Borough Children's Centre					
	Sevenoaks	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Eden Centre	Sevenoaks AEC	Eden Centre	
Edenbridge Children's Centre		Edenbridge Children's Centre	Sevenoaks Library		Swanley Link	New co-location with LRA	
New Ash Green		New Ash Green	Swanley Link			Transport Criteria	
West Kingsdown Church of England Primary - CC		West Kingsdown Church of England Primary - CC				Transport Criteria	
		Spring House					
Swale		Bysing Wood	Bysing Wood	Sheppey Gateway	Sittingbourne AEC	Sheppey Gateway	
	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Woodgrove Children's Centre	Crawford House	Sheppey AEC			
	Milton Court Children's Centre	Milton Court Children's Centre	Faversham Library				
	Murston Children's Centre	Murston Children's Centre					
	Queenborough Library	Queenborough Library				New co-location with LRA	
	Sittingbourne Library	Sittingbourne Library				New co-location with LRA	
Thanet	Beaches Children's Centre	Beaches Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Newlands Children's Centre	Newlands Children's Centre	Minnis Day Centre		Thanet Gateway		
	Newington Children's Centre	Newington Children's Centre	Cliftonville Library	Margate AEC		New co-location with LRA	
	Birchington Children's Centre	Birchington Children's Centre	Broadstairs Library (as outreach)	Broadstairs Library		New co-location with LRA, Adults with LD and CLS	
	Quarterdeck Youth Centre	Quarterdeck Youth Centre					
	Six Bells Family Centre	Six Bells Family Centre					
Tonbridge and Malling	Cliftonville Children's Centre	Cliftonville Children's Centre				New co-location with LRA	
	Ramsgate Library	Ramsgate Library				New co-location with LRA	
	Little Foxes CC	Little Foxes CC	Tonbridge Community Service	Tonbridge AEC	Tonbridge Library	New co-location with LRA	
	Woodlands Children's Centre	Woodlands Children's Centre					
	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre	Snodland Children' centre and Samays Youth Centre					
	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre	Tonbridge Youth and Childrens Centre					
Tunbridge Wells	Burham Children's Centre	Burham Children's Centre				Transport Criteria	
	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre	Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre		Amelia Scott (out of scope)			
	Little Forest CC	Little Forest CC					
	Cranbrook Library	Cranbrook Library				New co-location with LRA	

OPTION 4 CLOSURES

BUILDINGS	Family Hubs (28)	Adults with LD (6) (3 considering BAU)	CLS (1)	Gateway (3)	Notes
District					
Ashford	Ray Allen South Ashford Centre				
Canterbury	Joy Lane				
	Riverside CC				
	Swalecliffe CC				
	Tina Rintoul				
Dartford	Temple Hill CC	Dartford Bridge			BAU
	Dartford Bridge	TRACS			BAU
	Brent CC				
Dover	Blossoms CC	Walmer Centre		Dover Gateway	BAU
Folkestone and Hythe	Dymchurch Children's Centre	Folkestone Sports Centre			
	Five (Shepway Youth Hub)				
	Hawkinge Children's Centre				
	Lyddle Stars Childrens Centre				
Gravesham	New Beginnings			Gravesend Gateway	
Maidstone	East Borough Children's Centre				
	Marden Children's Centre				
Sevenoaks	Spring House Children's Centre	Sevenoaks Leisure Centre			
	Swanley Children's Centre				
Swale	Grove Park CC				
	Lady bird CC				
	St Mary's CC				
	New House Youth				
Thanet	Callis Grange CC	Hartsdown Leisure Centre	Broadstairs AEC		
	Priory CC				
Tonbridge and Malling				Tonbridge Gateway	
Tunbridge Wells	Cranbrook Children's Centre				
	The Ark Children's Centre				
	Harmony CC				
	Southborough/High Brooms Children's Centre				

Kent Communities Programme Detailed Options Appraisal

Whilst this Business Case is focused on providing assurance that a decision can be implemented it is important to note that this options appraisal is a tool to assist in decision making. It therefore should be considered alongside all other relevant factors when decisions are made, including the consultation response, impact of the proposals on residents and the overall policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates. These factors should be debated and assessed alongside each other as part of the decision-making process.

Assessment Methodology

Following public consultation and review of the responses received, the Programme team, in collaboration with the Cross Directorate team and supported by the SRP team have developed a range of options for consideration (in order of number of proposed closures):

1. **Go further:** making more significant changes to the model and closing more sites than originally set out in the consultation model. This option would require further consultation on a new rationale and methodology (potential future programme of work post any key decision on Phase 1 in its current form rather than an option for this Key Decision).
2. **Consultation option:** proceed and implement the option as set out in the consultation (incorporating the required changes as detailed above).
3. **Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis:** responding to the consultation by bringing back into the model centres that respond to the transport accessibility feedback (incorporating the required changes as detailed above).
4. **Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis:** more significant changes to the model as a response to the consultation feedback (incorporating the required changes as detailed above).
5. **Do nothing:** continue with the status quo and make no changes.

These five options been each been assessed to determine performance against the following appraisal factors:

1. **Critical Success Factors (Pass/Fail):** the key considerations that link back to our rationale.
2. **Need Framework (Pass Fail):** does the option meet the current understanding of need as set out by the need Framework.
3. **Cost (ranked):** the cost to deliver the changes.
4. **Financial Benefit (ranked):** Best value duty, savings and cost avoidance as well as project capital receipts.
5. **Non-Financial Benefits (ranked):** response to consultation and service integrity.
6. **Cost Benefit (ranked):** what we get for the cost of each option.
7. **Risks (ranked):** performance against key risk considerations.

The following section assesses each of the five emerging options against the seven appraisal factors listed above.

To begin with the options are assessed against the two Pass/Fail criteria. The first looks at the Critical Success Factors which link to the rationale of the Programme. Any option that is assessed to not meet the objectives of the Programme is marked as a failure and not taken forward. The second

Pass/Fail criteria considers whether each option meets the current understanding of need, as set out by the need framework. Any option that is assessed as not meeting the need set out in the need framework is marked as a failure and is not taken forward.

Following the Pass/Fail appraisals the options are then assessed using the ranked appraisals, a short narrative is provided which sets out how each option performs against the specific appraisal factor. If there is more than one aspect to the appraisal factor (for instance, 'cost-benefit' looks at the revenue saving predicted for each option as well as the forecast reduction in backlog maintenance and potential capital receipts) then each point is detailed in the appraisal narrative for each option.

Each appraisal factor concludes with a summary table following the narrative. This table ranks each option from 1-5 against each aspect of the appraisal factor, with 1 being the best and five being the worst, to clearly demonstrate how the options compare to each other.

For example, the table below demonstrates that Option 1 ranks the best when considering the estimated revenue savings, forecast maintenance reduction and potential capital receipts (highlighted in green). It also shows that Option 5 ranks the worst of all five options against the same aspects of the appraisal (highlighted in orange).

Option	CLL Saving	Maintenance Reduction	Capital Receipts
1 Go Further	1	1	1
2 Consultation model	2	2	=2
3 Minor amendments	3	3	=2
4 Major amendments	4	4	4
5 Do Nothing	5	5	5

Once the five options have been ranked against each aspect of the appraisal, the ranking scores are added together to provide the overall appraisal score (highlighted in green). As shown in the table below the score for Option 1 is 3 (1+1+1 because Option 1 is ranked the best across the three aspects of the appraisal). The scores are in turn ranked 1-5 (1 being the best, 5 being the worst) to provide the overall ranking against the appraisal factor (highlighted in red orange).

Option	CLL Saving	Maintenance Reduction	Capital Receipts	Score	Ranking
1 Go Further	1	1	1	3	1
2 Consultation model	2	2	=2	6	2
3 Minor amendments	3	3	=2	8	3
4 Major amendments	4	4	4	12	4
5 Do Nothing	5	5	5	15	5

Therefore, the table above demonstrates that Option 1 is the best performing of the five options against the 'Financial Benefit' appraisal. This process is repeated for all five of the ranked appraisal factors.

Finally, the ranked and pass/fail appraisals are combined to identify which options are not taken forward, which are considered viable, and which is preferred. The implications of moving forward

with each option is set out briefly before the preferred option is then considered in the following sections of this Business Case. It is however intended that all viable options will be considered by members for their decision.

Assessment of Options

Critical Success Factors

The Critical Success Factors listed below have been endorsed by both SRP Board and CMM. These factors link back to the rationale for the programme – they are the four outcomes which the Programme objectives seek to achieve to solve the problems detailed in the rationale. All four of the CSFs form part of other appraisals and are therefore detailed above. The ranked appraisals earlier in this section allow direct comparison between the options in relation to the critical success factors.

Critical Success Factor	Ranked Appraisal
Less costly estate leading to reduction in revenue costs	Financial Benefit Appraisal
Reduction in pressure on backlog maintenance budget	Financial Benefit Appraisal
Reduction in carbon emissions linked to the physical estate	Non-Financial Benefit Appraisal
Increased co-location sites, based on the need model	Non-Financial Benefit Appraisal

Option 1: Go Further

As set out in the ranked appraisals above, Option 1 scores the best of all options against the financial benefits. Whilst it is ranked fourth of the five options overall for non-financial benefits, this is largely due to the weakness of this option against the Need Framework. In terms of the non-financial critical success factors, Option 1 scores very well. The narrative above makes it clear that Option 1 meets the Programme objectives and therefore passes this appraisal.

Option 2: Consultation model.

As set out in the ranked appraisals above, Option 2 scores well against the financial and non-financial benefits. The narrative above makes it clear that Option 2 meets the Programme objectives and therefore passes this appraisal.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

As set out in the ranked appraisals above, Option 3 scores third of five against the financial benefits and the best against the non-financial benefits. The narrative above makes it clear that Option 3 meets the Programme objectives and therefore passes this appraisal.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

As set out in the ranked appraisals above, Option 4 scores fourth of five against the financial benefits and the third of five against the non-financial benefits. However, the narrative in the ranked appraisals demonstrates that Option 4 meets the Programme objectives. This is therefore a pass, however it must be noted within the appraisals above that whilst this is a pass, Options 1, 2 and 3 perform much better when ranked.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

This option does not make any change to the physical estate and therefore does not meet the Programme objectives. Option 5 fails and is discounted.

Need Framework

This appraisal considers how each option responds to the understanding of the need for services within communities as set out in our Need Framework.

Option 1: Go Further

This option fundamentally rejects the Need Framework and would need to identify alternative rationale and methodology to draw our model from. Therefore, this option fails this assessment.

Option 2: Consultation model.

Based on the work undertaken ahead of the consultation, this option is the most appropriate response to the Need Framework. This view is reinforced by the fact that a majority of respondents agreed with our designing the proposals by looking at where need was highest for our services. Option 2 passes this appraisal.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

There is little difference between this option and the consultation option. Option 3 represents an amendment to the Need Framework whereby the public transport service regularity and travel time criteria is assessed to determine whether, in the event of a building closure, a journey on public transport would take more than 35 minutes and whether the regularity of the service results in less than 1 service per hour. Following this consideration, two locations are brought back into the model. Option 3 therefore amends the Need Framework based on the consultation response. Option 3 passes this appraisal.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

This option brings amends the Need Framework by accounting for service regularity data to alternative sites in the event of a proposed closure. As a result, ten sites come back into the model when compared with Options 2 and 3. Whilst this does undermine the original Needs Analysis by retaining physical locations where other methods of service delivery are considered equally justified or more appropriate under the Needs Framework, Option 4 allows for the consultation to impact our understanding of need by of the transport network. Therefore Option 4 passes this appraisal.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

This option does not make any change to the physical estate and does not respond at all to our needs analysis. Option 5 fails and is discounted.

Cost

The following assessment of cost considers the cost of implementing the changes included within each of the five options. The following assumptions are made when considering the costs of implementation:

1. Revenue costs of implementing the options will in all possible cases be undertaken as part of the Infrastructure teams Business as Usual operations and therefore will be funded through base budget provision. As such most options are considered as 'cost neutral' in that no additional revenue costs will be required. The risk around certain unquantifiable revenue costs remains and is detailed more against each option. The opportunity cost of some options is equally outlined where relevant.
2. Across all options except for Option 5: 'Do Nothing', the Capital investment to enable the co-location sites is assumed the same.
3. Outreach costs are covered by service core budgets achieved through reinvestment of the reduction in costs of delivering their service currently from a KCC building.
4. Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B.

Option 1: Go Further

This option would involve a greater number of site closures than the consultation model. Whilst the majority of revenue costs would be covered under Infrastructure base budget (assumption 1 above) there would be additional revenue costs to consider. This includes redundancies for third party contract employees, such as cleaners, for which KCC is liable under the terms of the contract. This would clearly be balanced against increased revenue savings. These costs are historically considered very low.

Given the increased number of sites proposed for closure there would be a larger number of options appraisals to undertake and therefore the timeline for implementation would increase.

Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B.

It is assumed that the number of co-location sites proposed would not necessarily increase as part of this option, however the specific details of a go further option may in fact suggest that further co-locations are possible. Therefore, the capital cost of implementation for this option is estimated as £5.6m.

Option 2: Consultation model.

Same as above – the assumptions remain unchanged although the timescale for delivery is potentially shorter in Option 2 than Option 1, therefore freeing Infrastructure base budget to focus on other Corporate priorities sooner. Unquantifiable revenue costs such as third-party contract would be less than in Option 1, however the figure is considered low risk to begin with.

Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B.

Capital costs are £5.6m to facilitate the co-location sites.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

Assumptions remain the same as above and therefore revenue and capital costs are the same. Difference between Options 2 and 3 are slight and so even unquantifiable revenue costs would be

similar between the two options. Option 3 would represent a slightly smaller workload for the Infrastructure division.

Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B.

Capital costs remain at £5.6m to facilitate the co-location sites.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

Assumptions remain the same as above. This option represents a lower number of changes to services and locations and therefore, whilst still to be covered by the Infrastructure base budget, the lower workload will free up the Infrastructure team for other priorities sooner.

Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B.

This option would still provide the same co-locations and therefore the capital costs remain the same at £5.6m.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

No changes are made and therefore no cost of implementation on either revenue or capital budgets.

Summary Table

Option	Capital Costs	Revenue Costs	Score	Ranking
1 Go Further	=2	5	7	5
2 Consultation model	=2	=3	5	=3
3 Minor amendments	=2	=3	5	=3
4 Major amendments	=2	2	4	2
5 Do Nothing	1	1	2	1

Financial Benefit

The following assessment considers the financial performance of each of the options. As set out in the Outline Business Case and in the Strategic Case above there are two elements to the savings profile for the Kent Communities Programme:

1. CLL Saving (savings linked to the number of buildings we operate from and the cost of running the estate).
2. Service Savings (savings facilitated within the services areas as a result of changes within the operational estate).
3. The below appraisal is based on the CLL savings.

As was the case in the Outline Business Case the assessments made here focus on the Corporate Landlord saving only, and not any savings within the service areas. Whilst this programme assists in facilitating savings within the services, they are responsible for achieving their MTFP targets. The savings expectations of the services are included in the table at the start of this Business Case for reference.

As detailed above in the Strategic Case, Phase 2 of the Kent Communities Programme has been placed on hold by the Leader and therefore the CLL savings do not meet the MTFP target within any assessed option. The early modelling on Phase 2 demonstrated a potential CLL saving of circa £900k.

This assessment also considers the impact on the backlog maintenance costs and the Capital receipts anticipated.

Option 1: Go Further

Greatest amount of saving made on the CLL budget as a greater number of buildings are marked for closure. However, as this option does not take account of need a resultant lack of buildings undermines service provision and additional revenue costs for venue hire outweigh the savings made by the model.

This option would conceivably see the greatest reduction in backlog maintenance liability and would likely achieve the largest cumulative receipt from disposals (subject to Options Appraisals).

Option 2: Consultation model.

Based on the consultation model, incorporating the required changes outlined in the Strategic Case, this option saves £1.37m against the CLL budget.

The reduction to the backlog maintenance liability is estimated as £6.34m.

The estimated capital receipts are £3.8m.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

This model saves £1.29m against the CLL budget.

The reduction to the backlog maintenance liability is estimated as £5.85m.

The estimated capital receipts are £3.8m.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

This model saves £1.11m against the CLL budget.

The reduction to the backlog maintenance liability is estimated as £4.84m.

The estimated capital receipts are £3.2m.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

No changes are made and therefore no savings are made.

Summary Table

Option	CLL Saving	Maintenance Reduction	Capital Receipts	Score	Ranking
1 Go Further	1	1	1	3	1
2 Consultation model	2	2	=2	6	2
3 Minor amendments	3	3	=2	8	3
4 Major amendments	4	4	4	12	4
5 Do Nothing	5	5	5	15	5

Non-Financial Benefits

This section assesses each of the options against a range of non-financial benefits that are linked back to either the Programme rationale or the consultation response. The specific factors considered are:

1. CO2 emission savings
2. Number of co-locations
3. Response to Need Framework
4. Accessibility for service users
5. Health and wellbeing of residents (inclusive of mental health considerations)

Option 1: Go Further

The Go Further option would deliver greater CO2 savings on the basis that our operational estate would reduce the fastest of all options.

The number of co-locations is the same within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 as per the assumption outlined above.

This option, dependent on how far it is taken, will reach a tipping point whereby the Need Framework is undermined. This option could easily result in a greater reliance on outreach provision or digital services in locations where the Need Framework demonstrates a physical location is the right solution for service users.

This option will have the biggest detrimental impact on service accessibility and on the health and wellbeing of service users.

Option 2: Consultation model.

This option is anticipated to save 977 tonnes of CO2 from our operational estate.

There are 14 new co-locations proposed as part of this model.

Based on the work undertaken ahead of the consultation, this option is the most appropriate response to the Need Framework. This view is reinforced by the fact that the consultation response included very little constructive challenge to the Need Framework in principle, or the method in which it had been applied to the Kent Communities proposal.

Feedback from the consultation highlights a concern from service users around the accessibility of services and the resultant detrimental impact of their health and wellbeing.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

This option is anticipated to save 938 tonnes of CO2 from our operational estate.

There are 14 new co-locations proposed as part of this model.

There is little difference between this option and the consultation option. Based on the work undertaken ahead of the consultation, this option would still be considered an appropriate response to the Need Framework when viewed in conjunction with the consultation feedback.

Feedback from the consultation highlights a concern from service users around the accessibility of services and the resultant detrimental impact of their health and wellbeing. This option deals with that concern by bringing back into the model three centrally located, easily accessible Children Centre locations.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.
This option is anticipated to save 798 tonnes of CO2 from our operational estate.

There are 14 new co-locations proposed as part of this model.

This option brings a larger number of sites back into the model when compared with Options 2 and 3. This undercuts the Needs Analysis by retaining physical locations where other methods of service delivery would be considered more appropriate under the Needs Framework.

Feedback from the consultation highlights a concern from service users around the accessibility of services and the resultant detrimental impact of their health and wellbeing. This option performs very well when assessed against this criteria by retaining more physical locations, thus responding more directly to the responses received during the consultation.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

No changes are made and therefore there is no CO2 savings.

There are no new co-location sites.

This option does not respond to the Needs Framework at all.

In terms of the consideration of accessibility of services for residents and the impact on health and wellbeing of residents this option proposes no change and is therefore the most effective option against this particular assessment.

Summary Table

Option	CO2	Co-Locations	Need Framework	Accessibility	Health	Score	Ranking
1 Go Further	1	=1	3	5	5	15	4
2 Consultation model	2	=1	1	4	4	12	=1
3 Minor amendments	3	=1	2	3	3	12	=1
4 Major amendments	4	=1	4	2	2	13	3
5 Do Nothing	5	5	5	1	1	17	5

Cost Benefit

This appraisal considers the overall financial benefit of the proposal. The estimated total cost of the programme, including the funding of the programme work, estimated capital costs and implementation costs and the digital booking system is £8.1m (£5.6m capital costs, YTD £2.4m revenue from SRP reserve).

1. Vast majority of future revenue costs of implementation will be covered under existing budgets across all options. These costs may include additional storage, confidential waste requirements, officer time, staff moves.
2. Currently revenue costs do change between options, but this is unquantifiable at this stage, this is currently seen as a low risk to the programme of works.
3. Capital costs of implementation remain the same at £5.6m across options 1, 2, 3 and 4 as this relates to the co-location sites which is constant for all options.
4. Outreach costs are covered by service core budgets achieved through reinvestment of the reduction in the costs of delivering their services from a KCC building.
5. Room booking solution in co-location sites is common across each of the first four options and is estimated as £73,000 one off and £49,000 recurring annually as set out in Section B. The one-off cost is included in the following appraisals, the £49,000 needs to be considered for inclusion within base budget – this is detailed in the next section.
6. The cost of the Programme to date has been factored in at £2.36m.

Option 1: Go further.

This option would make the biggest revenue saving and reduction in backlog maintenance. Depending on the extent to which the model was taken further, it is likely that a breakeven position could be achieved before factoring the impact of the disposal income.

Option 2: Consultation model.

For an investment of £8.1m, the programme will generate a base saving of £1.37m for CLL by the end of 26/27; a cost avoidance in the backlog of maintenance on the estate of £6.3m and an estimated capital receipts of £3.8m. The smaller estate is less susceptible to the fluctuations in market conditions that can impact the CLL revenue budget.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

For an investment of £8.1m, the programme will generate a base saving of £1.27m for CLL by the end of 26/27; a cost avoidance in the backlog of maintenance on the estate of £5.85m and an estimated capital receipts of £3.8m. The smaller estate is less susceptible to the fluctuations in market conditions that can impact the CLL revenue budget.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

For an investment of £8.1m, the programme will generate a base saving of £1.11m for CLL by the end of 26/27; a cost avoidance in the backlog of maintenance on the estate of £4.84m and an estimated capital receipts of £3.2m. The larger estate in Option 4 results in a greater risk of the CLL (and service) budgets being susceptible to market fluctuations.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

No savings made and no implementation costs so there is no benefit.

Summary Table

Option	Cost Benefit	Ranking
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1 Go Further	1	1
2 Consultation model	2	2
3 Minor amendments	3	3
4 Major amendments	4	4
5 Do Nothing	5	5

Risks

The following key risks are incorporated within this assessment of each option:

1. Consultation risk (scale of response to the consultation feedback)
2. Clawback liability (liability to pay back capital investment from DfE for the Sure Start centres) – whilst the likelihood of having to pay clawback is low, it has been included in the appraisals and further sections. This risk will be mitigated through the standard Building Options Appraisal process and the KCP solution can be reconfigured if needed to manage the risk.
3. Strategic conflict between Family Hubs objective and KCP objective (community reach and engagement versus the need to close buildings and save money)
4. Undermining service integrity (changes result in service cuts that render the service undeliverable or jeopardise the value for money proposition)
5. Savings and capital receipt realisation (Options appraisals may undercut ability to realise financial benefits)

Option 1: Go Further

In practice the consultation risk on this option is irrelevant as further consultation would be required. However, on the assumption that this option would proceed as a preferred option for Decision without further consultation, this would be considered an extremely high risk.

The clawback liability for this option is likely to be the highest. Whilst any potential disposal will be subject to an Options Appraisal in line with the Council's adopted policy, this option would logically include the highest number of potential disposals and therefore the highest potential clawback liability.

This option would carry the greatest risk of conflict with the objectives of the Family Hub programme as a greater number of sites would be proposed for closure. This would undermine the service ability to deliver the outcomes that sit at the heart of the Family Hub model by placing too great a reliance on outreach and digital service provision.

Similarly, the integrity of service delivery for the other services in scope would be most dramatically undermined without very careful consideration within this option.

Whilst the anticipated savings and capital receipts would be higher under Option 1, there would be a greater number of Options Appraisals to undertake and therefore a greater number of instances where other service uses to be identified.

Option 2: Consultation model.

There is a consultation risk in that there are no changes made under this option in response to the consultation feedback. Whilst it is absolutely within the rights of Members to decide to proceed without making any changes, it is important to acknowledge the inherent reputational risk in proceeding as such.

The potential clawback liability of this option is circa £2.3m.

This option has the second highest risk of conflicting with the objectives of the Family Hub programme. However, given the extremely close work between the two Programmes during the formation of the Kent Communities proposal, this is still considered a very low risk overall.

Similarly, whilst service provision for the other services in scope is impacted, the impact has been assessed by the service representatives on the Cross Directorate group and considered acceptable ahead of consultation.

There is equally a risk in this option that the realisation of savings and capital receipts will be impacted by the Options Appraisal process as part of the disposal process.

[Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.](#)

Whilst it is possible to highlight changes made to the model following the consultation, the response in Option 3 is limited. Overall, Option 3 does demonstrate some change to the consultation based in the feedback received – namely the requirement to retain locations where travel to the nearest alternative location is considered too difficult, or the consultation response suggests that the importance of the service to the community is a key factor.

The clawback liability would reduce under this option to £1.8m.

This option would have a lower risk of conflicting with the objectives of the Family Hub programme (however, it would undercut the Need Framework and saving potential).

There are no changes for other services between Options 2 and 3 and so the risk of impacting service integrity is the same between Options 2 and 3.

There is slightly lower, but still present risk in Option 3 that the realisation of savings and capital receipts could be impacted by the Options Appraisal process.

[Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.](#)

Option 4 carries a lower risk in terms of the consultation response as it represents a more comprehensive response to the consultation feedback.

The clawback liability is also significantly lower in this option, reducing to £395k.

This option would have the lowest risk in terms of conflict with the Family Hub model as it allows greater permanent physical provision within more communities. However, it is not so simple, as this model will undercut the ability to provide outreach provision in locations where a permanent physical presence is not possible. Equally, the service savings position would be compromised as highlighted above.

Equally the service provision of other services would in theory be protected, however the reality of the financial position will likely undermine that. For this assessment however, Option 4 is considered lower risk.

With a lower savings position and more service provision, this option carries a smaller risk in terms of the realisation of the savings. However, given this option would create a shortfall against the target CLL savings position of £1.9m, Option 4 is considered a higher risk.

[Option 5: Do Nothing.](#)

This option carries no consultation risk as there would be no change.

Equally there is no clawback liability under Option 5.

The Family Hub objectives are protected under Option 5, however the CLL and service savings are severely compromised.

Current provision for other services remains unchanged in Option 5. Whilst this protects current services for residents, the knock-on impact of unrealised savings here will undoubtedly have severe impacts elsewhere. It is also important to note that for some services, current provision is not expected to be sustainable.

By virtue of there being no savings achieved under Option 5, there is little risk against the realisation of savings. However, given this option would create the greatest shortfall against the target savings position, Option 5 is considered the highest risk.

Summary Table

Option	Consultation Risk	Clawback Liability	Family Hub	Service Integrity	Savings realisation	Score	Ranking
1 Go Further	5	5	5	5	=2	22	5
2 Consultation model	4	4	=3	4	=2	17	4
3 Minor amendments	3	3	=3	3	1	13	3
4 Major amendments	2	2	2	2	4	12	2
5 Do Nothing	1	1	1	1	5	9	1

Discounted Options

Based on the analysis above Options 1 and 5 are discounted due to receiving a Fail in one or both of the Pass/Fail appraisals.

Options 2, 3 and 4 are all considered viable. There is little difference in the financial considerations between options 2 and 3.

Implications of Each Option

Option 1: Go Further

This option would abandon our current methodology and would require further consultation work ahead of any decision. This would result in an unacceptable delay to benefit realisation. It may be agreeable for additional phases of work to investigate further changes to the estate by working more closely with other partners across the public and voluntary sectors. However, Option 1 does not achieve a Pass against the Need Framework appraisal and the implication of proceeding with this option would mean that a decision is not taken at this stage.

Option 2: Consultation model.

Option 2 delivers the best viable revenue saving for the CLL budget and therefore reduces pressure to find alternative savings solutions elsewhere within the Council. Of the viable options, Option 2 performs best against the Need Framework and Critical Success Factors. The main risk of Option 2 is proceeding without making amendments due to the consultation feedback. Our Best Value duty considerations and the financial challenges facing the Council may be considered the most important factor meaning that whilst the consultation feedback has been carefully considered, the decision is taken to proceed with the option as set out at consultation.

Option 3: Amend Need Framework to take greater weight of public transport network analysis.

There is not a small difference between option 2 and 3 in terms of revenue savings, but more of a difference in terms of the reduction in backlog maintenance liability and capital receipts estimated. However, the service model implications of retaining additional buildings does have a small impact on the savings realised by the Family Hubs service team. Proceeding with Option 3 would mean that whilst overall we are delivering the financial and non-financial benefits, there would be a requirement to find alternative savings elsewhere to meet the shortfall. Option 3 does demonstrate a response to the consultation, and whilst it is a modest response balanced against the financial imperative, the changes are based directly in the feedback received from the consultation.

Option 4: Amend Need Framework to take greatest weight of public transport network analysis.

Option 4 demonstrates a much more significant response to the consultation however proceeding with this option would mean a much lower savings realisation. This would likely impact other parts of the Council's operations as alternative savings solutions will need to be found.

Option 5: Do Nothing.

This option does not make any change to the physical estate and does not respond at all to our needs analysis. This option is not considered viable as it does not pass wither of the Pass/Fail appraisals. Proceeding with Option 5 would mean that alternative solutions need to be found to deliver the entirety of the financial and non-financial benefit's the Programme is designed to deliver. This will impact other service areas and will almost certainly impact statutory service delivery.

Preferred Option

Based purely on the detailed analysis set out above the preferred option with which to proceed is 'Option 2: Consultation Option'. The next preferred viable option is Option 3, and it is noted that there is very little difference in the scoring between them. Option 4 is also considered viable, although it should be noted that when considering the ranking scores, Option 4 does not provide the same level of benefit as Option 2 or 3.

Members have the opportunity to consider the appraisal process outlined above and debate the relative importance of each factor, alongside all other relevant factors when decisions are made, including the consultation response, impact of the proposals on residents and the overall policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates. These factors should be debated and assessed alongside each other as part of the decision-making process.

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):	Kent Communities Programme (Community Assets)
2. Directorate	DCED
3. Responsible Service/Division	INF

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.	Ben Sherreard
5. Head of Service Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.	Rebecca Spore
6. Director of Service Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.	Rebecca Spore

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?	
Tick if Yes	Activity Type
Yes	Service Change – operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.
Yes	Service Redesign – restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working
Yes	Project/Programme – includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.
	Commissioning/Procurement – means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.
	Strategy /Policy – includes review, refresh or creating a new document
	Other

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance the equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed

in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

The services in scope have developed their own EqIAs which assess the impact of the Kent Communities Proposals as they relate to their specific service areas. This EqIA refers to and summarises the analysis provided within the individual service EqIAs and summarises the mitigations and justifications outlined by the services.

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses. This EQIA has been updated following feedback from that consultation and is also based on data and evidence about Kent's communities and our service users.

The Consultation

The Kent Communities proposal has been subject to a public consultation. The consultation launched on 17th January 2023 and lasted for ten weeks, closing on 26 March 2023. The consultation set out the rationale for the proposals, the methodology which was used to produce the draft proposal and the details of the Kent Communities model (i.e. which buildings we were proposing to close and which we were proposing to retain). These proposals have now moved on following the consultation and the options are detailed below.

Rationale

The rationale for the KCP is clear. The Programme contributes to meeting the revenue savings as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). To reduce risks across our corporate estate and capital programme, the KCP reduces the Council's capital liability to the maintenance costs of such a large physical estate.

Methodology

The consultation explained the methodology underpinning the Kent Communities proposal, including how we used the Needs Framework as a starting point. The Need Framework used a wide range of data and indicators that when combined profile the different level of need for services within our communities. The data included service-held metrics, such as user figures for each service.

In developing the alternative range of options for member consideration the impact on equalities has been taken into account. As explained above options 3 and 4 have been developed acknowledging the difficulties that accessing alternative locations via public transport network would pose for residents, including those for which protected characteristics would make that a greater challenge.

