



To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 23 February 2016 at 2.00 pm

Meeting Rooms 1&2, County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Peter Clark'.

Peter Clark
Head of Paid Service

February 2016

Contact Officer: **Sue Whitehead**
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Membership

Councillors

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Ian Hudspeth | <i>Leader of the Council</i> |
| Rodney Rose | <i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i> |
| Mrs Judith Heathcoat | <i>Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</i> |
| Nick Carter | <i>Cabinet Member for Business & Customer Services</i> |
| Melinda Tilley | <i>Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families</i> |
| Lorraine Lindsay-Gale | <i>Cabinet Member for Cultural & Community Services</i> |
| David Nimmo Smith | <i>Cabinet Member for Environment</i> |
| Lawrie Stratford | <i>Cabinet Member for Finance</i> |
| Hilary Hibbert-Biles | <i>Cabinet Member for Public Health</i> |

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on Wednesday 2 March 2016 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 15 March 2016

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Glenn Watson on (01865) 815270 or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note opposite

3. Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2015 (**CA3 (to be circulated separately)**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

5. Petitions and Public Address

6. New Arrangements for Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Services (Pages 1 - 144)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education & Families

Forward Plan Ref: 2015/118

Contact: Jim Leivers, Director for Children's Services Tel: (01865) 815122

Report of the Director for Children's Services (**CA6**)

Children's Services in Oxfordshire has and continues to be a primary priority for the Council and its partners. In particular, keeping children safe is of critical importance to

the Council and as such the Authority has a clear explicit resource commitment to supporting the most vulnerable within the community. There is however significant pressures and challenges facing public sector services that mean the current status quo arrangements are not sustainable. This item comprises an overview report together with a series of three reports which cover in some detail:

- The outcome of public consultation regarding proposals for change to early help services, including, children's centres and early intervention hubs
- Proposals for the future shape of Education and Learning Services
- Proposals for future safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services
- Proposals for future Children's Social Care services.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) receive the outcome of the consultation exercise on the future of early help services along with the proposed alternative arrangements for Children's Services as outlined in the Cabinet Advisory Group report of September 2015 along with recommendations from the Director of Children's Services regarding future organisational arrangements for Children's Social Care;***
- (b) approve the proposed arrangements for Safeguarding and Corporate parenting services as outlined in the attached report;***
- (c) approve the proposed arrangements for Education Services as outlined in the attached report; and***
- (d) receive a further detailed report on the implementation of the proposed changes.***

(a) The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service_(Pages 145 - 150)

Report by Deputy Director for Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding (**CA6a**)

The impact of increasing workloads and reducing resources is affecting the current capacity in both Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. Along with other Children, Education and Family services these areas of work need to change so as to address the high levels of demand. These services are part of a wider Children's Social Care service and include a range of specialist and quality assurance functions that are provided countywide and managed under a deputy director. These are all statutory services geared towards protecting the most vulnerable children in Oxfordshire.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) agree the proposals outlined in paragraph 19-22 of the report; and***
- (b) agree that a further report outlining in detail the proposed staffing arrangements and costs be made to the March 2016 Cabinet meeting.***

**(b) Future Arrangements for Education Support for Oxfordshire Schools
(Pages 151 - 156)**

Report by Interim Deputy Director - Education and Learning (**CA6b**)

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the proposed arrangements for Education and Learning Services as outlined in the attached report.

(c) Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care_(Pages 157 - 182)

Report by the Director for Children's Services (CA6c)

On 15 September 2015, Cabinet agreed to commence with a public consultation on proposals to redesign the county's children's services to focus support on the most vulnerable children, and consequently reconfigure existing the existing Early Intervention Services.

The public consultation ran from 14 October 2015 until 10 January 2016, and views were gathered on three options for delivering a new children's service which would support 0-19 year olds (up to 25 years if children have additional needs), and their families, and integrate services currently provided by Children's Centres, Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Social Care.

The report details the outcome of the public consultation and seeks approval to the proposals.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED:

- ***That eight Children and Family Centres are developed in the locations set out in the report. These Centres will deliver services that meet the authority's statutory duties relating to Children's Centres and deliver statutory and targeted services to vulnerable children and families***
- ***That limited open access services are provided from within the eight Children and Family Centres***
- ***A mobile bus is retained to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community as these communities are less likely to attend the main centres***
- ***To continue to support the child care settings currently based in Children's Centres through to April 2017. During this time the authority will work with the centres to ensure they are financially self-sufficient from April 2017.***
- ***Approve the inclusion of £1.9m budget in the capital programme for the new Children and Family Centres to be funded from the unallocated corporate resources.***
- ***Commit to continue conversations with organisations and groups that have shown an interest in using alternative funding streams to enable centres to remain open.***

7. 2015/16 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Report - December 2015 (Pages 183 - 222)

Cabinet Member: Finance

Forward Plan Ref: 2015/097

Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Chief Accountant Tel: (01865) 323981

Report by Chief Finance Officer (**CA7**).

This report focuses on the management of the 2015/16 budget. Parts 1 and 2 include projections for revenue, reserves and balances as at the end of December 2015. Capital Programme monitoring is included at Part 3.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the report;**
- (b) note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 4;**
- (c) approve an increase of £0.935m for the A34 Milton Interchange scheme;**
- (d) approve the full budget of £11.165m for the Eastern Arc Phase 1: Access to Headington project and to proceed to detailed design; and**
- (e) note the changes to the Capital Programme set out in Annex 7b and 7c.**

8. Progress Report on Looked After Children and those Leaving Care (Pages 223 - 246)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education & Families

Forward Plan Ref: 2015/117

Contact: Matthew Edwards, Corporate Parenting Manager Tel: (01865) 323098

Report by Director for Children's Services (**CA8**).

This report reviews the performance and outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers since April 2014 and identifies key challenges moving forward particularly around understanding the causes for and then addressing the growth in the looked after population.

It focuses on the significant rise in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children (UASCs) and makes recommendations for meeting the growing challenges in this area which are affecting all local authorities.

This report provides early evidence that the Placement Strategy is already having an impact on front line practice and recommends the Placement Strategy Board is tasked with measuring the effectiveness of Cabinet's significant investment in making sure children are safe and securely attached, improving outcomes and reducing external placements.

This paper RECOMMENDS that further analysis of the child in need and child protection populations are undertaken to isolate more specific risk factors for care and what constitutes an effective intervention. This work should draw on the learning and recommendations of the Neglect pilot and OSCB's reviews of adolescents who have died and suffered or caused serious harm.

This paper RECOMMENDS that a multi-agency group is established to devise a county-wide strategy to respond to the growing challenges nationally of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Refugee families.

Oxfordshire has taken a radical and proactive approach to the spiralling costs of external placements and has significantly invested to create in-county edge of care, fostering and residential capacity. The effectiveness of this investment in safeguarding, improving outcomes and reducing external placement costs will require close scrutiny over the coming year. This paper RECOMMENDS that the Placement Strategy Board is tasked with measuring the impact and cost savings of the Placement Strategy reporting up to Cabinet.

9. Staffing Report - Quarter 3 - 2015 (Pages 247 - 250)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2015/098

Contact: Sue Corrigan, County HR Manager Tel: (01865) 810280

Report by Chief Human Resources Officer (**CA9**).

This report gives an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015. It gives details of the actual staffing numbers at 31 December 2015 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. These are shown by directorate in Appendix 1. In addition, the report provides information on the cost of posts being covered by agency staff.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

10. Follow up to a Call in of a decision by the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Hudspeth substituting): Proposed Bus Lane & Parking/Waiting Restrictions - Orchard Centre (Phase 2), Didcot (Pages 251 - 322)

At their meeting on 4 February 2016, the Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Hudspeth substituting) made on 14 February 2016 following proper notice of a call in. The Committee agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet for it to consider in the light of the following material concern: that the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal;

The following documents are attached (**CA10**):

- (a) a report setting out the names of the Councillors who have required the call in and the reasons given for the Call in.
- (b) the report considered by the Leader of the Council together with an extract of the minutes of the delegated decision session.
- (c) additional information provided to the Performance Scrutiny Committee in response to the call in
- (d) a note of the material concern of the Performance Scrutiny Committee
- (e) report by the Deputy Director for Environment & Economy to Cabinet.

11. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 323 - 324)

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead, Committee Services Manager (01865 810262)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include "updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting". Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming

meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA11**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

CABINET– 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Proposed Future Arrangements for Children, Education and Family Services

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Children's Services in Oxfordshire has and continues to be a primary priority for the Council and its partners. In particular, keeping children safe is of critical importance to the Council and as such the Authority has a clear explicit resource commitment to supporting the most vulnerable within the community. There is however significant pressures and challenges facing public sector services that mean the current status quo arrangements are not sustainable. The County Council is facing unprecedented changes that are significantly influenced by a number of factors.
2. Firstly, Children's Services are both locally and nationally facing an agenda of unprecedented change. Much of this is driven by the ambitions of Government to introduce fundamental change to the ways in which children and their families are provided with services such as education, health provision and care. It is an agenda that will over the next 3-4 years fundamentally change the nature and extent of public sector services.
3. Secondly, running alongside these ambitions, funding for public sector services is being radically reduced. In Oxfordshire this has over the last 5 years seen a significant reduction in available finance that has required a reduction in excess of £210million in funding for County Council services. This has had a direct impact on Children, Education and Family services. This is not untypical of what is happening in other Local Authority areas up and down the country. Looking forwards it is known that there are other substantial reductions to come, both in Children's Social Care and in funding for Education Services. The extent of this is still to be ascertained.
4. Thirdly, volume and activity in Oxfordshire and elsewhere has shown since 2011/12 dramatic increases. Between March 2011 and March 2015 the number of children on a child protection plan rose from 332 to 569 - a rise of 71% (compared with a national rise of 16%). Since March the numbers of children on plans have stabilised. This has shown a concomitant increase in the Looked After population from 427 at March 2011 to 514 at March 2015 a rise of 20% compared to a national rise of 4%. Since March the number of looked after children has risen further to 585.
5. It is important to place these pressures and inevitable reduction in service provision in context. Whilst the Council needs to move from universal open access provision for all to a targeted model of intervention it is important to remember that much of existing provision such as those commissioned by public health services will remain in place.

6. These changes and pressures, both, volume and spend patterns, against a backcloth of increasing requirements from Government make major organisational change necessary. It is further compounded and complicated by the rising agenda of devolution as laid out in the "Cities and Local Government Devolution Act (CLGDA) 2016 which received assent in January of this year. Whilst much of the immediate changes are likely to affect in the first instance Adult Services it will have a longer term impact on Children's Services. This is currently being explored by the County Council and the health community and will form the basis of future reports to Cabinet.

Issues

7. As a consequence of the above the Children Education and Families Directorate needs to change. In some respects this builds upon the reorganisation of 2010/11 but fundamentally it is about the Directorate doing less with less resource and inevitably targeting what is done to those who need it most.
8. It inevitably means developing a different relationship with partner organisations such as Schools and Health and will create a different environment of help and support for children and their families.
9. The details of the proposed changes will be developed over the coming months with the intention of having in place a fit for purpose future organisation targeted at the most vulnerable children living in, or visiting Oxfordshire.
10. Linked to this report are a series of three reports which cover in some detail:
- The outcome of public consultation regarding proposals for change to early help services, including, children's centres and early intervention hubs
 - Proposals for the future shape of Education and learning Services
 - Proposals for future safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Services
 - Proposals for future Children's Social Care services.
11. If the proposals within these reports are accepted by Cabinet then further consultation with staff and partners will be required. This is intended to commence in April/May and will last over the summer period. It will be based upon more detailed work that will be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet.
12. An overriding consideration in the preparation of these reports has been affordability. Much of the change is required as a consequence of budget reductions arising from increasing volumes and decreasing resources. So whilst the concept of help and support delivered as part of a universal provision has been recognised as desirable it has been inevitable that

services in some key areas will be reduced. In practical terms the proposals identified throughout the linked reports are made on the basis of protecting the most vulnerable and making the best of what we have.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) receive the outcome of the consultation exercise on the future of early help services along with the proposed alternative arrangements for Children's Services as outlined in the Cabinet Advisory Group report of September 2015 along with recommendations from the Director of Children's Services regarding future organisational arrangements for Children's Social Care;
- (b) approve the proposed arrangements for Safeguarding and Corporate parenting services as outlined in the attached report;
- (c) approve the proposed arrangements for Education Services as outlined in the attached report; and
- (d) receives a further detailed report on the implementation of the proposed changes.

