

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Jenny Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services

DECISION NO:

13/00067

For publication**Subject:**

Shaping the Future of Children's Centres

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, I propose to agree to;

- Close 12 Children's Centres but retain services in the local community from 1 April 2014 (Cherry Blossom, Squirrel Lodge, Little Bees, Daisy Chains, Little Painters, Loose, Dunton Green, Merry-Go-Round, Hadlow, Larkfield, Pembury and Primrose Children's Centres.)
- Reduce the hours at 13 Children's Centres to part-time from 1 April 2014 (Tina Rintoul, Samphire, West Kingsdown, Dymchurch, Hawkinge and Rural, Hythe Bay, Lydd'le Stars, Beaches, Lilypad, Birchington, Callis Grange, Garlinge and Harmony Children's Centres.)
- Merge 12 Children's Centres into 6 but retain current Children's Centre buildings to continue to offer access to early childhood services on behalf of a Children's Centre - linked site/ outreach centre. (Merge The Village with Folkestone Early Years from 1 April 2015, merge Marden with Headcorn from 1 April 2014, merge Apple Tree with Little Hands from 1 April 2014, merge the Briary with The Poppy from 1 April 2014, merge Swalecliffe with Joy Lane from 1 April 2014 and merge Maypole with Oakfield from 1 April 2014.)
- Merge 2 Children's Centres into 1 but continue to offer access to early childhood services in Tower Hamlets community (The Daisy) on behalf of a Children's Centre - linked site/ outreach centre (merge The Daisy with The Buttercup from 1 April 2014.)
- Link 17 hubs with 43 full-time Centres and 18 part-time Centres and 7 Outreach Centres/ linked sites.

Reason(s) for decision:

- To support the delivery of a reduction in public funding for Children's Centres,
- To make sure that the available resources are focused more on service delivery and less on running buildings and other overheads,
- To ensure that the needs of our children and their families, particularly those who need our support most, are met.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

To be entered after the meeting and considered by the Cabinet Member when taking the decision.

Any alternatives considered:

An additional 13 Centres were considered as closures and additional 1 Centre as part time. These were included in the public consultation. Following analysis of the consultation these Centres will be retained, as follows:-

- a) In their current form – Temple Hill, St. Mary's, Folkestone Early Years, New Romney,

Woodgrove and The Buttercup Children's Centres.

- b) As mergers with another Centre. The Children's Centre buildings will be retained to continue to offer access to early childhood services (linked site/ outreach centre) - The Village, Marden, Apple Tree, The Daisy, Briary, Swalecliffe and Maypole Children's Centres. New accommodation will be sought within the local community to continue to offer access to early childhood service (linked site/ outreach centre) – The Daisy
- c) As a part-time Centre – Tina Rintoul

A number of additional workstreams for delivering savings have also been identified during the consultation process. These would potentially offset the reduction in savings achieved by decreasing the number of Centre closures and include;

- a) Generating additional income from working with partners, both internal and external, and increasing rental income particularly at part-time Centres
- b) Effective joint commissioning
- c) Considering the formal co location of health visitors
- d) Increased efficiencies of a new working model

These alternatives will be investigated further and, where feasible, implemented through 2014/15.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date