Consultation Response

Whilst the consultation response indicated a majority of respondents did not support a reduction in buildings, there was very little constructive challenge to the methodology. The consultation set out alternative methods for reviewing the estate and why they had been discounted. However, many respondents did outline concerns relating to the accessibility of public transport within their feedback. As such, the accessibility of public transport has been reviewed and has been the driving factor in developing the additional options for member consideration.

50% of consultees answering use Children's Centres. 46% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Children's Centres. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (92% and 93% respectively).

16% of consultees answering use Youth Hubs. 15% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Youth Hubs. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (83% and 86% respectively).

41% of consultees answering use the Health Visiting Service. 35% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Health Visiting Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (82% and 82% respectively).

11% of consultees answering use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. 12% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 68% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (22% and 27% respectively).

10% of consultees answering use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 9% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 71% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 25% respectively).

17% of consultees answering use Adult Education services. 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (72% and 72% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 23% respectively).

20% of consultees answering use Gateways. 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (66% and 65% respectively) but a significant proportion reported that they use both in person and online services (21% and 24% respectively).

64% of all residents taking part in the consultation and answering indicated they use at least one of the services under consultation.

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the equality analysis conducted in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses

together into themes. These are reported in the table below. It should be noted that 18% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

Of those answering, the most common considerations put forward are ensuring the services are accessible / walking distance / access via suitable public transport (24%).

Those commenting raise concerns for how the proposals will affect specific groups of residents who are disabled / have learning difficulties / SEN (15%), young people / children / families (15%) and low-income households (11%).

Summary of Options

Option 1 in the table above represents a model that involves a greater reduction in the physical estate than was consulted on.

Option 2 is the consultation model.

Options 3 and 4 are amended versions of Option 2, which respond to differing degrees to the consultation feedback. In seeking to respond appropriately to the consultation feedback a more detailed review of the public transport network has informed the options set out in the paper. In the consultation modelling was provided to assess the accessibility of the revised building network on public transport considering a 30-minute travel time. Greater analysis of timetable data was used to develop the post-consultation options that respond to feedback from residents. This analysis considered both an extended travel time of 35 minutes and the regularity of the service by applying a criteria that there should be at least one service per hour over the nine-hour period 8am to 5pm which reflects the general service offering timeframe. It is appreciated that regularity of service is an important additional factor for residents above merely the journey time itself.

Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.

Option 4 represents a model which goes further in the response to the consultation feedback and brings 10 buildings back into the model (the 2 buildings from option 3 and another 8). This option rules out the closure of a buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.

Option 5 is a 'Do Nothing' option and retains the current building network and service delivery model.

Impact

Within the consultation a significant majority of responses were received by women (81%) compared to men (18%). This is particularly relevant to the Family Hub Model proposal and there is a likely cross over here with any impacts on age. The EqIA relating to the Family Hub Model sets out the consideration of equality impacts on age. However, it is acknowledged that women may bear the responsibility for childcare more commonly and as such the characteristics of sex and age require careful consideration.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics as women and children would be required to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs and additional equipment.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on women and children required to travel further to access services.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

14% of respondents answered that they consider themselves disabled. In particular the Gateway service, Adult Education Service and Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service consider this characteristic in their EqlAs. There is a similar overlap with age within these considerations as well, given the higher likelihood of residents over the age of 60 to experience disabilities.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics the elderly and disabled would be required to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult for them.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on the elderly and disabled required to travel further to access services.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

7.4% of respondents might use English as a second language, which would likely indicate there could be impacts based on race, ethnicity or religious belief. This is a consideration particularly for service users requiring the Family Hub service, our Gateway service and our Adult Education Service. These residents may struggle more to understand and navigate the relocation of services from one place to another.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics as there would likely be a greater number of site closures, requiring residents to access services from different locations.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on the residents who use English as a second language as the number of instances of closures decreases between each option.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

Generally during the consultation the main theme of feedback emerging was the inaccessibility of some services, particularly using the public transport network, and the impact that has on the health and wellbeing of residents, including their mental health. The options set out for decision respond to this feedback by retaining identified centres depending on whether greater weight is given to the analysis of public transport accessibility.

The consultation response focused on the impact that the proposed changes might have particularly on children with learning difficulties/SEN (15% of respondents), young people, children and families (15%) mental health issues/isolation (10%), discrimination based on age/gender (6%), effect on the elderly (5%), ethnic minorities/English as a second language/LGBTQ (4%).

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to any one service) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%

Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	14%

Women were far more likely to oppose co-location of services than men and respondents with children under 10 were far more likely to disagree with co-location than those without:

Male resident	26%
Female resident	49%
Resident with no children	22%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	61%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	68%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	54%

Similarly, women were far more likely to oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings than men and respondents with children under 10 were far more likely to disagree with reducing the number of buildings than residents without children:

Male resident (161)	34%
Female resident (760)	62%
Resident with children / expecting children (653)	67%
Resident with no children (173)	30%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	83%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	82%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	70%

There is a similar difference in the level of disagreement with proposals to have fewer buildings based on age with residents aged 25-24 most likely to disagree:

Resident aged 25-34 (220)	81%
Resident aged 35-49 (301)	66%
Resident aged 50-64 (210)	41%
Resident aged 65 & over (152)	27%

When read alongside the fact that (as shown above) levels of objection rise for those residents with children compared to those without, it is a reasonable assumption to make that this increased level of objection is reflects the fact that the majority of reduction is being across the Children's Centre network.

Justification

We consider that the different options for member consideration will have differing levels of impact on groups with protected characteristics. Whilst there will be some positive impacts, particularly relating to the expansion of Gateway services, the co-location of services and the Family Hubs model (subject to a separate EqIA), it is important to address the negative impacts on groups with protected characteristics and how the impacts are mitigated between the options presented for decision.

Broadly, the mitigations against the impacts on women and young children (outlined above) include the retention of more Children Centre locations within options 3 and 4 as well as a more expansive outreach offer (details to be co-designed with partners) that will (in part) focus on providing services to areas that are not necessarily covered by the Family Hub network – for instance those in more rural areas. The Family Hub Model itself brings together a wider range of services for families and as such while some service users may be required to travel further, they may now only need to make a single journey to access a range of required provision.

The mitigations against the impacts considered for those experiencing disabilities and/or the elderly (across Gateways, Adult Education and Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities) include the relocation of services to alternative locations only short distances away, or that are equally accessible by public transport due to the centralised location of the alternative locations.

Users with English as a second language may find the co-location of services relocation of service provision more difficult to navigate. Service teams will be supported in communicating changes early and effectively to these users, and teams within new locations will receive guidance in helping signpost and support these residents effectively.

All of these mitigation activities do need to be balanced against our Best Value Duty set out in securing Kent’s Future and considered alongside the reality that the fewer buildings we close within this programme, the greater pressure is put on the rest of the Council finances, which will inevitably impact statutory service provision.

Across the programme the impacts are considered to be limited through the mitigation outlined and justified given the wider policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

<p>9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No</p>	<p>Yes, an analysis of the protected characteristics of the respondents to the consultation is as follows:</p> <p>Gender Male 18% Female 81.3% Prefer not to say 0.7%</p> <p>Same Gender as birth Yes 99% Prefer not to say 1%</p> <p>Pregnant Yes – 28 out of 870 responses</p> <p>Religion Christian 90.2% Buddhist 0.3%</p>
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	<p>Hindu 0.7% Jewish 0.7% Muslim 0.7% Prefer not to say 2.6% Other 4.9% Sikh 0%</p> <p>Disability Yes 14.3 % No 83.5% Prefer not to say 2.2%</p> <p>Sexual Orientation Heterosexual/Straight 89.7% Bi/Bisexual 2% Gay man 0.4% Gay woman/Lesbian 1.3% Prefer not to say 6% Other 0.6%</p> <p>Ethnicity White English 87.6% White Scottish 1.1% White Welsh 0.5% White Northern Irish 0.2% White Irish 0.7% White Gipsy/Roma 0.1% Asian or Asian British Indian 0.4% Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi 0.1% Mixed White and Black Caribbean 0.1% Mixed White and Black African 0.1% Mixed White and Asian 0.4% Black or Black British Caribbean 0.2% Black or Black British African 0.1% I prefer not to say 2.2% Other 6% White Irish Traveller 0% Asian or Asian British Pakistani 0% Arab 0% Chinese 0%</p>
<p>10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? <i>Answer: No</i></p>	
<p>11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? <i>Answer: Yes</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents,</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>

service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.			
13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with? Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.			
Engagement in a general context took place with stakeholders prior to the launch of the public consultation including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCC members and senior officers - Service delivery team members and property team members as part of the design process - District authorities - External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue <p>A full 10-week consultation process was carried out between 17 January 2023 and 26 March 2023, this gave an opportunity to residents, community groups and all interested parties to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation there were face to face sessions held, and over 150 hours of proactive engagement with residents, service users (including groups of users in locations proposed for closure), partners, staff, unions and members.</p> <p>Of the 1,776 consultees who took part, 18% of consultees provided a response to our specific question about the equality analyses we had conducted prior to, and published together with, our consultation. A more detailed breakdown of the responses within the consultation and the equalities considerations is given above.</p>			
14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? Answer: Yes/No		Yes – pre-consultation EqlAs from each service area.	
15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? Answer: Yes/No		Yes.	
Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.		Demographic data that informed the need framework. Consultation report with stats on feedback received.	
Section C – Impact			
16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.			
Service users/clients Answer: Yes/No	Yes	Residents/Communities/Citizens Answer: Yes/No	Yes
Staff/Volunteers Answer: Yes/No	Yes		
17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? Answer: Yes/No			Yes
18. Please give details of Positive Impacts			

The principles of the Kent Communities Programme are built on the ambition to provide a more cohesive range of community services to residents so that different needs can be met in the most accessible and efficient way possible.

By increasing the Gateways service overall (albeit with part-time provision at new locations), and co-locating with other services, we will be able to present a more coordinated overall service offer to our communities increasing access to complimentary KCC services for our users.

The co-location of services for Adults with Learning Disabilities proposed will help to advance the equality of opportunity between those individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not. It will also help to foster good relations between those individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not. Both of these factors are in line with the second and third considerations of s149 (1) of the Equality Act (2010).

The Family Hub Model provides positive impacts for residents by drawing closer together professionals from complimentary organisations to deliver a more well-rounded range of services in one place for residents. The approach to co-designing outreach with partners means that there will be a greater level of understanding of the challenges facing particular communities, including residents with one or more protected characteristic. This could result in services being delivered to communities that are currently unserved by delivering outreach provision to residents within these areas.

The proposed changes to the Adult Education service will result in services being delivered from a building in much better condition, resulting in a more pleasant and conducive learning environment.

Proposals for co-location with Libraries, Community Learning and Skills, Adult Social Care and Family Hub services. By co-locating with a mix or range of these services within the same buildings, we are presenting a more unified service offer to the resident, so it is easier for them to access a broader range of services from a single location.

We will also be able to offer space for a range of partners to deliver services from this location and benefit from a range of services under one roof. For example, it is anticipated that our Meet and Greet staff will also have knowledge of services available from the local Borough council as well as third sector partners, to enable effective sign posting. Similarly, the link between Birth Registrations and Family Hub services is strengthened by co-locating Libraries and Family Hubs together.

Residents with some protected characteristics (sex, age, disability and race) are likely to be impacted more by the proposed building closures. These same groups are likely to also benefit from co-location of services, mindful of specific mitigations such as continued DDA compliance of co-location sites and the provision of private/confidential areas. Residents in these groups will be able to utilise these services will benefit from a reduced number of journeys by having KCC services located nearby/ together. It is also possible that there will be benefits for residents from different races as co-location will help those whose first language is not English, as they will not need to navigate multiple locations.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

<p>a) Are there negative impacts for age? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>b) Details of Negative Impacts for Age</p>	<p>As set out above, the consultation response across the whole scope of proposals demonstrates a much greater level of</p>

opposition to both reductions in buildings and co-locations in the 25-24 age bracket. 81% of respondents in that age bracket oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings. This is likely due to the fact that residents in this age bracket have a higher chance of having children between the ages of 0-5 years old, and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children's Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings).

The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individual within this age bracket to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment. The crossover with other protected characteristics, including sex, disability, pregnancy and those with carers responsibilities needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.

By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures *decreases* progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.

63% of residents between the age of 25 and 34 disagree with the proposals to co-locate services together. Again, this is supported by the comments within the response that this opposition is likely due to the proposals to co-locate Children Centre services and accessibility is raised as a point of concern. This suggests that the impact on residents in this age bracket, particularly when combined with other protected characteristics like sex, disability, pregnancy and carer responsibilities, would be more significant.

Again, considering that the number of building closures *decreases* progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.

Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.

The EqIA for Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities set out that there is greater impact of changes to their service on residents aged 35-49. This is due to the demographic make up of their service user base. The impact on these residents is, similar to above, the requirement to travel further to access services that move as a result of the changes set out in Options 2, 3 and 4 (same changes proposed across these options for this service). It is noted that the service users in this age bracket are also more likely to experience disabilities or mobility issues themselves and so there is a link between age and disability to be

considered when assessing the impacts of the changes to this service. More detail is provided in the EqIA from the service.

The Adult Education service EqIA identifies that the relocation of their service proposed may disproportionately impact older residents who may find a relocation to an alternative location more confusing. As above, there is a crossover to be considered in that the impact is likely to be more significant for older residents that also experience disability of mobility issues. More detail is provided in the EqIA from the service.

The Gateway service EqIA sets out that many of their residents are elderly and therefore proposals to relocate their service within Options 2, 3 and 4 (same changes proposed across these options for this service) will have a disproportionate impact on the age characteristic. The reason being that residents will be required to travel to alternative locations in Gravesend, Tonbridge and Dover which may be more difficult for the elderly that also experience mobility issues. More detail is provided in the service EqIA.

The Family Hub Model EqIA details negative impacts on age given that parents (most likely aged between 25 and 39) may need to travel to new locations. Travel costs and arrangement, particularly with pushchairs and children will likely be more difficult. It also sets out that co-location of services may change the look and feel of buildings which will have a negative impact on young children, particularly those with SEND requirements. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.

c) Mitigating Actions for age

Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including age, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.

The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities EqIA sets out mitigations including the fact that the alternative locations proposed are close to the existing locations it is possible to mitigate the changes through clear communication and engagement with service users. Any co-locations will be supported by providing guidance to staff in new locations to adequately signpost new service users that may find new locations more difficult to navigate. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.

	<p>The Adult Education EqIA sets out that staff within the new location will be able to provide signposting and support to residents navigating the co-location site. The design and construction work to facilitate the co-location will consider DDA and accessibility regulations. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Gateway service EqIA sets out mitigating actions for negative impacts on age including clear communication and engagement with service users to raise awareness of the changes and any accessible transportation options to the new location. All proposed co-locations are within a mile of the existing locations and are equally accessible on public transport. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Family Hub EqIA sets out that impacts on age will be mitigated by consulting users on barriers to accessing services, co-designing elements of the model where possible to foster a sense of ownership and timetabling to support activities for different age groups. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Family Hub outreach offer, proposed to be co-designed with partners within each district locality, allows services to be delivered within communities that would negate the need for residents to travel to reach services. It will also lead to service delivery to currently underserved communities that may miss out on service provision due to the historic nature of the Council's building footprint.</p>
<p>d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard</p>
<p>20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</p>	
<p>a) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>b) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</p>	<p>14% of consultation respondents indicated that they experience a disability and 61% of all respondents disagree with the proposals to have fewer buildings. The negative impacts on residents experiencing a disability do interplay with other protected characteristics as already outlined, particularly between age.</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals experiencing a disability to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult given their disability. Equally, navigating new locations and co-location sites may be more challenging as spaces are unfamiliar.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p>

48% of respondents disagree with the proposals to co-locate services together. The comments within the response suggest that this opposition is likely due to concerns around accessibility of services within co-located sites. This suggests that the impact on residents experiencing a disability would be more significant.

Again, considering that the number of building closures *decreases* progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.

Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.

The EqIA for Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities sets out that due to the nature of their service, all of their users experience a disability. The impact on these residents is, similar to above, the requirement to travel further to access services that move as a result of the changes set out in Options 2, 3 and 4 (same changes proposed across these options for this service). Equally, co-location of services may present unfamiliar or overwhelming situations for service users that experience a disability. More detail is provided in the EqIA from the service.

The Adult Education service EqIA identifies that increased walking distance (shorter distance for some users) to the proposed new location of their service in Broadstairs may present a challenge for individuals that experience a disability. Equally, the relocation of their service proposed may disproportionately impact service users that experience a disability as they may find a relocation to an alternative location more confusing and difficult to navigate. More detail is provided in the EqIA from the service.

The Gateway service EqIA sets out that many of their service users will be required to make more than one trip to access KCC and partner services now, whereas previously these were provided from the single Gateway location. This will more significantly impact those that experience a disability. It also sets out that the proposed locations may not have the relevant facilities such as changing spaces or accessible toilets. More detail is provided in the service EqIA.

The Family Hub Model EqIA details negative impacts on parents/carers with a disability and children with SEND requirements or that experience a disability. Again, changes to the locations of buildings, and layout of buildings that are used to access services will disproportionately impact these groups given the increased difficulties that travelling further presents. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.

<p>c) Mitigating Actions for Disability</p>	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including disability, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>The co-location sites will be brought forward with the assistance of professional design and construction partners that will consider DDA compliance and regulations as part of the design work and implementation of changes that facilitate the co-location. This will include provision of accessible facilities, DDA compliant buildings and relevant wayfinding provision.</p> <p>The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities EqIA sets out mitigations including the fact that the alternative locations proposed are close to the existing locations it is possible to mitigate the changes through clear communication and engagement with service users. Any co-locations will be supported by providing guidance to staff in new locations to adequately signpost new service users that may find new locations more difficult to navigate. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Adult Education EqIA sets out that staff within the new location will be able to provide signposting and support to residents navigating the co-location site. The design and construction work to facilitate the co-location will consider DDA and accessibility regulations. It is also true that the alternative locations suggested are relatively close to the existing facilities and in some instances are already known locations to the service users. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Gateway service EqIA sets out mitigating actions for negative impacts on disability including clear communication and engagement with service users to raise awareness of the changes and any accessible transportation options to the new location. All proposed co-locations are within a mile of the existing locations and are equally accessible on public transport. The service will take additional mitigation action such as considering alternative disabled parking provision and exploring the use of facilities at co-location sites to help residents access a wider range of services digitally. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Family Hub EqIA sets out that impacts those experiencing a disability will be mitigated by consulting users on barriers to accessing services, co-designing elements of the model where</p>
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	<p>possible to foster a sense of ownership and reviewing proposed building co-locations to ensure accessibility and DDAA compliance. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Family Hub outreach offer, proposed to be co-designed with partners within each district locality, allows services to be delivered within communities that would negate the need for residents to travel to reach services which has been acknowledged as more challenging for residents that experience a disability.</p>
<p>d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard</p>
<p>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</p>	
<p>a) Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex</p>	<p>As is seen in the response to the consultation, 62% of female respondents oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings compared to 34% of male respondents. Equally 69% of female respondents oppose the co-location of services, compared to 26% of male respondents. This is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for childcare and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children's Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings).</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment. The crossover with other protected characteristics, including age, disability, pregnancy and those with carers responsibilities needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p> <p>Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.</p> <p>The Adult Education service EqIA identifies that 80% of its service user base is female and 61% of respondents objected to the proposals to relocate the CLS service in Broadstairs. Therefore, it could be argued that the impact of the move will disproportionately impact women. More detail is provided in the EqIA from the service.</p>

	<p>The Family Hub Model EqIA demonstrates that women are most likely to access their current service offer and so will be most impacted by the proposed changes. Again, changes to the locations of buildings, and layout of buildings that are used to access services will disproportionately impact these groups given the increased difficulties that travelling further presents. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p>
<p>c) Mitigating Actions for Sex</p>	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including sex, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>The Adult Education service EqIA sets out that the proposed move to a new location in Broadstairs is less than a couple of minutes' walk away from the existing location and therefore the impact on sex is considered low.</p> <p>The Family Hub EqIA sets out mitigation measures including co-design and parent carer panels to develop safe and inclusive delivery spaces – this will be important in co-located sites where the impact of accessing services alongside residents accessing other services will need to be considered.</p>
<p>d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard</p>
<p>22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</p>	
<p>a) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>b) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender</p>	<p>4% of respondents to the consultation raised the issue of effects on disadvantage ethnic minorities / English as a second language / refugees / travellers / LGBTQ.</p> <p>Young people within the gender identity/transgender characteristic may be impacted by the requirement to share youth centre space with an early years (0-5) setting. Feedback from the consultation demonstrates that young people that access youth centres are not in favour of this as they may feel unable to use the centre to highlight issues related to gender identity, sexual health and LGBTQ issues.</p>

<p>c) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender</p>	<p>Youth services will be protected by timetabling activity within the new Family Hub model and through design within spaces to provide separate and dedicated areas/settings for youth provision, including space for confidential conversations.</p> <p>We have examples of being able to do this successfully within our current estate and service models.</p>
<p>d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard</p>
<p>23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race</p>	
<p>a) Are there negative impacts for Race? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p>b) Details of Negative Impacts for Race</p>	<p>Residents that use English as a second language may find changes to service locations more difficult to accommodate. They may also find travel to alternative locations and navigating unfamiliar settings more challenging than native English speakers. This covers the entire extent of the Kent Communities Programme as the reduction in buildings means that residents will need to access services in alternative locations or in different ways (for example online).</p> <p>The Gateway service EqlA sets out that there may be confusion for service users within Tonbridge and Gravesham where a change of location is proposed due to language barriers as a high proportion of Gateway users have English as a second language. More detail is provided in the EqlA from the service.</p> <p>The Family Hub EqlA also recognises that services may be more difficult to access for residents for whom English is not their primary language as they may rely on local access points more as alternative provision (for example online services) may not fully cater to their requirements.</p>
<p>c) Mitigating Actions for Race</p>	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including race, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations or to navigate unfamiliar settings way from their current local access points. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>The Gateway EqlA explains that mitigation will be provided by clear communication to existing service users to raise awareness of changes to service locations. More detail is provided within the service EqlA.</p>

	The Family Hub EqIA sets out that the Family Hub team will work alongside partners, community and faith organisations to provide access for diverse ethnic communities. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Race	Ben Sherreard
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief	
a) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief	As detailed above, the Gateway service EqIA explains that there may be confusion for service users within Tonbridge and Gravesham where a change of location is proposed due to language barriers as a high proportion of Gateway users have English as a second language.
c) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief	The co-location of services has been carefully planned and service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services that use English as a second language.
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Religion and belief	Ben Sherreard
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation	
a) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation	
c) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation	
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Sexual Orientation	
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	
a) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity	As is seen in the response to the consultation, 62% of female respondents oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings compared to 34% of male respondents. Equally 69% of female respondents oppose the co-location of services, compared to 26% of male respondents. This is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for childcare and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children’s Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings). 3% of respondents to the consultation indicated that they were pregnant.

The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult for pregnant women or those with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment. The crossover with other protected characteristics, including age, disability, sex and those with carers responsibilities needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.

By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures *decreases* progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.

Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.

The Gateway service EqIA explains that pregnant women or those with young children will be required to travel to more than one site to access services from multiple agencies whereas currently in Tonbridge, Dover and Gravesend they are able to access multiple agencies within the existing Gateway location. This additional travel will more significantly impact the pregnancy and maternity protected characteristic.

Within the Family Hub EqIA the service accepts that expectant mothers will be required to travel to alternative locations to access the services they require under the Kent Communities Programme proposals. Costs of travel and difficulties using public transport and travelling greater distances will more significantly impact pregnant women. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.

c) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including pregnancy and maternity, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.

The Gateway EqIA sets out mitigation measures including clear communication to service users of accessible transport options and the use of facilities within co-location sites to support access

	<p>to a wider range of partner services (i.e. computers within libraries).</p> <p>The Family Hub EqIA sets out that they will continue to consult on barriers to service access throughout the implementation of the new model.</p>
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Pregnancy and Maternity	Ben Sherreard
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships	
a) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No.
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
c) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer’s responsibilities	
a) Are there negative impacts for Carer’s responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer’s Responsibilities	<p>It has been set out above that the protected characteristics of age and sex experience more significant negative impacts resulting from the changes outlined in the Ken Communities Programme proposals. It has been highlighted that there is an interplay between these protected characteristics and the protected characteristic of those with carer’s responsibilities.</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment to support those for whom individuals’ care.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p> <p>Option 5 is the ‘Do Nothing’ option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.</p> <p>The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service EqIA picks up this issue specifically in relation to their service users and the carers that support them. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Adult Education Service EqIA sets out that service users with carer responsibilities may find accessing the service in a new location more challenging in that they will be required to navigate</p>

	<p>the service setting in a location with other services on offer. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Gateway service EqIA includes the consideration that due to the proposed changes, carers will be required to travel to more than one location to access a range of services currently on offer in a single location. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p>
<p>c) Mitigating Actions for Carer’s responsibilities</p>	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including those with carer’s responsibilities, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>The Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service EqIA details mitigation for each of the three locations where changes are proposed. The mitigations primarily focus on the fact that alternative locations as proposed are all close to the existing service centres and as such are not overly burdensome to access. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Adult Education Service EqIA sets out that mitigation is provided that the proposed co-location delivers additional teaching space in an accessible way and will be provided in line with accessibility regulations. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p> <p>The Gateway service EqIA sets out that mitigation will be provided by raising awareness of accessible transport options to the new locations and that facilities will be used in co-location sites to assist users accessing a wider range of services. More detail is provided within the service EqIA.</p>
<p>d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer’s Responsibilities</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard</p>

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):	Kent Communities Programme – Gateway
2. Directorate	ST
3. Responsible Service/Division	Marketing and Resident Experience – Deputy Chief Executive's Office

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
5. Head of Service Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.	Christina Starte
6. Director of Service Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.	Amanda Beer – Interim Chief Executive

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?	
Tick if Yes	Activity Type
Yes	Service Change – operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.
Yes	Service Redesign – restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working
	Project/Programme – includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.
	Commissioning/Procurement – means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.
	Strategy /Policy – includes review, refresh or creating a new document
Yes	Other – Introduction of new Gateway provision in Maidstone, some proposed location moves

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also

intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme also seeks to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, in line with our Net Zero 2030 approach, although this is a secondary factor given the overarching financial context. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses. This EQIA has been updated following feedback from that consultation and is also based on data and evidence about Kent's communities and our service users.

Summary of Proposals

Five separate options are being presented for Member consideration and decision.

Within four of the five option the changes are the same for the Gateway service and these are detailed below.

- Relocation of existing Dover Gateway into Dover Discovery Centre as part of a wider co-location (The DDC co-location is an existing separate project, and the KCP proposal is to add Gateway into the co-location arrangement).
- Relocation of existing KCC services at Gravesend Gateway into Gravesend Library in December 2025.
- New part-time Gateway provision at KHLC (Maidstone) in a co-location with the library.
- Relocation of existing KCC services provided at Tonbridge Gateway into Tonbridge Library.

This EqlA considers the impacts on residents of the service moving location in four of the five options and the impact of the co-location with the library service. It takes into account the relevant feedback from the consultation in relation to the Gateway service and the general equalities approach.

Where we are proposing to move the Gateway service, there will be a KCC service provision, however the number of hours and the opening times offered have not yet been defined. It is likely that should a Gateway member of staff not be available full time in any location, that queries be dealt with by alternative KCC staff on site, i.e. receptionists or Library officers.

However, in order to access partner services that were offered alongside the KCC service, the users may be required to make more than one trip as the co-locations proposed are with other KCC services and not necessarily with external partners.

The fifth option is a 'Do Nothing' option and therefore no changes to the Gateway service are proposed under that scenario.

Gateway

Gateway is a hub, which allows for services from a range of different partners to co-locate and collaborate under one roof. This can include services from Kent County Council, Local District/Borough Councils and community/third sector partners and is designed to match and meet community needs. Gateway offers a conduit to a range of other services and providers to deliver services, with a meet and greet function that is designed to triage enquiries and assist customers to access services. This could be by promoting self-help, assisting with applications, making direct referrals or signposting depending on the customer need and capability.

In developing our proposals, we have considered the main data and evidence about Kent's communities. This is because the ethos of Gateway is to be placed in town centre locations where our customers may already be visiting to carry out other transactions in the area, such as shopping, accessing other services (e.g. job centres), and where there are good transport links.

Gateway is a physical service designed to help those who may not be able to navigate Kent County Council's or other partners' services that may assist them in their day to day lives. This includes helping some of our vulnerable residents accessing services such as Blue Badge assessment appointments.

As part of the programme, we have looked to utilise the buildings already owned by Kent County Council and expand the Gateway offer further to ensure that those with extra support needs can be supported in accessing KCC services, as well as those provided by third sector and other public sector bodies where appropriate. Wherever possible, we propose to use buildings located as close as possible to where a higher need is identified, and in locations where customers may already be undertaking other transactions.

Gateways already work successfully in a number of co-locations such as Ashford and Sheerness, where customers can access a range of services under one roof.

The proposal for Gateway services set out in the consultation was to retain all of our existing 9 locations throughout Kent, but with some moved to another location close by. Those proposed locations and changes were as follows:

District	Current Buildings	Proposal	Nearest Alternative	Distance (Miles from current building)
Ashford	Ashford Gateway Plus	Remain		
	Tenterden Gateway	Remain		
Dover	Dover Gateway	Leave	Moving to Dover Discovery Centre	0.1
Gravesham	Gravesham Gateway	Leave	Moving to Gravesend Library	0.9
Sevenoaks	The Eden Centre	Remain		
	Swanley Link	Remain		
Swale	Sheppey Gateway	Remain		
Thanet	Thanet Gateway Plus	Remain		
Tonbridge and Malling	Tonbridge Castle Gateway	Leave	Moving to Tonbridge Library	0.6

In the consultation we also proposed to extend our Gateway service to the new locations listed below, which would have been co-located in spaces where it is intended that other Kent County Council services would also be provided:

District	Proposed Community Hub Location	Co-located Services
Ashford	Stanhope Library	Library and Family Hub, Gateway
Dartford	Temple Hill Library	Gateway, Family Hub and Library
Maidstone	Kent History and Library Centre	Gateway and Library
Thanet	Ramsgate Library	Gateway, Library and Family Hub
	Cliftonville Library	Gateway, Adults and Library

Since the consultation, the Gateway Management Team have confirmed their funding envelope and without additional financial resource cannot support the inclusion of Gateway provision across all of the co-locations suggested in the consultation. As such the proposals no longer include a Gateway provision as part of a co-location of services at Stanhope Library, Temple Hill Library or Cliftonville Library. There is no additional removal of Gateway locations compared to the proposals outlined in the consultation model and there were no comments received specific to the proposed co-locations at Stanhope, Temple Hill or Cliftonville. On 30th March the Strategic Reset Programme Board agreed that all options presented must be financially viable. To retain the additional locations consulted on would result in pressure on the service funding envelope which, if met, would require corresponding cuts to other service areas.