JIM LEIVERS
Director for Children's Services

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Jim Leivers, Director for Children's Services

February 2016

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Oxfordshire County Council

Consultation on the proposed new model for children's services in Oxfordshire – analysis of the responses

Report from The Campaign Company (TCC)

January 2016

Contents

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 1. | Executive summary | 5 |
| 1.1. | Background to the consultation | |
| 1.2. | Key findings | |
| 1.3. | Summary of findings by consultation channel | |
| 1.4. | Conclusions | |
| 2. | About the consultation | 21 |
| 2.1 | Background to the consultation | |
| 2.2 | Consultation process | |
| 2.3 | Responses to the consultation | |
| 2.4 | Interpreting the consultation response | |
| 2.5 | Structure of the consultation reports | |
| 3. | Analysis of survey responses | 29 |
| 3.1 | Introduction | |
| 3.2 | Summary findings | |
| 3.3 | Breakdown of the responses | |

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 4. | Analysis of stakeholder responses | 68 |
| 4.1 | Introducing the stakeholder response | |
| 4.2 | Summary findings | |
| 4.3 | Ad hoc quantitative voting | |
| 4.4 | Main themes from stakeholder meetings | |
| 4.5 | Focus groups | |
| 4.5 | Additional information on stakeholder events | |
| 5. | Analysis of e-mail and letter responses | 87 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | |
| 5.2 | Summary findings | |
| 5.3 | Main themes | |
| 6. | Analysis of detailed responses | 95 |
| 6.1 | Introduction | |
| 6.2 | Summary of responses | |

Appendices

Appendix 1: Representativeness of respondent data

Appendix 2: Summary of social media responses

Appendix 3: Analysis of survey by geography and type of respondent

Appendix 4: Consultation survey questions

List of tables and charts

Table 1: *Headline quantitative measures from survey*

Table 2: *Quantitative data from stakeholder sessions*

Table 3: *Stakeholder engagement activities*

Table 4: *Responses received by response method*

Table 5: *"In what context are you responding to this consultation?" (Consultation Q1)*

Table 6: *Survey responses by geographic location*

Table 7: *Survey responses by demographics*

Figure 1: *"In what context are you responding to this consultation?" (Consultation Q1)*

Table 8: *Responses by children's centres / early intervention hubs used*

Figure 2: *Number of users of centres / hubs by geography (% respondents)*

Table 9: *Types of services used by respondents (% services)*

Figure 3: *Other sites used to access children and young people's services and support (% responses)*

Figure 4: *The extent to which people agree with the statement: "It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/ families than to all children and families"*

Figure 5: *Extent of agreement with the overall proposals to create an integrated children's service (% responses)*

Figure 6: *Which of the three options do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated services for 0-19 year olds? (% responses)*

Figure 7: *Do you think that any of the activities currently offered could be run by volunteers and/or community groups in your area? (% responses)*

Table 10: *Results of voting at stakeholder meetings*

1. Executive summary

In this executive summary, the key messages are set out with detail on findings and a high level summary of each of the channels of the consultation also included. Each channel has a detailed standalone report that expands on the points contained in here.

1.1 Background to the consultation

The public consultation was opened on the 14th October 2015 and closed on 10th January 2016. The details for the channels used to publicise the consultation, engage stakeholders around the proposals, and the methods used to capture responses, are detailed below.

Services for children in Oxfordshire are provided by Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Social Care and Early Intervention Service. This Service provides a service to children and families whose needs are such that they are required by law to protect and safeguard the well-being of children. The service supports children in need, children subject to child protection plans, looked after children and care leavers (as defined by the Children Act 1989). The primary aim of this service is to provide community support to vulnerable children and families in order to promote their wellbeing and prevent any concerns or difficulties escalating to a point where statutory services are required.

Currently, the Early Intervention Service comprises 44 children's centres; 7 Early Intervention Hubs; the Youth Engagement and Opportunities team focusing on education, employment and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-25 year olds who are vulnerable; and the Thriving Families Team, providing intensive support to families that have been identified as being in need through the national Troubled Families Programme.

This consultation followed a number of rounds of budget negotiation and decision which identified the need to consult on savings worth in total £8 million to the Early Intervention Service; a 50 per cent reduction from the £16 million 2014/2015 budget.

This consultation was on a proposed new model for children's services. The key features of the new model for services including reconfiguration of the current 44 children's centres and 7 early intervention hubs and creation of up to 8 children and family centres. The proposed new model will be funded by combining the budget for the Early Intervention Service, once the £8 million savings have been removed, with the £4 million budget of the Children's Social Care Family Support Teams.

Three options were consulted on: the county council's preferred option of no universal services (option 1), limited universal services (option 2), and universal services through community investment (option 3). No options were provided for no changes to the current Early Intervention Services.

1.2 Key messages for the council

Key message 1 - There is a general rejection of the proposals that have been put forward

Key message 2 - People want to defend universal services and proposals that undermine that position are not welcomed

Key message 3 - Integration is understood but rejected because of its association with the removal of universal services and the associated loss of specialist skills

Key message 4 -Prioritising vulnerable families over others is accepted as a principle but not at the expense of universal services

Key messages 5 -There is concern amongst respondents that removing prevention services will have damaging knock on effects across other services and the community in general

Key message 6 -There are identified negative social impacts that interact with negative health impacts creating a set of knock on effects that will damage long term outcomes

Key message 7 - These impacts include reduction in breastfeeding, increased incidence and lack of identification of postnatal depression, slower identification of special educational needs, poorer childhood development including socialisation, social isolation for parents, reduced community networks, and an increase in hidden child protection issues and family based domestic violence.

Key message 8 - There is an expected displacement effect in the wider system with other universal services being put under pressure to pick up the slack including Health Visitors, GPs, Mental Health, and Schools

Key message 9 - A social care led service will return services provided to a position of social stigmatisation

Key message 10 -Accessibility will be reduced with transport and capacity issues particularly disadvantaging rural communities. Minority communities and socio-economic groups may be excluded from alternative provision (picked up by a small number of participants)

Key message 11 - Women, minority communities and children with special educational needs are under-represented in the Social and Community Impact Assessment

Key message 12 -There is some scope for voluntary services to take up the slack although there is a need to support volunteers through infrastructure.

Key message 13 -There are call to find funding elsewhere including through council tax increases and lobbying of central Government for funds.

Key message 14 – There are a number of developed proposals that have been put forward as alternatives for exploration.

1.3 Findings

The consultation was broad in scope seeking opinion and input across multiple channels on the proposals that have been put forward. 2715 responses were received. In addition, 8 stakeholder and public meeting events were held. 21 focus groups were also held with adult and children service users.

1.3.1 Quantitative measures of reaction to the proposals

The survey asked a number of quantitative questions that give some insight into the overall response to the proposal. There were also a number of ad hoc votes taken at stakeholder events and organised by parents' representatives, we have set the details out of both forms of data here. Where questions were asked in the form "Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree" we have used net score to indicate the response - this is the total percentage of those who disagree subtracted from the total number who agreed. Don't know and neutral responses are excluded from this calculation.

Table 1: Headline quantitative measures from survey

| Question | Result |
|---|--------|
| Q 6. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/families than to all children and families?" | -7 |
| Q 7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with Oxfordshire County Council's overall proposal to create and integrated children's service for 0-19 year olds (25 for young people with special educational needs) | -47 |
| Q 8. Which of the three options outlined in the consultation document do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated services for 0-19 years? In particular, which model do you prefer? | |
| • Option 1 – preferred option | 8% |
| • Option 2 | 14% |
| • Option 3 | 8% |
| • None | 71% |
| Q.9 Do you have any alternative proposals for how the council could meet the £8 million savings required from the children's services budget? | |
| • Yes | 51% |
| • No | 49% |
| Q 11. Do you think that any of the groups/activities currently offered by your children's centre(s) and/or early intervention hubs could be run by volunteers and/or community groups in your local area? | |
| • Yes | 23% |
| • No | 25% |
| • Don't know | 52% |

The quantitative response from the survey highlights differing degrees of disagreement with the proposals put forward by the authority. Prioritising vulnerable families over others is accepted by a reasonably large minority of the survey respondents but is rejected by the majority. The integration of services to form a holistic 0-19 years' service is more fundamentally rejected by a large majority (over two thirds) of the response.

The preferred option that is put forward for the service receives the least amount of support with option two receiving the most support of any of the proposals. It is clear though that none of the proposals are accepted by the majority of respondents with 71 percent indicating that they do not support any of the proposals positioned in the consultation document.

There is greater optimism on the question of voluntary resource and provision with just under a quarter of respondents indicating that there is potential for these groups to take on some of the existing services.

The second quantitative data point that we have, comes from ad hoc show of hands voting at the stakeholder events. These were run by Oxfordshire County Council.

Table :2 Quantitative data from stakeholder sessions

| Date | Venue | Total attendees | Vote Question | Yes/ Agree | No/ Disagree | Abstain | Notes |
|--------|------------|-----------------|---|------------|--------------|---------|---|
| 16-Nov | Oxford (1) | 39 | Raise your hand if you are against all the proposals | 33 | 0 | 6 | |
| 19-Nov | Didcot | 62 | (vote1) Would you support a referendum to approve a rise in council tax (in order to reduce the cuts to children's services)? | 60 | 2 | 0 | <i>The vote on council tax was led by a Cllr attending the meeting as a stakeholder</i> |
| | | | (vote2) Do you support any of the proposals presented? | 0 | 54 | 6 | |

| Date | Venue | Total attendees | Vote Question | Yes/ Agree | No/ Disagree | Abstain | Notes |
|--------|------------|-----------------|--|------------|--------------|---------|--|
| 20-Nov | Oxford (2) | 45 | Do you agree that "We oppose all 3 proposals put forward"? | 36 | 0 | 1 | <i>Not everyone voted</i> |
| 24-Nov | Banbury | 74 | Raise your hand if you are agree with any of the proposals | 0 | 73 | 1 | |
| 25-Nov | Abingdon | 53 | No vote | | | | |
| 30-Nov | Bicester | 41 | No vote | | | | |
| 07-Dec | Witney | 63 | Vote to reject all 3 proposals | 36 | - | - | <i>No & Abstain votes were not requested</i> |
| 10-Dec | Oxford (3) | 56 | Do you agree that all the proposals are unacceptable? | 40 | 0 | 10 | <i>Not everyone voted</i> |

Questions that were put to the audience at six of the events were designed to indicate support within the room for the proposals put forward by the authority. Without exception, there is an overall rejection of the proposals. At Didcot, there was a further voted that indicated a majority would be in favour of a referendum on council tax increases to provide additional funding to run the children's centres.

1.3.2 Qualitative findings

The qualitative response is drawn from a number of sources including qualitative space on the survey, notes from stakeholder and public events, and emails, letters and extended responses.

In the qualitative response, there is specific detail that emerges in relation to personal experience, individual services, and elements of the proposal. Beyond those specifics, there is a very consistent set of themes that emerge.

These include: a general rejection of the proposals, concern over the loss of preventative services, associated health and social impacts, issues with accessibility within the new proposed model and funding of the services.

General rejection of the proposals

Across all of the channels, there is a clear message that the proposals are not welcomed. Universal services are extensively used and valued by the community and community groups. There are significant benefits that individuals, groups and communities gain from these services.

*“Local authority areas with children's centres have seen a larger reduction in child poverty levels in recent years than corresponding local authorities”
(Letter from Maple Tree Children's Centre)*

Respondents are generally unprepared to engage in a conversation about the wholesale removal of universal services. In part that is why survey respondents reject the integration of services and the principle of prioritising vulnerability, it is a rejection motivated by the context of removing universal services.

This rejection means that much of the remaining response is about expanding upon and explaining that rejection.

Concern over loss of preventative services

Prevention and Early Intervention are seen as positive elements of the current system. Universal services allow experienced practitioners to be involved with communities, in that space they are able to use their specialist training to identify and support families. This can and does include difficult issues such as domestic violence, post-natal depression and childhood development issues.

There is a perception that these proposals remove the opportunity and space for that to happen. As a result, there are a number of knock on effects, the lack of prevention is assumed to lead to a greater need for late stage intervention services further down the track across each area of potential early intervention. This could potentially also impact on childhood development, mental health and child protection issues. It is also assumed that families that are vulnerable but do not qualify for social care support are less likely to get help that will move them on from that stage.

The overall impression is that the service will be in a position of storing up problems for the future and as a consequence is likely to incur additional unbudgeted costs with the social care system.

“False economy. Costs will just be devolved to social service, criminal justice, NHS because lack of intervention at an early stage leads to greater and costlier interventions later STORING UP TROUBLE” [Stakeholder event]

Associated health and social impacts

There are multiple health and social impacts that flow from the removal of services.

From a health perspective there are concerns over breastfeeding, post-natal depression and childhood development. There is also a concern over a drop in the access to regular and necessary medical appointments and more general exposure to health professionals. There may be perceptual barriers to accessing GPs and mental health practitioners whereas children’s centres act as a positive intermediary. They can also be helpful referral routes for paediatricians, mental health practitioners and other health professionals. Health services that are provided through the centres perform an important role in setting the long-term health of families in Oxfordshire on the right road.

By removing the service, there is likely to be a systems impact where other health services, such as Health Visiting teams and NHS Breastfeeding teams will face an increase in demand. It is not clear what that demand will look like or whether the ‘system’ had been prepared for it.

Moving onto the social perspective. Centres and hubs act as a community hub for many groups of people. This includes young teenagers, families with children who have special educational needs, new immigrants, as well as new mums and dads. Where hubs exist social networks develop and connections are made that can strengthen individuals and communities. Removal of those hubs and networks leaves people feeling more isolated and less resilient and consequently it weakens the community. There are likely to be social consequences following the removal of support networks and access to specialist advice.

