

## **Appendix B - A summary of consultation responses provided by Councillors**

A total of 20 responses were received from Councillors via the Children' Centre consultation questionnaire (16 submitted online, and 4 on paper). This is likely to include, but is not restricted to, KCC members<sup>1</sup>. Fourteen of these Councillors disagreed with the proposal to close some Centres, with this figure dropping to 11 disagreeing with the proposal to reduce the opening hours at some Centres, and just 7 disagreeing with the proposal to link Centres. Five Councillors disagreed with all three proposals, but 4 agreed with all three.

Generally, Councillors' objections to the proposed closures were objections to the proposal in principle, rather than the closure of any particular, named Centre(s)<sup>2</sup>. The key concern appears to be the impact on children and families, particularly those most in need of support and those who are not in a position to travel.

Similarly, Councillors' objections to the proposed reductions in opening hours were mostly objections to the proposal in principle, rather than the proposed reductions at any particular, named Centre<sup>3</sup>. The key concern appears to be the fear that reduced opening hours will mean a reduction in services that children and families are able to access.

A number of those agreeing with the proposals alluded to the need to make savings, with others feeling that the impact of the proposals would not be significant.

### **Written Responses from KCC Members**

6 Members of KCC submitted written responses to the consultation. A summary of these responses is provided below.

- One member identified an alternative proposal.
- Universal service provided by Centres is of great value to mothers and families. They provide a network for new mothers it reaches out and effectively helps vulnerable families. I would therefore question why, in Canterbury District, it is proposed to close Briary, and Tina Rintoul Centres (Hersden).

It is, of course, not the case that all residential areas have Children's Centre, and this presents a challenge to a service like this one, especially in rural areas. Many villages certainly in the Canterbury District, have a number of families in the categories mentioned above and I know the outreach work that has been done from centres like those in Chartham and Littlebourne. If the latter are closed then careful thought will have to be given to how the new, urban hubs will provide outreach to those families who are unlikely to be able to travel far from their homes. I would hope to see energetic exploration of

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<sup>1</sup> Each of the 20 respondents checked the 'Councillor' box at Q1b on the consultation questionnaire.

<sup>2</sup> With some exceptions

<sup>3</sup> With some exceptions

the possibilities of using village and community halls and of using volunteers, either as coordinating committees of local residents, or through commissioning from well-established voluntary organisations.

- Closing the centre (Briary) will mean failing those clients most in need, effectively leaving them in a vacuum. Canterbury is too far away and Poppy will not be able to cope with extra demand. Outreach is not a satisfactory method when early intervention is clearly the overriding goal too to be achieved.
- There has been a history of difficulty with the Hadlow Children's Centre ..... which has constrained the success of the Children's Centre and therefore the numbers attending. As ever, matters are complicated in that the financial support of the Children's Centre, by using the Youth Centre building, maintains the viability of the building and therefore allows the other uses, including the BEAT Project funded by KCC and the Youth Club.
- This particular centre (New Romney) is the one that is in the most populated area of the Marsh, opened most time and days of the three Sure Start Centre and that offers the widest range of services.
- If Children's Centres are to be closed, then Woodgrove is not the best option, as far as Sittingbourne is concerned. It is the only centre on the South side of Sittingbourne, but, as you heard on your visit, its central position makes it the best option in access terms for a large number of parents. I believe there has been a major increase in the number of users and the Centre has also reached out more successfully to families who are most in need of the support provided here. I would say that an alternative option cannot be to close Milton Court, which does serve an area of great deprivation too.

### **KCC Member Queries**

Additionally, 8 Members of KCC contacted the Consultation Team with queries relating to the consultation. These were responded to and addressed as appropriate. In summary the queries included;

- An explanation regarding the launch of the consultation and the reasoning behind some Children's Centre staff being unaware.
- Reasoning as to why the Bysingwood centre will be linked to Canterbury for management purposes rather than Swale.
- Additional information relating to the reasoning for the proposed Centre closures.
- Reasoning as to why St. Mary's Children's Centre was proposed instead of Bysing Wood Children's Centre.
- Explanations relating to transport accessibility analysis – public transport and drive times.
- Request for usage information for Larkfield and Woodland Children's Centres.
- Request for usage information for the Briary Children's Centre.

- Explanation relating to the age of usage data used.
- Request for cost of building and equipment at the Briary Children's Centre.
- Explanation of the need indicators used.
- Request for staffing details, building usage plans and associated savings at Tina Rintoul, Briary and Swalecliffe Children's Centres.
- Request for need information (volume), targeted service delivery information and improvements in outcomes for the Centres it is proposed to close in the Canterbury District.
- Definition of natural catchment .
- Request for usage information for Apple Tree, Little Bees and Tina Rintoul Children's Centres.
- Outreach service provision in Canterbury.
- Taxi provision to Children's Centres provided by KCC.
- Use of space at Milton Court Children's Centre.
- Request for funding information for Hythe Bay Children's Centre.
- Possibilities of exploring funding from other sources.
- Request for consultation feedback, running costs, usage figures, attendance figures, and customer feedback for the Daisy Chains Children's Centre.