As such an alternative provision has been drawn up for delivery:

District	Current Buildings	Proposal	Notes	Distance (Miles from current building)
Ashford	Ashford Gateway Plus	Remain		
	Tenterden Gateway	Remain		
Dover	Dover Gateway	Leave	Move to Dover Discovery Centre	0.1
Gravesham	Gravesham Gateway	Leave	Move to Gravesend Library – part time provision	0.9
Sevenoaks	The Eden Centre	Remain		
	Swanley Link	Remain		
Swale	Sheppey Gateway	Remain		
Thanet	Thanet Gateway Plus	Remain		
	Ramsgate	New	Part time provision	
Tonbridge and Malling	Tonbridge Castle Gateway	Leave	Move to Tonbridge Library - part time provision	0.6
Maidstone	Kent Library and History Centre	New	Part time provision	

Part time provision would mean a Gateway member of staff would not be on site five days a week. Where we are proposing to move the Gateway service, there will be a Gateway KCC service provision, however the number of hours and the opening times offered have not yet been defined. It is likely that should a Gateway member of staff not be available that queries be

dealt with by alternative KCC staff, i.e. receptionists or Library officers in their absence. We would seek the views of partners who may wish to deliver services out of the new sites as to when that provision is best delivered.

We would therefore not be providing provision at the following locations as originally proposed by the consultation;

District	Proposed Community Hub Location	Co-located Services	Notes
Ashford	Stanhope Library	Library and Family Hub	Family hub and Library would be offering support for residents in a small space. There would be limited space for partners.
Dartford	Temple Hill Library	Family Hub and Library	Family hub and Library would be offering provision in a small space. There would be limited space for partners.
Thanet	Cliftonville Library & Ramsgate Library	Adults and Library	Additional provision at the existing Gateway in Margate (Thanet Gateway Plus) will offer better value for money and a richer service in a higher footfall area. Adults and Libraries services at Cliftonville and Libraries at Ramsgate will be able to assist customers by signposting residents to required services where needed. At Cliftonville, there is limited space for partners.

The precise location for all Gateway services will be subject to the continued availability of the properties concerned. The above proposals are based on leases currently in place and what we currently know about the relevant properties.

Consultation

20% of consultees answering use Gateways. 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (66% and 65% respectively) but a significant proportion reported that they use both in person and online services (21% and 24% respectively). Although Gateway does not have an online provision, we have assumed that they have meant Council websites.

There were 7 comments received regarding the proposal to relocate the existing Dover Gateway into the Dover Discovery Centre which did not specifically raise equalities concerns.

There were 8 comments received regarding the proposal to relocate the existing Gravesend Gateway into Gravesend Library. One person raised that Women's Support services for example Domestic Abuse, should not be offered in a hub, due to safety concerns for those impacted.

There were 15 comments received regarding the proposal to relocate the existing Tonbridge Gateway into Tonbridge Library. There were concerns raised regarding access to toilets and parking at the library, however this was not clear as to whether this was due to an equalities issue.

The majority of comments were in support of retaining Gateway style services, allowing people to access them in more locations and retaining existing provisions. Some raised the issue of needing to potentially access two locations to see different Councils, i.e. local and district/borough services.

More generally feedback was received re confidentiality in hubs and also for those who are Neurodiverse, the hubs may be overwhelming in terms of sound and space.

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to the Gateway co-location proposals) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	14%

The feedback around impact on accessibility and mental health should be considered in equalities terms and is addressed in the relevant section below.

Impact

We consider that the impact of our proposals in relation to the Gateways service are likely to be positive overall, as the service will be co-locating with other services and we intend to introduce provision in Maidstone as set out in the tables above.

People with protected characteristics that are mostly likely to benefit from our proposals to increase provision are those with disabilities, including hidden disabilities, carers, and older people who may need greater assistance to access our services online such as Blue Badges. Further, we expect that people whose first language is not English and may therefore need additional assistance, and some groups for whom there may be a stigma or perception of inequality in accessing our services (e.g. Gypsy, Roma and Irish Travellers) to also benefit from our proposals. It is important however to acknowledge that, as set out above, the increase in provision is not as great as was initially suggested at consultation and so the positive impacts are less than would have been.

Whilst no comments on the proposals raised specific equalities concerns, it is important to acknowledge that in relocating the sites in Dover, Gravesend and Tonbridge there may be a negative impact on residents with disabilities, residents who are older (noting that residents over 60 are statistically more likely to also experience a disability or may have other difficulties accessing alternative locations not directly linked to disability, such as a greater reliance on public transport), or other residents with accessibility or mobility difficulties (such as pregnant women or women with young children), that may need to make alternative travel arrangements or will be required to walk further to access the relocated service. Similar impacts may result from the potential need for service users to make multiple trips where Gateways that we are proposing to leave are co-located with other non-Gateway and/or non-KCC services. However, all relocations are less than a mile away from the existing location and are in centrally located buildings which meet accessibility requirements and are well served by public transport access.

Justification

The impacts outlined above are considered to be proportionate when considered against the positive impacts, mitigations and the overall policy and financial context within which the Council operates. Therefore, any impacts are considered to be both limited and justifiable.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No

No

However, an analysis of the protected characteristics of the respondents to the consultation is as follows:

Gender

Male 18%

Female 81.3%

Prefer not to say 0.7%

Same Gender as birth

Yes 99%

Prefer not to say 1%

Pregnant

Yes – 28 out of 870 responses

Religion

Christian 90.2%

Buddhist 0.3%

Hindu 0.7%

Jewish 0.7%

Muslim 0.7%

Prefer not to say 2.6%

Other 4.9%

Sikh 0%

Disability

Yes 14.3 %

No 83.5%

Prefer not to say 2.2%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual/Straight 89.7%

Bi/Bisexual 2%

Gay man 0.4%

Gay woman/Lesbian 1.3%

Prefer not to say 6%

Other 0.6%

Ethnicity

White English 87.6%

White Scottish 1.1%

White Welsh 0.5%

White Northern Irish 0.2%

	<p>White Irish 0.7% White Gipsy/Roma 0.1% Asian or Asian British Indian 0.4% Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi 0.1% Mixed White and Black Caribbean 0.1% Mixed White and Black African 0.1% Mixed White and Asian 0.4% Black or Black British Caribbean 0.2% Black or Black British African 0.1% I prefer not to say 2.2% Other 6% White Irish Traveller 0% Asian or Asian British Pakistani 0% Arab 0% Chinese 0%</p>
<p>10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? <i>Answer: No</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? <i>Answer: Yes</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with? <i>Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.</i></p>	
<p>Engagement regarding the consultation in a general context had already taken place with stakeholders prior to the launch of the consultation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCC members and senior officers - Service delivery team members as part of the design process - District authorities - External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue <p>A full 10-week consultation process was carried out between 17 January 2023 and 26 March 2023, this gave an opportunity to residents, community groups and all interested parties to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation there were face to face sessions some of which were held in Gateways, to gauge the views of the public on the proposals.</p> <p>The Gateway team raised awareness with its customers and partners that a consultation was taking place and asked them to take the opportunity to share their views and to ask any of their customers to take part too. This included all locations including those where there were no proposed changes.</p> <p>Of the 1,776 consultees who took part, 20% of consultees stated that they use Gateways. 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways.</p>	

The following partners have and/or are operating from the Gateways listed. Please note however that these change from time to time to reflect changes in customer needs and the partner requests.

Ashford Gateway - Ashford Borough Council, Libraries, Registration and Archives, Community Learning and Skills, Adult Services, Food with Friends café, Occupational Therapy, We are with You (counselling), Kent Supported Employment, Hearbase, Hi Kent, Kent Pathways, Child Health Clinic, Job Club, Blue Badge Assessments, Blue Badge Appointments

Tenterden – Ashford Borough Council, Libraries, Registration and Archives, Post Office, Hi Kent, Inspiring Lives, Blue Badge Appointments

Dover - Dover District Council, Citizens Advice Bureau, ONE You, Hi Kent, Occupational Therapy, Kent Supported Employment, Blue Badge Assessments, Blue Badge Appointments

Gravesham - Gravesham Borough Council, Kent Police, Kent Supported Employment, KCC Blue Badge Appts, KCC Blue Badge Assessments, Shaw Trust, Royal British Legion,

Eden Centre – Libraries, Registration & Archives, West Kent Extra, Citizen’s Advice Bureau, Baptist Union Corp

Swanley Link - Swanley Town Council, West Kent Housing, Post Office, Libraries, Registrations and Archives, Day Services, Café, Community Warden, Carers First, Specsavers, Pathways to Work, One You, Porchlight,

Sheppey Gateway - Swale Borough Council, Community Learning and Skills, Libraries, Registrations and Archives, Children's Services, Occupational Therapy, We are with You (counselling), Porchlight, Kent Supported Employment, Barclays, Live Well Kent, Blue Badge Appointments

Thanet - Thanet District Council, Kent Support Employment, KCC Blue Badge Appts, KCC Blue Badge Assessments,

Tonbridge and Malling - Tonbridge & Malling Council, Kent Supported Employment, Citizen’s Advice Bureau, KCC Blue Badge Appointments, KCC Blue Badge Assessments, Post Office, Change Grow Live.

14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? *Answer: Yes/No*

One has been carried out for Dover Gateway as part of the Dover Discovery Centre refurbishment. And one prior to the launch of the consultation regarding Kent Communities proposals.

15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes.

Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App
Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.

Demographic data from the consultation demographic questionnaire is available for some of the protected characteristics. This has been used where appropriate to inform the Equality Impact Assessment as set out above.

Data is not currently collected from service users about any protected characteristics they may have. A proactive effort was made during the consultation to encourage service users to tell us any potential impacts they see to any of those listed protected groups. The data included above sets out the protected characteristics of respondents.

We do currently collect some data about footfall into the buildings, but this is not perfect data and cannot be

relied upon as an accurate reflection of the customers who access services. This data is also not broken down by protected groups.

Section C – Impact

16. Who may be impacted by the activity? *Select all that apply.*

Service users/clients <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes	Residents/Communities/Citizens <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
Staff/Volunteers <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes		

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

The principles of the Kent Communities Programme are built on the ambition to provide a more cohesive range of community services to residents so that different needs can be met in the most accessible and efficient way possible.

By co-locating with other KCC services, we will be able to present a more coordinated overall service offer to our communities. This includes:

- Proposals for co-location with other KCC services. By co-locating with a mix or range of these services within the same buildings, we are presenting a more unified service offer to the resident, so it is easier for them to access a broader range of services from a single location.
- We will also be able to offer space for a range of partners to deliver services from this location and benefit from a range of services under one roof. It is anticipated that Meet and Greet staff will also have knowledge of services available from the local Borough council as well as third sector partners, to enable effective sign posting.
- We hope that by co-locating with other services, we will be able to offer a more holistic service offer, including sign posting, triaging, and assisting customers to carry out tasks such as Blue Badge applications.
- The proposed co-locations means that in the majority of cases it is possible that customers with protected characteristics particularly those who are older, those who are disabled and their carers who utilise these services will benefit from a reduced number of journeys by having KCC services located nearby/ together. It is also possible that it will help those whose first language is not English, as they will not need to navigate multiple locations.
- It is possible by operating all services from one central and convenient location; it will avoid the need for multiple visits to different sites for KCC services.

The proposals for the Gateway service in four of the five options include additional provision at Maidstone. If members choose to proceed with the 'Do Nothing' option it could be argued that this will negatively impact those residents that would have used the new service provision. This would represent a missed opportunity for a positive impact delivered by the other four options.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

<p>e) Are there negative impacts for age? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>f) Details of Negative Impacts for Age</p>	<p>In Gravesham, Dover and Tonbridge we are proposing to move from locations shared with District and Borough Council services. Service users may therefore need to make two trips if they want to also see our district and borough colleagues or access those services. It is possible that those who are older with mobility constraints may find it more difficult to navigate two different locations.</p> <p>We don't currently have a breakdown of those accessing services within Gateway. However, given that we anticipate a high proportion of users of Gravesend Gateway are over 65 given the current mix of services on offer there, for example Blue Badge assessments, a high proportion of those affected will be elderly.</p> <p>The requirement to make more than one trip, or to travel further may lead to an impact on more elderly residents that are more likely to struggle walking further or accessing public transport. They are also more likely to become confused at a change in location.</p> <p>In Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesham Districts there are over 65k people who are over 65 years old. (ONS data 2020 mid-year population estimates)</p> <p>Wider feedback received in the consultation raised that the proposed co-location sites may be more difficult to navigate for the elderly if they are in unfamiliar locations.</p>
<p>g) Mitigating Actions for age</p>	<p>The proposed relocations of services in Gravesham and Tonbridge are all within 1 mile.</p> <p>Some comments were received with regards to those locations we anticipate leaving from but moving to an alternative locally, these concerns covered being able to still access services and having to travel between two locations to access different services as well as parking.</p> <p>We are proposing to take action to mitigate the impact of the change in location, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will engage with Gravesham, Dover and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils and partners to understand any impact on the move to the Libraries on their service users. Including offering space should they wish to use it for their services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will raise awareness of accessible transport routes to alternative locations and district and borough council services. As well as highlighting available parking in the area. We will explore utilising the facilities at the community hubs to help these service users to use digital services and/or to access services virtually with support from staff. <p>Co-location The co-location of services has been carefully planned and feasibility studies have assessed the appropriateness of co-location from a service and accessibility compliance perspective. Further design work will continue to develop the co-location proposals.</p> <p>Service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services within the location.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigations detailed are considered to be justified.</p>
<p>h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</p>	<p>Pascale Blackburn-Clarke</p>
<p>20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</p>	
<p>e) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>f) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</p>	<p>Within Gravesham, Dover and Tonbridge where we are proposing to relocate away from our District and Borough Councils, those with disabilities may need to make two trips or travel further to see both council’s services which may be particularly difficult for individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>As part of the responses to the Consultation some responses have mentioned the inconvenience of accessing two locations for services, however none specifically linked this to a concern around accessing services with a disability. There were mentions of access to parking generally.</p> <p>In the proposed new locations there are no Changing place facilities in Dover or Gravesham and there are no accessible toilets in Tonbridge for customers to use.</p>

	<p>Both Tonbridge and Gravesend Libraries already have a hearing loop to assist those customers with hearing impairments.</p> <p>In Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesham Districts there are over 8k people claiming disability allowance at all ages. (Department of Work and Pensions data Feb 2020)</p> <p>Wider feedback received in the consultation raised that the hubs may be overwhelming for those who are neurodiverse in terms of sound and space as well as for those that may find navigating unfamiliar locations difficult if they have a disability.</p>
<p>g) Mitigating Actions for Disability</p>	<p>As both services are being relocated within a mile, we think the impact of this proposal on those with a disability is low.</p> <p>To mitigate any potential impact we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all locations are accessible both internally and externally. A feasibility study will be undertaken to understand the accessibility requirements of each building. • Look at the feasibility of introducing hearing loops, changing places and accessible toilets to proposed locations that do not already have these. • Consideration for ramped access and automatic doors for those locations that do not already have them. • We will engage with Gravesham and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils and partners to understand any impact on the move to the Libraries on this group. Consider offering space to these services to allow services to continue to be delivered under one roof. • Raise awareness of accessible transport routes to alternative locations • Consideration of disabled parking at alternative locations for Gravesend which is centrally located in the middle of town (Tonbridge already has parking, Dover is close by to original location)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore utilising the facilities at the community hubs to help these service users to access services virtually with support from staff. • Explore the possibility of confidential and quieter spaces for those who may be overwhelmed in noisy and large spaces. <p>The impact of needing to make multiple trips to now access partner agency services is difficult to mitigate. It is balanced by the ability to access a wider range of KCC services. The opportunity to invite partner agencies into the new co-location sites – even if part time – can be explored with other organisations including district councils to mitigate this impact.</p> <p>Co-location</p> <p>The co-location of services has been carefully planned and feasibility studies have assessed the appropriateness of co-location from a service and DDA compliance perspective. Further design work will continue to develop the co-location proposals.</p> <p>Service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services within the location.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigations detailed are considered to be justified.</p>
<p>h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability</p>	<p>Pascale Blackburn-Clarke</p>
<p>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</p>	
<p>e) Are there negative impacts for Sex? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>No</p> <p>Currently there are no perceived impacts for Sex as there is no proposed reduction of KCC service provision, it will be delivered in another location close by in Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesend.</p> <p>No other potential impacts were raised as part of the consultation.</p> <p>Since significantly more women (81%) than men (18%) responded to the consultation it could be argued that the changes proposed disproportionately impact women. However, none of the responses in relation to Gateways received at consultation specifically raised concerns regarding sex.</p>

f) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex	One comment was raised in relation to offering Women's support services within hubs to support with domestic abuse and the safety of those accessing the service, we will work with partners to ensure any safety considerations are taken into account, if a partner wishes to deliver in a Gateway location.
g) Mitigating Actions for Sex	
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex	
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
e) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No, currently there are no perceived impacts for gender identity / transgender as there is no proposed reduction of KCC service provision, it will be delivered in another location close by in Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesend. 99% of consultation respondents indicated that they consider themselves to be the same gender as assigned at birth. No potential impacts were raised as part of the consultation.
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender	
g) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race	
e) Are there negative impacts for Race? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	Yes
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Race	Potential confusion for service users where a change of location is proposed due to language barriers as it is possible that Gateway users will have English as a second language. According to the latest school census data (2021-2022), Gravesham has the highest proportion for Asian / British Asian families (particularly Indian families) and the second highest proportion of Black / Black British families and White Eastern European families in Kent. This is also evident in the language profiles where Gravesend has the highest proportion of children in schools in Kent who speak Polish, Lithuanian, Romanian, Panjabi, and Yoruba. A breakdown of ethnicities within the overall consultation response is included above. As the latest available census data at this level is 2011, the school census has been used as a proxy for languages spoken in the wider community and households.

	<p>Whilst we have identified groups that are more likely to be impacted by these changes, there are no statistical evidence of a higher proportion of these groups identified within Tonbridge and Malling. It is however possible that Ukrainians who are here as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme may be using our services.</p> <p>Users with English as a second language may find co-location of services more difficult as signposting may be more of a challenge for them in a new environment.</p> <p>No additional impacts were raised as part of the consultation.</p>
<p>g) Mitigating Actions for Race</p>	<p>Effective communications to be deployed before any changes made to locations. Consideration of information being made available in alternative languages or through local community groups.</p> <p>Co-location The co-location of services has been carefully planned and service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services that use English as a second language.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigations detailed are considered to be justified.</p>
<p>h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Race</p>	<p>Pascale Blackburn-Clarke</p>
<p>24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief</p>	
<p>e) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>However, no potential impacts were raised as part of the consultation carried out from January to March 2023.</p>
<p>f) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief</p>	<p>Potential confusion for service users where a change of location is proposed due to language barriers as Gateway users may have English as a second language. There is likely to be a relationship between use of English as a second language and religion, for certain religious groups.</p>
<p>g) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief</p>	<p>The co-location of services has been carefully planned and service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that</p>

	<p>are accessing different services that use English as a second language.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigations detailed are considered to be justified.</p>
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Religion and belief	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation	
e) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation	<p>We currently don't have a breakdown of those accessing services within Gateway. There is no proposed removal of service provision, it will be delivered in another location close by in Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesend.</p> <p>The general response to the consultation when broken down by Sexual Orientation was as follows:</p> <p>Sexual Orientation Heterosexual/Straight 89.7% Bi/Bisexual 2% Gay man 0.4% Gay woman/Lesbian 1.3% Prefer not to say 6% Other 0.6%</p> <p>No impacts were raised as part of the consultation responses received.</p>
g) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation	
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Sexual Orientation	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	
e) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>At the time of consultation 3% of respondents indicated that they were pregnant.</p> <p>Within Gravesham, Dover and Tonbridge where we are proposing to relocate away from our District and Borough Councils partners, those experiencing pregnancy and/or maternity may find it more challenging to visit two locations to access both council's services and may find longer walking distances more difficult.</p>

g) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>The proposed relocations of services in Dover, Gravesham and Tonbridge are all within 1 mile.</p> <p>We will raise awareness of transport routes to alternative locations and district and borough council services.</p> <p>Explore utilising the facilities at the community hubs to help these service users to access services virtually with support from staff.</p> <p>No additional impacts were raised during or as a result of the consultation carried out from January to March 2023</p>
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Pregnancy and Maternity	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships	
e) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	<p>No. Currently there are no perceived impacts for marriage and civil partnership as there is no proposed removal of service provision, it will be delivered in another location close by in Dover, Tonbridge and Gravesend.</p> <p>No additional impacts were raised during or as a result of the consultation carried out from January to March 2023</p>
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
g) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities	
e) Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
f) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities	Carers may need to carry out two trips to request support from District and Borough partners. As part of the responses to the Consultation some responses have mentioned the inconvenience of accessing two locations for services.
g) Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities	We will raise awareness of transport routes to alternative locations and district and borough council services.

	Explore utilising the facilities at the community hubs to help these service users to access services virtually with support from staff.
h) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer's Responsibilities	Pascale Blackburn-Clarke

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template V2

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):	Kent Community Programme- AHDCLDMH – <i>Kent Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities</i>
2. Directorate	ASCH
3. Responsible Service/Division	AHDCLDMH

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.	Tracy Haith
5. Head of Service Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.	Barbara Rickman
6. Director of Service Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.	Jim Beale

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Tick if Yes	Activity Type
Yes	Service Change – <i>operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.</i>
Yes	Service Redesign – <i>restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working</i>
No TBC	Project/Programme – <i>includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.</i>
No	Commissioning/Procurement – <i>means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.</i>
No	Strategy /Policy – <i>includes review, refresh or creating a new document</i>
	Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme also seeks to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, in line with our Net Zero 2030 approach, although this is a secondary factor given the overarching financial context. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example, benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in the proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses.

Our Equality Impact Assessment is based on data and evidence about Kent's communities and our service users. We have further developed our assessment based on feedback from the public consultation as this is an important means by which we can test our understanding. Feedback received directly into the consultation was proportionately lower than for the other services. However direct action was taken to engage specifically with users at sites proposed for closure. Service representatives had conversations directly with users at Northgate Hub and at Folkestone Sports Centre to discuss the proposals and get their feedback.

Summary of Proposals

The table below sets out the extent of proposals with notes provided to explain changes that have impacted the proposals since the consultation.

The changes proposed are common across four of the five options, with the fifth being the 'Do Nothing' option.

District	Current Buildings	Number of Service Users (Rounded to Nearest 5)	Proposal	Nearest Alternative	Distance Miles
Ashford	Ashford Gateway Plus		Remain		

Canterbury	Swalecliffe Day Opportunities Centre	45	Remain		
	Northgate Hub*	30	Remain		
	Thanington Hub		Remain		
Dartford	TRACS, Essex Road (not as accessible as local alternatives)	30 across Dartford	Leave as part of business-as-usual activity	Yew Tree Centre	1.5
	Yew Tree Centre		Remain		
	The Dartford Bridge Learning and Resource Campus		Leave as part of business-as-usual activity	Dartford Library, Central Park Gardens (existing co-location)	3.0
Dover	Walmer Centre	40	Leave as part of business-as-usual activity	Relocation to Dover Discovery Centre (new co-location)	8.0
Folkestone & Hythe	Bridge Resource Centre	50	Remain		
	Phase II		Remain		
	Folkestone Sports Centre		Leave	Broadmeadow** Phase II	1 14
Gravesham	Milton Haig (including Freeways cookery skills setting)	45 (15 within cookery skills)	Remain		
Maidstone	Maidstone House	25	Remain		
Sevenoaks	Eden Centre	5	Remain		
	Sevenoaks Leisure Centre	15	Leave	Relocate to Sevenoaks Library* (new co-location)	0.1
	Swanley Link	10	Remain		
Swale	Crawford House	30	Remain		
	Faversham Library	10	Remain		
Thanet	Minnis Day Centre	45	Remain		
	Hartsdown Leisure Centre		Leave	Minnis Day Centre Cliftonville library (new co-location)	3.4 2.7 3.5

Tonbridge & Malling	Tonbridge Community Service	25	Remain		
Tunbridge Wells	Tonbridge Community Service. (There are no permanent buildings in this district so services users access services in Tonbridge)	15	See above	Outreach from Cranbrook Library (KCP has sought to identify opportunities for access to a wider network of KCC locations for outreach activity particularly in locations where there is no current provision)	

* Within the consultation document it was proposed that the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service would vacate Northgate Hub & the Prince of Wales Centre in Canterbury and consolidate their offer at Thanington. However, the landlord has been clear that they will not allow additional space within the Thanington location that would be required to facilitate the consolidation. Therefore, the plans to come out of the Northgate Hub are not achievable from a practical perspective. As such the removal of the service from the Northgate Hub is not a part of any option.

** Another proposal in the consultation was to remove the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service from the Folkestone Sports Centre and use alternative provision at the Phase 2 Centre (14 miles away). Since the consultation the service has been offered space in another location (Broadmeadow) which is an Adult Short Stay centre within the Adults service. This centre is 1 mile away from the Folkestone Sports Centre and so represents a far better alternative option for service users. They will still have the option to utilise space at Phase 2, however they will have increased choice by also having access to space at Broadmeadow. This does not impact the financial position of the Programme.

***Under Business As Usual (BAU) provision, a change detailed in the consultation model has already been enacted regarding the Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. In the consultation we proposed moving the service out of the Sevenoaks Leisure Centre and into the Sevenoaks Library (across the car park). Shortly after the close of the consultation the management company of the Sevenoaks Leisure Centre went into administration and so to protect the service delivery, the service moved to the library. This is considered a BAU move. The consultation document explained that some changes may need to be made on a BAU basis, for example as a result of the expiry of a lease or a health and safety issue arising.

Service

Community Services currently provide opportunities throughout the day Monday- Friday, across the twelve districts in Kent. The service supports around 400 adults with a learning disability with varying complexities of assessed support needs, including personal care, to ensure that it meets the needs of the people who use our services, and their parents/carers in Kent. The number of adults supported by the service is subject to change based on demand and capacity within the external market.

Our current service provision consists of both building based and community outreach support designed around meeting the wellbeing and socialisation needs of people we support as well as meeting their carers needs for time away from their caring responsibilities.

Some of the buildings are currently rented and some are Council owned. Through our proposals we are seeking to close some building-based services and to broaden our outreach offer by co-locating into existing Council owned properties wherever possible, reducing our carbon footprint and maximising opportunities for the people we support to be present within their local communities and community buildings. As well as potentially enabling us to increase the outreach activities on offer by making more informal use of a wider network of KCC buildings (responding to the specific needs of our service users), it has the potential to also bring them closer to those that need them, reducing travel and transport time and costs for individuals and carers.

The service is available to all persons who meet the criteria for inclusion which includes a referral from a social work practitioner.

The Services complete a dependency score for everyone. This will highlight support required for each activity ensuring outcomes are achievable. Everyone accessing our services will have a bespoke individual outcome focused support plan – (their “About Me “document).

Our services work with multi partnership agencies to prevent, delay, reduce the need for referral into these more costly services, supporting people to live in their family units for longer and thriving as citizens of their local environments supported by those that know them best.

Physical fitness and fresh air are important for everyone and can have a positive impact on psychological as well as physical well-being. Across the County we therefore actively seek and provide opportunities to maintain and increase physical fitness tailoring the sessions to meet peoples assessed needs and current levels of fitness. Examples include Walking groups, cycling, swimming, sailing, gardening, bowling, boxing subject to local community resources available Other activities provided typically include:

- Art and craft sessions, including painting, clay modelling, sewing, flower pressing.
- Cooking, for developing life skills and just for fun.
- Community outings utilising local services such as cinemas, cafes, pubs, shops. Libraries, church groups.

Current service users:

Below is a summary of what we know about our current service users compared to the latest census data available (2021) where appropriate unless otherwise stated.

Age (from 2020 Mid-Year Population Estimates)

Age	Percentage	Kent Average
0-24	0%	28.6%
25-34	16%	12.2%
35-49	33%	18.9%
50-59	28%	14.1%
60-64	11%	5.9%
65-74	9%	10.8%
75-84	4%	6.9%
85+	0%	2.7%

Young people are not represented by the adults service, they remain supported by children’s services which are unaffected by this proposal. Older people are also slightly underrepresented. It is well known that health outcomes

and life expectancy is significantly lower for people with a learning disability. A significant majority of individuals that benefit from our services are 25-59 years.

Disability – As the service is targeted at those with a disability, 100% of our service users have a disability.

Sex– We have an equal split of male and female service users, this is in line with the Kent average

Ethnicity –92% of our service users are from a white background, this is roughly in line with the Kent average of 89%

Marital Status – 93% of service users are single, this group is overrepresented as only 31% in the general Kent population are single with 49% being married and 20% being separated married or divorced.

Religion – No religion (45%), not stated (26%), Christian (19%), Other (10%). This also shows a difference to Kent averages with 60% of the population identifying as Christian and only 28% identifying as not having a religion.

Sexual Orientation Heterosexual / Straight (29%), Not Known (71%).

Pregnancy / Maternity – No data available

Gender identity/transgender – No data is available

We work to the six 'C's' model of inclusion coherence, commitment, consciousness, courage, connectedness, and co-production – to ensure we advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not ,promoting fairness for all Our services foster good relations with others promoting inclusion for those who have protected characteristics and the proposed changes will continue to support us in eliminating discrimination by enabling us to continue working in a person centred way

Consultation

10% of consultees answering use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 9% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 71% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 25% respectively).

8 comments were received relating to the consultation proposal to close services at Northgate Hub. As detailed above this is no longer part of these proposals.

10 comments were received regarding the proposed removal of the service from Folkestone Sports Centre which focused on the impact on users that losing the service would have and the difficulties in travelling the distance to an alternative location. These same concerns were expressed by service users engaged directly by service reps during the consultation.

10 comments were received regarding the proposal to move the service from Sevenoaks Leisure Centre to Sevenoaks Library. Responses referred to the current ease of access to the leisure centre and the facilities offered at the centre for disabled people in terms of fitness and socialisation with others, which some service users rely on. Some consultees noted that moving to the library would not be a problem as service users are already familiar with the library building. The Sevenoaks Library location is less than 400 metres from the current Leisure Centre and is equally accessible via public transport and served by the same large car park.

10 comments were received regarding the proposal to remove service from Hartsdown Leisure Centre. These included comments about the benefit of the facilities on offer at Hartsdown, including free parking, and comments disagreeing

with the proposal to access services at a co-located site as accessing different sites with different resources can make for good variation and a good day for service users.

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to the proposals to co-locate this service) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	14%

The feedback around impact on mental health should be considered in equalities terms and is addressed in the relevant section below.

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the equality analysis undertaken prior to consultation. 18% of consultees provided feedback in answer to the question in the consultation about equalities, although not all of these consultees will have considered the EqIA for community day services. 15% of consultees who answered the question about equalities referred to the effect on the disabled, those with learning difficulties or special educational needs. 10% of consultees raised concerns about whether buildings would be inclusive and accessible (including for the disabled). 5% raised concerns about the effect of the proposal on the vulnerable. In comments in answer to the question on equalities, which were mostly not comments specifically about this service, consultees raised concerns including about the accessibility of services, the potential impacts on mental and overall health on isolation from or difficult in accessing services, and difficulties in accessing digital services (including for some disabled people).