These consequences will be felt at a societal level but also at an individual level for children, young people, mothers and fathers.

*“[I’m] worried about the impact on children i.e. higher exclusion, higher abuse, more NEETs. Higher teenage pregnancy more drug use”
[Stakeholder event]*

There is also likely to be an issue with social stigma that is attached to accessing a social care led service. This is seen as a significant drawback of the proposed service and one that is likely to see families actively avoiding engagement.

Issues with accessibility within the new proposed model

In the response accessibility is interpreted in a number of ways. There is an overarching point that because the removal of universal services is not accepted, that the whole community will suffer accessibility issues. It is, from this perspective, still people's 'right' to have universal access.

More traditionally there is a clear perspective that the new proposed set up will disadvantage rural communities. This relates to the remoteness of the remaining centres which can be several miles away in some instances. If families do not have a car, then they are reliant on public transport that can be non-direct and irregular.

'Oxfordshire is a big county. Service users will not have a local contact if there is no support in the future in the South of the county. It is 15 miles from Sonning Common to Didcot. Public transport links aren't great. Service users will struggle to travel with young children.' {Stakeholder meeting}

For those who are not using the services there is likely to be another rural issue in that alternative provision may be fewer and farther between. There is recognition that outreach work is vitally important and that this will be a benefit of the preferred model (option 1) for rural communities.

There is a view that volunteering will be able to provide some coverage for existing services although it raises concerns over the accessibility of those services. Some facilities may be based in church halls, which may exclude people on religious grounds. Similarly, there may be a socio-economic asymmetry in provision with prosperous areas able to organise and fund services where areas of deprivation may struggle.

Funding of the services and criticism

The economic case for the new proposed models is questioned across the channels. The removal of early intervention is seen as a false economy and, as stated previously, will potentially cost more in the long run.

There is an appetite within the response for other options for funding to be explored, these include lobbying central Government for more funds and raising council tax via a referendum to pay for the shortfall in the children's budget. There is also a desire for displacement with funding being found from other departments and sources in the local authority, particularly from Highways and senior managers' salaries.

Efficiency is seen as a potential source of funds this is both within the model of delivery – for example cluster management of centres and odd opening days - as well as looking across the authority more generally.

Respondents are keen to explore any other options or opportunities that might help to maintain the current services. Suggestions for raising income include reaching out to business for sponsorship, creating partnerships and merging budgets with the local NHS, as well as establishing a charitable trust to pay for the services in the long term. There is also a view that the authority should look to raise council tax via a referendum to meet the budget shortfall.

There is also criticism that appears throughout the consultation response. This includes criticism of the political decision and the adherence to an 'austerity agenda'. In the same vein, Central Government and Prime Minister David Cameron are accused of wasting money on expensive schemes such as HS2 whilst children are denied support in their early years. The consultation process is also questioned and a suggestion made that the decision has already been taken.

Alternative suggestions

There are a number of detailed alternative proposals that have been put forward by stakeholders within the Oxfordshire area. These include;

- An outcomes based model that is informed by a local health partnership model
- A cluster model with seven hubs and a range of services provided for 0-5 and for 5 -19
- A programme to develop a community provision of existing service
- An internal suggestion on a new operating model to support an existing centre

1.4 Summary of the consultation by consultation channel

1.4.1 Survey

2241 survey responses were received they have been analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using statistical and coding software. Table 1 (page 8) showed the key quantitative measures from these responses. A summary of the more qualitative insight obtained from these responses is also explained below.

Headline findings

- Of the three potential proposals put forward all received low levels of support, the most popular response was none with 71 percent. The option that received the most support was option 2. This was principally motivated by the greater retention of universal services that was presented in that option.
- The proposal to have an integrated service has a net score (positive response minus negative response, excluding neutral and don't know) of negative 47 percent. There is a belief in the benefits of integration but this is conflated with an attack on universal services which leads many to reject it.
- On the principle of prioritising vulnerable families over others, there is a net score of negative 7. This is a more mixed picture; the benefits of integration are recognised by not at the expense of universal services.
- On whether the services could be provide by volunteers / community groups, 23 percent can see a role for this in the provision of existing services going forward whereas 25 percent cannot. 52 percent respond Don't Know.

Qualitative responses from the survey

- There is in general a strong defence of universal services that informs the reaction and response to the question that are put forward in the survey. A set of common narratives emerge across the response that includes Prevention, Health and Social Impact, Accessibility (including rurality), and Funding (including opposition to cuts)
- Prevention acts as the root for many of the issues identified throughout the survey response. There is a widely held view that the presence of universal services provides a specialist workforce able to intervene early to prevent the escalation of issues to social care. This supports people in difficult scenarios such as post-natal depression and domestic violence. With the removal of universal services there is a persistent fear that the vulnerable families who do not qualify for social care will 'slip through the net' either stagnating in a position of vulnerability or will eventually present to social care at a later date. This has the added disadvantage of entrenching issues making them more difficult to deal with.
- There are multiple health impacts that are set out; some of these interact with the prevention theme. The reduction in universal services will reduce the number of available breastfeeding support groups and practitioners with a longer-term impact on breastfeeding rates. Mental health is considered an area of risk with the removal of universal services creating conditions of social isolation and minimal exposure to the specialist workforce. Women's mental health in particular is seen as at risk with an expected rise in the number of cases of post-natal depression.

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- Childhood development is an issue that straddles both social and health spheres. There are concerns that children in general will be less socialised and less prepared for school. In addition, there is concern that specific groups of children with special needs will not have the early support they need to improve the longer-term developmental outcomes. Speech and language are given as useful examples where earlier intervention can provide better life chances; centres with specialist staff are more likely to pick these issues up.
 - Social cohesion and integration are seen as at risk with the removal of the universal services. They provide a forum where families can develop networks that support them through their parenting journey. Those networks are viewed as a bridge across social and economic dividing lines in the community; in the long run this can create greater community resilience. Alternative provision provided by voluntary services are exposed to accessibility issues due to 'cliques' and may present religious barriers depending on where they are run (for example church halls)
 - Stigmatisation is seen as a social issue that is likely to develop. Social Care led services are seen as unattractive and people will potentially fear using those services because of the associations and assumptions that are made. This is likely to make the new service less effective.
 - Accessibility is linked to universal services for many respondents. The benefits of universal services are highly valued and there is not an acceptance that their removal is the right course of action. Therefore, there is a general accessibility issue for families. Specifically, with the new models that are proposed there is concern over rural communities ability to access these services via the transport network but also the capacity of rural communities to develop and provide alternatives.
 - On funding, there is a system question about the displacement of services. There is a view that by taking the services out of the authority's budget there will be an increase in the use of universal services that operate in the same space. The impact will be an increase in the use of services such as Health Visitors, GPs and the school system. There is a question as to whether the full cost and capacity of the system has been modelled to understand if that impact can be accommodated.
 - Linked to funding, a series of alternatives are suggested in the survey response. These include displacing the savings from the children's budget into another budget pot such as Highways or manager's salaries. There are suggestions for generating income including charging for the use of services, reaching out to other institutions for sponsorship and partnership, creating a charitable trust and general fundraising

1.4.2 Emails and Letters

We received 88 emails and 36 letters. 8 of these letters were detailed submissions with alternative proposals suggested. In addition, correspondence between the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Secretary of State for Education and Rt Hon Andrew Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Oxford East, relating to the proposed plans for the children's centres raised by a constituent was also submitted. Below we highlight the themes that emerge from these.

- Prevention is seen as essential especially with low income families and is proven to work. It creates a space without stigma where problems can be easily detected. It has much wider community benefits including reducing incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour. There are also health benefits.
- Other services will have to pick up issues that the centres are currently dealing with. For example, schools will need to take the strain on childhood development but at a much later stage. GPs, social workers and the wider NHS will be impacted. Centres currently pick up the issues that will need to be dealt with elsewhere.
- Many emails and letters were against the cuts and closure for many of the reasons stated including impact and prevention. Some of the emails were part of a campaign to influence Oxfordshire County Council to rethink cuts to 'vital services'.
- Vulnerability is a key theme and is seen as more than just income, the universal part of the service identifies needs that escalate amongst those who are vulnerable. Vulnerability should be prioritised but the authority needs to widen its definition to encompass many others who are vulnerable and need support.
- There is a clear role for the centres and hubs in the long-term health of the people of Oxfordshire. The centres' staff are often trusted in a way that GPs and other practitioners are not therefore making them a vital link to good health.
- There is a cost involved in closing services down and replacing them. There will also be a big impact on staff through re-training and redundancies. Overall, the approach is likely to cost more in the long term and create additional cost for other services. There should be a way of finding additional funding to sustain the current model.
- Parents may suffer from a lack of personal development and learning, this support for young parents is vital if they are to avoid becoming vulnerable. The proposals are likely to lead to negative impacts such as increased stress and social isolation.
- Rural areas have had great success with the children's centres, it was the same level of service enjoyed by urban areas. Removing them is very worrying and it will become difficult to access services both for recreation, health and development in the future because of public transport.

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- There has been significant investment in staff, by cutting them you lose that investment and add costs through redundancy and retraining.
 - The consultation documentation contains incorrect information and the consultation is lacks integrity because the decision has already been made.
 - There is criticism of the Government and the council with some citing a reversal on promises in the election.

1.4.3 Public, stakeholder and service user events (including young people's focus groups)

8 stakeholder and public meeting events were held with an addition 21 focus groups with adult and children service users. Below is a summary of the key themes.

- Prevention is regularly raised in the stakeholder meetings with the impact on longer-term services highlighted.
- Vulnerability was a key theme in the stakeholder groups with multiple issues arising from the lack of support from preventative services.
- Rurality was a significant issue from the meetings with the issue of transport and accessibility of the new facilities consistently highlighted. This could lead to isolation for rural families.
- Impacts on other services is highlighted particularly on schools who are seen to be under pressure and do not have the resources to cope with this. There are also concerns over health facilities that will need to fill the gap on issues such as breast feeding.
- There will be an impact on young people with children losing consistency and the support that they need to be ready for school.
- Parents are likely to suffer negative impacts with low levels of support leading to issues such as depression and domestic abuse.
- Staff are seen as a group who will be impacted with job losses and all that comes with it. There is also concern that a skills deficit will be left by removing these specialist roles.
- The community itself will be impacted as local networks and support hubs are lost. This will damage the fabric locally.
- Suggested different approaches include integration with other services, approaching the issues through commercialisation and fundraising.
- Volunteering was discussed as a possible solution but it raised questions about safeguarding and oversight that would need to be addressed.

1.4.4 Social Media

There was an active social media dialogue that took place over the course of the consultation. This included 322 Tweets that were received between 01/10/2015 and 06/01/2016. Most of those Tweets were sent by individuals. 141 Tweets were campaigning Tweets, for example:

- Sign the petition asking @OxfordshireCC to save Oxfordshire's children's centres! (36)
- I've just asked @OxfordshireCC to protect Oxfordshire's children centres. Can you? (24)
- I asked @David Cameron to spend a day at @OxfordshireCC to see if he can balance the books. (81)

More detail on social media is contained in Appendix 2.

1.4.5 Petition and campaigns

Although not analysed in this report, because they are a form of consultation considered separately by the Council, it is recognised that an active petition has been underway throughout the duration of the consultation. This can be viewed at <https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/save-oxfordshire-s-children-s-centres-2>. There are around 7000 signatures to the petition and personal appeals and testimonies around the value of children's centres to individuals and the wider community.

1.5 Conclusions

This phase of consultation presents specific proposals that have been developed by Oxfordshire County Council. Respondents were able to respond via a variety of channels. As well as specific issues and experiences, there are some generic issues that have emerged that remain relatively consistent across all response channels.

One interpretation of the consistency is that the radical and wholesale nature of the change means that all of those with a stake in the service are impacted. The fact that many facets of the service are being removed means that people and organisations are responding to a situation that means a personal loss and a change to their day to day. This is combined with what are seen as significant complex impacts across society and community.

The opposition to these proposals is evident across the response. Whatever decisions are eventually made, they will need to be supported by further engagement with the specific communities impacted by the decisions. For many, there will be a direct impact that they will require assistance both to understand and to be able to accommodate. In this respect there does appear to be a willingness from the response to engage in dialogue from stakeholders, users and residents on developing alternatives and potential involvement in any next steps.

2. About the consultation

This section of the report describes the background to the consultation and the way the consultation has been conducted. It provides a summary of the different types of responses that were received throughout the consultation period; the quantity of responses by each consultation method; the process that was carried out to collect and manage these responses; and how they have been analysed to produce this report.

2.1 Background to the consultation

Services for children in Oxfordshire are provided by Oxfordshire County Council's Children's Social Care and Early Intervention Service. This service provides a service to children and families whose needs are such that they are required by law to protect and safeguard the well-being of children. The service supports children in need, children subject to child protection plans, looked after children and care leavers (as defined by the Children Act 1989). The primary aim of this service is to provide community support to vulnerable children and families in order to promote their wellbeing and prevent any concerns or difficulties escalating to a point where statutory services are required.