Justification

The impacts outlined above are considered to be proportionate when considered against the positive impacts, mitigations and the overall policy and financial context within which the Council operates. Therefore any impacts are considered to be both limited and justifiable.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost-effective way? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users,</i>	Yes

<i>staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.</i>	
13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with? <i>Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.</i>	
<p>Engagement took place prior to consultation with stakeholders including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCC members and senior officers - Service delivery team members as part of the design process - District authorities - External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue - Adult Day Services Senior Management Team - Other services in the Kent Community Programme <p>A full 10-week consultation process provided residents, community groups and all interested parties with an opportunity to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation period there was over 150 hours of pro-active engagement continuing with public sector and other partners.</p> <p>These key stakeholders were identified to include in the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community day service staff - Community day service users - Community day service Parents & Carers - Other Councils who have placed people in our services <p>There was initially a low response rate to the consultation in relation to this service and so, as detailed in the consultation Report, additional engagement was undertaken where possible with service users. This engagement was led by the service team at Folkestone Sports Centre by discussing the proposals with users of the 'Front Room' at Folkestone Sports Centre.</p>	
14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	No
15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App <i>Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.</i>	<p>The Learning Disabilities (a learning disability) Mortality review- Annual Report for 2018: HQIP (2019): https://www.hqip.org.uk/resource/the-learning-disabilities-mortality-review-annual-report-2018/ https://nationalautistictaskforce.org.uk/the-autism-dividend-reaping-the-rewards-of-better-investment/ Access to primary and community health-care services for people 16 years and over with intellectual disabilities: a mapping and targeted systematic review https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553283/ Framing Kents Future Appendix A - Framing Kents Future.pdf</p>

NICE Guidance Arranging services for people with a learning disability and behaviour that challenges
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng93>
 Data Intelligence Report Kent Learning Disabilities
[Microsoft Word - Data Intelligence Final Report \(kentcht.nhs.uk\)](https://www.kent.nhs.uk)
 Valuing People Now 2001
[Microsoft Word - VPN SUMMARY REPORT FINAL 3.12.10 v7.doc \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk)
 Valuing People Now 2 2009
[Improving outcomes for people with learning disabilities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
 The Carer's Strategy
[2022-01-06 Kent Adult Carers Strategy 2022 to 2027.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.sharepoint.com)
 PANSI Report (includes the number of residents in each District with a disability).

<https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/media/16810/lgbtqplus-support-toolkit.pdf>

Section C – Impact

16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.

Service users/clients <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes	Residents/Communities/Citizens <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
Staff/Volunteers <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes		

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? Answer: Yes/No Yes

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

Sevenoaks

In Sevenoaks, as other residents also use the Library, we will be expanding the potential for those with protected characteristics due to disability to be working alongside those without as well as having dedicated space that can be developed and adapted to offer further facilities enabling us to broaden our activity offer in Sevenoaks.

Co-locating into Sevenoaks library means the service would benefit from greater accessibility to all the activities and resources the library has to offer as they will access the location with the support of our service staff whilst still enabling people to continue to use the Leisure Centre for physical fitness activities as any other local citizen might do.

In relation to Swanley, following the recent closures due to the recent COVID pandemic we have seen a decrease in service users returning to this facility, therefore opening possible bookable space to the general public will allow the council to reach a wider audience, whilst continuing to foster good relationships and work alongside those with protected characteristics related to disability.

Thanet and Tunbridge Wells

Further bookable outreach spaces in Thanet will enable greater flexibility when planning community outings and activities. As other community citizens also use the libraries, we will be expanding the potential for those with protected characteristics due to disability to be working alongside those without as well as having dedicated space that can be developed and adapted to offer further facilities enabling us to broaden our activity offer in Thanet.

The ability to book outreach space will provide a positive benefit for service users, particularly to relieve service pressure in Tunbridge Wells where, based on the PANSI report, we have a need in Tunbridge Wells with around 7% of the population identified as an adult with a learning disability and this is reflected in Kent County Councils database, MOSAIC, with around 7% of adults using the community services for adults with a learning disability residing in this area. This lack of physical space may have contributed to a decline in use of our services in this area over the past 3 years and may mean that people with an assessed need and their carers are not receiving the support that they are entitled to. The ability to book flexible outreach space across KCC buildings is an opportunity for our service as it will continue to foster good relationships and encourage working alongside those with protected characteristics related to disability.

By continuing to increase our co-locations with other services at Sevenoaks Library and Cliftonville Library and exploring opportunities to use a wider network of outreach locations, will be expanding the potential for good relationships with those with protected characteristics due to disability and to be working alongside those without.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

<p>i) Are there negative impacts for age? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>j) Details of Negative Impacts for Age</p>	<p>As explained above, the demographic breakdown of our service users is predominantly those aged 25 – 64 with the largest cohort being 35-49. Changes to our service therefore disproportionately impact those within these age groups.</p> <p>The proposed exit from or closure of some buildings including those in Folkestone and Hythe, Sevenoaks and Thanet may create travel and transport issues for existing people who use our services and their parents/carers as well as for our social work practitioners where travel forms part of an assessed need, increasing both travel time and cost which may lead to a decrease in attendance and our ability to provide services. This would potentially affect our older generation of users whose parents/carers would be that much older themselves and more likely to have mobility/health issues that prevent them being able to transport the people that use our services independently leading to unmet assessed needs of those with age related protected characteristics.</p> <p>‘Age’ specifically was not raised within the consultation feedback. However, the disproportionate impact on those in the age brackets set out above has been considered.</p>

k) Mitigating Actions for age

Across all proposed exit from or closure of buildings

We will seek to mitigate any negative impacts by providing wider opportunities through development of our outreach offer keeping people well informed of proposed changes and enable real involvement in managing the change using positive risk management assessments and techniques to support people through each step of the proposed change where this need is identified additionally. This means making the most of emerging opportunities to provide support within flexible outreach spaces across the rest of the KCC community estate.

Folkestone and Hythe

We will seek to continue to use Folkestone Sports centre for ad hoc community activities (as opposed to a service centre) through development of our outreach offer, increasing service led physical activity opportunities where demand requires.

Having agreed that we can have space in Broadmeadow Registered Care Centre means we are only 1 mile away from our current location and mitigates the need for travel to the Bridge Resource Centre or Phase 2 where age would impact more on people's ability to travel. Given the short distance the impact is not considered significant in regards to age.

Sevenoaks

By collocating into Sevenoaks library, from the leisure Centre which is on the same site, people will already be familiar with this site reducing potential anxieties regarding change and it will also not affect travel plans for the people who use the service or their carers with age related protected characteristics. Due to circumstances beyond our control (the leisure centre going into liquidation) these changes have already been introduced to enable our services to have a building base to operate from. People that attend our service in Sevenoaks, their families and carers were advised of this and opportunities to feedback on the proposals given.

Being able to book outreach space at Swanley Gateway may enable us to provide a meet and greet service as well as a drop in space for when accessing community resources in the local area, bringing the service back to this rural location where there are few or no external providers.

Thanet

During the Covid pandemic and on reopening we moved into new premises at Minnis Bay as our main building hub so people and their families, carers are already familiar with

	<p>travel to and attendance at this site. Hartsdown Leisure Centre is currently used for Outreach work only and we will be able to continue to use the Sports centre for community activities as members of the public.</p> <p>As the nearest alternative is 3 miles away, we recognise that the travel implications related to Thanet may be higher, although these must be balanced against the overall policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates. We acknowledge that this travel distance may have greater adverse impacts for older users of this service.</p> <p>Co-location The co-location of services has been carefully planned and feasibility studies have assessed the appropriateness of co-location from a service and accessibility perspective. Further design work will continue to develop the co-location proposals.</p> <p>Service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services within the location.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigation detailed, are considered to be justified.</p>
<p>l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Age</p>	<p>Barbara Rickman - Assistant Director, Service Provision</p>
<p>20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</p>	
<p>i) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>j) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</p>	<p>As explained above, the nature of our service means that all of our service users have the protected characteristic of disability. Those service users will therefore be impacted more by our proposed changes, than people who do not have that protected characteristic.</p> <p>All consultation feedback concerning this service is therefore relevant to this protected characteristic.</p> <p>The proposed exit from or closure of some buildings including those in Folkestone and Hythe, Sevenoaks and Thanet may cause distress for individuals who have become familiar with the site and may suffer increased anxiety, a decrease in mental health and wellbeing and some may find that behaviours alter to include physical and verbal aggression where previously there were none. Travel to</p>

alternative locations may be difficult for service users as a result of their particular disabilities (and may also be more difficult for parents/carers with disabilities) given accessibility of public transport services and other challenges resulting from having to travel further, for example in wheelchairs. This is likely to be most challenging in Thanet where the nearest alternative permanent location is 3 miles away.

Folkestone and Hythe

Folkestone Sports Centre currently provides a dedicated 'drop in' space where people using the sports facilities can break for refreshment and lunch breaks. Service users are currently able to access many of the sports facilities including use of the toning tables and sensory environment we may find exiting this site has cost implications for the service if wishing to continue to use the facilities, as well as an impact on people's physical fitness, health and wellbeing.

Sevenoaks

The people who currently access Sevenoaks Leisure Centre all benefit from using the dedicated training kitchen and being supported to cook their lunch daily. The library does not currently offer this provision. Service users are currently able to access many of the sports facilities and exiting this site may have cost implications for the service if wishing to continue to use the facilities, as well as an impact on people's physical fitness, health and wellbeing.

The allocated space in the library has not been designed to meet the needs of people with a learning disability and as such has limited resources to meet the needs of the people who currently use this service.

Thanet

Hartsdown Leisure Centre currently provides a dedicated space where local people can meet prior to undertaking community activities elsewhere, including using the on-site sports facilities, as well as break for refreshment and lunch times. Where an individual is responsible for travelling independently and funding their own transport this may have cost implications for them which may lead to a decrease in attendance numbers and further to unmet care and support needs.

Co-locations

Co-location as a principle may provide some difficulties for service users as they will be required to access service

	<p>support from new, unfamiliar locations in settings that include people accessing a range of different services. This could provide an overwhelming atmosphere.</p>
<p>k) Mitigating Actions for Disability</p>	<p>Across all proposed exit from or closure of buildings</p> <p>We seek to mitigate any negative impacts by providing wider opportunities through development of our outreach offer keeping people well informed of proposed changes and enable real involvement in managing the change using positive risk management assessments and techniques to support people through each step of the proposed change where this need is identified additionally. This means making the most of emerging opportunities to provide support within flexible outreach spaces across the rest of the KCC community estate in order to foster good relationships and encourage working alongside those with protected characteristics related to disability.</p> <p>Folkestone and Hythe</p> <p>We will seek to continue to use Folkestone Sports centre for ad hoc community activities (as opposed to a service centre) through development of our outreach offer, increasing service led physical activity opportunities where demand requires.</p> <p>Use of dedicated space in Broadmeadow Adult short stay service as an alternative service centre will also provide new opportunities for the people we support in a Kent County Council owned property thereby meeting the objectives of the Project and enabling those with protected characteristics by disability to engage and work alongside the people being supported in the adult short stay centre promoting inclusion and wider opportunities for friendships to form.</p> <p>Sevenoaks</p> <p>By collocating into Sevenoaks library from the Leisure Centre which is on the same site people will already be familiar with this site reducing potential anxieties regarding change and it will also not affect travel plans for the people who use the service or their careers.</p> <p>The area dedicated for our service is however due to be upgraded to provide a kitchen and changing place as part of the co-location proposal with the Library service.</p> <p>The consultation feedback included comments that supported the co-location at Sevenoaks Library given it is a familiar location for many service users.</p> <p>Being able to book outreach space at Swanley Gateway may enable us to provide a meet and greet service as well as a</p>

	<p>drop in space for when accessing community resources in the local area, bringing the service back to this rural location where there are few or no external providers</p> <p>Thanet</p> <p>During the Covid pandemic and on reopening we moved into new premises at Minnis Bay as our main building hub so people and their families, carers are already familiar with travel to and attendance at this site. Hartsdown Leisure Centre is currently used for Outreach work only and we will be able to continue to use the Sports centre for community activities on an outreach basis as members of the public.</p> <p>We will seek to continue to use the Sports centre for community activities as ad hoc activities (as opposed to a service centre), particularly to promote physical fitness and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>We will provide wider opportunities through development of our outreach offer increasing service led physical activity opportunities where demand requires. This will mean utilising flexible outreach space across the rest of the KCC community estate to make the most of opportunities to foster good relationships and encourage working alongside those with protected characteristics related to disability.</p> <p>Co-location</p> <p>The co-location of services has been carefully planned and feasibility studies have assessed the appropriateness of co-location from a service and accessibility perspective. Further design work will continue to develop the co-location proposals.</p> <p>Service staff will be able to support service users in new situations and other service staff can be provided guidance to better signpost and support individuals that are accessing different services within the location.</p> <p>Given the overall policy and financial context in which KCC is currently operating, the impacts outlined above, with the mitigations detailed, are considered to be justified.</p>
<p>l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability</p>	<p>Barbara Rickman - Assistant Director, Service Provision</p>
<p>21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex</p>	
<p>i) Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>No impacts have been identified.</p> <p>As explained above, the demographic breakdown shows that our current service users are equally split between male and female. We therefore do not currently have any</p>

	reason to suspect that either group would be disproportionately affected by the changes as a result of their sex.
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex	
k) Mitigating Actions for Sex	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex	
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
i) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	<p>No impacts have been identified.</p> <p>Information relating to Gender identity/ Transgender is identified within individual referrals, support plans and discussed within reviews, this supports the services in generating the necessary support.</p>
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender	
k) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender	
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race	
i) Are there negative impacts for Race? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	<p>No impacts have been identified. The data above sets out that users of the Community Day service are slightly less likely to be self-declared BME than non-users. However, no comments from the consultation raised any concerns around impacts based on race.</p> <p>Information relating to Race is identified within individual referrals, support plans and discussed within reviews, this supports the services in generating the necessary support.</p>
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Race	
k) Mitigating Actions for Race	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Race	
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief	
i) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	<p>No impacts have been identified. The data above sets out that users of the Community Day service are slightly less likely to identify as Christian than non-users. However, no comments from the consultation raised any concerns around impacts based on religion or belief.</p> <p>Information relating to Religion and Belief is identified within individual referrals, support plans and discussed within reviews, this supports the services in generating the necessary support.</p>
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief	
k) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief	
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation	

i) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No impacts have been identified. Information relating to Sexual Orientation is identified within individual referrals, support plans and discussed within reviews, this supports the services in generating the necessary support.
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation	
k) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation	
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	
i) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No impacts have been identified.
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity	
k) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity	
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships	
i) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No impacts have been identified. Information relating to Marriage and Civil Partnerships is identified within individual referrals, support plans and discussed within reviews, this supports the services in generating the necessary support.
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
k) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
l) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities	
i) Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	Yes
j) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities	The proposed exit from or closure of buildings in Folkestone and Hythe, Sevenoaks and Thanet may create travel and transport issues for the parents/carers of people who use our services as well as for our social work practitioners where travel forms part of an assessed need, increasing both travel time and cost which may lead to a decrease in attendance and our ability to provide services. This would potentially affect our older generation of users whose parents/carers would be much that much older themselves and have mobility/health issues that prevent them being able to transport the people that use our services independently leading to unmet assessed needs of those with carer related protected characteristics. It is also likely that parents/carers are more likely to be women and so this should also be considered carefully in relation to parents/carers.
k) Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities	Folkestone and Hythe

	<p>People who use our services will still be able to access the Sports Centre as members of the public.</p> <p>Use of dedicated space in Broadmeadow Adult short stay service will enable us to continue with our outreach offer in the local vicinity, where caring responsibilities would impact on people’s ability to support travel requirements thus reducing or preventing the need for travel to the Bridge Resource Centre or Phase 2, which are further away.</p> <p>Sevenoaks</p> <p>By collocating into Sevenoaks library, from the leisure Centre which is on the same site, people will already be familiar with this site reducing potential anxieties regarding change and it will also not affect travel requirements for people with carers responsibilities as the site is equally accessible via public transport and service by the same car par as the Library is approximately 400 metres away from the Leisure Centre.</p> <p>Being able to book outreach space at Swanley Gateway may enable us to provide a meet and greet service as well as a drop in space for when accessing community resources in the local area, bringing the service back to this rural location where there are few or no external providers</p> <p>Thanet</p> <p>During the Covid pandemic and on reopening we moved into new premises at Minnis Bay as our main building hub so people and their families, carers are already familiar with travel to and attendance at this site. Hartsdown Leisure Centre is currently used for Outreach work only and we will be able to continue to use the Sports centre for community activities on an outreach basis as members of the public.</p> <p>As the nearest alternative is 3 miles away, we recognise that the travel implications related to Thanet may be higher, although these must be balanced against the overall policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates.</p>
<p>I) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer’s Responsibilities</p>	<p>Barbara Rickman - Assistant Director, Service Provision</p>

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):

Kent Communities Programme - Community Learning and Skills (CLS)/Adult Education

2. Directorate

Children Young People and Education (CYPE)

3. Responsible Service/Division

Community Learning and Skills

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA

Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.

Mark Easton

5. Head of Service

Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.

Jude Farrell

6. Director of Service

Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.

CYPE Director – Christine McInnes

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Service Change – operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people. Answer Yes/No

Yes

Service Redesign – restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working. Answer Yes/No

No

Project/Programme – includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects. Answer Yes/No

Yes

Commissioning/Procurement – means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement. Answer Yes/No

No

Strategy /Policy – includes review, refresh or creating a new document. Answer Yes/No

No

Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

N/A

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme also seeks to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, in line with our Net Zero 2030 approach, although this is a secondary factor given the overarching financial context. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses.

Summary of Proposals

Five separate options are being presented for Member consideration and decision.

Within four of the five options there is only one change relevant to CLS. Whilst all KCC freehold or leasehold properties that CLS occupy have been considered under this consultation, Broadstairs Memorial Hall & Pottery is the only venue that we are proposing to close, the proposal is to move services to Broadstairs Library as part of a co-location with the Library service and Adult Day Services (Adult Day Services as outreach provision only). The fifth option is a 'Do Nothing' option and therefore does not propose any closures or changes to the CLS service at all.

This EqlA considers the impacts on residents of the service moving location in four of the five options and the impact of the co-location with the library service. It takes into account the relevant feedback from the consultation in relation to the CLS service and the general equalities-related consultation feedback.

Community Learning and Skills

Community Learning and Skills (CLS) is one of the services included in this programme. CLS delivers Education and Training opportunities to residents age 16+ in all 12 districts across Kent.

CLS service priorities are:

- Maximise access to community learning for adults, bringing new opportunities and improving lives, whatever people's circumstances
- Promote social renewal by bringing local communities together to experience the joy of learning and the pride that comes with achievement
- Maximise the impact of adult and community learning on the social and economic well-being of individuals, families, and communities
- Focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate, including in rural areas and people on low incomes with low skills
- Collect fee income from people who can afford to pay and use where possible to extend provision to those who cannot
- Widen participation and transform people's destinies by supporting progression relevant to personal circumstances

Over the past 5 years CLS has realised 5554 enrolments (data from Management Information System and represents course enrolments, not unique individuals) at Broadstairs Adult Education, of which:

Gender: 80% of service users are female.

Gender	%
Female	80%
Male	20%

(The population of Thanet by gender is 51.9% are female and 49% are male – data is publicly available and published nationally or available via Thanet District Council)

Gender by Age: Most service users are 60+ years, of which most are female

Age	Gender	
	Female	Male
0-19	0.00%	0.05%
20-39	5.87%	2.30%
40-59	18.10%	3.96%
60+	56.14%	13.58%

Gender by Disability: 4% of service users with a self-declared disability are female

Gender	Disability		
	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Known
Female	19%	4%	57%
Male	4%	1%	15%

Age: 69.7% of service users are 60+ in age

Age	%
0-19	0.1%
20-39	8.2%
40-59	22.1%
60+	69.7%

(20.1% of the population of Thanet are aged 0 – 17

23.7% of the population of Thanet are aged 18 - 64

56.2% of the population of Thanet are aged 65+)

Age by Disability: 3.29% of service users aged 60+ have a self-declared disability

Age	Disability		
	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Known
0-19	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%
20-39	0.40%	0.38%	7.40%
40-59	3.20%	1.08%	17.77%
60+	19.84	3.29%	46.58%

Age by Ethnicity: 5.22% of service users are 60+ in age with self-declared BME status

Age	Ethnicity		
	BME	Non BME	Not Known
0-19	0.02%	0.04%	0.00%
20-39	1.15%	6.90%	0.13%
40-59	2.90%	18.96%	0.20%
60+	5.22%	64.33%	0.16%

Disability: 5% of service users have self-declared a disability

Disability	%
Not Disabled	23%
Disabled	5%
Not Known	72%

(23.4% residents in Thanet have a health problem or disability which limits their day-to-day activities - data is publicly available and published nationally or available via Thanet District Council)

Disability by Ethnicity: 0.54% of self-declared BME service users are self-declared disabled

Ethnicity	Disability		
	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Known
BME	1.42%	0.54%	7.33%
Non BME	21.9%	4.20%	64.08%
Not Known	0.07%	0.02%	0.40%

Ethnicity: 9.3% of service users are self-declared BME, which is above the BME population of Kent (6.33%), but broadly in line with the proportion of those in Thanet who are BME (see below)

Ethnicity	%
BME	9.3%
Non BME	90.2%
Not Known	0.5%

(Ethnicity data for Thanet: 9.6% of the population of Thanet are BME - data is publicly available and published nationally or available via Thanet District Council)

Source Data:

- <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/facts-and-figures-about-Kent/equality-and-diversity-data#tab-3,4>
- CLS Management Information Unit-E.

Affected local groups

No local groups have been identified as being affected by this proposal.

Consultation

17% of consultees answering use Adult Education services. 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 72% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 25% respectively).

In terms of the response to the move from Broadstairs Memorial Hall and Pottery, 51 comments were received during the consultation. The breakdown of responses is included here:

	Number of consultee answering	% of consultees answering
Alternative venue not suitable - size/capacity / storage, i.e., pottery, fitness/exercise classes in a library?	31	61%
Use frequently / essential / needed / lifeline / do not close / lost without it / loss of access to services	17	33%
Detrimental impact of mental health / socialisation / development / counselling service much needed	13	25%
Current building in walking distance / accessible / won't be able to walk/access alternatives	8	16%
Services would suffer if moved elsewhere /insufficient provision / oversubscribed / would current services be available	8	16%
Detrimental effect on community / much needed by community	7	14%
Current building provides good facilities / parking / nice environment / not available at alternatives	3	6%

In considering these responses it is clear that concerns relating to suitability (31) and accessibility (17, 8, 8, 3) of the alternative location are common themes. There are specific equalities considerations raised by the responses on mental health and wellbeing (13) and in terms of disabilities and age when considering the comments on additional walking distance (8). A further theme which was apparent from consultees' comments was concern about the suitability of the library building for providing all of the services which are currently available at the Broadstairs site. Some of these classes may be attended by service users for reasons connected with a protected characteristic. These factors are considered in the following sections.

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to the Broadstairs Library proposals) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%

Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels

14%

The feedback around impact on accessibility and mental health should be considered in equalities terms and is addressed in the relevant section below.

Impacts

Given that the only proposed site closure within four of the five options for CLS (Broadstairs Adult Education Centre) will relocate to a venue 0.1 mile (2-minute walking) from the existing venue, no significant impacts have been identified in terms of service access. The assessment is because there will be no change to existing access, public transport infrastructure, personal travel arrangements, parking, geography/topography as set out in section 18 of this document.

Justification

It is considered that the impacts summarised above and detailed in the sections below are justified when considered alongside the suggested mitigations and the overall policy and financial framework within which the Council currently operates.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No

Yes – see above.

10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost-effective way? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? Answer: Yes/No

Where available, statistical data for Thanet has been used to compare service user statistics.

For protected characteristics data that is not collected by CLS, publicly available statistics have been used for this EqIA:

Pregnancy/maternity Leave: In 2020, 1,383 births were registered in Thanet.

Gender reassignment: No publicly available for Thanet could be identified.

Sexual Orientation: An estimated 3.1% of the UK population aged 16 years and over identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) in 2020, an increase from 2.7% in 2019 and almost double the percentage from 2014 (1.6%).

Married or in a civil partnership: No publicly available for Thanet could be identified. However, in 2020, there were 7,566 opposite-sex civil partnerships formed in England and Wales, of which 7,208 were registered in England and 358 were registered in Wales; this is the first year that civil partnerships between opposite-sex couples have been reported. There were 785 civil partnerships formed between same-sex couples in England and Wales in 2020, of which 745 were registered in England and 40 were registered in Wales; this is the lowest number recorded for England since the introduction of civil partnerships in 2005.

Religion or belief:

UK		Thanet
All categories:		
Christian	59.38%	61.44%
Buddhist	0.45%	0.37%
Hindu	1.52%	0.48%
Jewish	0.49%	0.20%
Muslim	5.02%	0.92%
Sikh	0.79%	0.07%
Other religion	0.43%	0.51%
No religion	24.74%	28.60%

Religion not stated	7.18%	7.41%
12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders?		
<i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
<i>Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.</i>		
Yes		
13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?		
<i>Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.</i>		
Engagement took place prior to consultation with stakeholders including:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCC members and senior officers - Service delivery team members as part of the design process - District authorities - External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue - Community Learning and Skills Senior Management Team - Other services in the Kent Community Programme 		
A full 10-week consultation process provided residents, community groups and all interested parties with an opportunity to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation period there was over 150 hours of pro-active engagement continuing with public sector and other partners.		
These key stakeholders have been identified to include in the consultation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Learning and Skills staff members - Community Learning and Skills customers - General public as part of wider KCC consultation - Other users of proposed building(s) identified for co-location 		
14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
Yes – pre-consultation version of this EqIA.		
15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?		
<i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
Yes		
Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App		
<i>Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.</i>		
Section C – Impact		
16. Who may be impacted by the activity? <i>Select all that apply.</i>		
Service users/clients - <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
Yes		
Residents/Communities/Citizens - <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
Yes		
Staff/Volunteers - <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>		
Yes		

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Answer: Yes/No

No

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

In four of the five options the proposal is to move services out of Broadstairs Memorial Hall and Pottery and relocate to a co-located site at Broadstairs Library. The current building from which Community Learning and Skills deliver services in Broadstairs and which is proposed to be closed is in a poor state of repair, which does not provide a quality working or learning environment or experience. The proposed relocation from Broadstairs Adult Education Centre, 14 St Peter's Rd, Broadstairs CT10 2JW to Broadstairs Library, The Broadway, Broadstairs CT10 2BS, will in that sense provide more appropriate working and learning environments for all protected characteristics given the building condition of the current service location. Whilst there were comments received from consultees around the suitability of the proposed co-location, not all of these raised equalities impacts. Where CLS has previously co-located with other services (KCC or other) e.g., Tonbridge Wells (Amelia Scott), Ashford Gateway, Sheppey Gateway, co-location has been a positive experience as customers can access multiple services in the same location.

The proximity of the proposed relocation site to the existing site is approximately 0.1 mile (2-minute walking distance), therefore, there will be no significant impact on access to the services on offer for any protected characteristic groups given the following:

- Access to services via public transport will remain unchanged
- Personal transport (car, walking, cycling etc) will remain unchanged
- Parking facilities will remain unchanged
- No increase to personal financial expenditure will be incurred
- Access to the site will remain unchanged as there is no change to topography and geographic location

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

m) Are there negative impacts for Age? *Answer: Yes/No*

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes.

n) Details of Negative Impacts for Age

Potential for co-location to provide a confusing environment for more elderly users. The service specific data for Broadstairs demonstrates a high percentage of over 60's access Adult Education classes who may be particularly affected by this. It is important to note that residents over 60 are also more likely to experience accessibility issues/overlap with disabilities which was raised as a specific comment within our consultation response and is considered in the relevant section below. We also recognise that the service offer may not be identical at the new site and that it is possible that not every class will be possible to accommodate in the way it is currently.

It is considered that with the mitigating action listed below, that the impact is justified when balanced against the potential benefits to service users and the overall requirement to reduce costs given the financial and policy context set out in Securing Kent's Future.

o) Mitigating Actions for Age

Part of the co-location model enables staff to support users across service areas and increase signposting to the correct service area, whilst also potentially identifying additional needs that could be met. At Broadstairs Library this will mean ensuring that Library staff are empowered to answer questions and provide support to signpost service users that require it.

The lead in time for changes being made to facilitate service users within the Broadstairs Library allows for plenty of time to orient users to the new location.

To enable the proposed co-location at Broadstairs Library a feasibility study was undertaken which demonstrated that the required floorspace and facilities are available so that the service can be safely and appropriately accommodated within the Library building. The creation of additional class space is proposed and this is contained within the implementation plans for the Programme subject to the decision.

The accessibility of the library building is considered to be good from a disability standpoint, given that it is a KCC public building with universal access to all residents.

p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Age

Mark Easton – Head of Resource

20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

m) Are there negative impacts for Disability? *Answer: Yes/No*
(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes.

n) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Service users with disabilities may find it difficult to move around buildings that contain more than one service. Users with mobility issues may find tight spaces difficult to navigate in a building containing multiple services and equipment to support other service delivery. As above, the service specific data for Broadstairs demonstrates the highest percentage of people with disabilities that access CLS services are also over 60's.

The consultation response particularly raised walking distance and accessibility of the new location as well as the suitability of the library building site for the classes which are offered at the current site, some of which may be attended by some service users because of particular characteristics, including disability.

It is considered that with the mitigating action listed below, that the impact is justified when balanced against the potential benefits to service users and the overall requirement to reduce costs given the financial and policy context set out in Securing Kent's Future.

o) Mitigating Actions for Disability

To enable the proposed co-location at Broadstairs Library a feasibility study was undertaken which demonstrated that the required floorspace and facilities are available so that the service can be safely and appropriately accommodated within the Library building. The creation of additional class space is proposed and this is contained within the implementation plans for the Programme subject to the decision.

Further design stages will incorporate detailed accessibility analysis of spaces and facilities required to safely accommodate customers with accessibility requirements. It is likely that additional classroom space will be provided on the ground floor, but these will be subject to standard accessibility requirements.

Given the walking distance is 2 minutes between venues this is not considered a significant impact when balanced against the requirement for the Council to reduce costs.

p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability

Mark Easton – Head of Resource

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

m) Are there negative impacts for Sex? *Answer: Yes/No*
(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes

n) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex

It should be acknowledged that given 80% of service users are female and 61% of consultee responses raised concerns about the new location (granted only a small number of these concerns referenced equalities considerations). It can therefore be argued that the changes will disproportionately impact women.

o) Mitigating Actions for Sex

Despite the above it is not considered that the proposed move of service, or proposed co-location of the service will have a significant negative impact on women, particularly when balanced against the overall financial and policy context within which the Council currently operates.

p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex

Mark Easton – Head of Resource

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

a) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

No

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

c) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

m) Are there negative impacts for Race? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

No

n) Details of Negative Impacts for Race

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

o) Mitigating Actions for Race

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Race

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

a) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

No

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

c) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief

Not applicable (as above in section 18)

25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
a) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
c) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
a) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).
Yes
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Service users who are pregnant or who are accompanied by young children may find it difficult to move around buildings that contain more than one service. Users may find tight spaces difficult to navigate in a building containing multiple services and equipment to support other service delivery.
It is also possible that pregnant woman or users with young children may be disproportionately impacted by any additional walking distance (although others may have a shorter walking distance) to the new location.
c) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
To enable the proposed co-location at Broadstairs Library a feasibility study was undertaken which demonstrate that the required floorspace and facilities are available so that the service can be safely and appropriately accommodated within the Library building for all users. The creation of additional class space on the ground floor is proposed, and this is contained within the implementation plans for the Programme subject to the decision.
Given the walking distance is 2 minutes between venues this is not considered a significant impact when balanced against the requirement for the Council to reduce costs.
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity
Mark Easton – Head of Resource
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships
a) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).
No
b) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
c) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not applicable (as above in section 18)
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer’s responsibilities
a) Are there negative impacts for Carer’s responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes

b) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities

Service users that are with carer's responsibilities may find it difficult to move around buildings that contain more than one service. Users may find tight spaces difficult to navigate in a building containing multiple services and equipment to support other service delivery.

It is also possible that pregnant woman may be disproportionately impacted by any additional walking distance (although others may have a shorter walking distance) to the new location.

c) Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities

To enable the proposed co-location at Broadstairs Library a feasibility study was undertaken which demonstrate that the required floorspace and facilities are available so that the service can be safely and appropriately accommodated within the Library building for all users. The creation of additional class space on the ground floor is proposed, and this is contained within the implementation plans for the Programme subject to the decision.