Currently, the Early Intervention Service comprises of 44 children's centres; seven early intervention hubs; the Youth Engagement and Opportunities team that focuses on education, employment and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-25 year olds who are vulnerable; and the Thriving Families Team, who provide intensive support to families that have been identified as being in need through the national Troubled Families Programme.

The amount of money spent on the Early Intervention Service was £16 million in 2014-15 and £15 million in 2015-2016 following £1 million of savings. The budget agreed by Council in February 2014 included savings of £3 million in Early Intervention to be achieved by 2017-2018 with a further £3 million agreed by Council in February 2015. In addition to these, there needs to be an additional £6 million savings made by 2017-2018.

As a result of these budget reductions, there was a need to consult on savings worth in total £8 million to the Early Intervention Service; a 50 per cent reduction from the £16 million 2014/2015 budget.

This consultation was on a proposed new model for children's services. The key features of the new model for services including reconfiguration of the current 44 children's centres and 7 early intervention hubs and creation of up to 8 children and family centres. The proposed new model will be funded by combining the budget for the Early Intervention Service, once the £8 million savings have been removed, with the £4 million budget of the Children's Social Care Family Support Teams.

Three options were consulted on: the County Council's preferred option of no universal services (option 1), limited universal services (option 2), and universal services through community investment (option 3). No options were provided for no changes to the current Early Intervention Services.

2.2 Consultation process

The public consultation was opened on the 14th October 2015 and closed on 10th January 2016. The details for the channels used to publicise the consultation, engage stakeholders around the proposals, and the methods used to capture responses, are detailed below.

2.2.1 Communication and engagement

To publicise the consultation, 1,930 hardcopies of the consultation documents were distributed: 30 copies were sent to each children's centre and early intervention hub and 10 to each Oxfordshire Library. The consultation was also published on Oxfordshire County Council's consultation portal website. In addition to this, following an audit of hardcopy documents, a further 20 consultation documents and 95 consultation summaries were distributed to children's centre's and early intervention hubs.

The consultation was publicised through adverts in the Henley Standard, Banbury Guardian, The Oxford Times, The Oxford Mail, The Herald Series, and Bicester Advertiser as through press releases and posters distributed across Oxfordshire County Council buildings.

Stakeholder engagement was conducted with major stakeholders and key target groups. These are described below.

Table 3: Stakeholder engagement activities

| Engagement | Groups | Detail |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Stakeholder engagement events | Eight groups in Oxford (x3), Didcot, Banbury, Abingdon, Bicester and Witney. | Events were conducted with Children's Centre and Early Learning Hub service users. The followed a discussion around what the proposals mean for children and families in each Children's Centre and Hub and how participants could respond to the proposals. |
| Focus groups | 21 focus groups with service users, both adults and children | Discussion using a structured topic guide with questions around use of the services, views of the proposals and impact of changes. |
| Targeted groups | One group with the Traveller Community | |
| Email briefing | Partner organisations, MP's council's and schools | A key fact summary distributed by email |
| Presentations | Each elected member locality meeting | A presentation delivered setting out the proposals |

2.2.2 Response Method

The following channels were provided for people to respond to the consultation throughout the consultation period:

- **Online consultation survey** was the primary methodology used to allow responses to the consultation. Oxfordshire County Council's consultation hub website www.consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk was used to host the survey. The survey included closed questions to capture views of the proposals and the opportunity to provide open text responses to each question to allow respondents to express views in their own words. Information about the demographics, Children's Centre Usage and the context in which people were responding to the consultation were also asked for sub-group analysis. The questions were developed by Oxfordshire County Council.
- **Paper surveys** were provided to early intervention hubs and children's centres. These contained the same questions as the online survey with a freepost return option. This survey was translated into Polish, Urdu, France, Hungarian, Indian Punjabi, Somali and Spanish. There were no requests for translation into additional languages. Copies of the translated documents were sent directly to the requestor.
- **Public meetings** were held in Oxford (18th November), Didcot (23rd November) and Bicester (30th November). These provided an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions about the proposals and give their views in a meeting setting.
- **Written submissions** in the form of letters, emails and petitions could be submitted to the consultation by post or online.
- **Social media** was monitored for comments on Facebook and Twitter.

2.3 Responses to the consultation

A total of 2715 responses were received. Below details the number of responses received through each consultation method.

Table 3: *Responses received by response method*

| Method | Responses |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Paper survey | 666 |
| Online | 1,575 |
| Emails | 88 |
| Facebook responses | 28 |
| Twitter responses | 322 |
| Letters | 36 |

In addition to these responses, a petition was also submitted via this route to Oxfordshire County Council with 50 signatures.

Responses received after the close of consultation have been stored securely but are not included in the analysis of responses.

2.3.1 Survey response by specific audience group

The tables below set out the numbers and percentage of self-reported responses from different audience groups, demographics and geographic areas. Where respondents have not responded to these specific questions this is not reported.

Table 5: *"In what context are you responding to this consultation?"*

| Context responding | Total | Percentage |
|---|-------|------------|
| Councillor | 22 | 1% |
| Employee/volunteer in children's centre, hub or in children's services | 160 | 8% |
| Other (if yes please state below) | 56 | 3% |
| Oxfordshire resident | 293 | 14% |
| Professional partner (e.g. GP, health visitor, teacher etc.) | 199 | 10% |
| Responding on behalf of a group/organisation (if yes please state group/organisation below) | 77 | 4% |
| Service user/parent or carer of a service user | 1278 | 61% |
| <i>Total completed responses</i> | 2085 | 100% |

Table 6 : *Survey responses by geographic location*

| Town area | Postcodes | Count | Total |
|------------------|----------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Oxford | OX1, OX2, OX3, OX33, OX44 | 594 | 48% |
| Kidlington | OX5 | 50 | 4% |
| Chipping Norton | OX4 | 29 | 2% |
| Thame | OX9 | 31 | 3% |
| Wallingford | OX10 | 23 | 2% |
| Didcot | OX11 | 38 | 3% |
| Wantage | OX12 | 11 | 1% |
| Abingdon | OX13,OX14 | 87 | 7% |
| Banbury | OX15, OX16, OX17 | 155 | 13% |
| Woodstock | OX20, | 7 | 1% |
| Bicester | OX26, OX27 | 68 | 6% |
| Witney | OX28, OX29 | 88 | 7% |
| Faringdon | SN7 | 8 | 1% |
| Chinner | OX39 | 8 | 1% |
| Watlington | OX49 | 8 | 1% |
| Aylesbury | HP18, HP20 | 4 | 0% |
| Reading | RG4, RG8 | 8 | 1% |
| Henley On Thames | RG9 | 10 | 1% |
| Other | W13, SN6 | 2 | 0% |
| | <i>Total completed responses</i> | 1229 | 100% |

Table 7 – *Survey responses by demographics*

| Demographic information | Total | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-------|------------|
| Age | | |
| 19 or under | 18 | 1% |
| 20-25 | 84 | 6% |
| 26-34 | 434 | 30% |
| 35-44 | 570 | 40% |
| 45-54 | 155 | 11% |
| 55-64 | 82 | 6% |
| 65-74 | 42 | 2% |
| 75 or over | 6 | 0*% |
| Prefer not to say | 44 | 3% |
| Total recorded | 1435 | 100% |
| Gender | | |
| Male | 194 | 13% |
| Female | 1218 | 83% |
| Prefer not to say | 57 | 4% |
| Total recorded | 1661 | 100% |

| Demographic information | Total | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-------|------------|
| Ethnicity | | |
| White British | 1098 | 78% |
| White other | 169 | 12% |
| Asian or Asian British | 56 | 4% |
| Black or Black British | 15 | 1% |
| Mixed | 28 | 2% |
| Other | 69 | 3% |

Analysis of how these demographics compare to the profile of Oxfordshire as a whole is included in Appendix 1.

2.4 Interpreting the responses

The Campaign Company was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council to provide an independent analysis of the consultation responses of each of these channels. This report sets out the findings from this analysis.

The findings from this consultation will inform the final decision about the future model for children's services in Oxfordshire to be taken by Oxfordshire County Council in spring 2016.

The Campaign Company collated responses made throughout the consultation period and feedback representations made through the different engagement formats. Data collected by Oxfordshire County Council was shared with The Campaign Company for the purposes of this analysis.

The methods used to collective evidence are designed to allow everyone to contribute to the consultation, but the evidence collected is not representative. Responses are self-selecting: only people who chose to give their views have had them recorded. Public consultations tend to over-represent responses from people with the strongest views and those most directly involved with the services being considered.

As the responses are self-selecting, particular attention is paid to understanding who has responded to the consultation, to understand where some groups are being under or over represented through the findings.

The primary method of analysis is qualitative with approaches used to understand the particular issues raised by those who have contributed, to capture the themes that emerge from response and gauge the strength of perceptions by different groups.

Quantitative data is analysed in this way, as indicators of the perceptions of different respondents.

For the analysis of the survey responses, closed question responses are described as percentages. Due to a high number of partially completed responses, varying from only one question to all but one question being answered, the number of responses included in each response varies. As a result, the base number for many questions varies and is stated for each question.

In places, percentages may not add up to 100 per cent. This is due to rounding or questions allowing multiple responses. Where questions have allowed multiple responses this is clearly stated.

Open questions and free text responses were analysed using a qualitative data analysis approach. Using qualitative analysis software (NVivo) all text comments have been coded thematically to organise the data for systematic analysis. To do this, a codeframe was developed to identify common responses; this was then refined throughout the analysis process to ensure that each response is categorised and could be analysed in context.

The analysis has been presented thematically based on the method through which the responses were received. Quotations from responses and submissions are included to illustrate these themes.

2.5 Structure of the consultation reports

Each consultation report details analysis by response method in the following order: survey responses, public and stakeholder and service user events, email and letter responses and detailed submission responses.

Survey responses are analysed by responses to the individual questions with the quantitative responses and the open text responses analysed together. Analysis of the remaining chapters is analysed thematically, with detail of the form of submissions followed by explanation of the key themes.

3 Analysis of survey responses

3.1 Introduction

This report is a standalone document that makes up part of the overall reporting for Oxfordshire's County Councils public consultation on 'The proposed new model for children's services in Oxfordshire. The consultation was open from the 14th of October 2015 and closed on the 10th of January 2016.

This report relates to the response to the survey which was available online and via paper copy on request. The survey was open to anyone to respond with specific questions relating to the relationship of the respondent to the services, question relating to the new model, and questions to help profile the response. There was a mixture of open and closed questions within the survey.

To support the survey there was a supporting consultation document that provided information on the proposed changes and detail to help respondents to understand how the proposals had been reached.

As with all public consultations, the response cannot be seen as representative of the population but rather a cross section of interested parties who were made aware of the consultation and were motivated to respond. Within the analysis we cannot be clear the extent to which responses are informed by the supporting information that has been provided. We have conducted analysis on the response using statistical software and coding software.

In reading this report, the reader will find an executive summary that draws together the themes that emerge from the response followed by a breakdown of each question by all of its elements (quantitative and qualitative). Where there are significant differences in responses by either geography, demographics or other factors, these are stated. For quantitative data we have include a base figure to highlight the number of responses, where there is no quantitative element to a question we have indicated the number of separate responses to the qualitative element.

3.2 Summary findings

There were 2241 survey responses. There are a set of specific themes that emerge from the response to the survey alongside some key quantitative elements.

3.2.1 Quantitative

- Of the three potential proposals put forward all received low levels of support, the most popular response was none with 71 percent. The option that received the most support was option 2. This was principally motivated by the greater retention in that option of universal services.
- The proposal to have an integrated service has a net score (positive response minus negative response, excluding neutral and don't know) of negative 47 percent. There is a belief in the benefits of integration but this is conflated with an attack on universal services which leads many to reject it.
- On the principle of prioritising vulnerable families over others there is a net score of negative 7. This is a more mixed picture; the benefits of integration are recognised by not at the expense of universal services.
- On providing services by volunteers or community groups, 23 percent can see a role for this in the provision of existing services going forward whereas 25 percent cannot. 52 percent respond 'Don't Know'.

3.2.2 Qualitative

- There is in general a strong defence of universal services that informs the reaction and response to the question that are put forward in the survey. A set of common narratives emerge across the response that includes *Prevention*, *Health and Social Impact*, *Accessibility* (including rurality), and *Funding* (including opposition to cuts)
- Prevention acts as the root for many of the issues identified throughout the survey response. There is a widely held view that the presence of universal services provides a specialist workforce able to intervene early to prevent the escalation of issues to social care. This supports people in difficult scenarios such as post-natal depression and domestic violence. With the removal of universal services there is a persistent fear that the vulnerable families who do not qualify for social care will 'slip through the net' either stagnating in a position of vulnerability or will eventually present to social care at a later date. This has the added disadvantage of entrenching issues making them more difficult to deal with.
- There are multiple health impacts that are set out, some of these interact with the prevention theme. The reduction in universal services will reduce the number of available breastfeeding support groups and practitioners with a longer-term impact on breastfeeding rates. Mental health is considered an area of risk with the removal of universal services creating conditions of social isolation and minimal exposure to

the specialist workforce. Women's mental health in particular is seen as at risk with an expected rise in the number of cases of post-natal depression.