Given the walking distance is 2 minutes between venues this is not considered a significant impact when balanced against the requirement for the Council to reduce costs.

d) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer's Responsibilities

Mark Easton – Head of Resource

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):	Family Hubs
2. Directorate	Children, Young People and Education
3. Responsible Service/Division	Integrated Children's Services

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.	Danielle Day Programme Manager – Family Hubs
5. Head of Service Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.	Carolann James Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services
6. Director of Service Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.	Carolann James Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?	
Tick if Yes	Activity Type
Yes	Service Change – operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.
Yes	Service Redesign – restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working
Yes	Project/Programme – includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.
Yes	Commissioning/Procurement – means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.
Yes	Strategy /Policy – includes review, refresh or creating a new document
	Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

Case for change – Family Hub programme

The Department for Education (DfE) has selected Kent County Council (KCC) as a Family Hub and Start for Life Transformation Authority. Family Hubs are about bringing together and integrating support services for children, young people, and families so that they are easier for people to access. These will include, but not be limited to, KCC services:

- Children’s Centres
- Youth Hubs and community youth provision
- Health Visiting Services

And partnerships, including:

- Community-based midwifery care
- Community organisations

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children’s services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses. This EQIA has been updated following feedback from that consultation and is also based on data and evidence about Kent’s communities and our service users.

The Consultation

The Kent Communities proposal has been subject to a public consultation. The consultation launched on 17th January 2023 and lasted for ten weeks, closing on 26 March 2023. The consultation set out the rationale for the proposals, the methodology which was used to produce the draft proposal and the details of the Kent Communities model (i.e. which buildings we were proposing to close and which we were proposing to retain). These proposals have now moved on following the consultation and the options are detailed below.

Rationale

The rationale for the KCP is clear. The Programme contributes to meeting the revenue savings as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). To reduce risks across our corporate estate and capital programme, the KCP reduces the Council’s capital liability to the maintenance costs of such a large physical estate.

Methodology

The consultation explained the methodology underpinning the Kent Communities proposal, including how we used the Needs Framework as a starting point. The Need Framework used a wide range of data and indicators that when combined profile the different level of need for services within our communities. The data included service-held metrics, such as user figures for each service.

In developing the alternative range of options for member consideration the impact on equalities has been taken into account. As explained above options 3 and 4 have been developed acknowledging the difficulties that accessing alternative locations via public transport network would pose for residents, including those for which protected characteristics would make that a greater challenge.

Consultation Response

Whilst the consultation response indicated a majority of respondents did not support a reduction in buildings, there was very little constructive challenge to the methodology. The consultation set out alternative methods for reviewing the estate and why they had been discounted. However, many respondents did outline concerns relating to the accessibility of public transport within their feedback. As such, the accessibility of public transport has been reviewed and has been the driving factor in developing the additional options for member consideration.

50% of consultees answering use Children's Centres. 46% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Children's Centres. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (92% and 93% respectively).

16% of consultees answering use Youth Hubs. 15% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Youth Hubs. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (83% and 86% respectively).

41% of consultees answering use the Health Visiting Service. 35% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Health Visiting Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (82% and 82% respectively).

11% of consultees answering use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. 12% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use the Children and Young People's Counselling Service. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 68% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (22% and 27% respectively).

10% of consultees answering use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. 9% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (65% and 71% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 25% respectively).

17% of consultees answering use Adult Education services. 13% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Community Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (72% and 72% respectively) but a significant proportion use both in person and online services (18% and 23% respectively).

20% of consultees answering use Gateways. 17% of consultees answering indicated other household members currently use Gateways. The majority of both groups use services in person at a building (66% and 65% respectively) but a significant proportion reported that they use both in person and online services (21% and 24% respectively).

64% of all residents taking part in the consultation and answering indicated they use at least one of the services under consultation.

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the equality analysis conducted in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed respondents' comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the table below. It should be noted that 18% of consultees provided a comment at this question.

Of those answering, the most common considerations put forward are ensuring the services are accessible / walking distance / access via suitable public transport (24%).

Those commenting raise concerns for how the proposals will affect specific groups of residents who are disabled / have learning difficulties / SEN (15%), young people / children / families (15%) and low-income households (11%).

Summary of KCP Options

Option 1 in the table above represents a model that involves a greater reduction in the physical estate than was consulted on.

Option 2 is the consultation model.

Options 3 and 4 are amended versions of Option 2, which respond to differing degrees to the consultation feedback. In seeking to respond appropriately to the consultation feedback a more detailed review of the public transport network has informed the options set out in the paper. In the consultation modelling was provided to assess the accessibility of the revised building network on public transport considering a 30-minute travel time. Greater analysis of timetable data was used to develop the post-consultation options that respond to feedback from residents. This analysis considered both an extended travel time of 35 minutes and the regularity of the service by applying a criteria that there should be at least one service per hour over the nine-hour period 8am to 5pm which reflects the general service offering timeframe. It is appreciated that regularity of service is an important additional factor for residents above merely the journey time itself.

Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.

Option 4 represents a model which goes further in the response to the consultation feedback and brings 10 buildings back into the model (the 2 buildings from option 3 and another 8). This option rules out the closure of a buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.

Option 5 is a 'Do Nothing' option and retains the current building network and service delivery model.

Impact

Within the consultation a significant majority of responses were received by women (81%) compared to men (18%). This is particularly relevant to the Family Hub Model proposal and there is a likely cross over here with any impacts on age. The EqIA relating to the Family Hub Model sets out the consideration of equality impacts on age. However, it is acknowledged that women may bear the responsibility for childcare more commonly and as such the characteristics of sex and age require careful consideration.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics as women and children would be required to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs and additional equipment.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on women and children required to travel further to access services.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

14% of respondents answered that they consider themselves disabled. In particular the Gateway service, Adult Education Service and Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities service consider this characteristic in their EqlAs. There is a similar overlap with age within these considerations as well, given the higher likelihood of residents over the age of 60 to experience disabilities.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics the elderly and disabled would be required to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult for them.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on the elderly and disabled required to travel further to access services.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

7.4% of respondents might use English as a second language, which would likely indicate there could be impacts based on race, ethnicity or religious belief. This is a consideration particularly for service users requiring the Family Hub service, our Gateway service and our Adult Education Service. These residents may struggle more to understand and navigate the relocation of services from one place to another.

Option 1 in the proposals would carry greater impacts for these characteristics as there would likely be a greater number of site closures, requiring residents to access services from different locations.

Options 2, 3 and 4 would present different levels of impact, the significance decreasing between options 2 and 3 and then decreasing further between options 3 and 4 as more of the existing locations are retained. This would reduce the impact on the residents who use English as a second language as the number of instances of closures decreases between each option.

Option 5 is a Do Nothing option and as such would not impact the equalities of these groups.

Generally during the consultation the main theme of feedback emerging was the inaccessibility of some services, particularly using the public transport network, and the impact that has on the health and wellbeing of residents, including their mental health. The options set out for decision respond to this feedback by retaining identified centres depending on whether greater weight is given to the analysis of public transport accessibility.

The consultation response focused on the impact that the proposed changes might have particularly on children with learning difficulties/SEN (15% of respondents), young people, children and families (15%) mental health issues/isolation (10%), discrimination based on age/gender (6%), effect on the elderly (5%), ethnic minorities/English as a second language/LGBTQ (4%).

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to any one service) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%

Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	14%

Women were far more likely to oppose co-location of services than men and respondents with children under 10 were far more likely to disagree with co-location than those without:

Male resident	26%
Female resident	49%
Resident with no children	22%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	61%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	68%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	54%

Similarly, women were far more likely to oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings than men and respondents with children under 10 were far more likely to disagree with reducing the number of buildings than residents without children:

Male resident (161)	34%
Female resident (760)	62%
Resident with children / expecting children (653)	67%
Resident with no children (173)	30%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	83%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	82%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	70%

There is a similar difference in the level of disagreement with proposals to have fewer buildings based on age with residents aged 25-24 most likely to disagree:

Resident aged 25-34 (220)	81%
Resident aged 35-49 (301)	66%
Resident aged 50-64 (210)	41%
Resident aged 65 & over (152)	27%

When read alongside the fact that (as shown above) levels of objection rise for those residents with children compared to those without, it is a reasonable assumption to make that this increased level of objection is reflects the fact that the majority of reduction is being across the Children's Centre network.

Summary of Family Hub proposals

Since the inception of Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) in 2015, Kent County Council (KCC) has been able to maintain a comprehensive Open Access offer, including both universal and targeted provision, delivered through both KCC staff and settings and commissioned services across the 0-19 years age group.

In September 2020, a DfE and DHSC review of outcomes for babies and the first 1001 days of a child's life, led by Andrea Leadsom MP, developed a framework for local authorities to work with health partners and develop a Start for Life concept within a 0-19 years (25 years with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities [SEND]) Family Hub model.

Existing Open Access services work closely with partners including Public Health services such as Health Visiting provision through co-location. This close working partnership provides a strong foundation for Kent to deliver to the ambitions of the national review and develop a whole family approach to services as set out in the proposals for the Family Hub model.

We know that reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing requires organisations to closely work together. Through the Family Hub programme KCC seeks to deliver the best outcomes through a hybrid of universal and targeted support for children, young people, and their families, delivering services identified through the Family Hub guidance.

Our goals for the Family Hub model are to:

- Offer support to all parents and carers: from the early stages of preparing to become a parent, and throughout the child's first two years
- Reduce inequalities in health, wellbeing, and education
- Create a supported, capable workforce who work in partnership with families
- Ensure families are listened to
- Provide targeted, timely and accessible support to those in greatest need
- Support teenagers as they move into adulthood
- Provide services based on evidence and need

The model proposes some changes to the existing Open Access services and those available from Public Health:

- Services to families with children up to the age of 8yrs to support the physical, social, and emotional development, communication, and language development in young children.
- Support to young people aged 8-19 (25 for young people with SEND) around emotional health and wellbeing, educational and social development and pathways into adulthood.
- Support for parents with parenting, emotional wellbeing, understanding child development and managing family conflict.
- Online support for new parents
- Increased parenting support from antenatal to 2 years
- Perinatal Mental Health services for parents
- Infant feeding support
- Home learning support

The DfE Family Hub model must fit with the new KCC's 'Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy'. The model of delivery must proactively evidence the best value for money in decision making. Sustainability and best value is at the core of all decisions and the design of the Family Hub model to ensure services can be delivered beyond the life of the Family Hub grant and elements will work within KCC's new budgetary requirements.

This EQIA relates to the policy change for Kent, to rebase our existing Open Access & Youth inhouse services to deliver provision with the Family Hub model for children and families 0 to 19 (25 with SEND).

Family Hub services will be delivered through a number of different avenues. This will include face-to-face, a digital offer and community outreach. Our Family Hubs will offer a one stop shop for advice and information for children and their families.

The Family Hub approach delivers joined up whole family services across each district. This model will be used to strengthen our arrangements with co-located partners and ensure a consistent model for Start for Life partnership across the county.

The model will strengthen the arrangements with Health Visiting and community midwifery to ensure through co-location and system arrangements, we work towards a family only needing to tell their story once.

Every Family Hub provision will be managed across a district, and staff will continue to work across the range of Family Hub sites ensuring that each location is appropriate for the services at that site. For example, appropriate spaces for adolescents, ensuring that services on school sites maintain safeguarding requirements, and ensuring support services to families, such as debt and welfare advice or parental conflict are delivered in an appropriate space maintaining privacy of participants.

Family Hub sites in each district will deliver a range of Start for Life and partnership services and work with the voluntary and community sector to provide access to a wide range of services. There will be services for 0-19 years in Family Hub sites for example, this may include activities for older children after school in a building that currently offers mainly 0-11 years services.

The increase of community outreach may mean more services within community settings where there are needs identified. The outreach offer will be developed in partnership with district and community partners and will vary according to the local partnerships and buildings available.

There will be more peer to peer community support and the introduction of Family coaches to offer additional community support.

Summary of Options for Consideration

Following the public consultation and review of the responses received, a range of options have been put forward for consideration, they are detailed below with a summary of the main equality impacts:

Option 1: Do not implement the Family Hub model.

This would mean the Local Authority would not meet the minimum expectations set by the DfE in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding, with the associated risk of losing c£11m of additional funding. If this were to occur, we would not be able to offer any additionality to our existing services.

If option 1 is chosen then there will be no change to the service that KCC already delivers, therefore there will be no impact on persons with different protected characteristics.

Option 2: Deliver the mandatory enhanced services set out by the DfE.

We will continue to deliver a 0-19 (25 SEND) Family Hub model offering enhanced services only in the DfE mandated areas set out in the following Key Decisions taken by the Cabinet Members for Integrated Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Public Health;

Infant Feeding 23/00076

Parenting Support - 23/00081

Home Learning Environment - 23/00082

Perinatal Mental Health - 23/00075

Families will still have access to Family Hub staff members who will be able to offer them assistance in finding the help that they need to access local services through signposting only.

If option 2 is chosen then there will be a positive impact to under twos and their parents, as well as pregnancy and maternity services, as we will be enhancing the existing service as outlined above, however there will be a negative impact on persons with different protected characteristics aged over 2 as these services will focus solely on the first 1001 days.

Option 3: Wider Family Hub offer

We will continue to deliver a 0-19 (25 SEND) Family Hub model offering enhanced services in the DfE mandated areas set out in the following Key Decisions taken by the Cabinet Members for Integrated Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Public Health.

Infant Feeding 23/00076
Parenting Support - 23/00081
Home Learning Environment - 23/00082
Perinatal Mental Health - 23/00075

In addition, we will offer the 7 services we consulted on below that service users felt they might most use. These will be delivered by Family Hub practitioners, through enhanced and additional modes of delivery, in each district throughout the county. We have used the consultation data and the design of the Family Hub model to allow residents to access services in a way that suits their preferences and fits in with their lifestyle wherever possible; for example, some consultees clearly prefer face to face groups and appointments, however some consultees stated they find it easier to access information online and talk to experts virtually. Young people had a very clear voice in our consultation and had a clear preference for face to face delivery which we have taken into account.

- Education for parents on child development
- Activities for children aged 0-5
- Activities for older children and young people
- Information, advice and guidance about support services for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Information and signposting to mental health services (children and adults)
- Support for parents/carers of adolescents (teenagers)
- Online safety for children and young people

Option 4: Deliver a Family Hub model through a developed Family Hub Network. Our preferred option.

KCC will continue to deliver a 0-19 (25 SEND) Family Hub Model offering enhanced services in the DfE mandated areas set out in Key Decisions taken by the Cabinet Members for Integrated Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Public Health;

Infant Feeding 23/00076
Parenting Support - 23/00081
Home Learning Environment - 23/00082
Perinatal Mental Health - 23/00075

As outlined in option 3, the following services will be delivered by Family Hub practitioners:

- Education for parents on child development
- Activities for children aged 0-5
- Activities for older children and young people
- Information, advice and guidance about support services for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Information and signposting to mental health services (children and adults)
- Support for parents/carers of adolescents (teenagers)
- Online safety for children and young people

In addition to these, we will also ensure that the remaining 4 services (which are outlined below) are accessible through the Family Hub model. The additional specialist services in option 4 will be delivered through partnership working with the VCS and partners (the Family Hub Network). We have outlined each service and the changes applicable for each option in appendix 3.

- Support for young people with substance misuse (alcohol/drugs)
- Domestic abuse support

- Debt and welfare advice
- Signposting to information to support separating and separated parents

Option 4 is our preferred option because we recognise the importance of all 11 services following feedback from the consultation and within our Family Hub model, we are in a position to offer, in an innovative and consistent way across the county, to deliver joined up services to meet the need of children, young people and families.

If option 3 or 4 is chosen there will be positive impacts generally in terms of additional services including digital and outreach offers. The negative impacts to persons with different protected characteristics as the services outlined in option 3 and 4 are identified in further detail in this equalities impact assessment.

Summary and justification

We consider that the different options for member consideration will have differing levels of impact on groups with protected characteristics. Whilst there will be some positive impacts, particularly relating to the enhancement of services, the co-location of services and the Family Hub model, it is important to address the negative impacts on groups with protected characteristics and how the impacts are mitigated, within our options for implementation presented in the separate Family Hub paper.

Broadly, the mitigations against the impacts on women and young children (outlined above) include the retention of more Children Centre locations within options 3 and 4 as well as a more expansive outreach offer (details to be co-designed with partners) that will (in part) focus on providing services to areas that are not necessarily covered by the Family Hub network – for instance those in more rural areas. The Family Hub Model itself brings together a wider range of services for families and as such while some service users may be required to travel further, they may now only need to make a single journey to access a range of required provision. The Family Hub model will enable parents to have improved information and access to services antenatally with an increasing focus on developing services for fathers-to-be. Feedback from fathers has already identified suggestions such as an improved digital offer with more information on support such as finances and learning more about child development.

Within the umbrella of the Family Hub model there is a collation of a wider range of services for families to improve knowledge and access to them. Although some service users may be required to travel further, the model proposes that families may should be able to access a wider range of required service from sites where services are delivered.

Children and young people with SEND needs should be able to navigate through services and local support through the collation of services in the model. There may be some differences in location of services. Some services may move to co-located spaces and outreach services are reliant on local community buildings therefore physical access to some services may be impacted by community building limitations.

Users with English as a second language may find the proposal for co-location of services which will require re-location of provision more difficult to navigate initially, therefore service teams will be supported in communicating changes early and effectively to these users. Teams will receive guidance in helping signpost and support these residents effectively.

The consultation did not have enough responses from some service user groups with protected characteristics. We recognise this as an area of continued development and will ensure within our future work to proactively reach groups to engage the service user voice from these seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics. These include, gender identity, religion and belief, wider family carers, and sexual orientation and those with differing ethnicities.

The Family Hub model seeks to reduce inequalities and increase engagement of seldom heard groups through ongoing participation activity such as Parent Carer panels. We are committed to ensuring services are developed to reach such communities therefore we will have targeted participation activity to develop the Family Hub model of services.

The Family Hub model will be developing more peer to peer groups with those with lived experience, for example SEND peer group support and fathers groups. This will be supported by staff to help set up and support through use of spaces within the Family Hub sites.

All of these mitigation activities do need to be balanced against our Best Value Duty set out in securing Kent's Future and considered alongside the reality that the fewer buildings we close within this programme, the greater pressure is put on the rest of the Council finances, which will inevitably impact statutory service provision.

Across the programme the impacts are considered to be limited through the mitigation outlined and justified given the wider policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

<p>9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No</p>	Yes
<p>10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? Answer: Yes/No</p>	Yes
<p>11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? Answer: Yes/No</p>	Yes
<p>12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders? Answer: Yes/No Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.</p>	Yes

13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.

Kent Communities Programme
Engagement in a general context took place with stakeholders prior to the launch of the public consultation including:

- KCC members and senior officers
- Service delivery team members and property team members as part of the design process
- District authorities
- External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue

A full 10-week consultation process was carried out between 17 January 2023 and 26 March 2023, this gave an opportunity to residents, community groups and all interested parties to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation there were face to face sessions held, and over 150 hours of proactive engagement with residents, service users (including groups of users in locations proposed for closure), partners, staff, unions and members.

Of the 1,776 consultees who took part, 18% of consultees provided a response to our specific question about the equality analyses we had conducted prior to, and published together with, our consultation. A more detailed breakdown of the responses within the consultation and the equalities considerations is given above.

Family Hub Model

Initial informal engagement took place between January and August 2022 with staff, service users and partners to explore the themes and aims of a Family Hub model in Kent, to inform the proposals and the application for the Family Hub Grant Funding in August 2022. Colleagues from across Integrated Children’s Services have spoken with KCC staff, health visitor and midwifery colleagues, other public health colleagues, commissioners and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

Work to develop the involvement of parent/carers started in March 2023 and includes feedback on the branding for Kent Family Hubs, Fathers’ feedback on Start for Life services and feedback on the Service user Journey in the two test sites. Further consultation and engagement has taken place and will continue with internal and external stakeholders as well as children, young people, and parent/carer representatives throughout the duration of this programme of transformation.

The Family Hub services consultation launched on 19 July 2023 and closed on the on 13 September. The consultation aimed to gather the views of the community about the proposed changes to Children’s Centre services, youth provision, Health Visiting and community-based midwifery care. Families were able to complete an online or physical form, send emails, written communication and young people also sent videos, voice notes and flip charts from youth sessions. The feedback from the consultation has informed the equalities impact analysis and modelling.

Family Hub Consultation feedback

The table below shows the profile of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire only, we do not have the profile data for those who responded through alternative methods. The proportion who left this question blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included.

RESPONDING AS...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
As a Kent resident	849	94%
On behalf of a friend or relative	24	3%
A resident from somewhere else	14	2%
Other	6	1%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	15	2%

Our consultation data shows women were the majority of consultees and are far more likely to be impacted by the implementation of the Family Hub model as they form the majority of parent/carer service users as supported by our user reach data.

GENDER	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Male	97	11%
Female	597	66%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	214	24%

The consultation shows that those most consultees were between the age of 25 - 49 and that supports our KCC user data for those that utilise our services with 67% having children and 4% expecting a child. 22% of consultee's left this question blank.

As outlined below we have recognised Age as an impacted group.

AGE	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
0-15	14	2%
16-24	28	3%
25-34	198	22%
35-49	315	35%
50-59	62	7%
60-64	23	3%
65-74	23	2%
75-84	15	2%
85 & over	3	0.3%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	227	25%

PRESENCE OF CHILDREN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
I/we have children	612	67%
I am / we are expecting a child	40	4%
I/we do not have children	54	6%
Prefer not to answer / left blank	202	22%

AGES OF CHILDREN	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
0-1 year old	194	21%
2-5 years old	240	26%
6-10 years olds	196	22%
11-19 years old	238	26%
I/we do not have children	54	6%
Do not have children / prefer not to answer / left blank	255	28%

Profile of professionals / organisation consultees responding

263 consultees took part in the consultation questionnaire specifically responding as professionals/organisations.

The KCC team also received feedback via email / letters. All emails / letters / videos received were passed to Lake Market Research to review and include comments in this report accordingly.

The table below shows the profile of consultees responding specifically to the consultation questionnaire. The proportion who left this question blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included. The main responses that were identified came from KCC staff, charities and the voluntary/community sector and educational establishments.

RESPONDING AS...	Number of consultees answering	% of consultees answering
Kent County Council staff	77	29%
Community-based midwifery staff	2	1%
Health Visiting staff	17	6%
Staff from another health-related organisation	11	4%
As a representative of a local community group or residents' association	2	1%
On behalf of an educational establishment, such as a school, college or early years setting	40	15%
On behalf of a Parish / Town / Borough / District Council in an official capacity	15	6%
As a Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor	16	6%
As a Kent business owner or representative	2	1%
On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)	53	20%
On behalf of a faith group	2	1%
Other	26	20%

14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App <i>Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that</i>	

can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.

Section C – Impact

16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.

Service users/clients <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes	Residents/Communities/Citizens <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes
Staff/Volunteers <i>Answer: Yes/No</i>	Yes		

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

The principles and framework for the Family Hub model, as set out by central government, are built based on improving user experience by:

1. increasing access to a wider range of services in one place or under one shared umbrella;
2. improving the interface and join-up between services; and
3. having services working within practice that builds on strengths and puts children, young people and their families at the centre of services.

Examples of positive impacts that we anticipate from the Family Hub model for service users with protected characteristics include:

- Increased information and support for fathers-to-be and fathers
- Increased support for mothers and fathers on perinatal mental health and the different gender impacts
- Easy to navigate digital and virtual offers for pregnant parents on a wider range of services
- Increased support and access to Infant feeding support for mothers and father
- Increased information for parents/carers on child development at early years and adolescent development
- Targeted support for parents of children with additional needs or disabilities
- More peer to peer groups led by those with lived experience eg SEND peer support groups
- Targeted engagement of seldom heard groups to help further develop the Family Hub model eg for families where English is a second language.

Proposals for co-location with Libraries, Community Learning and Skills, Adult Social Care and Family Hub services. By co-locating with a mix or range of these services within the same buildings, we are presenting a more unified service offer to the resident, so it is easier for them to access a broader range of services from a single location.

Residents with some protected characteristics (sex, age, disability and race) are likely to be impacted more by the proposed building closures. These same groups are likely to also benefit from co-location of services, mindful of specific mitigations such as continued DDA compliance of co-location sites and the provision of private/confidential areas. Residents in these groups will be able to utilise these services will benefit from a reduced number of journeys by having KCC services located nearby/together. It is also possible that there will be benefits for residents from different races as co-location will help those whose first language is not English, as they will not need to navigate multiple locations.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age	
q) Are there negative impacts for age? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Age	<p>We recognise that parents (most likely to be aged between 25 and 39) may need to access services differently, may need to travel to alternative locations and may receive a different type of service than previously offered. Travel costs could become a barrier to access and, if this is the case, this could affect their ability to access the support required when needed.</p> <p>Additionally, as Family Hubs adopt a 0-19 (25 for SEND) whole family approach. The look and feel of buildings may change and individuals from different age groups will have to share space. This may affect how individuals feel about space that was previously designed for their age range and could impact on feelings of safety and belonging.</p> <p>We know that young people were concerned about this as part of their feedback on the Family Hub services consultation. 12% of consultees answering indicated there should be more youth services offered / more activities for young people / not less / separate spaces should be provided for them. In addition, promotional education/information material for young people that is displayed in buildings may not be suitable for different age ranges.</p> <p>Additionally, parents (most likely to be aged between 25 and 39) may also experience some negative impacts as a result of these changes to the look and feel of buildings, and the co-location of a wider range of services at Family Hubs. Parents of younger children may feel uncomfortable sharing spaces with teenagers, as the messaging around information, guidance and support literature is very different, also they may feel uncomfortable approaching a building with lots of young people gathered outside.</p> <p>63% of residents between the age of 25 and 34 disagree with the proposals to co-locate services together. Again, this is supported by the comments within the response that this opposition is likely due to the proposals to co-locate Children Centre services and accessibility is raised as a point of concern. This suggests that the impact on residents in this age bracket, particularly when combined with other protected characteristics like sex, disability, pregnancy and carer responsibilities, would be more significant.</p> <p>Again, considering that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p>
s) Mitigating Actions for age	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including age, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p>

	<p>We will address recognised barriers to accessing services, and how outreach and digital options of support could assist. In some cases, where required home visits or support through other community provision could be provided. Leaflets and posters will be displayed with consideration for the different service user groups in a Family Hub site to ensure the materials are age appropriate.</p> <p>As part of the co-design element of the model, users will be involved in the development of shared spaces to create a sense of ownership and belonging.</p> <p>We will ensure that timetabling and scheduling considers when children, young people and families are available based on their age range. Promotional material will also need to be age appropriate in delivery spaces.</p> <p>Parent Carer Panels will seek to engage and include a wide range of parents and carers at the different end of the age range to ensure inclusivity.</p> <p>The Family Hub outreach offer, proposed to be co-designed with partners within each district locality, allows services to be delivered within communities that would negate the need for residents to travel to reach services. It will also lead to service delivery to currently underserved communities that may miss out on service provision due to the historic nature of the Council’s building footprint.</p>
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t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age	Danielle Day Programme Manager – Family Hubs
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20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

q) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	Yes
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r) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability	<p>14% of consultation respondents indicated that they experience a disability and 61% of all respondents disagree with the proposals to have fewer buildings. The negative impacts on residents experiencing a disability do interplay with other protected characteristics as already outlined, particularly between age.</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals experiencing a disability to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult given their disability. Equally, navigating new locations and co-location sites may be more challenging as spaces are unfamiliar.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p> <p>48% of respondents disagree with the proposals to co-locate services together. The comments within the response suggest that this opposition is likely due to concerns around accessibility of services within co-located sites. This suggests that the impact on residents experiencing a disability would be more significant.</p>
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Again, considering that the number of building closures *decreases* progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.

Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.

The Census and the Council do not routinely collect data on the number of parents with a disability living in Kent, so it is difficult to assess the impact of the service change without a baseline.

Face to face services are not changing but they may be delivered from a different location, however some children and young people with disabilities could be more digitally excluded. For example, an enhanced digital offer may have limited applicability for children, young people, and adults with SEND, who are hard of hearing, or have visual impairment or dyslexia who may struggle to engage with virtual activities.

Changes to buildings, staffing, timings, and the addition of co-located staff may be a challenge for some children, young people and adults who struggle with change by the nature of their disability. New environments and the level of activity in those environments (as a result of co-location and integration of services) could also adversely affect those groups.

Outreach support will be in community buildings and this may impact accessibility dependant on physical building limitations.

We recognise that individuals with disabilities may need to access services differently, may need to travel to alternative locations and may receive a different type of service than previously offered. Travel could become a barrier to access and, if this is the case, this could affect their ability to access the support required when needed.

s) Mitigating Actions for Disability

Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including disability, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.

The co-location sites will be brought forward with the assistance of professional design and construction partners that will consider accessibility compliance and regulations as part of the design work and implementation of changes that facilitate the co-location. This will include provision of accessible facilities, DDA compliant buildings and relevant wayfinding provision.

We will undertake co-production of digital content to ensure it is functional and accessible for individuals with disabilities.

Our peer-to-peer support through Family Coaches and volunteers may assist individuals who feel that services don't understand the challenges they face. This should assist with greater engagement and the opportunity to offer support.

We will also undertake digital accessibility testing of web content to ensure accessibility across a wider spectrum of need e.g., sensory needs, deaf or hard of hearing, blind/poor vision, dyslexic, physical, neurodivergence, and mental health difficulties.

Venues will be checked for accessibility and advice will be given to partners and volunteers delivering services as part of the wider network on inclusive practice.

Family Hubs, by working as part of the SEND Transformation programme, will be able to improve and develop on our inclusion practice.

Our data driven approach, outreach offer and work through the Family Hub network will assist us able to identify the greatest need and respond appropriately.

There are four specific categories of need that have been identified through a data driven approach, as areas of focus within the Family Hub model that indicate a requirement for outreach provision within the community.

- I. Specific 'edge-of-town' communities falling outside the 20 min walking distance but high proportion of families and young people living in deprivation sitting outside the boundary and therefore '0-19' outreach activity is required.
- II. Larger communities 'whole towns' that see a high cumulative 0-19 deprivation linked need across the whole area but not enough to warrant a whole building.
- III. Rural communities with high levels of deprivation that may otherwise be cut off, with cumulative level of need requiring specific 0-19 outreach provision.
- IV. Areas where specific flexible detached youth provision is required – often 'in the field' and not linked to specific building locations.

Outreach work in the community within the Family Hub model will be delivered across both urban and rural localities informed by need/data. The Family Hub outreach offer, proposed to be co-designed with partners within each district locality, allows services to be delivered within communities that would negate the need for residents to travel to reach services which has been acknowledged as more challenging for residents that experience a disability.

Outreach is community-based provision, delivered in non-Family Hub sites such as libraries, community centres and may take place in family homes (for example Health Visitors attending a family home).

It will not be possible to have a Family Hub site in all localities, particularly in rural areas with low population density as outlined within the Kent Communities programme. Outreach delivery will improve reach to isolated and/or vulnerable communities through its flexibility/agility in responding to need and not being tied to a physical Family Hub site location.

In these cases, the Family Hub offer will be delivered from existing community buildings e.g., libraries, halls, as well through a digital offer with the nature of delivery varying and informed by local need and data. The need/type of outreach provision will be reviewed on a regular basis, examples include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners delivering targeted groups/activities from locations such as community halls and libraries. • Joint work with community and health partners. • Practitioners working alongside existing groups, such as toddler groups on a regular basis to extend the reach/access to information, advice, and guidance. • Practitioners holding drop-in surgeries/sessions to provide 1 to 1 signposting and support. • Practitioners holding targeted virtual groups and activities online. • The frequency of outreach and rural delivery will be determined by need and data, and in some cases may be weekly, monthly, or termly. <p>We will engage on barriers to accessing services, and how outreach and digital options of support could assist.</p>
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability	Danielle Day Programme Manager – Family Hubs
q) Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex	<p>As is seen in the response to the consultation, 62% of female respondents oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings compared to 34% of male respondents. Equally 69% of female respondents oppose the co-location of services, compared to 26% of male respondents. This is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for childcare and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children’s Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings).</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment. The crossover with other protected characteristics, including age, disability, pregnancy and those with carers responsibilities needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p> <p>Option 5 is the ‘Do Nothing’ option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.</p> <p>Given that females may be disproportionately affected as they are most likely to access our services currently, we need to recognise that women may be negatively impacted by the co-location of services. This is likely to be subjective to individuals lived experience and circumstance. For example, women mainly attend groups for support around domestic violence and may struggle to enter buildings where men are sharing the space.</p>

	Conversely, some fathers or male carers may be put off attending spaces that are mostly occupied by women.
s) Mitigating Actions for Sex	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including sex, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>Our workforce development programme will include training on inclusive practice, and we will work with the wider Family Hub network to consider how groups and services are scheduled and promoted appropriately.</p> <p>Our digital offer will allow us to target information, signposting, and online content suitable for the needs of service users based on their sex, and individual needs.</p> <p>Our parent carer panels, and co-design opportunities will also assist us in improving accessibility. We will seek feedback from all service users to improve and develop inclusive and safe delivery spaces that acknowledge how circumstances and lived experience can affect men and women’s view on space sharing.</p> <p>We will continue to work with partners to develop and improve our offer to fathers and male carers and ensure feedback from fathers and male carers is used to develop relevant and engaging services to support them in their parenting roles.</p>
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex	Danielle Day Programme Manager – Family Hubs
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
m) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No
n) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender	There are areas within service user groups with protected characteristics that we don’t have data from the consultation or from across the service. We recognise this as an area of development and will ensure within our future work to develop the model we will proactively reach groups to engage the service user voice from these seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics.
o) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	N/A
p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender	N/A
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race	
q) Are there negative impacts for Race? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	Yes

r) Details of Negative Impacts for Race

Residents that use English as a second language may find changes to service locations more difficult to accommodate. They may also find travel to alternative locations and navigating unfamiliar settings more challenging than native English speakers. This covers the entire extent of the Kent Communities Programme as the reduction in buildings means that residents will need to access services in alternative locations or in different ways (for example online).

Gravesham and Dartford districts both have a higher number of ethnic communities than the Kent Average:

District	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	Other ethnic group	White
Dartford	9.9%	10.5%	3.1%	2.0%	74.5%
Gravesham	11.2%	6.5%	2.6%	3.0%	76.6%
Kent Average	4.6%	2.7%	2.3%	1.3%	89.1%

Within these districts the co-production work to develop the access to services will ensure that feedback is representative of the communities living within the districts to help shape how we support communities.

People whose first language is not English are more likely to be digitally excluded and may not be able to access an enhanced digital offer. They may also not access traditional marketing activity for face to face, understand the changes being proposed or understand how to access or apply for support in the future. They may be more reliant on local access points. We also recognise that some ethnic minority families may not feel that the services are available to cater for their specific cultural needs.

s) Mitigating Actions for Race

Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including race, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations or to navigate unfamiliar settings way from their current local access points. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.

Co-production of digital content will be developed to be inclusive focusing on simple language that is either available to translate or is compatible with common translation software.

Targeted provision will be informed by a range of data including the number of children whose main language is not English, and the number of students from ethnically diverse backgrounds. Ongoing analysis will be required to ensure that Family Hub services are targeted at more “hidden” communities or ethnic groups.

	<p>Family Hubs will work alongside partner agencies, community groups and faith organisations to identify ethnic minority children, families, and communities in the local area to provide local solutions to service provision e.g., specifically designed groups and interventions to improve outcomes for diverse ethnic communities.</p> <p>Enhanced community working and support from volunteer and peer support networks should increase awareness of services and access routes. Universal health services within the Start for Life offer may use interpretation services to support services for one-to-one support. In areas of higher need (e.g., in Dartford and Gravesham 15% of children don't have English as their main language) promotional materials should be available in alternative languages where possible e.g., for targeted campaigns.</p> <p>Family Coaches and volunteers may assist individuals who feel that services don't understand the challenges they face. This should assist with greater engagement and the opportunity to offer support. The Family Coaches, volunteers and any peer to peer groups much reflect the ethnic diversity of local populations. In Dartford and Gravesham there will be proactive engagement of community groups to engage a diverse group of Family Coaches.</p>
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Race	Danielle Day Programme Manager – Family Hubs
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief	
m) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
n) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief	<p>There is currently no direct data which measures religion of children and young people or parents of children and young people living in Kent. The only data collected is related to the overall population and based on the 2021 Census data. The Council provides services to children, young people, and their families, irrespective of their religion or beliefs.</p> <p>We recognise this as an area of development, and will ensure within our future work to develop the model we will proactively reach community and faith groups to engage the service user voice from these seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics.</p>
o) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief	N/A
p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief	N/A
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation	
m) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
n) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation	Our services are open to all individuals, but we recognise that accessing services can be challenging.

	<p>Some LGBTQ+ individuals who are concerned about accessing face to face services may benefit from our online digital and virtual offer.</p> <p>There are areas within service user groups with protected characteristics that we don't have data from the consultation or from across the service. We recognise this as an area of development, and will ensure within our future work to develop the model we will proactively reach groups to engage the service user voice from these seldom heard groups and those with protected characteristics</p>
<p>o) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	
<p>m) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>n) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity</p>	<p>As is seen in the response to the consultation, 62% of female respondents oppose the proposal to have fewer buildings compared to 34% of male respondents. Equally 69% of female respondents oppose the co-location of services, compared to 26% of male respondents. This is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for childcare and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children's Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings). 3% of respondents to the consultation indicated that they were pregnant.</p> <p>The proposals within Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 would require individuals to travel further, likely on public transport which may be difficult for pregnant women or those with children, pushchairs, and additional equipment. The crossover with other protected characteristics, including age, disability, sex and those with carers responsibilities needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.</p> <p>By virtue of the fact that the number of building closures <i>decreases</i> progressively between option 1 and 2, further between option 2 and 3, and then again between option 3 and 4, it is clear that the significance of the impacts across the County would lower depending on which option is chosen.</p> <p>Option 5 is the 'Do Nothing' option and as such, if Members decided to proceed with Option 5, there would be no change in equalities impacts.</p> <p>We recognise that expectant mothers may need to access services differently, may need to travel to alternative locations and may receive a different type of service than previously offered. Travel costs and accessibility could become a barrier to access and, if this is the case, this could affect their ability to access the support required when needed.</p> <p>The Family Hub model includes midwifery and Health Visiting support which includes home visiting services, this will not change with any of the Family Hub implementation options.</p>

The Family Hub model includes the outreach offer and work through the Family Hub network will assist us able to identify the greatest need and respond appropriately.

There are four specific categories of need that have been identified through a data driven approach, as areas of focus within the Family Hub model that indicate a requirement for outreach provision within the community.

- I. Specific 'edge-of-town' communities falling outside the 20 min walking distance but high proportion of families and young people living in deprivation sitting outside the boundary and therefore '0-19' outreach activity is required.
- II. Larger communities 'whole towns' that see a high cumulative 0-19 deprivation linked need across the whole area but not enough to warrant a whole building.
- III. Rural communities with high levels of deprivation that may otherwise be cut off, with cumulative level of need requiring specific 0-19 outreach provision.
- IV. Areas where specific flexible detached youth provision is required – often 'in the field' and not linked to specific building locations.

Outreach work in the community within the Family Hub model will be delivered across both urban and rural localities informed by need/data.

Outreach is community-based provision, delivered in non-Family Hub sites such as libraries, community centres and may take place in family homes (for example health visitors attending a family home).

It will not be possible to have a Family Hub site in all localities, particularly in rural areas with low population density as outlined within the Kent Communities programme. Outreach delivery will improve reach to isolated and/or vulnerable communities through its flexibility/agility in responding to need and not being tied to a physical Family Hub site location.

In these cases, the Family Hub offer will be delivered from existing community buildings e.g., libraries, halls, as well through a digital offer with the nature of delivery varying and informed by local need and data. The need/type of outreach provision will be reviewed on a regular basis, examples include:

- Practitioners delivering targeted groups/activities from locations such as community halls and libraries.
- Joint work with community and health partners
- Practitioners working alongside existing groups, such as toddler groups on a regular basis to extend the reach/access to information, advice, and guidance.
- Practitioners holding drop-in surgeries/sessions to provide 1 to 1 signposting and support.
- Practitioners holding targeted virtual groups and activities online.
- The frequency of outreach and rural delivery will be determined by need and data, and in some cases may be weekly, monthly, or termly

		We will engage on barriers to accessing services, and how outreach and digital options of support could assist.
ii)	Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Across the options presented for Member decision the impact of change on all protected characteristics, including pregnancy and maternity, are mitigated to different degrees by retaining progressively more buildings in Options 3 and 4 compared to the consultation model presented in Option 2. In Options 3 and 4, the Needs Framework has been amended to give progressively greater weight to the analysis of the public transport network. Therefore, in Options 3 and 4 progressively fewer buildings are proposed for closure, which reduces the requirement for residents to use public transport to access services in alternative locations. Option 5 does not make any changes and so there are no equalities impacts to mitigate.</p> <p>We will consult on barriers to accessing services, and how outreach and digital options of support could assist. In some cases support through other community provision could be provided.</p>
iii)	Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity	

27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships

m) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
n) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	N/A
o) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	N/A
p) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships	N/A

28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities

m) Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No
n) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities	N/A
o) Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities	N/A

**p) Responsible Officer for
Mitigating Actions - Carer's
Responsibilities**

N/A

EQIA Submission Draft Working Template

If required, this template is for use prior to completing your EQIA Submission in the EQIA App.

You can use it to understand what information is needed beforehand to complete an EQIA submission online, and also as a way to collaborate with others who may be involved with the EQIA.

Note: You can upload this into the App when complete if it contains more detailed information than the App asks for and you wish to retain this detail.

Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):	Kent Communities Programme (Community Assets) – Principle of Co-Location Proposals
2. Directorate	DCED/GET
3. Responsible Service/Division	INF/LRA

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith
5. Head of Service Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.	Rebecca Spore / James Pearson
6. Director of Service Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.	Rebecca Spore / Stephanie Holt-Castle

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Tick if Yes	Activity Type
Yes	Service Change – <i>operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.</i>
	Service Redesign – <i>restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working</i>
Yes	Project/Programme – <i>includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.</i>
	Commissioning/Procurement – <i>means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.</i>
	Strategy /Policy – <i>includes review, refresh or creating a new document</i>
	Other

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

Equality Impact Assessment

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance the equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed

in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

This EqIA refers the proposals to co-locate services and the impact that the co-locations will have on users of the library service. The services in scope have developed their own EqIAs which assess the impact of the Kent Communities Proposals as they relate to their specific service areas. Equally the overall Programme impact is considered in a separate EqIA – ‘Kent Communities Programme EqIA’. As the co-location proposals progress through the next stages of design, site specific Equalities impact Assessments will be undertaken for each individual site based on the final design for the co-location.

The Case for Change - Kent Communities Programme

The Council is facing very significant financial pressures, for a number of reasons set out in 'Securing Kent's Future' (August 2023 and October 2023). That document sets out the urgent steps needed to return the Council to financial sustainability, by reducing overspend in its budget to avoid further need to use limited reserves to fund revenue overspends, which would weaken the financial resilience of the authority and limit the scope for the use of reserves to invest in transformation necessary to address the structural deficit.

The financial challenges faced by the Council cannot be ignored. Two particularly significant factors, are the Council's statutory 'best value' duty to deliver a balanced budget, provide statutory services, including adult social care and children's services, and secure value for money in all spending decisions; and the Council's other statutory duties.

The Kent Communities Programme seeks to rationalise our physical estate and propose a greater mix of alternative methods of service delivery across the County, informed by a clear and data-driven understanding of service need. Delivery of this programme has become more important in the light of the increased financial pressures faced by the Council. The programme also seeks to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, in line with our Net Zero 2030 approach, although this is a secondary factor given the overarching financial context. The programme does include elements of improvement to service delivery: for example benefits offered by co-location of services.

However, the Council must acknowledge that the impact of closures and reductions in services on residents can be significant. The approach set out in these proposals is therefore based on a relative needs assessment. Mitigating measures are set out, which are intended to minimise as far as possible the impact of the proposals on Kent residents.

A detailed and extensive public consultation (www.kent.gov.uk/communityservicesconsultation) allowed consultees the opportunity to give their views on the proposals. These responses have been analysed and carefully considered. A range of options have been developed, informed by the consultation responses. This EQIA has been updated following feedback from that consultation and is also based on data and evidence about Kent's communities and our service users.

The Consultation

The Kent Communities proposal has been subject to a public consultation. The consultation launched on 17th January 2023 and lasted for ten weeks, closing on 26 March 2023. The consultation set out the rationale for the proposals, the methodology which was used to produce the draft proposal and the details of the Kent Communities model (i.e. which buildings we were proposing to close and which we were proposing to retain). These proposals have now moved on following the consultation and the options are detailed below.

Rationale

The rationale for the KCP is clear. The Programme contributes to meeting the revenue savings as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). To reduce risks across our corporate estate and capital programme, the KCP reduces the Council's capital liability to the maintenance costs of such a large physical estate.

Methodology

The consultation explained the methodology underpinning the Kent Communities proposal, including how we used the Needs Framework as a starting point. The Need Framework used a wide range of data and indicators that when combined profile the different level of need for services within our communities. The data included service-held metrics, such as user figures for each service.

In developing the alternative range of options for member consideration the impact on equalities has been taken into account. The impact on the current library service users is taken into account within this EqlA.

Consultation Response

Overall, 48% (of 1,583 responses) of respondents disagree with the proposals to co-locate services together. Whilst there were some comments in support of the proposals, many raised concerns about the suitability of alternative locations for co-location of services and the accessibility of these sites for users. This will be acknowledged and considered in the site-specific EqlAs once designs are developed further.

Women were far more likely to oppose co-location of services than men and respondents with children under 10 were far more likely to disagree with co-location than those without:

Male resident	26%
Female resident	49%
Resident with no children	22%
Resident with children aged 0-1 years old (250)	61%
Resident with children aged 2-5 years old (243)	68%
Resident with children aged 6-10 years old (142)	54%

This suggests that the co-location proposals that impact women and children – where co-location between a library and a Family Hub is proposed – will require particular consideration.

The most common concern expressed in the consultation response regarding the general co-location of services (not specific to any one service) were:

Users being able to get there / travel there / can't walk to alternatives / need close location of services	51%
Public transport availability / cost of / reduction in service	33%
Practicality of co-located services (e.g. children's centre in same space as library)	22%
Impact on users unable to access the service / impact on vulnerable / mental health / taking away a lifeline / hub of community	21%
Suitability of building / fit for purpose / the space	19%
Maintaining service levels / impact on service levels	14%

Summary of Options

Within option 1, 2, 3 and 4 the proposals include co-location of services within Library buildings as follows:

Building	Proposed service to co-locate
Stanhope Library	Library and Family Hub
Temple Hill Library	Library and Family Hub
Gravesend Library	Library and Gateway
Kent History and Library Centre	Library and Gateway
Sevenoaks Library	Library and Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities
Queenborough Library	Library and Family Hub
Sittingbourne Library	Library and Family Hub
Ramsgate Library	Library and Family Hub
Cliftonville Library	Library and Community Day Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities
Tonbridge Gateway	Library and Gateway
Cranbrook Library	Library and Family Hub

Option 5 is our 'Do Nothing' option, in which case the proposed co-location of services in the table above would not proceed.

Justification

The co-location proposals are the same across Options 1, 2, 3 and 4 and so the equalities impacts will be common between these options. Option 5 would not see any change and therefore there would not be any impact on equalities. Whilst there will be some positive impacts in that service users accessing their primary service would be able to access a range of other KCC services, it is important to assess the impacts of co-location proposals on the existing users of the library service.

Broadly, the mitigations against the impacts will include careful design of co-located spaces, with the considered input of service leads, expert in the requirement of their existing user base. It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.

Across the programme the impacts are considered to be adequately mitigated and justified given the wider policy and financial context within which the Council currently operates. As set out above, the impacts for each site will be acknowledged and considered in the site-specific EqlAs once designs are developed further.

Section B – Evidence

Note: For questions 9, 10 & 11 at least one of these must be a 'Yes'. You can continue working on the EQIA in the App, but you will not be able to submit it for approval without this information.

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? Answer: Yes/No	<p>Yes, an analysis of the protected characteristics of the respondents to the consultation is as follows:</p> <p>Gender Male 18% Female 81.3% Prefer not to say 0.7%</p> <p>Same Gender as birth Yes 99% Prefer not to say 1%</p> <p>Pregnant</p>
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	<p>Yes – 28 out of 870 responses</p> <p>Religion Christian 90.2% Buddhist 0.3% Hindu 0.7% Jewish 0.7% Muslim 0.7% Prefer not to say 2.6% Other 4.9% Sikh 0%</p> <p>Disability Yes 14.3 % No 83.5% Prefer not to say 2.2%</p> <p>Sexual Orientation Heterosexual/Straight 89.7% Bi/Bisexual 2% Gay man 0.4% Gay woman/Lesbian 1.3% Prefer not to say 6% Other 0.6%</p> <p>Ethnicity White English 87.6% White Scottish 1.1% White Welsh 0.5% White Northern Irish 0.2% White Irish 0.7% White Gipsy/Roma 0.1% Asian or Asian British Indian 0.4% Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi 0.1% Mixed White and Black Caribbean 0.1% Mixed White and Black African 0.1% Mixed White and Asian 0.4% Black or Black British Caribbean 0.2% Black or Black British African 0.1% I prefer not to say 2.2% Other 6% White Irish Traveller 0% Asian or Asian British Pakistani 0% Arab 0% Chinese 0%</p>
<p>10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way? Answer: No</p>	<p>Will be identified during next phase local demography</p>
<p>11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? Answer: Yes</p>	<p>Yes -</p>
<p>12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p><i>Answer: Yes/No</i> <i>Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.</i></p>			
<p>13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with? <i>Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.</i></p>			
<p>Engagement in a general context took place with stakeholders prior to the launch of the public consultation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - KCC members and senior officers - Service delivery team members and property team members as part of the design process - District authorities - External partners including NHS and Kent Fire and Rescue <p>A full 10-week consultation process was carried out between 17 January 2023 and 26 March 2023, this gave an opportunity to residents, community groups and all interested parties to give feedback on the proposed changes to service delivery across the county. During this consultation there were face to face sessions held, and over 150 hours of proactive engagement with residents, service users (including groups of users in locations proposed for closure), partners, staff, unions and members.</p> <p>Of the 1,776 consultees who took part, 18% of consultees provided a response to our specific question about the equality analyses we had conducted prior to, and published together with, our consultation. A more detailed breakdown of the responses within the consultation and the equalities considerations is given above.</p>			
<p>14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>		Yes – pre-consultation EqIA	
<p>15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>		Yes.	
<p>Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App <i>Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.</i></p>		Demographic data that informed the need framework. Consultation report with stats on feedback received.	
<p>Section C – Impact</p>			
<p>16. Who may be impacted by the activity? <i>Select all that apply.</i></p>			
<p>Service users/clients <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>	Yes	<p>Residents/Communities/Citizens <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>	Yes
<p>Staff/Volunteers <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>	Yes		
<p>17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? <i>Answer: Yes/No</i></p>			Yes
<p>18. Please give details of Positive Impacts</p>			

The principles of the Kent Communities Programme are built on the ambition to provide a more cohesive range of community services to residents so that different needs can be met in the most accessible and efficient way possible.

By increasing the Gateways service overall (albeit with part-time provision at new locations), and co-locating with other services, we will be able to present a more coordinated overall service offer to our communities increasing access to complimentary KCC services for our users.

The co-location of services for Adults with Learning Disabilities proposed will help to advance the equality of opportunity between those individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not. It will also help to foster good relations between those individuals who share a relevant protected characteristic and those that do not. Both of these factors are in line with the second and third considerations of s149 (1) of the Equality Act (2010).

The proposed changes to the Adult Education service will result in services being delivered from a building in much better condition, resulting in a more pleasant and conducive learning environment.

Proposals for co-location with Libraries, Community Learning and Skills, Adult Social Care and Family Hub services. By co-locating with a mix or range of these services within the same buildings, we are presenting a more unified service offer to the resident, so it is easier for them to access a broader range of services from a single location.

We will also be able to offer space for a range of partners to deliver services from this location and benefit from a range of services under one roof. For example, it is anticipated that our Meet and Greet staff will also have knowledge of services available from the local Borough council as well as third sector partners, to enable effective sign posting. Similarly, the link between Birth Registrations and Family Hub services is strengthened by co-locating Libraries and Family Hubs together.

Residents with some protected characteristics (sex, age, disability and race) are likely to be impacted more by the proposed building closures. These same groups are likely to also benefit from co-location of services, mindful of specific mitigations such as continued accessibility compliance of co-location sites and the provision of private/confidential areas. Residents in these groups will be able to utilise these services will benefit from a reduced number of journeys by having KCC services located nearby/ together. It is also possible that there will be benefits for residents from different races as co-location will help those whose first language is not English, as they will not need to navigate multiple locations.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

<p>u) Are there negative impacts for age? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>v) Details of Negative Impacts for Age</p>	<p>As set out above, the consultation response across the whole scope of proposals demonstrates a much greater level of opposition to both reductions in buildings and co-locations in the 25-24 age bracket. 81% of respondents in that age bracket oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings. This is likely due to the fact that residents in this age bracket have a higher chance of having children between the ages of 0-5 years old, and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children’s Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have</p>

	<p>fewer buildings). As age increases, the opposition to co-locations decreases.</p> <p>The impact of co-location on young parents and children is addressed in separate EqlAs.</p> <p>The impact of co-location of other services into library settings on elderly library users does require consideration. These users may find it more difficult, or overwhelming to access the library service with which they are familiar with other services being delivered – particularly if they are noisier sessions as part of the Family Hub offer. If elderly residents also experience a disability or mobility issues, then the impact of these changes will be more significant. It is worth acknowledging that the current library service already delivers activities that would be considered busier and ‘noisier’.</p>
<p>w) Mitigating Actions for age</p>	<p>It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.</p> <p>Regardless of this, mitigations against the impacts on age will include careful design of co-located spaces, with the considered input of service leads, expert in the requirement of their existing user base.</p> <p>Staff in co-located sites will be provided with guidance to support and signpost elderly residents and ensure that any scheduled sessions that may be overwhelming are well advertised.</p>
<p>x) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager</p>
<p>20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability</p>	
<p>u) Are there negative impacts for Disability? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>v) Details of Negative Impacts for Disability</p>	<p>14% of consultation respondents indicated that they experience a disability and 48% of all respondents disagree with the proposals to co-locate services. The negative impacts on residents experiencing a disability do interplay with other protected characteristics as already outlined, particularly between age.</p> <p>Co-location of services into Library buildings may cause distress for library users that suffer from disabilities as they may be required to navigate around buildings in a</p>

	different way if the layout changes to accommodate the mix of services.
w) Mitigating Actions for Disability	<p>It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.</p> <p>The co-location sites will be brought forward with the assistance of professional design and construction partners and the considered input of library service representatives. They will consider both the needs of the existing user base and accessibility compliance and regulations as part of the design work and implementation of changes that facilitate the co-location. This will include provision of accessible facilities, accessibility compliant buildings and relevant wayfinding provision.</p> <p>Staff in co-located sites will be provided with guidance to support and signpost residents that experience a disability of mobility issues and ensure that any scheduled sessions that may be overwhelming are well advertised.</p>
x) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex	
u) Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
v) Details of Negative Impacts for Sex	<p>69% of female respondents oppose the co-location of services, compared to 26% of male respondents. This is likely due to the fact that women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for childcare and the majority of the reduction in buildings is across the Children's Centre estate (83% of respondents with children under 1 year old oppose the proposals to have fewer buildings).</p> <p>Where we are proposing to co-location with other services, there may be a higher proportion of men in the building than at present. Both male and female service users may feel uncomfortable by this, particularly where they may be breast feeding.</p>
w) Mitigating Actions for Sex	It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.

	The co-location sites will be brought forward with the assistance of professional design and construction partners and the considered input of library service representatives. They will consider the necessary provision of baby change, breastfeeding and toilet facilities as well as confidential/private spaces so that existing users are not subject to overhearing conversations they may find distressing.
x) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	
q) Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender	<p>4% of respondents to the consultation raised the issue of effects on disadvantage ethnic minorities / English as a second language / refugees / travellers / LGBTQ.</p> <p>Young people may be impacted by the requirement to share youth centre space with existing library service users. People that access youth centres raise concerns with this as they may feel unable to use the centre to highlight issues related to gender identity, sexual health and LGBTQ issues.</p>
s) Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender	<p>Existing library users (as well as youth service users) will be protected by timetabling activity within the new Family Hub model and through design within spaces to provide separate time of use and where possible dedicated areas/settings for youth provision, including space for confidential conversations.</p> <p>We have examples of being able to do this successfully within our current estate and service models.</p>
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race	
u) Are there negative impacts for Race? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes.
v) Details of Negative Impacts for Race	<p>With more services in buildings, it may be more difficult for library users with limited English language and literacy to navigate the various services. This could lead to people feeling overwhelmed and not able to find where they need to go very easily.</p> <p>The co-locations at Stanhope Library and Temple Hill Library are likely to be accessed by a large number of people from different ethnic populations. There may be high demand for services which may result in waiting lists</p>

	<p>for spaces on particular groups, particularly affecting those from different ethnic populations given the high number currently accessing services proposed to relocate to these co-located sites.</p> <p>Whilst we endeavour to provide enough activities to meet demand, space may be prohibitive of additional groups, highlighting the importance of creating new opportunities through local community groups.</p>
w) Mitigating Actions for Race	<p>It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.</p> <p>Staff in co-located sites will be provided with guidance to support and signpost residents that do not use English as their first language.</p> <p>We will look to introduce a meet and greet service in new community hubs to support people to find the right service.</p> <p>We will work with other services to ensure a welcoming environment for all service users.</p>
x) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Race	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief	
q) Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	No.
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief	
s) Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief	
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Religion and belief	
25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation	
q) Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. <i>Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>	Yes
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation	<p>4% of respondents to the consultation raised the issue of effects on disadvantage ethnic minorities / English as a second language / refugees / travellers / LGBTQ.</p> <p>Young people may be impacted by the requirement to share youth centre space with existing library service users. People that access youth centres raise concerns with this as they may feel unable to use the centre to</p>

	highlight issues related to gender identity, sexual health and LGBTQ issues.
s) Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation	<p>Existing library users (as well as youth service users) will be protected by timetabling activity within the new Family Hub model and through design within spaces to provide separate time of use and where possible dedicated areas/settings for youth provision, including space for confidential conversations.</p> <p>We have examples of being able to do this successfully within our current estate and service models.</p>
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Sexual Orientation	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	
o) Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
p) Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>Within the consultation response it is evident that those with children under 5 years oppose the co-location of services.</p> <p>Our co-located spaces it may be busier at certain times or have a greater proportion of men and those who haven't experienced pregnancy.</p> <p>The impact on pregnant women, or new parents accessing the library service also requires consideration. The introduction of new services into a library building may mean library services are more difficult to access or the building itself is more difficult to navigate for expectant mother and new parents.</p>
q) Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity	<p>It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.</p> <p>During feasibility we endeavour to find a private room for delivery of health visiting services as well as more private/confidential conversations.</p> <p>Library staff will be provided guidance to help signpost and support pregnant women and new parents accessing the library service within co-location sites.</p> <p>We will continue existing practice of considering the timings of groups and appointment to create a</p>

	<p>welcoming inclusive environment for everyone in collaboration with other services.</p> <p>The co-location between Family Hubs and Library services will strengthen the link between the two service areas relating to Birth Registrations.</p>
r) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Pregnancy and Maternity	Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager
27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships	
q) Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	No.
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
s) Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships	
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer’s responsibilities	
q) Are there negative impacts for Carer’s responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).	Yes
r) Details of Negative Impacts for Carer’s Responsibilities	<p>The negative impacts on residents with carer’s responsibilities do interplay with other protected characteristics as already outlined, particularly between age and disability.</p> <p>Co-location of services into Library buildings may cause uncertainty for library users that have carer’s responsibilities as they may be required to navigate around buildings in a different way if the layout changes to accommodate the mix of services. The impact of additional uses and therefore additional service users may also negatively impact residents with carer’s responsibilities by leading to a minor overwhelming atmosphere within the library building.</p>
s) Mitigating Actions for Carer’s responsibilities	<p>It is very important to acknowledge that the Council already successfully operates co-locations across the County, including every specific mix proposed within the Kent Communities Proposal.</p> <p>The co-location sites will be brought forward with the assistance of professional design and construction partners and the considered input of library service representatives. They will consider both the needs of the existing user base and DDA compliance and regulations as part of the design work and implementation of changes that facilitate the co-location. This will include provision of accessible facilities, DDA compliant buildings and relevant wayfinding provision.</p>

	<p>Staff in co-located sites will be provided with guidance to support and signpost residents with carer's responsibilities and ensure that any scheduled sessions that may be overwhelming are well advertised.</p>
<p>t) Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Carer's Responsibilities</p>	<p>Ben Sherreard / Jackie Taylor-Smith / Local Manager</p>

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Building	Service	Need	Usage (2019)	Property	Proposal	Consultation Responses (Impact Comments)	Number of Impact	How/Were responses addressed? Was Needs Framework revisited for this building based on response?
The Willow Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	65	2501	Long term flexible lease so no property pressure.	Retain due to need and usage.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Waterside Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	56	1496	10-year lease – break clause 2026 (notice needed Feb 25).	Retain due to need and usage and lease constraint.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Ashford North Youth Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	57	494	School site and good condition.	Retain due to need.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Sure Steps Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	43	1381	School site with cost split agreement in place	Retain for adjacent ward of High Need (Bockhanger)			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Stanhope Library	Family Hubs/Public Health	59	Leasehold to Aug 25	Co-locate due to need – replacement provision for Ray Allen (see below)	<p>Example of comments received about co-location of children's centre services into Stanhope Library:</p> <p>"I'm worried that combining two more services into the Stanhope Library would be very cramped, especially as the only space it has is the carpeted area downstairs, the large community room belongs to Moat housing as it is their building and the library rents space from them."</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of the proposed co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: no change to consultation option</p>
Ashford Gateway	Adults/CLS/Gateways	57	Capacity at site for co-locations if appropriate	Retain – high need.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Homewood School	CLS	28	School site – CLS pay direct.	Retain due to need identified in Ward 18		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Tenterden Gateway	Gateways	40		Retain due to lease position and no alternatives	Retain due to property constraint.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Bluebells Children's Centre	Family Hubs	45	/	Amber condition.	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 78% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 66% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users also praised the facilities provided in relation to the alternative(s) proposed (38%) and value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (25%). 16% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development</p> <p>Consider buildings in rural areas: I feel it is important to keep centres in more rural areas as well as towns. I see many of the same parents at the centre who also use it frequently as would not necessarily be able to attend other centres."</p>	<p>The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils)outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context. It should be noted that for this ward, need has been deemed to be low.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Little Explorers Children's Centre	Family Hubs	43	964	License to KCHFT to March 25	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 76% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 62% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (41%). 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Consider buildings in rural areas: impact of closing both rural centres in Ashford (Little Explorers and Bluebells)</p>	<p>The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils)outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context. It should be noted that for this ward, need has been deemed to be low.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Options 3 and 4.</p>