- Childhood development is an issue that straddles both social and health spheres. There are concerns that children in general will be less socialised and less prepared for school. In addition, there is concern that specific groups of children with special needs will not have the early support they need to improve the longer-term developmental outcomes. Speech and language are given as useful examples where earlier intervention can provide better life chances; centres with specialist staff are more likely to pick these issues up.
- Social cohesion and integration are seen as at risk with the removal of the universal services. They provide a forum where families can develop networks that support them through their parenting journey. Those networks are viewed as a bridge across social and economic dividing lines in the community, in the long run this can create greater community resilience. Alternative provision provided by voluntary services are exposed to accessibility issues due to 'cliques' and may present religious barriers depending on where they are run (for example church halls)
- Stigmatisation is seen as a social issue that is likely to develop. Social Care led services are seen as unattractive and people will potentially fear using those services because of the associations and assumptions that are made. This is likely to make the new service less effective.
- Accessibility is linked to universal services for many respondents. The benefits of universal services are highly valued and there is not an acceptance that their removal is the right course of action. Therefore, there is a general accessibility issue for families. Specifically, with the new models that are proposed there is concern over rural communities ability to access these services via the transport network but also the capacity of rural communities to develop and provide alternatives.
- On funding, there is a system question about the displacement of services. There is a view that by taking the services out of the authority's budget there will be an increase in the use of universal services that operate in the same space. The impact will be an increase in the use of services such as Health Visitors, GPs and the school system. There is a question as to whether the full cost and capacity of the system has been modelled to understand if that impact can be accommodated.
- Linked to funding, a series of alternatives are suggested in the survey response. These include displacing the savings from the children's budget into another budget pot such as Highways or managers' salaries. Holding a referendum and raising council tax is seen as a way to fill the funding gap. There are suggestions for generating income including charging for the use of services, reaching out to other institutions for sponsorship and partnership, creating a charitable trust and general

fundraising activities. There are also calls for closer partnership with the NHS and for lobbying of Central Government to find additional funding.

- In exploring voluntary options there is some optimism in the response that voluntary provision can be found to run some of the services that are provided but this falls short of fulfilling the specialist staff roles that exist in the current system. There is a concern though that voluntary provision will not provide the standard of provision or the safeguarding assurance that the services need.
- Service and Community Impact Assessment, a number of issues are raised with this including the rigour with which it has been developed. Women are identified as a group who are disproportionately impacted that have not been identified as are children with special educational needs. Minority and ethnic communities are seen as qualifying for inclusion because of the integration and language skills.

3.2.3 Other summary points and issues from the response

- Service users are the most numerous respondents representing 61 percent of the overall response. This is followed by residents of Oxfordshire and professional partners.
- 67 percent of respondents were female.
- All 51 sites of children's centres and early intervention hubs have been used by the respondents. The highest usage is Florence Park Children's Centre, and the lowest usage is the Rural Children's Centre.
- Services are well used with Stay and Play the most popular service followed by a number of post and antenatal services. Breastfeeding and wider health services were highly used services. All other services had a least some representation the lowest used service was 'I have a key worker' at 66 responses.
- Respondents speak highly of the services they use and provide personal testimonials to the benefit of using the services that are on offer.
- Other community services are well used including: GPs, schools, libraries and others provided in community settings. These services are viewed as a useful supplement to the work of the centres and hubs but not as a replacement. This is largely due to the professional and specialist support that is available in the centres.
- There are no significant differences in responses from different demographic groups (eg gender, age, ethnicity and so on). Where there are, these are stated.
- Appendix 3 provides further quantitative analysis by the type of respondent and by geography (North, Central and South areas as defined in the consultation).

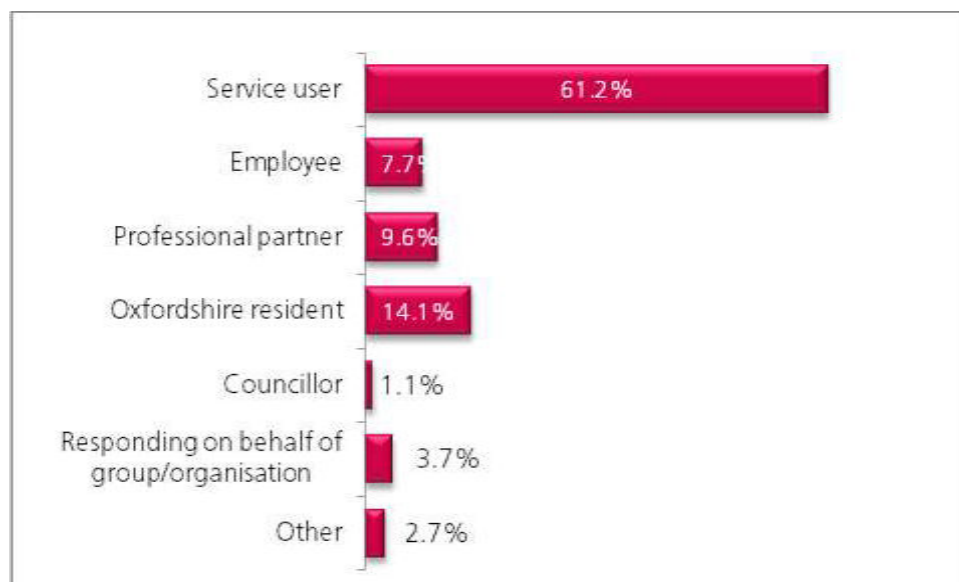
3.3 Breakdown of the responses

Detailed responses to the survey are shown below.

3.3.1 Question 1 – In what context are you responding to this consultation?

The response to this is shown below.

Figure 1: In what context are you responding to this consultation (Q1)



Dataset: 2085 completed responses

- Most respondents are users of the children's centres / early intervention hubs (61%)
- Eight percent are responding as employees and ten percent as professional partners
- Four percent are responding on behalf of groups and organisations in Oxfordshire
- The 'other' category includes respondents who are volunteers at centres; former service users; and relations of people who attend these centres.

3.3.2 Question 2 – Are you/or is a member of your household currently a user of children's centres and/or early intervention hubs in Oxfordshire?

- 67 percent of respondents said that someone in their household was a current user
- 31 percent said that no one in their household was a user of the services

3.3.3 Question 3 – Which children centre(s) and/or early intervention hub(s) do you use, or have you used?

Respondents were able to tick more than one response to this and people on average said they attended 3 centres and / or early intervention hubs.

Table 8: Responses by children's centres / early intervention hubs used

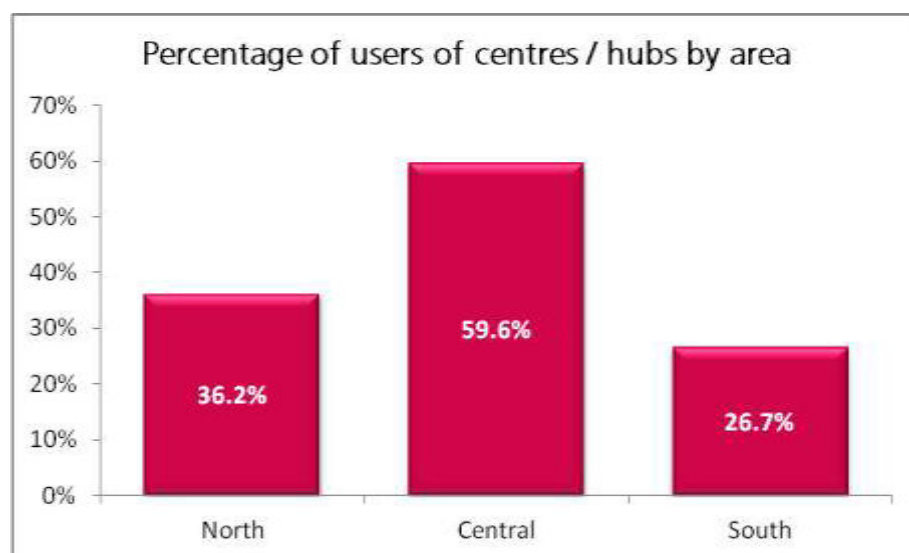
| Children's Centre / Early Intervention Hub | % of respondents at each |
|---|--------------------------|
| Florence Park Children's Centre | 16.10% |
| East Oxford Children's Centre | 13.40% |
| Marston/Northway Children's Centre | 11.70% |
| North Oxford Children's Centre | 11.70% |
| Slade and Headington Children's Centre | 10.40% |
| Grandpont Nursery School & Children's Centre | 8.80% |
| The Roundabout Centre | 8.60% |
| Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre | 8.30% |
| Elms Road School & Children's Centre | 8.10% |
| Leys Children's Centre | 7.90% |
| Bicester Children's Centre Brookside | 7.70% |
| Bicester Children's Centre Glory Farm | 7.50% |
| South Abingdon Children's Centre | 7.50% |
| North Abingdon Children's Centre | 7.10% |
| The Sunshine Centre | 7.10% |
| East Street Centre | 6.60% |
| The Maple Tree Children's Centre | 6.20% |
| Kaleidoscope Children's Centre | 6.10% |
| Britannia Road Children's Centre | 6.00% |
| Witney Children's Centre | 6.00% |
| The Orchard (Eynsham and Woodstock Area) | 5.70% |
| Red Kite Children's Centre, Thame | 5.10% |
| Stephen Freeman Children's Centre | 5.10% |
| The Ace Centre | 4.90% |
| Didcot Ladygrove Children's Centre | 4.60% |
| North East Abingdon Children's Centre | 4.20% |
| South Didcot Children's Centre | 4.20% |
| North Banbury Children's Centre | 4.10% |
| Banbury Early Intervention Hub | 4.10% |
| Carterton Children's Centre | 3.90% |
| Abingdon Early Intervention Hub | 3.80% |
| East Oxford Early Intervention Hub | 3.80% |
| Ambrosden Area Children's Centre | 3.70% |
| West Oxfordshire Early Intervention Hub (in Witney) | 3.70% |
| Butterfly Meadows Children's Centre (Bloxham area) | 3.60% |
| Chalgrove and Watlington Children's Centre | 3.60% |
| Bicester Early Intervention Hub | 3.50% |
| Littlemore Early Intervention Hub | 3.30% |
| Berinsfield Children's Centre | 3.20% |
| Didcot Early Intervention Hub | 3.10% |
| Wallingford Children's Centre | 2.90% |
| Heyford & Caversfield Area Children's Centre | 2.70% |
| Willow Tree Children's Centre (Bampton and Burford Area) | 2.60% |
| North and West Witney Children's Centre | 2.50% |
| The Rainbow Children's Centre, Henley | 2.50% |

| Children's Centre / Early Intervention Hub | % of respondents at each |
|--|--------------------------|
| Wantage Children's Centre | 2.50% |
| The Rainbow Centre (Sonning Common, Goring, Woodcote and area) | 2.40% |
| Grove and Hanneys Children's Centre | 2.20% |
| Faringdon Children's Centre | 2.10% |
| Southmoor Children's Centre | 2.10% |
| Rural Children's Centre | 1.80% |
| None | 8.80% |

Dataset: 1994 respondents completed question (5759 responses)

This information is also summarised by geographic area (North, South, Central) as defined in the consultation document.

Figure 2: Number of users of centres / hubs by geography (% respondents)



Dataset: 1824 respondents (2233 responses)

- All 51 sites have been used by respondents
- The highest use is at Florence Park Children's Centre
- The lowest use is at the Rural Children's Centre
- The majority of response comes from the central area (as defined in the consultation document) and the lowest comes from the south area. This might be expected due to the population density in each area.

3.3.4 Question 4 – What kind of children’s centre services and/early intervention hub services do you use, or have you used?

Respondents were able to tick more than one response to this and people on average said they used three different types of services.

Table 9: Types of services used by respondents (% responses)

| Services used | Percent of Cases |
|--|------------------|
| Stay and play session including family drop ins | 69.10% |
| Access health services (e.g. health visitor appointments/midwife appointments/speech and language support) | 44.30% |
| Breast feeding support | 41.60% |
| Postnatal support | 37.20% |
| Parenting education programmes | 26.30% |
| Antenatal support | 21.70% |
| Parenting support (group programme) | 20.70% |
| Dad's group | 18.00% |
| Child care | 11.50% |
| I receive outreach/family support | 10.50% |
| Employment and training advice (for parents) | 9.50% |
| Health support including healthy eating, smoking cessation, substance misuse, sexual health | 9.10% |
| Mental health support | 8.60% |
| Targeted programmes (e.g. young carers, SEN) | 5.90% |
| Family contact meeting | 5.60% |
| Youth group/open access youth session | 4.90% |
| Employment and training advice (for young people) | 4.90% |
| Domestic abuse support (for parents and children) | 4.30% |
| I have a key worker | 3.60% |
| I haven't used any services | 9.50% |
| Other | 11.40% |

Dataset: 1864 respondents completed question (7034 responses)

- The highest usage is for the Stay and Play sessions
- Access to health services is also an important provision found in the centres / hubs
- Breastfeeding support, antenatal and postnatal support are well used by respondents

- There are popular programmes of support including parenting support, dad's groups and employment and training for adults and young people
- Specialist support on domestic abuse, special educational needs, and mental health are also used by respondents

Consultees noted a number of other services and also used the space to provide commentary on the value of the services. Postnatal support is highlighted with a number of well used and valued services described including baby massage, breastfeeding groups and the baby café;

'Invaluable – could not have kept breast feeding without the baby cafes'

Respondents also describe other services that they are able to access such as financial advice and describe a social hub that is facilitated by the centres and hubs with multiple groups taking place. For example, LGBT groups, Polish groups, Asian Families groups, Fostering groups, Youth Partnership Meetings, Duke of Edinburgh Open Access amongst others.

Parents of special educational needs (SEN) also describe the positive support that they receive. Examples from some localities include the Down's Syndrome Early Development Group in South Abingdon and the speech and language group helping the hearing impaired in the East Street Centre. A particular benefit from these groups is the socialisation with other parents with children with SEN.

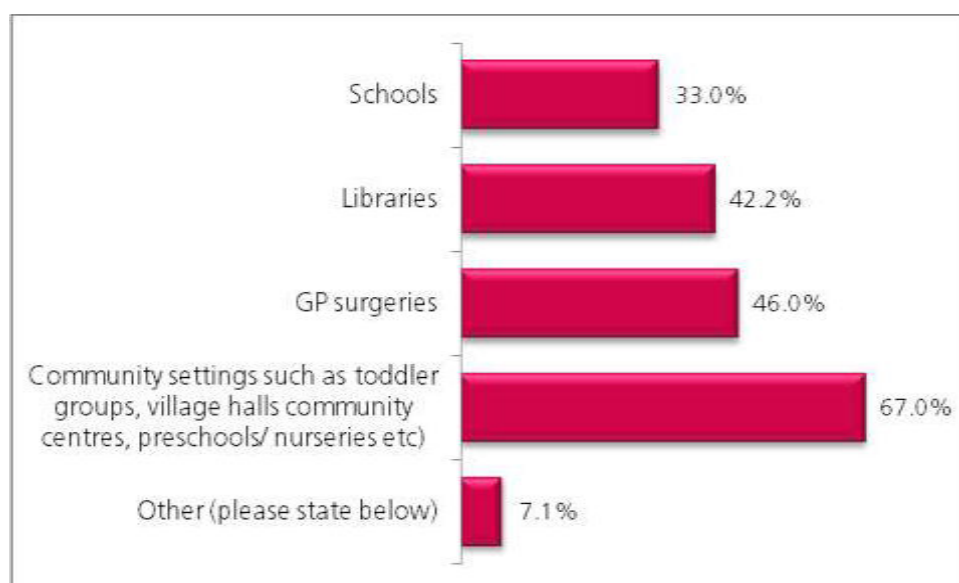
There is a general point about the support and expertise that are available through these services and the benefit that this provides to new parents. A collateral benefit is the social networks that develop from the use of these services that allow shared experience and learning.

Practitioners highlight the importance of these services. This includes comments from practitioners on the 'Thriving Families' programme who see the services as facilitating much of their work, a paediatrician who uses these services to refer patients to and a school Governor who sees the services as vital in the development of pre-school age children.

3.3.5 Question 5 – Do you or have you used any of the following sites to get children and young people's services and support?

Respondents were allowed to refer to more than one site to get children and young people's services and support.

Figure 3: Other sites used to access children and young people's services and support (% responses)



Dataset: 1373 completed responses

- All of the additional settings are well used sources of children and young people's services and support.
- Community settings are the most familiar additional locations with two third of respondents accessing services in these locations. This is followed by GP surgeries and libraries follow community services
- Schools are less familiar settings, potentially due to the age of children with around 60 percent of respondents with children from 0 -5 years' old

The nature of the services ranges from developmental session for young children such as Rhyme Times at the local Libraries to support for mothers with breastfeeding at the local GP surgeries. Toddler groups in the local church hall are a commonly referred to services such as Headington Baptist Church.

Parents appreciate these services but are keen to point out that their value does not replace or substitute the services that are available in centres and hubs.

'I appreciate the facilities available in these settings, however this cannot and should not replace what the children's centres can offer all families in Oxfordshire'

The professional support that is available through centres and hubs, particularly for difficult issues such as post-natal depression and domestic violence, is felt to be lacking. There is also a concern that medical facilities simply will not have the time and space to absorb the services that are currently provided.

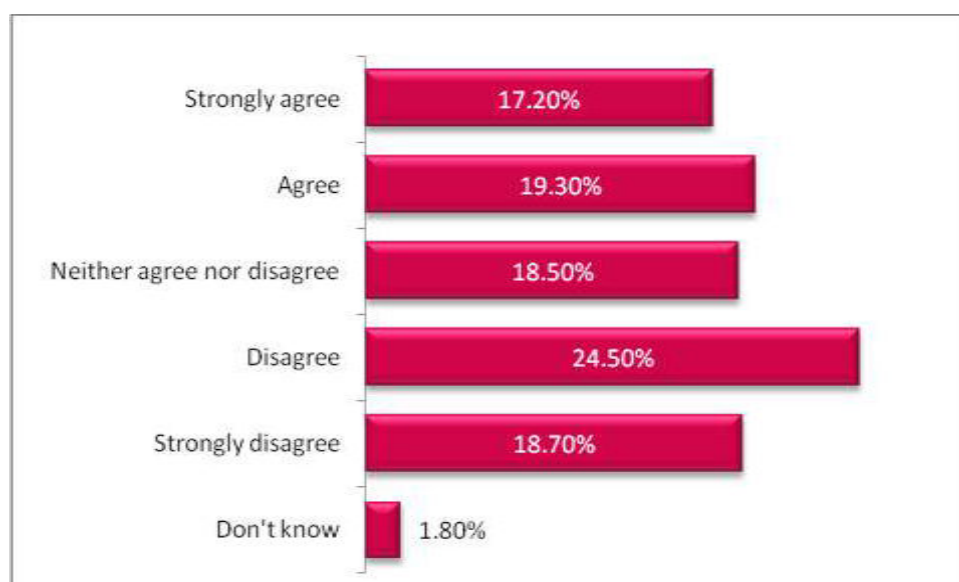
Provision of these services is also viewed as somewhat ad hoc leading to an inequality of access. This is highlighted in a point of concern on the accessibility of Church run toddler groups and services for the local Muslim population, these comments came not necessarily from the Muslim population but staff respondents and other users.

'I am concerned that the many Muslim families who currently access our centres ...will not be able to access church run groups. They risk increased isolation and de-integration.'

3.3.6 Question 6 – How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/families than to all children and families?”

The responses to this question are shown below.

Figure 4: The extent to which people agree with the statement: "It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/ families than to all children and families (% responses)



Dataset: 1855 completed responses

- The net score is **-7** percent, taking the negative responses (disagree and strongly disagree) away from the positive responses
- A fifth of respondents either don't know or are neutral on the statement

There is agreement from most sections of the response and disagreement from others primarily service users (this is shown in Appendix 3).

Agreement

Those who agree see the need for additional support for vulnerable families over and above others. As such this should be a principle of any service.

‘Should a vulnerable child or family receive proportionally more services than a family that is not vulnerable, the answer is a very strong YES’

There is recognition that those families who are vulnerable may not have the knowledge and awareness to look for support or seek out help. Therefore, services should be shaped in such a way as to reach out to those families through prioritisation. Universal services may be used by the many but not those who actually need them in from a statutory perspective.

There is a caveat in the agreement. The question is seen in context and whilst people are prepared to agree with the principle they want to qualify their agreement. The qualification is twofold, first of all the principle of prioritisation should not lead naturally to the removal of universal services which are highly valued and create significant value for the County. Second of all, the definition of vulnerable should encompass those who are not at the point of crisis, those who are not identified on statutory or targeted programme. Universal services are viewed as a vital link to the identification and support of those families who are not yet at crisis point.

Disagreement

The disagreement with the proposals builds on and reinforces the caveats that are made by those who agree with the statement. There is a belief that all young parents and families have the potential to become vulnerable. For example, families who do not appear on the multiple deprivation index are equally susceptible to issues such as post-natal depression and domestic violence. Prioritising those who are currently defined as vulnerable over the remainder of the population is seen as a negative step and an unacceptable trade off.

Early intervention and prevention is viewed as a significant and cost effective benefit to the County. By proposing a focus on those who are statutorily vulnerable there is a fear that the authority will store up difficult and costly issues for the future.

“If families are supported before they reach crisis point (social care threshold), they are more likely to be able to make significant, sustainable change. The more ingrained issues become the more difficult it is to change them. It is through early intervention or help that the most difference is made to children and young people’s lives.”

Moving away from universal services will reduce exposure of families to trained experts and specialists in children and family welfare. There is a genuine fear that by taking this route children and families will be missed and as a consequence will present at a later

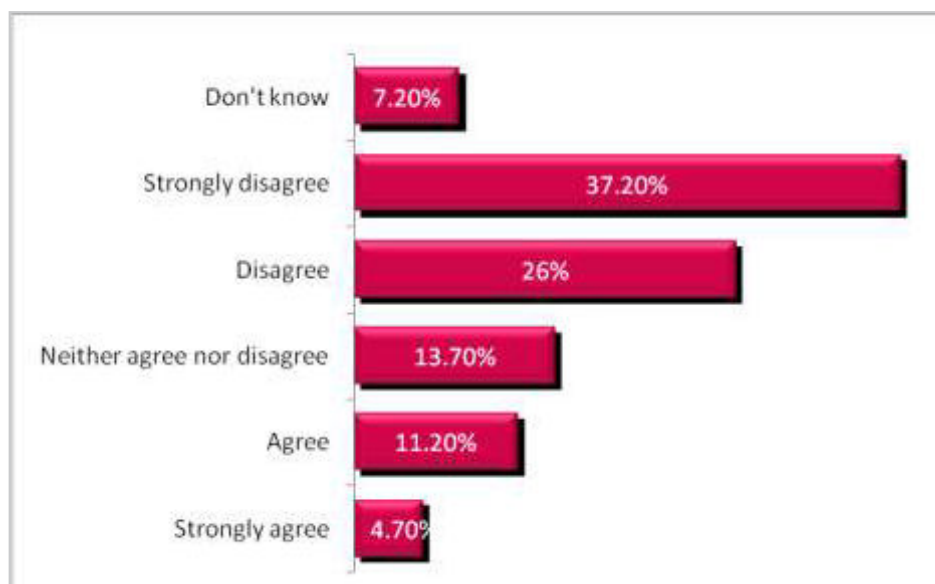
stage or will fail to reach beyond their vulnerable state. Many participants simply do not agree with the choice that is being positioned on this basis.

There is concern about the social dynamics that may be disrupted by the focus of services on vulnerable families. It is felt that there is the potential for significant stigma being attached to accessing social care led services. This is likely to reduce the uptake and engagement with the services. There are also collateral benefits of social mixing and social network development that will be lost through concentrating only on vulnerable families

3.3.7 Question 7 – To what extent do you agree or disagree with Oxfordshire County Council's overall proposal to create an integrated children's service for 0-19 year olds (25 for young people with special educational needs)

The responses to this are shown below.

Figure 5: Extent of agreement with the overall proposals to create an integrated children's service (% responses)



Dataset: 1863 completed responses

- The net score for this question is **-47** (positive minus negative response, excluding neutral)
- Over two thirds of responses disagree with this
- 21 percent of the response are neutral or undecided
- Disagreement is slightly stronger in the North and Central areas than in the South (65 and 68 versus 58 respectively)

Support

There are some supportive voices from respondents including practitioners. The perception is that integration of the services will bring a degree of consistency for families as it removes the arbitrary separation of the family into distinct age groups. This is likely to bring a more holistic approach to the engagement with the family and protect against 'too many disparate services' working with families.

"Integrated support will ensure focus on the whole family right across the age range. Early intervention is vital for struggling families. By addressing the whole family's needs, this should strengthen communication and information sharing."

There are perceived benefits for practitioners with a clearer set of communication channels facilitating a more joined up approach to young people and their needs.

There is some support for the proposal that references the direct benefit for children from the proposed approach; a better communications environment for practitioners; and a clearer integration of services and their outcomes.

The support from some is cautious and there is a request that any integrated service protects the skill sets that are necessary to work with different age groups, particularly the specialist skills required for the under-five group.

A further caveat is that the integration of services should be available and delivered on a wider basis than simply to those targeted as vulnerable.

Some participants although agreeing with the idea of integration foresee problems with the configuration of the proposed approach and suggest alternative configurations

"Oxfordshire County Council is proposing to put support services under Social Care which has a culture of statutory intervention and -- however good the staff -- perceived as a threat to parents who therefore do not engage voluntarily. Integration of services for children 0-19 is sensible but should have the ethos of targeted outreach and voluntary engagement whenever possible and be located as close to families as possible. Early intervention hub staff based in children's centres could provide a 'bottom up' voluntary support service, staffing dependent on need."