Ray Allen South Ashford Centre	Family Hubs	59			Exit	<p>FH: 48% of those providing a comment noted the centre provided much needed support / services for local families in the area and 37% commented the centre is essential / seen as a lifeline. Comments referenced the good facilities provided in relation to the alternative(s) proposed (22%). 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on the community and 19% expressed concerned they will have a detrimental impact on residents' mental health / development.</p>	27	Provision reprovided through Stanhope Library co-location.
Riverside Youth Hub	Family Hubs/Public Health	63	1045	25 year PA with Academy ends 2031.	Commissioned Youth Service only occupy part of site – co-locate CC from across the road into remainder of site.	<p>Example of comments received about co-location of Riverside Children's Centre into Riverside Youth Hub:</p> <p>"Massively impacted - co-locating the current Riverside Children's Centres into the youth centre will likely reduce the space available and therefore the service provision. The clients at Rising Sun rely on the space and services available at the Riverside for emergency safeguarding drop ins, parental support and even discounted meal options. It is a lifeline for many families. I feel that co-locating these targeted, specific services into the youth centre will reduce the effectiveness and reach of the services. Therefore creating yet another barrier for our clients and many others to engage with support services."</p>		<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time. Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Briary Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	48	1479	School site good condition.	Retain due to adjacent ward need (West Bay 56)			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time. Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Little Hands Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	52	1782	License to occupy with KCHFT	Retain due to need and usage.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Poppy Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	70	1837	Long lease with CC and protected use to CC/YH.	Retain due to need and property constraint.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Whitstable Youth and Community Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	29	505	Freehold.	Retain due to need in Gorrell Ward (45)	<p>Example of comments received about co-location of children's centre services into Whitstable Youth and Community Centre:</p> <p>"If the service moved to Whitstable Youth Hub changes would need to be made to make it fit for our purpose - this would mainly be in the form of storage for Children's Centre resources. Also a clinic room for health services. The Coastal midwifery team currently use Joy Lane Children Centre all day every day - and have two rooms to run clinics and also do their admin as they have no other base. They would need to be housed in the new Family Hub."</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Swalecliffe Day Centre	Adults	47	Freehold.	Retain due to need identified in Ward 1 (Beltinge).		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Northgate Hub	Adults	63	Lease	Exit due to alternative sites in the district.	<p>Example comments about the impact of stoppnig services for Adults with Learnding Disabilities at Northgate Hub:</p> <p>“We will ALL pay for this - I am utterly distraught about any proposal to cut these services to our most vulnerable - a society is only as healthy as the way it takes care of its most vulnerable members.”</p> <p>“No services in future when my disabled child will need them. He can’t use public transport and we already use taxis as KCC has failed SEN children in multiple areas in the past. This is an extension of that disregard and de prioritisation.”</p> <p>“Closing the Northgate hub will be detrimental as follows:- to the current people who use it and love it to Northgate Community Centre residents who use the centre every day and who welcome and love KCC Day Opportunities people.”</p>	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: site to now be retained because of feasibility study which showed lack of sufficient space at alternative sites.</p>
Thanington Hub	Adults	52		Retain.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Canterbury AEC	CLS	50				<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Apple Tree	Family Hubs	34	325		Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community</p> <p>Examples of feedback: "Chartham is one of the largest villages with a growing population. It is easily accessible to neighbouring villages. As a centre it could host health visitor appointments, routine maternity appointments and even support with children for children starting school or reception with the skills they need. As a new mum the baby groups have been essential in supporting me to meet people and talk informally about my baby's development. I can't afford bus fares into town and juggle siblings with school pick-ups."</p>	17	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Joy Lane	Family Hubs	43	2183		Exit and reprovide at Whitstable Youth and Community as building is bigger and more suited	<p>FH: 60% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 51% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (40%). 38% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p>	47	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Riverside Children's Centre	Family Hubs	63	2230	Lease expired and in occupation without any rights.	Exit and re-locate across road into Youth Hub.	<p>FH: 67% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 52% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (31%). 31% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Example comment: "Riverside centre has been a central hub for many years. The building is purpose built and well used and loved. This will be devastating to the community around there because the youth centre does not have the same provision and openness about it. What does it say about the community that a purpose built building specifically for families is to be decommissioned/torn down and land sold off?"</p>	42	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Swalecliffe CC	Family Hubs	47	592		Exit due to lower need and Whitstable Youth retained due to need in Gorrell Ward.	<p>FH: 79% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 69% comment that it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (34%). 24% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p>	29	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Tina Rintoul	Family Hubs	54	324		Exit – usage. Possible outreach target.	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community</p> <p>Example comment: "An invaluable resource to its community which provides good value for money."</p>	15	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Swanscombe Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	64	1490	Freehold	Retain due to need	<p>Example comment: "Swanscombe (which is a lovely large centre in the middle of an area of need) I understand keeping Swanscombe."</p>		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Knockhall Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	44	1569	Freehold condition green.	Retain due to usage			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Oakfield Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	34	1877	Freehold condition green.	Retain due to usage		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Temple Hill Library	Family Hubs/Public Health	68		Freehold	Co-locate Temple Hill CC.	<p>Example comment: "Moving the children's centre to the library will have a negative impact on our local community. There is not enough space at the library, there are no toilets or baby changing areas, no safe storage for pushchairs, the number of people allowed to attend will decrease due to the size of the venue. No outside space to allow children to experience outdoor play & learning. People trying to concentrate in the library will be disturbed by the groups being held. Services have already been cut at Temple Hill; this community needs more children's services not less."</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Yew Tree	Adults	56			Retain		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Dartford Library	Adults	52		Freehold, condition issues.	Potential co-location with FH, already co-location site for Adults.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Dartford AEC	CLS	52		Condition issues	Retain for CLS.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Dartford Bridge	Family Hubs		327	BAU School Expansion needed – 1FE Primary.	Exit to allow BAU school expansion.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option. Proceed with exit as part of BAU activity.</p>
Brent CC	Family Hubs	50	1975	Expired lease – very expensive.	Exit due to property constraints and possible co-location at Library. Potential outreach target. Use of Temple Hill 0.6 miles away.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>The proposed alternatives are 0.6 miles away (Temple Hill Library) and 1 mile away (Oakfield Children's Centre), so alternative venues to access services are very close to this site. Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

73

FH: 75
PH: 40

Greenlands at Darenth	Family Hubs	49	914	Freehold – mobile on school site.	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 32% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 16% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.</p> <p>Example comment: “This is a local children’s centre & serves many residents in Darenth providing vital access to midwives & for socialising, if this is closed access to other locations could be limited.”</p>	28	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Maypole CC	Family Hubs.	31	69		Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 32% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 16% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.</p> <p>Example comment: “The proposed alternatives are not big enough to house all the health professionals required along with up to 15 mothers / children / prams at one time. The travel for some families would be almost impossible and care would be compromised.”</p>	22	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>A proposed co-location site that Maypole service users could access is Temple Hill Library. Each of the buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>

Temple Hill CC	Family Hubs	68	2637	Leasehold	Exit as leasehold and relocate into freehold library.	<p>FH: 62% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 47% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users praise the facilities currently offered (32%) in comparison to proposed alternative(s). 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. 18% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / would be concerned current services would still be available to them.</p>	60	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>A proposed co-location site that Temple Hill children's centre service users could access is Temple Hill Library. Each of the buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>A proposed alternative is 0.4 miles away (Temple Hill Library), so an alternative venue to access services is very close to this site.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
TRACS	Adults	52			Plan in place for disposal prior to consultation so proposal to exit is BAU			
Deal Youth Club	Family Hubs/Public Health	58	1021	Good condition and potential future use for co-location.	Retain due to need.	<p>Example comment of using Deal Youth Club as a co-location site for children's centre services: "I am not confident the same level of safety and security could be achieved at the Youth Hub and I would not feel comfortable using space that is shared with young people, particularly those who have behavioural issues, complex support needs or youth offenders."</p>		<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered. Each of the buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Buckland Children's Centre, St Nicholas Church	Family Hubs/Public Health	61	947	Leasehold in church building.	Retain due to need.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Samphire Children's Centre (Aycliffe)	Family Hubs/Public Health	72	489	Freehold – condition green	Retain due to need.		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Dover Discovery Centre	Adults/CLS/Gateways	72		Current project to include Children's Services under BAU .	BAU co-location of many services		
Deal AEC	CLS	58		Freehold	Retain for CLS		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

The Sunflower CC	Family Hubs	58	872		Exit due to low need and usage comparative to other District centres	<p>FH: 63% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 58% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (48%). 43% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Example feedback: Rural location. Unsafe to walk to some areas due to no path or unsuitable path (depending where outreach is).</p>	40	<p>The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils) outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Blossom Children's Centre	Family Hubs	42	1626	Freehold with covenant issue.	Exit due to need and proximity to Deal Youth	<p>centre, including a petition.</p> <p>FH: 74% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 59% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (41%). 37% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>PH: 52% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 48% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (42%). 19% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>CYPE Counselling Service: 52% of those providing a comment noted they use the centre frequently / it is seen as a lifeline (for counselling and other services) and 51% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. 32% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (21%).</p> <p>Example comment: "I am not confident the same level of safety and security could be achieved at the Youth Hub and I would not feel comfortable using space that is shared with young people, particularly those who</p>	FH: 131 PH: 91 CYPE: 57	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>The co-location site for Blossoms would be at Deal Youth Club. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time. Deal Youth Hub (alternative site for accessing services) is 1.3 miles from Blossoms.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Walmer Centre	Adults	42		Moving to DDC	Plan in place for disposal prior to consultation so proposal to exit is BAU			
Dover Gateway	Gateways	72		Moving to DDC	Exit as part of BAU within DDC project.			

The Village Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	67	1994	Freehold large site, potential future co-location	Retain due to need.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Caterpillars Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	56	1913	Freehold in school site – good condition.	Retain due to need and usage.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Folkestone Early Years Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	61	1466	Retain and move Youth in	Retain due to need and usage.			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
New Romney Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	58	1307	Leasehold till 2034 – condition green	Retain due to need and lease term			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Bridge Resource Centre	Adults	50		Freehold – condition green	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Phase 2	Adults	50		Freehold – potential future plans for NHS health hub	Retain		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
The Cube	CLS	61		Leasehold – vert flexible	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
The Pottery	CLS	61		Tenancy at will – very flexible	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Dymchurch Children's Centre	Family Hubs	58	362	Freehold in school site	Exit due to usage	<p>FH: 68% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 64% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (25%). 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Example comment: With no children's Centre in Dymchurch, a very rural village my daughter will not meet and socialize and I also would be very isolated and lonely."</p>	28	<p>The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils) outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Five (Shepway Youth Hub)	Family Hubs	61	620	Freehold	Exit due to co-location at Folkstone Early Years Centre	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some highlighted that the centre is needed to provide somewhere for young people to go in the district. There appears to be some confusion over the proposed re-location of the service provision.</p> <p>Feedback from young people: Some visited the proposed co-location site and specified that they would want their own space there so they don't have to share spaces with young children and parents.</p>	16	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered. The co-location site for Five (Shepway Youth Hub) is Folkstone Early Years Centre which is very close in proximity to Five. Young people feedback that they would want their own space at the co-location site. This would likely be possible. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users. Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Hawkinge CC	Family Hubs	38	1251	Leasehold – condition issues	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 71% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 69% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (33%). 33% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>PH: 64% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 36% comment that it provides much needed support / services. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%).</p> <p>Example comment: "Hawkinge is a town and needs services. It is growing, so why remove services?" "Public transport is barely an option for this area as it's unreliable"</p>	FH: 48 PH: 33	<p>Population growth has been factored into the Needs Criteria modelling.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Lyddle Stars Childrens Centre	Family Hubs	59	684	Freehold	Exit due to usage – potential outreach target.	<p>FH: 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 40% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%). 30% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).</p> <p>Example comment: "There is very little help for anyone in Lydd. The public transport is inadequate and unreliable. It is very difficult to use public transport to access services anywhere else."</p>	40	<p>The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils) outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Folkestone Sports Centre	Adults	47		Short term leasehold	Exit due to low need. Can utilise nearby Broadmeadow and/or Phase 2.	<p>Concerns were raised about a proposed 1.5 hour return trip to proposed alternative and whether this is appropriate for client base and carers, journey times impacting on carers' wellbeing and their other commitments and perceived difficulty in coping with change. This change could potentially prevent some people from being able to access the service.</p> <p>Example comment: "Why have KCC taken the decision to move the services from Folkestone Sports Centre to a facility 14 miles away, which we do not believe is fit for purpose. Can we confirm where the clients are coming from to be able to access this resource?"</p>		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: Exit the building, as per consultation option. But a different alternative venue for accessing services has been determined, due to feedback that the 1.5 hour round trip would be unmanageable / unreasonable for the client group and their carers. The new alternative is Broadmeadow which is much closer.</p>

Bright Futures Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	61	2196	Freehold – adjacent to school	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Northfleet Youth and Community Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	57	722	Freehold – adjacent to sports centre	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Little Gems Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	60	1420	Leasehold within school site	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Riverside Childrens Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	69	2763	Freehold – condition green	Retain due to need in this ward and adjacent ward (Westcourt)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Little Pebbles Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	69	2313	Freehold – adjacent to school	Retain due to need in this ward and adjacent ward (Westcourt)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Next Steps Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	57	1733	Freehold – part of school site	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Milton Haig	Adults	48		Freehold – with specialist equipment	Retain due to need and no viable alternative location		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Gravesend AEC	CLS	58	Freehold – with condition issues	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Gravesend Gateway	Gateways	58	Licence	Exit – co-location into Library	<p>Feedback: Library would need to be adapted to make it suitable for gateway services and the partner orgs that use it, such as domestic abuse services.</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered. The co-location site for Blossoms would be at Deal Youth Club. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
New Beginnings	Family Hubs	49	Freehold – condition issues	Exit due to low need and alternative provision in Singlewell	<p>(Only comments were standardised comments across all locations proposed for closure)</p> <p>It's vital to ensure during the current crisis that local community big emphasis on COMMUNITY not 5 miles down the road centres, are kept open if its further people may not be able to afford to get there which could stop professionals potentially spotting signs of poverty/ neglect</p>	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Info Zone (Youth centre)	Family Hubs/Public Health	64	583	Freehold – significant condition issues	Retain due to need and no alternative youth site		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Sunshine Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	64	1363	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Greenfields Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	52	1910	Freehold on school site – good condition	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
The Meadows Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	62	2436	Freehold – good condition	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

West Borough Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	44	1989	Freehold	Retain due to family time provision		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Maidstone House	Adults	45		Leasehold	Retain due to need in adjacent ward (Shepway North)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Oakwood	CLS	44		Freehold - BAU co-location	Retain due to BAU co-location		
KHLC	Gateways	40		Freehold	Gateway to co-locate with Library in KHLC		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

East Borough Children's Centre	Family Hubs	42	1537	Freehold within Academy site	Exit due to low need	<p>FH: 42% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 39% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (36%). 21% comment that the centre could be used by the school or for other activities to keep the centre open.</p> <p>Example comments:</p> <p>"An issue that needs to be highlighted regarding East Borough Children's Centre is its location on the periphery of High Street Ward. Its users are not going to be geographically ringfenced to East Ward. Its service users are most likely to come from High Street Ward which is the most deprived ward in Maidstone borough."</p> <p>"I cannot get to any other children's centres as they are too far to walk to and there are no buses from near my house to get to any of the others."</p>	33	<p>Need in neighbouring High Street ward is served by two proposed locations.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Marden Children's Centre	Family Hubs	45	767	Freehold	Exit due to low need – referrals in this area suggest outreach target	<p>FH: 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 63% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%). 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s). 29% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>PH: 70% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 63% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%). 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s). 29% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Example feedback:</p> <p>Concern that Marden train station is not accessible which will cause issues for those with push chairs and wheel chair users travelling to other sites.</p> <p>"However publicly accessible venues in Marden are limited and there is no mention in the consultation document that any assessment of availability or suitability that has taken place."</p>	FH: 49 PH: 24	<p>Outreach would likely be proposed for this area within a co-designed approach (the proposal is not for service users to travel to other sites that would involve Marden train station which is not accessible). The proposed model does not consider 'rurality' as a specific factor and it is true that there are closures proposed to centres in more rural settings. However, the Need Framework did look at the travel time and catchment area of centres when building the proposed model. Our proposed outreach model does specifically consider how best to serve more rural communities regardless of whether there is a proposed closure in that location, or whether there was no centre in that location to begin with. A co-designed (with district/borough councils) outreach offer will be guided by the Need Framework and not the historical estate context.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Swanley Youth & Community Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	64	286	Freehold – large youth centre with detached sports hall	Retain due to need in adjacent ward (Swanley White Oak) and ability to accommodate services within this location			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Edenbridge Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	44	945	Freehold – good condition	Retain due to geographic local and need in adjacent ward (Edenbridge South and West)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Spring House Children's Centre	Public Health	42	1845	Leasehold	Retain for PH – potential outreach for Family Hubs		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Eden Centre	Adults/Gateways	44		Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Sevenoaks Library	Adults	38	Freehold	Co-locate Adults from Sevenoaks Leisure Centre into Library		<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>The co-location site for Sevenoaks Leisure Centre is Sevenoaks Library. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Swanley Link	Adults/Gateways	64	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Sevenoaks AEC	CLS	38	Freehold – condition issues	Retain subject to future co-location opportunity with Sevenoaks District Council		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

New Ash Green CC	Family Hubs	36	638	Local agreement at property	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: 64% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 62% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (43%). 43% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s). 26% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>PH: 45% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 40% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (40%). 35% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).</p> <p>Example feedback: Poor public transport serving the area.</p> <p>"No other buildings in the area which could be used for the satisfactory provision of outreach services in a safe and effective way have been identified as being available."</p>	FH: 61 PH: 40	<p>The proposal will seek agreement from decision-makers for a co-design approach to outreach delivery, drawing on the knowledge and perspectives of partners including district councils, health and community partners.</p> <p>The Need Framework will play a key role in planning where outreach services are needed so that provision is sufficient for those that need it. Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Spring House Children's Centre	Family Hubs	42	1845	Leasehold	Exit due to low need. Potential outreach target	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. There is concern that the alternative(s) highlighted in the consultation document are not easily accessible via public transport.</p> <p>Example comment: "There is no easy public transport link between Sevenoaks and Edenbridge meaning that non-drivers, such as myself, or those who are not confident driving immediately with a young baby will be left struggling to access services."</p>	21	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Swanley Children's Centre	Family Hubs	60	2588	Freehold	Exit due to co-location with Swanley Youth and Community Centre	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. There is some concern over the proposed re-location of the service provision and the suitability of co-locating services.</p> <p>Example comment: "Swanley Children's Centre is a much loved centre locally and used for maternity services. This is a highly deprived area that requires a local service." "Swanley has significant areas of deprivation with several vulnerable families - mixing Youth and Children Centres services will create barriers for families as it will no longer be seen as a safe, dedicated unit."</p>	21	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>The co-location site for Swanley Children's Centre is Swanley Youth and Community Centre. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
West Kingsdown C of E Primary CC	Family Hubs	38	89	Mixed tenancy	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Some commented that a reduction in staffing has contributed to a reduction in recent usage. There is concern that the alternative(s) highlighted in the consultation document are not easily accessible via public transport.</p> <p>Example comment: "We believe that the users of this provision will not access services in Edenbridge or Swanley due to distance required to travel."</p>	16	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>

Sevenoaks Leisure Centre	Adults	38		Leasehold – previous management went into Administration	Exit and relocate to Sevenoaks Library.	<p>Example comments:</p> <p>“The present building has an easy access for those who travel by public transport and is not for them to walk keeping up their independence.”</p> <p>“Proposal makes sense to use buildings so long as staff feel comfortable with the change in use.”</p> <p>“As she is familiar with that area, it won't be a problem.”</p> <p>“Moving to the library would not cause an issue as this is a familiar building to her.”</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered. The co-location site for Sevenoaks Leisure Centre is Sevenoaks Library. Each of the co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option (already implemented due to BAU response to issue at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre)</p>
Bysing Wood	Family Hubs/Public Health	48	399	Freehold – condition good	Retain due to need in adjacent ward (Abbey)	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>	
Woodgrove Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	48	1204	Freehold – condition good	Retain due to need	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>	

Milton Court Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	57	2391	Freehold – condition good	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: no change to consultation option</p>
Murston Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	64	1133	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Queenborough Library	Family Hubs/Public Health	66		Freehold	Co-location to serve need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Sittingbourne Library	Family Hubs/Public Health	71		Freehold	Co-location to serve need		Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option
Sheppey Gateway	Adults/Gateways	71		Freehold	Co-location to serve need		Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option
Crawford House	Adults	71		Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Faversham Library	Adults	53		Freehold	Co-location to serve need		Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option - this is an existing co-location.
Sittingbourne AEC	CLS	48		Leasehold	Retain		Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option

Sheppey AEC	CLS	66		Freehold	Retain			Draft outcome or this site: no change to consultation option
Grove Park CC	Family Hubs	39	1646	Freehold	Exit due to low need	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community and people's mental health. A couple commented on reductions in use due to the pandemic and this could affect consultation contribution.</p> <p>Example comment: "This Children's Centre is located within reasonable distance of other suitable access points; however we are concerned as in other centres about the levels of services that can be offered from the nearest location which is Wood Grove. This site is already delivering a number of services, and we understand that they are very efficient in this, however by closing Grove Park will the numbers be unmanageable to allow access. Our continued concerns are echoed here with regards to the levels of outreach that will be put in place around the area to ensure that Wood Grove and Milton Court do not end up being over-burdened with numbers trying to access services."</p>	21	<p>The Kent Communities model is designed to provide access to the right services in the right way in the right location. The Need Framework will necessarily need to be reviewed as communities evolve over time and need changes. By working with our partner agencies we would expect to be able to continue to adapt our service offer in the future to ensure we are meeting the changing need as best as possible given the financial constraints the Council faces.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Ladybird CC	Family Hubs	66	1063	Freehold	Exit due to relocation at Queenborough Library 0.6 miles away	<p>FH: 73% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 54% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 43% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%). 19% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.</p> <p>Example comments: "Queenborough is noted as one of the other areas of deprivation located on the Isle of Sheppey, with most households being located around the area of Rushenden in Queenborough. Therefore, Ladybird's is the closest most accessible centre for residents and currently provides services within walking distance to those who most need it." "The Kent Communities model is designed to provide access to the right services in the right way in the right location. The Need Framework will necessarily need to be reviewed as communities evolve over time and need changes. By working with our partner agencies we would expect to be able to continue to adapt our service offer in the future to ensure we are meeting the changing need as best as possible given the financial constraints the Council faces."</p>	37	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Option 4. N.B. co-location in Queenborough Library is also part of the consultation option.</p>

New House Youth	Family Hubs	50	543	Freehold - Significant condition issues	Exit due to co-location at Milton Children's Centre	<p>FH: 76% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for young people in the area and is/was used frequently / seen as a lifeline to 64%. Users comment on undertaking sporting activities at the centre and whether this will be available elsewhere (36%).</p> <p>Example comment: "We are aware that the youth teams work hard to try and accommodate activities in other locations, such as sports halls and school facilities, but this service is very inconsistent and not reliable. Also, by utilising various other facilities, there is no consistency which means that young people have to be aware of where things are taking place each week, and this is causing a barrier as previously they could just turn up and take part in any of the activities taking place in the one location."</p>	25	<p>The Kent Communities model is designed to provide access to the right services in the right way in the right location. The Need Framework will necessarily need to be reviewed as communities evolve over time and need changes. By working with our partner agencies we would expect to be able to continue to adapt our service offer in the future to ensure we are meeting the changing need as best as possible given the financial constraints the Council faces.</p> <p>The Family Hub model is built on the understanding that preventative services are an integral entry point to other service provision delivered by KCC and other agencies. The Family Hub model will provide for much greater integration between KCC services and services from other providers (e.g. NHS) regardless of the delivery method (permanent physical building, outreach session, digital).</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Beaches Children's Centre	Family Hubs	60	873	Freehold - clawback	Exit due to low usage. Potential outreach location.	<p>FH: 61% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 52% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 37% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%). 22% express concerns that it is costly to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to access proposed alternative(s).</p> <p>Example feedback: "Beaches Children's Centre is the only service that offers groups for children in the Warden/Leysdown area there are no other under 5's group within the area". Concern about the lack of facilities to deliver outreach. Village hall is fully booked with nursery.</p> <p>Transport is poor and journey times are long – especially difficult with children with SEND.</p> <p>No social infrastructure on east of island.</p> <p>Data – have people that live in the holiday parks 10-11 months a year been included?</p>	54	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: this centre would be retained in Options 3 and 4.</p>

St Mary's CC	Family Hubs	53	1767	Freehold – required for school expansion	Exit due to requirement for school expansion. Bysing Wood serves this need.	<p>FH: 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 49% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (52%). 27% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. 19% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.</p> <p>PH: 54% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (42%). 33% noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. 23% express concerns that services would suffer if moved elsewhere / whether services would be available elsewhere.</p> <p>Example comment: Bysingwood not a good alternative due to space and facility limitations. "Shutting St Mary's will put more strain in Bysing wood. St Mary's is more central, easier to find and is accessible by public transport." "Faversham's population is increasing at an alarming rate with all the new housing estates. It does not make sense that the town will only have one centre to cater for all."</p>	<p>Potential outreach target based on co-designed outreach approach - edge of town area. Population growth (0-5s until 2040) was considered in the modelling for the need framework. Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>FH: 81 PH: 52</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Newlands Children's Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	56	805	Freehold	Retain due to need	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>	
Newington Children's Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	74	1601	Freehold	Retain due to need	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>	

Birchington Children's Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	58	856	Leasehold till 2033. Condition good	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Quarterdeck Youth Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	75	591	Freehold – large detached building with parking	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Six Bells Family Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	70	2046	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Cliftonville Children's Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	75	1381	Leasehold till 2033. No break options	Retain due to need and contractual obligations		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Ramsgate Library	Family Hubs/ Public Health	65	Freehold	Co-locate to serve need in ward (Family Hub service if Priory Children's Centre closes)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Minnis Day Centre	Adults	58	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Cliftonville Library	Adults	52	Freehold – condition good	Co-locate to serve need (an option for Adults if provision at Hartsdown Leisure Centre stops)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Broadstairs Library	CLS	46	Freehold	Co-locate CLS to serve need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Margate AEC	CLS	70		Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Thanet Gateway	Gateways	70		Leasehold till 2027. Thanet DC funding	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Callis Grange CC	Family Hubs	57	759	Freehold	Exit due to low usage. Potential outreach target subject to modelling	<p>FH: 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 24% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%). 16% express concerns it would be difficult to travel elsewhere / there is insufficient public transport to travel to proposed alternative(s).</p> <p>PH: 57% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 46% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (46%).</p> <p>Example comments: "It's the only children centre in Broadstairs. Removing this will deprive children and their families of development and support. Travelling from Broadstairs to Margate or Ramsgate as proposed is expensive and unaffordable."</p>	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>FH: 43 PH: 28</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Priory CC	Family Hubs	65	1504	Mixed tenancy	Exit and co-locate to Ramsgate Library	<p>FH: 75% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 69% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (39%). 30% comment on using the nursery and that it is needed. 25% praise the facilities at the building and are concerned whether these will feature at proposed alternative(s).</p> <p>PH: 46% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 44% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (36%).</p> <p>Example comments: "Especially those who have no outdoor space at home, when the centre provides this for them with an array of outdoor equipment/activities, so vital to young children and their physical development." "Health visiting service should remain in purpose built environments to best serve children and families' needs"</p>	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Ramsgate Library is the co-location option for Priory children's centre (0.3 miles away). Each of these buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>FH: 64 PH: 50</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Hartsdown Leisure Centre	Adults	56		Leasehold till 2024	Exit due to provision at alternative Cliftonville Library, Minnis Day Centre and Broadstairs Library	<p>Example comments: "Hartsdown has free parking, space and is perfect. Stop reducing what people have and telling them it's for their benefit." Some concern about travelling to different locations.</p>	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Broadstairs AEC	CLS	46		Freehold – part currently closed due to condition issues	Exit due to condition and co-location at Broadstairs Library	<p>61% of those providing a comment have concerned about the suitability of the alternative venue for the services provided. 33% of those making a comment indicate they use the service frequently and it is considered essential / a lifeline. 25% express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development.</p> <p>Example feedback: "As far as I am aware no suitable venue/equipment is available there for this activity. Also, the rooms currently available in Broadstairs Library are unsuitable for certain fitness classes currently held in the Memorial Hall by Broadstairs Adult Education; i.e. the library rooms are too small to allow adequate spacing and are already full of furniture."</p>	51	<p>Views on the suitability of co-location sites have been considered.</p> <p>Each of th co-location buildings has been individually assessed for its suitability for co-locating the proposed services. This process has included the input of the services themselves as they best understand the needs of their service users.</p> <p>Privacy has been considered when exploring the suitability of co-locations to protect the confidential nature of some aspects of service delivery. This includes spaces for confidential conversations, as well as for activities such as breastfeeding. These spaces are being included in our early designs for co-location buildings.</p> <p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Little Foxes CC	Family Hubs/Public Health	52	2104	Freehold – condition good	Retain due to need			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Woodlands Children's Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	53	1782	Freehold	Retain due to need			<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Snodland Children's Centre and Samays Youth Centre	Family Hubs/Public Health	57	1543	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Tonbridge Youth and CC	Family Hubs/Public Health	40	1499	Freehold	Retain due to need in neighbouring wards (Castle and Trench)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Tonbridge Community Centre	Adults	40		Freehold	Retain due to need in neighbouring wards (Castle and Trench)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Tonbridge AEC	CLS	40		Freehold	Retain due to need in neighbouring wards (Castle and Trench)		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Tonbridge Library	Gateways	40		Freehold	Co-locate due to need in neighbouring wards (Castle and Trench)		11	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Burham Children's Centre	Family Hubs	40	678	Freehold – part of school	Exit due to low need.	<p>FH: Those commenting noted the value of the services provided and their contribution to the local community. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s).</p>		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: this centre would be retained in Option 4.</p>
Tonbridge Gateway	Gateways	37		Leasehold	Exit due to low need and co-location to Tonbridge Library	<p>Verbatim comments: "Loss of yet another amenity like the Post Office." "Should be retained. This is a vital community resource that should be developed and not removed." "Accessibility, costs reliability. All support services must work in order for gateways to work. The gateways service needs an infrastructure that supports gateways by working not socially analysing people."</p>	11	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre	Family Hubs/ Public Health	36	256	Freehold – condition good	Retain due to need in adjacent ward (Sherwood)	<p>FH: Whilst comments are few, those who use the hub consider it valuable</p>	9	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period.</p> <p>Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

Little Forest CC	Family Hubs/ Public Health	54	1429	Freehold	Retain due to need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Cranbrook Library	Family Hubs/ Public Health	45		Freehold	Co-locate Children's Centre to serve need		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome: no change to consultation option</p>
Amelia Scott	CLS	36		Leasehold till 2044	Retain due to contractual obligation		<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Cranbrook Children's Centre	Family Hubs	45	1032	Leasehold	Exit due to co-location with Library	<p>FH: 78% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 59% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 37% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).</p>	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria:</p> <p>Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

The Ark Children's Centre	Family Hubs	48	1622	Freehold	Exit due to provision in Tunbridge Wells Youth Centre	<p>FH: 69% of those providing a comment noted the centre is used frequently / seen as a lifeline and 45% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area. 30% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (24%).</p> <p>CYPE Counselling Service: 55% of those providing a comment noted the centre is seen as essential / as a lifeline and 30% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.</p>	FH: 33 CYPE: 20	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Southborough/High Brooms CC	Family Hubs	40	1409	Freehold	Exit due to low need	<p>FH: 58% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 33% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (30%).</p>	40	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>
Harmony CC	Family Hubs	47	1223	Mixed tenancy. 12 month rolling break	Exit due to low need	<p>FH: 69% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and 65% comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. 37% of those making a comment express concerns that proposals for the centre will have a detrimental impact on users' mental health / development. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (27%).</p> <p>PH: 35% of those providing a comment noted the centre provides much needed support / services for local families in the area and comment it is used frequently / seen as a lifeline. Users value the centre as being walking distance and they won't be able to access the proposed alternative(s) (26%).</p> <p>CYPE Counselling Service: 40% of those providing a comment noted the service is essential / seen as a lifeline and 28% comment it provides much needed support / services for local families in the area.</p>	FH: 49 PH: 31 CYPE: 31	<p>Following responses to the consultation, the Needs Framework was amended to take greater account of the public transport network analysis. An assessment was made to determine which communities were outside the catchment area of the new network, which highlighted ten sites proposed for closure that would be reconsidered under the following amended criteria: Option 3 rules out the closure of 2 buildings where the journey on public transport to the nearest alternative is over 35 minutes and there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period. Option 4 rules out the closure of 10 buildings where there is less than one service per hour when averaged over a 9-hour period, regardless of the journey time.</p> <p>Draft outcome for this site: no change to consultation option</p>

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

CABINET

DECISION NO:

23/00101

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions

- *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
- *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Title of Decision: Kent Communities Programme (Community Assets)

Decision:

Cabinet is asked to:

- a) Consider and note the feedback from the Kent Communities Consultation on the proposals, as well as responses to the Family Hub Consultation, insofar as they are relevant to the Kent Communities proposals, alongside the amended policy and financial position set out in the report 'Securing Kent's Future;'
- b) Consider the options as set out in the decision report and confirm an option to be implemented including agreement of:
 - i. The network of buildings to be utilised to support the delivery of following services:
 - Open access youth and children services – including Public Health
 - Adults with Learning Disabilities
 - CLS – Adult Education
 - Gateways
 - ii. The decommissioning of services at those buildings which are no longer to be utilised to support the delivery of the services outlined above.
 - iii. The co-design of outreach services with partners.
- c) Approve expenditure from capital budget to enable adaptations to the agreed network of buildings in order to facilitate the co-location of multiple services;
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Directors of Children Young People & Education (CYPE), Growth Environment & Transport (GET), Deputy Chief Executives Department (DCED) and Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) to design the staffing model to support the changes as agreed in part b of the decision above, undertake the necessary staff consultation and implement any changes as a result; and
- e) Delegate authority to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to enter into the necessary contracts and legal agreements to facilitate the implementation of the decisions.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Kent County Council (KCC) property estate across the portfolio is unsustainable, with high associated revenue costs to run buildings to support service delivery. The cost of maintaining our buildings at the current level is unmanageable, with estimated backlog maintenance cost standing at £42m across the buildings in the scope of this decision.