Opposition

Opposition builds on the caveats that are set out in the supportive response. For some the diminishment of the skill set of specialist workers is reason enough to reject this approach. There is a fear that the specialist skills needed to work with toddlers and babies will be lost.

"The subtle presentations babies and toddlers display, risk being overlooked by professionals without the skills and experience of this age group. The very obvious way that older children present means that funding is likely to be diverted to older children and under 5's get missed again."

This expands into a wider concern that across the 0-19 age group there will not be enough focus on age specific issues creating a service that does not meet the needs of families and as a consequence is not fit for purpose.

Reading across the issues respondents see the proposed integration as part of an unwelcomed move to remove highly valued services. The 'streamlining' and 'efficiency' that is set out in the approach to integration is associated with a cost, the removal of universal services (such as baby groups, stay and play and Dad's groups). This is linked by respondents to a number of other common themes that arise in opposition to the proposals overall including the accessibility of services with a consolidated number of children and family centres, a rejection of the funding scenario that informs the proposals and question over how need has been established in developing the proposals. This leads to a number of challenges including the economic rationale for a new service.

"Starting a from scratch may sound attractive but what is proposed means the loss of so much valuable work and intangible social capital that has been built up by the current centres over a long period of time. Trim them! Don't raise them to the ground."

Prevention again emerges with respondents using this question to highlight a fundamental opposition to the reduction of universal services. It is the removal of universal services and the perceived wider impact of reduced early intervention that is opposed.

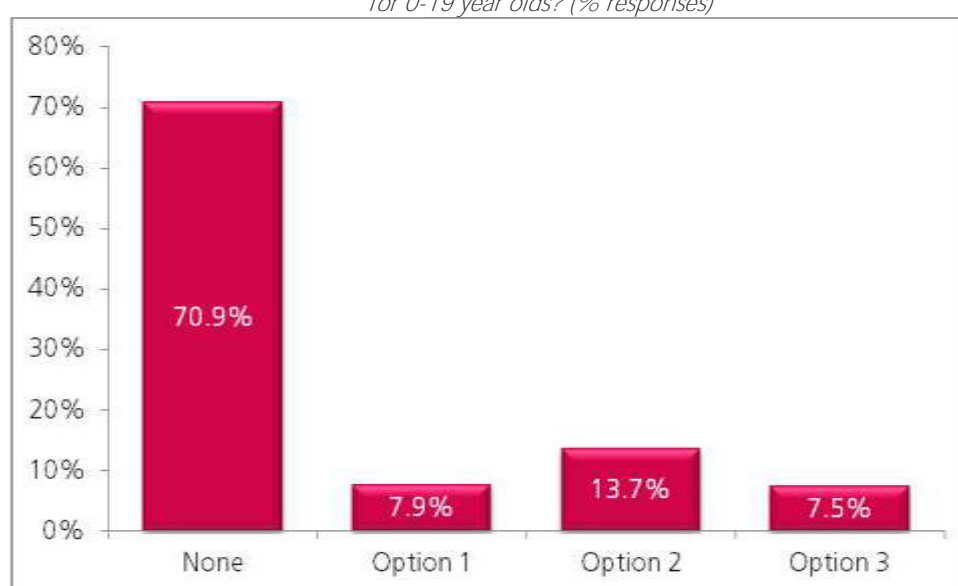
"Integration and a 0-19 service make sense, but we believe that this proposal would promote integration only at the highest level of need, when it is needed across the levels."

Accompanying that perception is a view that the issues that are dealt with by the current system will not fade away but will rather be displaced creating different pressures at other points in the system. Points in the system identified are GPs, mental health services and schools. This is seen as unsustainable and a potential drain on future resources.

3.3.8 Question 8 – Which of the three options outlined in the consultation document do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated services for 0-19 years? In particular which model do you prefer?

As the graph below shows, 71% of respondents stated that 'None' of the options provided the best model for delivering integrated services.

Figure 6: Which of the three options do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated services for 0-19 year olds? (% responses)



Dataset: 1496 completed responses

- Of the three options, Option 2 receives the greatest level of support
- The response is consistent across demographics and geography

General rejection

In expanding on the response it is clear that the overall response is very much against moving to any of the three models. Those who support any of the three developed options make the choice from a position of 'best of a bad bunch'. There is no real appetite for the development of the services as described by the three models, therefore it can only be interpreted that there is minimal support for the options. The majority of the response sets out a defence of the existing universal services that are provided.

Option one – preferred option

There are relatively few people who choose option one as their preferred option. This is reflected in the number of comments that have been submitted to support that choice.

Although a small response there are a number of comments that position the choice as the 'best of a bad bunch'. The features that make this more palatable than the other options include the family outreach element which is seen as a positive. The model also allows control of the service to rest with the authority, this is seen as a positive.

Nevertheless, the support is qualified by the disagreement with the removal of valued universal services, the possible stigmatisation that is recognised in the proposals and the possible impact on those who do qualify for help.

"[This option] Because it involves family outreach work. But it is still NOT a good enough option! How will families be approached and helped? They may feel targeted, labelled, isolated...If they feel a finger is pointing at them. They'll never agree to use the 8 centres. How about the non-disadvantaged? I am not disadvantaged, but I'm still receiving a little help from the Early Years Hub, and the parenting course I attended is ESSENTIAL for ANY parent!"

There were some specific pieces of feedback to this from parts of the community. For example, there is a call to amend the proposal for option one to include the provision of a facility that is close to the military bases within Oxfordshire.

Option two

Option two received the most support of any of the three options that were put forward. Positives for this option include the spread of centres across Oxfordshire which is seen as a better geographical settlement.

"This is the fairest option, otherwise towns such as Bicester and Abingdon lose out. I wouldn't travel to Banbury to access support for myself or my six week old baby. Community groups wouldn't fill the gap left by taking away universal services."

There is also a positive response to the maintenance of access to some universal services which is seen as a partial benefit for the community. This creates a space to compare the benefits of universal services with their removal, for example, ensuring a reduced risk of the stigma that might be attracted if option one was adopted.

It highlights how important universal services are for respondents, it appears that in supporting this option over the others it is the benefits of universal services; access,

prevention, social networks and specialist advice that are the motivating factors in that support. There are benefits, such as prevention, of targeting a set of universal services within deprived communities

“Universal services in areas of deprivation support the most vulnerable children and families. They are key for early identification and for non-stigmatisation of services.”

There are some practical concerns and risks such as the case load of the family support team which is seen as at risk of increasing in an unmanageable way under this proposal.

Option three

This option received the joint lowest level of support.

There was some support for the provision of grant funding to communities, for some this provided the opportunity to develop the capability of the community to take the services on in a sustainable way. Others disagreed with this model citing the reduction of staff and reallocation of funding into the community as an unacceptable trade off.

Those who do agree with the involvement of the community and community organisations in the provision of services highlight the need for support and acknowledge the challenges with an untrained or volunteer workforce.

“Option three would enable more universal services to remain. I do firmly believe though that the community/voluntary sector would need to have support to run these services. It is a lot to ask of volunteers to run regular services if they aren't paid. Safeguarding would also need to be considered.”

However, for some this represents the clearest opportunity to retain the principle of universality and creates the space for further innovation within the community in the longer term.

There are some specific issues around fairness of the distribution of centres within the third option that are put forward by a minority of respondents.

“Option 3 is unacceptable. Bicester and Abingdon, both have significant need, including from Service families. No centre in Bicester would leave CDC with the second highest need and highest number of children (forecast for 2020) in the county with only one centre in Banbury.”

None

The most popular response to this question is 'none'. In qualifying and clarifying that position respondents have provided a rich set of data that describes their opposition to the proposals. Specifically, the response represents a defence of universal service and a warning over the dangers of removing services as suggested within the preferred option. Specific areas of opposition, that emerge consistently, include funding, impact, and prevention. There is also a general opposition to cuts and to the proposals overall.

"There should be a 4th option- to keep Children's services as they are and make savings in other ways."

Prevention

Consistent points are made on prevention. There is seen to be great value in early intervention services for the local authority and for families. The current universal services provision creates an environment where trained and specialist members of staff are able to interact with families, identifying where points of concern exist. This can lead to successful intervention that prevents the issue getting worse and possibly presenting to the social care system. The removal of universal services to focus on intervention with high needs is seen as a significant 'own goal' by the authority creating and storing up cost for the future.

"Early intervention is designed to prevent escalation of issues within a family. Based on these models families may be unsupported and unidentified until they reach crisis point. This is likely to result in higher demands on the mandatory Social Care system and increased costs."

Social impacts

The social impact of the removal of universal services is seen as extensive. Young parents benefit from accessing empathetic practitioners and developing a peer group by attending sessions. This can create social capital and greater community resilience in the long term. The removal of services undermines this community resilience. In tandem it is suggested by practitioners that the replacement high level support service creates a social issue of stigmatisation that may reduce accessibility and as a consequence damage the potential outcomes.

“I work as a GP in an area that under your proposals would have its children's centre closed. My “vulnerable” patients, to use the County Council's phrase, would not be able to get on 2 or 3 buses to reach the next nearest children's centre, if our local one closes. Even if I refer them the transport situation will prevent attendance. Furthermore, some of these families have already said to me that they don't want to be referred under a new system without universal access because they don't want to be labelled or go to groups where everyone “has problems” - they feel they and their children learn so much from universal services.”

From a parent's perspective the current provision offers socialisation and integration, for example learning English and building confidence. For other parents having a child with developmental issues is made easier via locally available universal services this becomes more challenging with their removal.

A more muted part of the response is the impact that the service restructuring will have on teenagers, but the benefit of the early intervention hubs is identified. It is felt that the removal of services will create potential for negative social and personal impacts such as increased anti-social behaviour and teenage pregnancy.

Health impacts

There are some direct health impacts that are identified, particularly the impact of reduced breastfeeding support that is easily accessible within the community and the impact on the mental health of young parents who are potentially isolated and at risk without access to universal services.

There is a system impact that is foreseen from the implementation of the options suggested. This operates in the short, medium and long term. In the short term there is likely to be an increase in the number of presentations at GP surgeries from trivial childhood illnesses that would otherwise be dealt with in centres. There is also, for some, likely to be an increase in long term use of mental health services and the NHS in general as a result of the removal of preventative universal services. This is seen as 'problem displacement' driven by budget rather than joined up thinking.

“Reducing this service (Breastfeeding support) (or effectively consolidating numerous struggling mothers) into a small number of centres makes this less personal, more intimidating, and likely will reduce the number of breastfeeding mothers we have in the area. This would be disappointing, and based on scientific study would likely increase the burden on NHS services in the area and is, frankly, unacceptable”.

Accessibility

Most respondents do not accept the premise of removing universal services. There is little acceptance that accessibility to the new services should be determined by qualification via 'vulnerability' criteria. This means that all current users of universal services are being denied access in the view of respondents.

Within that there are some specific concerns about the accessibility for some specific groups, including rural areas and those who have children with special needs.

"Rural children and their families in particular will suffer with children's services concentrated in the towns; even the closest towns are mostly inaccessible by public transport."

Funding

There is felt to be a true cost to the services and their value that has not yet been fully calculated. The current cost cutting exercise is seen as short-termism with a related degradation of the skills and assets of the County. Future costs and impacts may come back to haunt the authority.

Alternative funding scenarios are put forward including reducing the number of hubs and centres by 50 percent, providing the required funding reduction but leaving the coverage that is required. This assumes that the services remain universal.

There is a suggestion of greater volunteer involvement in the delivery of the services and an emphasis on parents to provide funding or fundraising activities to contribute to the budget of the existing centres.

3.3.9 Question 9 – Do you have any alternative proposals for how the council could meet the £8 million savings required from the children's services budget?

51% of respondents (from 1681 who completed this question) suggested they did have alternative proposals for meeting the savings required.

Overall

For some there is a question on how realistic it is to ask people, without knowledge of the authority's intricate budget, to make valuable suggestion about alternatives.

Nevertheless, many suggestions have been submitted for exploration.

Maintaining the service and finding reduction in funding elsewhere

This suggestion disagrees with the question and puts forward that the money should not be taken out of the children's services budget. There is a view that Central Government should be intervening with funding or policies that create space for funding. For example, lobbying for a reduction in private rents to prevent excessive housing benefit payments and freeing up funds for early intervention.

There are multiple alternative areas of the local authority's budget that are suggested as sources of budget reduction, these include;

- Highways and infrastructure
- Free school meals
- Christmas lights
- Parks and gardens
- Senior salaries
- Staff pensions
- A reduced number of councillors
- A reduced number of managers
- Refugees housing
- Rationalisation of the back office

Highways and senior staff salaries appear more than most as potential alternative budget reductions.

Generating income

There are multiple suggestion for generating income. These range from increasing income tax, charging fees to use services and charitable fundraising strategies.

A rise in council tax is viewed by some as a self-evident approach to resolving this issue and a number of respondents make an appeal for a local referendum.

"Increase council tax in Oxfordshire by £1 per month per person - 66,100 people x £12 per year = £8m. I would happily pay more to preserve these services."