The Council needs to reduce the size of its property estate to reduce revenue costs in line with the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), reduce the backlog maintenance bill to ease pressure on the capital budget and protect the authority against future market uncertainty. This reduction will also support the Councils net zero commitments as it will bring a reduction in CO2 emissions from the estate.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw a shift in how service users’ access services and demonstrated that alternative delivery methods were viable. This decision facilitates a significant shift in service delivery towards alternative methods where appropriate.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

Ahead of the Cabinet decision an All-Member briefing is to be held on the 17 November 2023 and the item will be discussed at the November Policy and Resources Cabinet Meeting.

Public consultation was undertaken between 17 January 2023 and 26 March 2023 and feedback has been considered within the proposals of this decision.

The link to the consultation is here: [Community Services Consultation | Let’s talk Kent](#)

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The following options were identified as alternative methods for reviewing the size of the property estate and the buildings used for specific services:

- Close the most expensive buildings to run.
- Close the most valuable assets.
- Close the most environmentally inefficient buildings.
- Do nothing.

The consultation document concluded that these options would either disproportionately impact some of the highest need communities, or in the case of the ‘Do Nothing’ option, would not achieve the required outcomes.

Specific options have been developed following the consultation and are included for member consideration and decision.

In considering the decision Members weigh the relevant factors including;

- The overarching policy and financial context.
- The Needs Framework.
- The impact on residents including Equalities Impact Assessments.
- Options Appraisal

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None.

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signed

.....
date

From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee - 23 November 2022

Subject: Decision 23/00108 Disposal of former Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE

Key Decision

Classification: Unrestricted report with exempt appendix A, not for publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Past pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Member decision

Electoral Division: Sheppey; Mr Andy Booth and Mr Mike Whiting

Summary: This report considers the proposed disposal of the Property, the Former Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE

Recommendations:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services on the proposed decision to agree the disposal of the Property, the Former Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE and Delegate Authority to:

1. The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal; and
2. The Director of Infrastructure to authorise the execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper addresses Kent County Council's (KCC) intention to sell the former Halfway House Primary School and playing fields, which totals approx. 3.76 acres (1.522 hectares).

1.2 The site is made up of two parcels of land; the larger site on which the school buildings are located and fronts Queenborough Road and accessed off Southdown

Rd; and the smaller playing field site which is accessed also via Southdown Road as seen in the red-line boundary plans attached in Appendix B.

- 1.3 The two sites are located in a predominantly residential area situated south of Sheerness in the area of Halfway Houses, near the sea front of Minster Leas Beach, approximately 1.5 miles east of Queenborough Train Station.
- 1.4 The larger school building site fronts Queenborough Road with access to both sites currently off Southdown Road. The smaller playing field site is situated behind the residential roads of Southdown Road and is surrounded by residential properties to the east and south.
- 1.5 A site plan is shown in Appendix B.

2. History

- 2.1 The Title Absolute (Freehold) is vested to KCC, and it holds good and marketable title in order to dispose of the Property.
- 2.2 The site became vacant in 2016 following a relocation of the school to a new site at Danley Road. The Site was subsequently held strategically pending the outcome of a planning application for a nearby SEN facility, and then held pending assessment of wider education needs. The site has now been declared surplus and is capable of being progressed as a disposal, no other KCC service requirements have been identified for the site.
- 2.3 Subsequent to the relocation of the school to a new site, the Council have gained consent of the Secretary of State for Education to dispose of the school site and the playing field under Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010 and Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- 2.4 The site has now been allocated for residential development as part of the Local Plan adopted in July 2017 by Swale District Council. Indicative capacity has suggested the site is suitable for 60 x dwellings.
- 2.5 *Policy A20.9* (Swale Local Plan 2017) defines the site's allocation for Housing Development in which permission will be granted.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital programme. Further financial information is set out in the exempt appendix A.
- 3.2 The disposal of the property will remove associated holding costs whilst easing pressure on revenue budgets.

4. Marketing

- 4.1 Subject to the necessary approvals being forthcoming, KCC will appoint in accordance with its procurement processes a suitably qualified agent to openly market the site in quarter one (Q1) of 2024 on an "all enquiries" basis to allow any interested parties to submit a bid for the site.

- 4.2 A marketing campaign to advertise the site through various media channels will be undertaken to ensure a wide potential audience is reached; appropriate due diligence will be undertaken on any bidders.
- 4.3 Bids will be appraised in line with the Council's legislative and fiduciary duties, and in compliance with the Freehold asset disposal policy.
- 4.4 Following the formal submission of bids, the bids will be assessed against adopted policy, including considering the following criteria:
- Overall price, any pricing caveats, or exclusions
 - Any conditionality on the proposals and deliverability
 - Compliance with the Local Plan affordable housing requirements, if appropriate
 - Deliverability of the proposals submitted if they are reliant on the planning process
 - Funding security
 - Any factors of opportunity cost that KCC may wish to consider other than those described above delivering operational or policy returns.
- 4.5. Due diligence will be undertaken as appropriate which may include valuation, planning or other specialist advice.
- 4.6. Following the consideration of initial bids, 'best and final' offers may be requested. It is proposed to select the best submission that enables KCC to deliver the maximum capital receipt for the Council (considering the factors described in 4.4).

5. Options

- 5.1. Following internal consideration, no operational requirement for the site has been established. Therefore, the only options to be considered were limited to holding the property or disposal.
- 5.2. Continuing to hold leaves the Council exposed to ongoing costs, and the buildings on site remain an inherent risk.
- 5.3. A freehold disposal will allow a capital receipt to be generated for reinvestment back into the Council's stated capital priorities.
- 5.4. A freehold disposal is the preferred option for the site, seeking offers on an "all enquiries" basis to ensure all market interest is explored in line with the Council's statutory duties.

6. Governance and Legal implications

- 6.1. A Key Decision is being sought in line with the constitution and the Council's governance processes. The views of the local Member in accordance with the property management protocol have been sought and will be reported to the Cabinet Member before a Key Decision is taken.
- 6.2. The Council has a duty under s123 of the 1972 Local Government Act to obtain not less than best consideration in the disposal of property assets.

6.3. External legal advisors will be appointed in consultation with General Counsel.

7. Equalities implications (EQIA)

- 7.1. The Key Decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member does not relate to a service delivery or change.
- 7.2. The site has been vacant since 2016 and has already been declared surplus to the Council’s operational requirements.
- 7.3. An EQIA has been undertaken by the Service Directorate in 2014 and has identified no impact on any groups with protected characteristics in relation to the proposed decision.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Both local Members for the division have been consulted.
- 8.2 Mr Mike Whiting raised potential concerns in respect of the traffic impact from redevelopment of the site due to recent alterations to the highway network in the vicinity. He further suggested that the site could be considered suitable for sheltered accommodation.
- 8.3 KCC officers note that the highway implications of any future development will be assessed through the planning process, and that the site is already allocated within the adopted Local Plan for residential redevelopment.
- 8.4 In respect of potential future uses KCC must abide by adopted policy and legislation. The site will be marketed on an all-enquiries basis. If bids are received for non-residential uses, then these will be assessed against adopted policy. If a proposed use can demonstrate clearly deliverable budgetary savings elsewhere in KCC which exceeds the opportunity cost of not selling at best consideration, this will be factored into the bid appraisal process.

9. Next Steps and Conclusions

9.1. An indicative timetable for the planned disposal is set out below:

Stage	Timescale
Marketing	Q1 2024
Bid appraisal	Q2 2024
Exchange	Q3 2024
Completion assuming unconditional sale	Q3 2024
Completion assuming conditional sale	Q1 2025- Q3 2025 (subject to terms agreed)

9.2. The site has been declared surplus to the Council’s operational requirements and a disposal decision is now sought from the Cabinet Member, in accordance with the Council’s strategy of recycling assets to produce capital receipts for reinvestment into capital project priorities.

10. Recommendation(s)

Recommendations:

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services on the proposed decision to agree to the disposal of the Property, the former Halfway Houses Primary School, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE and Delegate Authority to:

1. The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal; and
2. The Director of Infrastructure to authorise the execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 Appendix A – Exempt Appendix
- 11.2 Appendix B – Site Plan
- 11.3 Appendix C – Proposed Record of Decision
- 11.4 Appendix D – Equalities Impact Assessment

12. Contact details

Lead Officer:

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Investment & Disposals
03000 41 88 35
Hugh.D'Alton@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Rebecca Spore
Director of Infrastructure
03000 41 67 16
rebecca.spore@kent.gov.uk

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

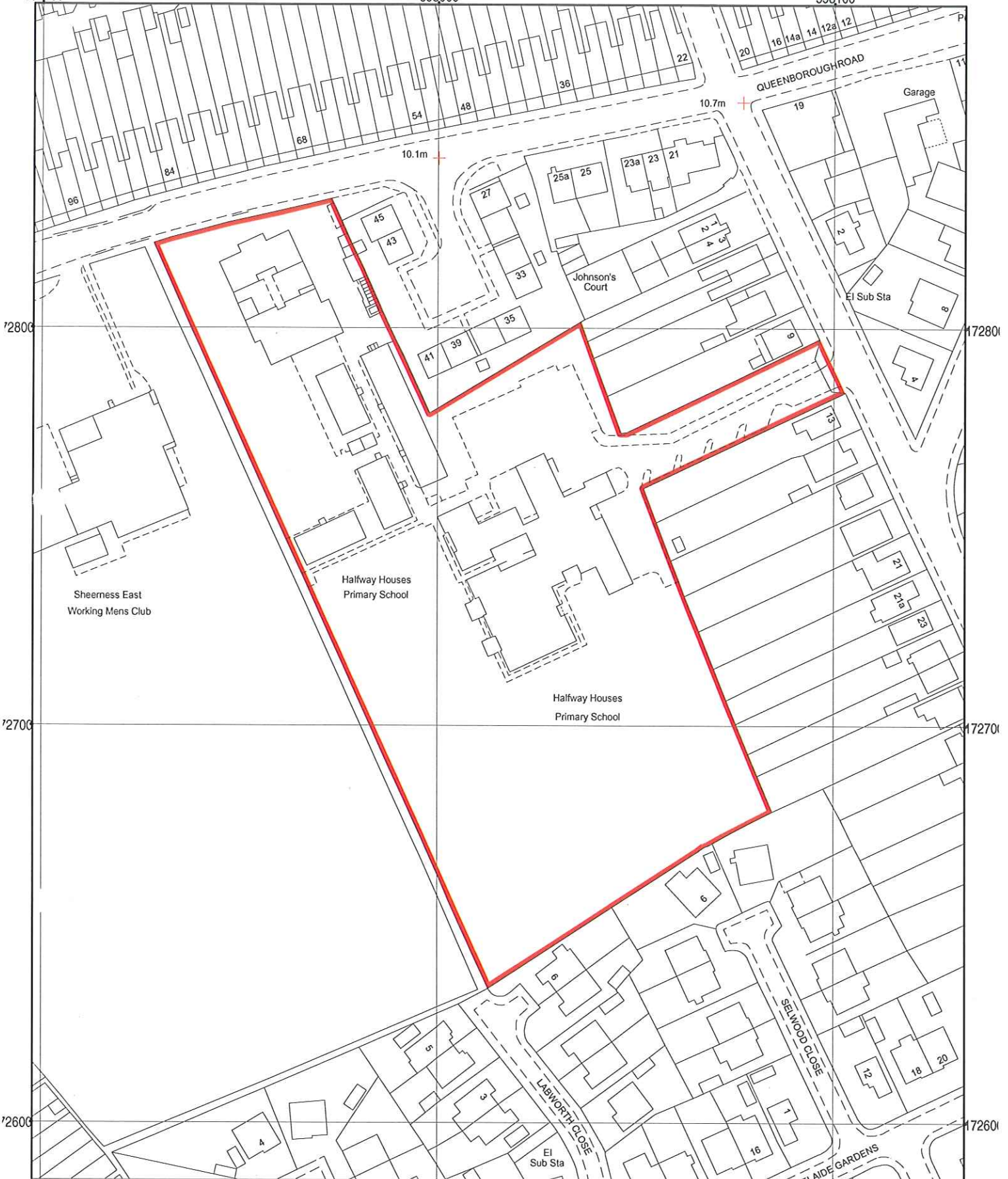
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592900

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593100



N



**HALFWAY HOUSES PRIMARY SCHOOL
SHEERNESS**

AS TRANSFERRED TO THE GOVERNING BODY ON 8/8/1996
AREA EDGED RED = 1.5212ha

NO KCC LEGAL INTEREST

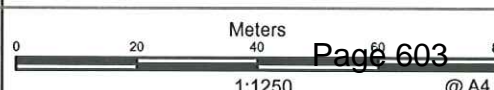
MasterMap



PROPERTY GROUP
County Hall, Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XQ
Tel:08458 247247

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

DECISION NO:

23/00108

For publication

Key decision: YES, *the decision will result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000).*

Title: Disposal of former Halfway Houses Primary School site, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE

Decision:

As the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, I agree to the Disposal of former Halfway Houses Primary School site, Southdown Road, Halfway, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 3BE and delegate authority to:

1. The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to finalise the terms of the disposal; and
2. The Director of Infrastructure to authorise the execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

Reason(s) for decision:

The property is surplus to the Council's operational requirements and due to the value requires a key decision per Kent County Council's constitution.

The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital programme.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The matter is due to be considered at a meeting of the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee in November 2023.

The views of the local members will be sought per the Council's constitution and any comments provided will be reported to the Cabinet Committee meeting and Cabinet Member taking the decision.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The Council has an overarching duty under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to secure not less than best consideration in respect of property disposals. It also has a fiduciary duty to the residents of Kent.

The property is not required for the Council's operational purposes and has been considered surplus to education needs following the relocation of the school to the new site. Since vacation of the school site, alternative service needs were considered, and none have been identified. A disposal provides an opportunity to reinvest capital in agreed priorities, as set out in the Council's Capital programme.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None.

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signed

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date

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Directorate:

- *Education and Young People's Services*

Name of policy, procedure, project or service

- *Proposed expansion Halfway Houses Primary School*

What is being assessed?

- *School Project*

Responsible Owner/ Senior Officer

- *Marisa White, Area Education Officer – East Kent*

Date of Initial Screening

1 September 2014

Version	Author	Date	Comment
1	Marisa White	01.09.14	



Screening Grid

Characteristic	Could this policy, procedure, project or service affect this group less favourably than others in Kent? YES/NO If yes how?	Assessment of potential impact		Provide details: a) Is internal action required? If yes what? b) Is further assessment required? If yes, why?	Could this policy, procedure, project or service promote equal opportunities for this group? YES/NO - Explain how good practice can promote equal opportunities
		High/MEDIUM Low/NONE UNKNOWN	Positive		
Age	No	High	None		Yes. Positive for the community and children in the locality, as the proposed expansion will allow more families to access this popular local school and the school will relocate and operate in new school buildings improving the learning environment for all children.
Disability	No – the school will be rebuilt as a three form entry school to provide facilities for the additional pupils and will be compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and fully inclusive	High	None		Yes. There will be more places available to meet the needs of the children on the Isle of Sheppey, including those with SEN and/or disability.
Gender	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gender identity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	No	High	None		Yes. Positive for all primary aged children within Sheerness locality, including white British boys from lower socio economic backgrounds (lowest achieving groups in educational outcomes in Kent)
Religion or belief	No. The school will be open to children of faith or no faith	High	None	N/A	Yes. The school curriculum covers all religions.
Sexual orientation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Part 1: INITIAL SCREENING

Proportionality - Based on the answers in the above screening grid what weighting would you ascribe to this function – **LOW**

Low	Medium	High
Low relevance or insufficient information / evidence to make a judgement.	Medium relevance or insufficient information / evidence to make a Judgement.	High relevance to equality, / likely to have adverse impact on protected groups

Context

Halfway Houses Primary School is a popular school and the proposal to expand the school is, therefore, in line with the expectation of expanding popular, successful schools and providing local schools for primary aged children wherever possible, having a positive impact on local families. The proposal will provide an additional 30 places in Reception from September 2015, providing places to meet the predicted increasing demand due to the rise in the birth rate and families moving into the locality.

Aims and Objectives

- The project is for the provision of primary school places in an area identified as needing additional places.
- Background documents are:
 - Kent's Commissioning Plan for Education Provision 2013-18
 - Bold Steps for Kent
- The project will provide additional school places. This will be achieved initially using accommodation on the current school site and then through rebuilding of the school, under the Priority Schools Building Programme, as a three form entry primary school and the commissioning of a further 30 places from the school by the Local Authority.

Beneficiaries

- Local children and their families
- The Local Authority

Consultation and data

Information about the School

- The data used in the project is published data on pupil numbers, school performance data and characteristics of the local pupil population.
- Halfway Houses Primary School is currently a two form entry Foundation primary school and the proposal is to expand the school to three forms of entry.
- The age range for the school is 4 to 11 years.
- 19.2% of the children are eligible for free school meals
- 23.4% of the children have been assessed as having special educational needs, of whom 2.1% have a statement of special educational needs.
- 2.8% of children are learning to speak English as an additional language.

The Community

For more detail on the community visit –

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles>

Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan

Protected Characteristic	Issues identified	Action to be taken	Expected outcomes	Owner	Timescale	Cost implications

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From: Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance,
Corporate and Traded Services

Lisa Gannon, Director of Technology

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 22 November 2023

Subject: Decision 23/00106 Oracle Enterprise Business Capabilities (EBC)
System – Hosting and Support

Key Decision

Classification: UNRESTRCITED

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: All Divisions

Summary:

The Council's current support from Rimini Street for the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) expires on 5 April 2024. E-Business Suite is used for critical business processes in finance, human resources and procurement, including payroll and accounts payable and is necessary in order to provide continuing support for Oracle whilst the Enterprise Business Capabilities project implementation is underway.

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services on the proposed decision to:

1. award a contract and the permitted contract term extensions to Rimini Street for the support of the Council's Oracle E-Business Suite (April 2024 to April 2026 with the potential for extensions to 2027);
2. delegate authority to the Director of Technology in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to activate the permitted contract term extensions; and
3. delegate authority to the Director of Technology to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to entering in contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) uses the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) for critical business processes in finance, human resources and procurement, including payroll and accounts payable.

1.2 KCC has used Rimini Street since November 2020 to provide support for the Oracle EBS application.

2. Consideration of Options

2.1 The following options were considered, with Option 3 being the preferred option recommended:

2.1.1 **Option 1** - Oracle – Oracle have stopped supporting the version of our EBC system, so we could not pursue this option.

2.1.2 **Option 2** - Move to another supplier – Rimini Street is the market leader in supporting legacy Oracle systems, however in recent years other suppliers have come into the market. This option would have required using expert resource currently dedicated to the replacement EBC project and the move to a new supplier would have increased the risk to business continuity.

2.1.3 **Option 3** - Extend current contract - Given the practical and financial considerations as well as timing, awarding a new contract to Rimini Street provides business continuity and allows time for the EBC project to be implemented.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The term of the contract will be April 2024 to April 2026 with an option to extend for up to one further year.

3.2 The value of the contract is approximately £1,241,536 with the option to extend priced at £702,846 (£1,944,382 in total).

4. Legal implications

4.1 For the previous contract, the Council had selected Rimini Street through the Government's Digital Marketplace ("G-Cloud"). General Counsel was satisfied that the appropriate terms were in place with Rimini Street and had been reviewed by external lawyers (Burgess Salmon).

5. Equalities implications

5.1 Given there will be no change to the E-Business Suite system, there are no foreseen equalities implications for staff.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and no further action is required.

6. Other corporate implications

6.1 Data Protection – Rimini Street will not have any access to personally identifiable information. Rimini Street will not ever host, store, transfer, transmit or process any of our data, this is not a requirement for them to provide the services.

7. Governance

- 7.1 A Key Decision is required due to expenditure of more than £1m.
- 7.2 Lisa Gannon, Director of Technology will inherit the main delegations via the Officer Scheme of Delegations.
- 7.3 This will include authority to exercise the relevant contract extensions identified within this decision and only subject to prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Given the practical and financial considerations as well as timing, option 3 to award a new contract to Rimini Street, to be procured through the Government's Digital Marketplace ("G-Cloud") provides business continuity and allows time for the EBC project to be implemented.

9. Recommendation(s):

Recommendation(s):

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services on the proposed decision to:

1. award a contract and the permitted contract term extensions to Rimini Street for the support of the Council's Oracle E-Business Suite (April 2024 to April 2026 with the potential for extensions to 2027);
2. delegate authority to the Director of Technology in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to activate the permitted contract term extensions; and
3. delegate authority to the Director of Technology to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to entering in contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.

10. Background Documents

- 10.1 Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- 10.2 Appendix B – Published Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

11. Contact details

Report Author: Tina Lloyd Commercial Lead Telephone: 03000 41 47 45 E-mail: tina.lloyd@kent.gov.uk	Relevant Director: Lisa Gannon Director of Technology Telephone: 03000 41 43 41 E-mail: lisa.gannon@kent.gov.uk
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Oakford, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services

DECISION NO:

23/00106

For publication

Key decision: YES

The decision will result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000).

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Oracle Enterprise Business Capabilities (EBC) System – Hosting and Support

Decision:

As the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, I agree to:

1. award a contract and the permitted contract term extensions to Rimini Street for the support of the Council's Oracle E-Business Suite (April 2024 to April 2026 with the potential for extensions to 2027);
2. delegate authority to the Director of Technology, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Traded Services, to activate the permitted contract term extensions; and
3. delegate authority to the Director of Technology to take other relevant actions, including but not limited to entering in contracts and other legal agreements, as required to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The Council's current support from Rimini Street for the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) expires on 5 April 2024. E-Business Suite is used for critical business processes in finance, human resources and procurement, including payroll and accounts payable and is necessary in order to provide continuing support for Oracle whilst the Enterprise Business Capabilities project implementation is underway.

The term of the contract will be April 2024 to April 2026 with the option to extend for up to one further year. The value of the contract is £1,241,536 with the option to extend priced at £702,846 (£1,944,382 in total).

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

No public consultation has been undertaken.

The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee will consider this on 22 November 2023.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1 - Oracle – Oracle have stopped supporting the version of our EBC system, so we could not pursue this option.

Option 2 - Move to another supplier – Rimini Street is the market leader in supporting legacy Oracle systems, however in recent years other suppliers have come into the market. This option would have required using expert resource currently dedicated to the replacement EBC project and the move to a new supplier would have increased the risk to business continuity.

Option 3 - Extend current contract - Given the practical and financial considerations as well as timing, awarding a new contract to Rimini Street provides business continuity and allows time for the EBC project to be implemented.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer: None

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Oracle Support - Rimini Street

Responsible Officer

Tina Lloyd - DCED T

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Technology

Responsible Head of Service

Lisa Gannon - DCED T

Responsible Director

Amanda Beer - DCE

Aims and Objectives

The Council's current support from Rimini Street for the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) expires on 5 April 2024. E-Business Suite is used for critical business processes in finance, human resources and procurement, including payroll and accounts payable and is necessary in order to provide continuing support for Oracle whilst the Enterprise Resource Planning project implementation is underway.

There is no change to the previous contract.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Not Applicable

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

This is for a new contract with the same supplier providing a continuation of service.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff Staff/Volunteers
Residents/Communities/Citizens No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
No
Details of Positive Impacts
Not Applicable
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities

Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: Ben Watts, General Counsel

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 22 November 2023

Subject: **Work Programme 2023**

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Standard item

Summary: This report gives details of the proposed work programme for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee.

Recommendation: The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and note its planned work programme for 2023

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The proposed Work Programme has been compiled from items on the Forthcoming Executive Decision List, from actions arising from previous meetings and from topics identified at agenda setting meetings, held 6 weeks before each Cabinet Committee meeting, in accordance with the Constitution, and attended by the Chair, Vice-Chair and group spokesmen.
- 1.2 Whilst the Chair, in consultation with the Cabinet Members, is responsible for the final selection of items for the agenda, this item gives all Members of the Cabinet Committee the opportunity to suggest amendments and additional agenda items where appropriate.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.1 At its meeting held on 27 March 2014, the County Council agreed the following terms of reference for the Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee “To be responsible for those functions that fall within the Strategic and Corporate Services Directorate” and these should also inform the suggestions made by Members for appropriate matters for consideration.

3. Work Programme 2023

- 3.1 The Cabinet Committee is requested to consider and note the items within the proposed Work Programme, set out in the appendix to this report, and to suggest any additional topics to be considered for inclusion on agendas of future meetings.
- 3.2 The schedule of commissioning activity that falls within the remit of this Cabinet Committee will be included in the Work Programme and is considered at agenda setting meetings to support more effective forward agenda planning and allow Members to have oversight of significant services delivery decisions in advance.

3.3 When selecting future items, the Cabinet Committee should consider performance monitoring reports. Any 'for information' or briefing items will be sent to Members of the Cabinet Committee separately to the agenda or separate member briefings will be arranged where appropriate.

4. Conclusion

4.1 It is important for the Cabinet Committee process that the Committee takes ownership of its work programme to help the Cabinet Members to deliver informed and considered decisions. A regular report will be submitted to each meeting of the Cabinet Committee to give updates on requested topics and to seek suggestions for future items to be considered. This does not preclude Members making requests to the Chair or the Democratic Services Officer between meetings for consideration.

5. Recommendation: The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and note its planned work programme for 2023

6. Background Documents

None.

7. Contact details

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POLICY AND RESOURCES CABINET COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

17 January 2024 – 10am agenda setting 27 November at 3.00pm (online)		
• Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Kent	Tim Woolmer	Annual item
• Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department	David Whittle Matt Wagner	Regular item
• Kent Public Service Network (KPSN)	Lisa Gannon Stuart Cockett	Key Decision
• Disposal of Former Rosemary Centre, High Road, Dartford, DA2 7DP	Rebecca Spore Mark Cheverton Hugh D'Alton	Key Decision Moved from March
• Update on new Asset Management Strategy development	Rebecca Spore Rebecca Anderson Mark Cheverton	
• Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy	David Whittle Serine Annan-Veitch	Key Decision
• Proposals regarding the Afghan Resettlement and United Kingdom Resettlement Schemes	David Whittle Michael Thomas-Sam Chris Grosskopf	Key Decision
• Digital Strategy (tbc)	Lisa Gannon Dave Lindsay Emma Rudd	Key decision for Strategy
• Work Programme 2023		
13 March 2024 – 10am agenda setting 29 January at 2.00pm (online)		
• Asset Management Strategy 2024 – 2030	Rebecca Spore Rebecca Anderson	
• Risk Management (Including RAG ratings)	David Whittle Mark Scrivener	Annual item

• Cyber Security	Lisa Gannon	Annual item
• Contract Management Review Group update	Clare Maynard	Six-monthly item
• Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Zena Cooke Dave Shipton	Regular item
• Facilities Management update (bi-annual)	Rebecca Spore	Moved to 2024 due to new Facilities Management arrangements. (frequency thereafter to be confirmed)
• Work Programme 2023		
15 May 2024 – 10am – agenda setting 20 March at 2.00 pm (online)		
• Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department	David Whittle Matt Wagner	Regular item
• Kent Partnerships Update - Kent Estates Partnership (KEP) and Kent Connects	Rebecca Spore Phil Murphy Julie Johnson	Regular item
• Facilities Management update (bi-annual)	Rebecca Spore	Regular item
• Work Programme 2023		
10 July 2024 – 2pm – agenda setting 22 May at 11.00am (online)		
• Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Zena Cooke	Regular item
• Work Programme 2023		
September 2024 – 2pm – agenda setting TBC		
• Facilities Management update (bi-annual)	Rebecca Spore	Regular item
• Work Programme 2023		

PATTERN OF REGULAR ITEMS

JANUARY	Annual	Draft Revenue and Capital Budget and Medium-Term Financial Plan	Zena Cooke Dave Shipton
	Annual	Implementation of the Armed Forces Covenant in Kent	Tim Woolmer
	Every other meeting	Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department	David Whittle Matt Wagner
MARCH	Annual	Risk Management (Including RAG ratings)	David Whittle Mark Scrivener
	Annual	Cyber Security	Lisa Gannon
	Six-monthly	Contract Management Review Group update	Clare Maynard
	Every other meeting	Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Zena Cooke Dave Shipton
MAY	Annual	Kent Partnerships Update - Kent Estates Partnership (KEP) and Kent Connects	Rebecca Spore Phil Murphy Julie Johnson
	Six-monthly	Facilities Management update	Rebecca Spore
	Every other meeting	Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and Deputy Chief Executive's Department	David Whittle Matt Wagner
JULY	Every other meeting	Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Zena Cooke Dave Shipton
SEPTEMBER	Six-monthly	Contract Management Review Group update	Clare Maynard
	Every other	Performance Dashboard for the Chief Executive's Department and	David Whittle

	meeting	Deputy Chief Executive's Department	Matt Wagner
NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER	Annual	Annual Equality and Diversity Report (in 2022 moved to January)	David Whittle
	Six-monthly	Facilities Management update	Rebecca Spore
	Every other meeting	Regular Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) update	Zena Cooke Dave Shipton
TBC	TBC	Enterprise Business Capabilities - Update	Lisa Gannon