Charging for services is suggested with a consensus emerging that a general charge of £2-3 should be levied on those who are not vulnerable and able to afford it. For some services and groups there might be further additional charges levied dependent on what is being delivered. For example, baby massage;

"At my local children's centre, a 6-week baby massage course was offered for under £10 - I had just paid £60 to book a private baby massage course".

There is recognition that this may be difficult to administer but means testing and voluntary contribution schemes are put forward as potential option for managing these approaches.

An additional income source may come from the rental of space and rooms to local community groups or to local people for functions and events.

Charitable and community fundraising

Another source of income that is put forward is a move towards fundraising with approaches to District Councils, Armed Forces, FE Colleges, Academies and other institutions. This is supplemented by more traditional charitable fundraising activities including; the establishment of a charitable trust to raise money across Oxfordshire; local activities such as cake sales and appeals for donations amongst the local community.

A number of respondents' point to the prominence of the University community in Oxfordshire and suggest establishing a link to those institutions as possible sponsors of centres and early intervention hubs. The idea of sponsorship is extended out to the wider business community.

There is also a call to involve the charitable sector in the delivery of the services. A commissioning model is put forward from Buckinghamshire that may act as a template for Oxfordshire to explore further.

"Buckinghamshire CC has tendered its children's centres out to Action for Children to run at a reduced cost".

Efficiency

There is a general call for efficiency across the authority. This manifests in requests to look at back office expenditure, duplications of work and roles, and expenditure on high profile services such as highways and maintenance.

Respondents are keen to find ways in which the centres and early intervention hubs might remain. This leads to a number of possibilities, there are specific suggestions around cluster management of services, reduction of some services with closure on some days, as well as recourse to the use of volunteers.

"Fewer activities, combining centres, letting premises out two days a week, volunteers helping with some activities. Bucks and Herts are not closing centres."

A number of respondents are keen to explore volunteering as a possible solution. This ranges from engaging the voluntary sector to establishing a new post of volunteer coordinators to organise the centres and hubs with an element of specialist training in safeguarding

There are, equally, respondents who view volunteering as an inadequate response to the challenge of reduced services.

"There may - or may not - be a source of voluntary support - but it is not professionally trained, and volunteers are already propping up other services eg libraries. We were promised that when the Youth Service was cut, volunteers would step in. This hasn't happened."

Other alternative approaches

There are a number of alternative approaches that have been put forward.

- Delay the implementation of this budget round until 2017/18 to allow for alternative funding strategies to be developed
- Reject a top down re-organisation and set centres and hubs a challenge to find a sustainable approach with their communities
- Combine NHS and Social Care budgets
- Use council surpluses
- Go for unitary status to reduce duplication

Of the alternatives a number of respondents focus on the potential partnership between the services and the NHS. There is already successful partnership working with Oxford Health and maintaining the services that they provide from centres is seen as an important priority.

3.3.10 Question 10 – What is your biggest concern if the children's centre(s) or early intervention hub(s) which you use were to close?

This is an open question, 1507 people responded to the question providing insight into their concerns about the potential closures. There are a variety of concerns some of which have emerged in other questions but some that are specific to this question.

Concerns include an impact on the community, strain on other services, health impacts on families, accessibility, loss of specific services, loss of specific centres and social isolation.

Community impacts

There are general concerns about the loss of community hubs and an impact on the strength and togetherness of the local communities that are served by the centres and early intervention hubs. This is seen by some as likely to reduce the opportunity to encourage diversity in the relationships that make communities strong. Both rural and urban communities are expected to suffer as a consequence.

"...in Cutteslowe there is a lot of economic diversity, but the North Oxford Children's Centre attracts families from all different economic and social and religious backgrounds, and so builds up our community and enables genuine relationships to flourish across these socio-economic-religious divides."

There are concerns that the closure of centres and early intervention hubs will foreshadow more issues with anti-social behaviour and a greater strain on other services across the community.

Strain on other services

The closure of services it is felt will displace the need that is currently met by those services. This will impact on other universal services that are operating in a similar space. It is expected that schools will have to deal with an increase in children underprepared for school.

"Children and families would not be accessing any services at all. This would put increased pressure on schools when children arrive at school without the basic skills needed for school readiness eg talking, toilet trained, eating independently."

Health services are expected to be exposed to greater demands as a consequence of the removal of services. There are specific services that are expected to be overburdened in the short term such as NHS breastfeeding teams and health visiting teams. More generally it is perceived that there will be an over reliance on already stretched GP services in the longer term.

Respondents fear that specific health conditions and issues will develop and have a long-term impact on services. For example, increases in mental health issues such as post-natal depression may put additional pressure on those services.

Health impacts on families

Building on this last service point, postnatal depression emerges as an area of concern. The concern centres on the identification of postnatal depression with the removal of specialist practitioners and the opportunity for new mothers to engage with those practitioners.

"Women's mental health will decline. There will be an increase in post-natal depression. Women will find it harder to bond with their babies leading to attachment disorders later. More women will reach crisis point."

There is the concern that the removal of focal points for peer networks will compound this issue through greater social isolation and consequently create greater incidence of post-natal depression amongst new mothers. Some link this to a fear that there may be an increase in suicide and infant deaths.

Breastfeeding is expected to reduce following the removal of support and as a consequence contribute to a longer term decline in childhood health and development. Other concerns emerge about development including fears that speech and language problems will go unidentified for longer. Crossing over from health there are also concerns about socialisation of children and as mentioned their readiness for entering the schools system.

Accessibility

As set out in the proposals, social care led services may be a source of stigmatisation and as a consequence deeply unattractive to people. This is referenced as a significant concern and likely to lead to the diminished use of services:

" 'Vulnerable' families wouldn't access the new services as they will feel stigmatised."

There is a perceived danger that this will result in a reduction in service usage with children and families 'slipping through the net'.

Of those families who do not reach the threshold for support in the new set up there is a general concern that the families that are most vulnerable will not get access to services that they need to help them move forward. This lack of access is one of the biggest drawbacks and worries for respondents. This issue can be compounded by **people's situation**, for example rural areas are perceived as less likely to provide additional accessible services that might support those families in the absence of universal services. The transport infrastructure is also seen as unsupportive in facilitating access to alternatives and to services for those who do qualify.

"Support for schools and families in the South East of Oxfordshire is currently far too remote already. The Hubs in Didcot and Abingdon are geographically inaccessible, especially for vulnerable families. The Children's Centres are the only effective accessible provision that we have in our area now."

There is also concern that any voluntary services that replace the universal provision will fail to have the level of expertise and insight that makes the current provision effective. There is a view that this is particularly an issue for younger adolescents who are less likely to be the subject of voluntary provision.

"Lack of services aimed at adolescents as these are less appealing to work with and voluntary groups either avoid or select heavily."

Loss of specific services

Losing access to centres is a common concern and a specific reference to most facilities is made. Some commonly identified services that respondents find valuable include;

- Stay and play
- Breastfeeding groups
- Dads groups
- HENRY (Health Eating and Nutrition for the Really Young)
- Parenting classes
- Baby café
- Baby and me
- Baby massage
- First Aid courses
- PEEP session

Alongside the loss of facilities, classes and groups there is a widely held concern that there will be a diminishment of professional skill and expertise within communities as jobs are lost. This it is felt will result in an unreasonable pressure and expectation on remaining staff.

Child protection and prevention.

Child protection and prevention issues are also raised by many respondents. With early intervention removed there are scenarios that are less likely to be picked up and as a result become a social care issue.

"Children's Centres are vital for identifying the need for support and intervention, and without them many children and their families at risk would only be identified after the damage is done and possibly when it was simply too late."

The longer-term impact of removing early intervention support is also seen as a significant concern by a large number of respondents. It is felt that the outcomes for children will be damaged and that the cost to the authority will increase in the long run through poorer educational performance and greater pressure on other services.

"Early intervention is well known to be financially cost efficient. Cutting to hard and too fast is a false economy. Enabling a child to thrive in their early years means future savings in both the health and education budgets. It is short sighted and neglectful to cut this hard."

No concerns

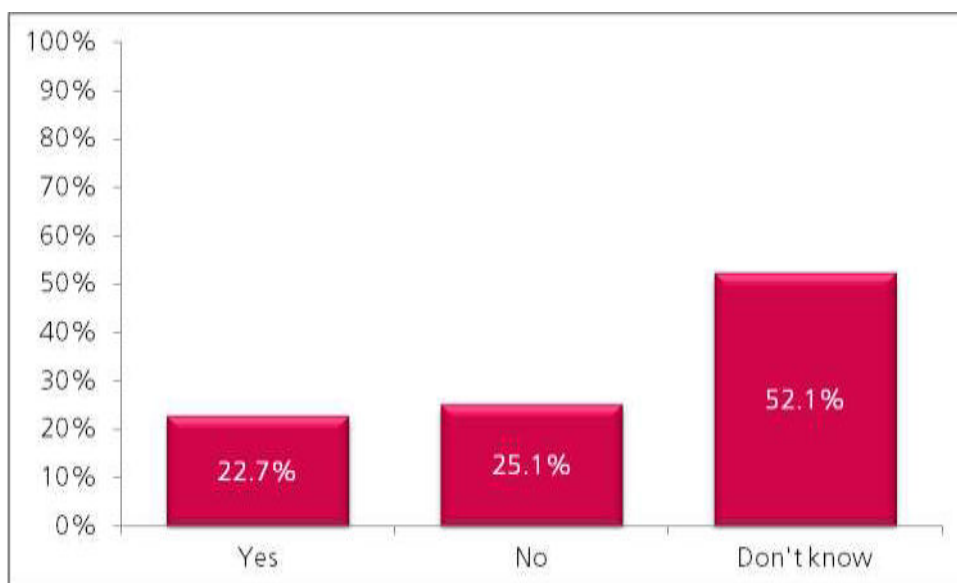
For a small minority there is not issues that cause concern with the proposals.

'No major concerns, families would get used to it'

3.3.11 Question 11 – Do you think that any of the groups/activities currently offered by your children's centre (s) and/or early intervention hubs could be run by volunteers and/or community groups in your local area?

The majority of the respondents, 52 percent, do not feel able to answer this question.

Figure 7: Do you think that any of the activities currently offered could be run by volunteers and/or community groups in your area? (% responses)



Dataset: 1560 completed responses

- 25 percent do not believe that services could be provided by volunteers / community groups
- 23 percent believed that services could be provided by volunteers / community groups

Support with caveats

There is some support for this suggestion.

A number of participants are able to see the potential for community groups and the voluntary sector to step in and deliver services. Although this raises supplementary questions such as; where the services would be provided? What training and development framework would be put in place? And what supervision would be in place in order to ensure standards?

There are examples of successfully run services in the community that rely on voluntary commitment of time and effort. This encourages optimism that more services could be run in this way. It is felt that adequate investment in training and oversight will be required to ensure that services are 'up to scratch'.

“We have always tried to recruit volunteers and enable our users to contribute to the running of groups etc however we always find that this requires a lot of support from staff to manage this, coordinate training, ensure suitability checks are carried out etc etc. so there is no doubt that volunteers could be used and possibly costs reduced by this use but there would need to be supervision and coordination to ensure quality.”

There is a perception that increased volunteering would bring additional community benefits such as extended networks and increased social capital. However, there is concern over funding and that whilst there may be a pool of volunteers able to run them funding will be needed to secure training and development, venues and cater for other associated expenses.

Perhaps the biggest reservation is on involving volunteers in the family support work and the more specialist services. This is seen as something that should be led by experienced practitioners.

Opposition - Lack of necessary knowledge and skills of volunteers

For many the idea of volunteers running the services is not feasible because of the extensive experience and specialist skills that are required to run an effective service. There are concerns that volunteers would not be able to; deliver the required safeguarding standards, providing specialist advice in a discrete and empathetic way and develop the specialist skills required for the role.

Whilst volunteers have their place they are not seen as a replacement for highly trained staff.

“Volunteers are a fantastic asset to any organisation and I use them in my place of work but they cannot be used in the place of a professional.”

Some see the suggestion as undermining the current role that staff play in delivering services.

“Also, we must not trivialise the very exacting role of professional staff in supporting parents, identifying their needs as well as their children's, role modelling, responding to concerns, keeping confidentiality, monitoring risk, nurturing parents and children, running support groups, counselling, dealing with disclosures, liaising with social workers over safeguarding issues, attending CAF and TAC meetings, liaising with local schools and care providers etc.”

Local authority responsibility

The delivery of the services is seen as local authority role and shifting responsibility to the voluntary sector of the community is seen as an unfair expectation. Volunteers are already involved in delivering these and other services across Oxfordshire and further demands may be too much.

"We have already removed the library support and depend on volunteers to keep these open; remove children's centres and you create an additional burden for volunteers to provide other services - for what are we paying our taxes if not to help people locally. Community groups and volunteers are already groaning under the weight of providing support for their communities - remove another leg of support and these communities will crumble."

Accessibility

Accessibility is seen as an issue that is exacerbated by voluntary involvement. Many voluntary groups are run and delivered in church hall settings, this is seen as a potential barrier to other religious communities, Muslim communities are given as an example, from staff and other users, of those who might be excluded as are those of no religion.

'The only volunteer childcare group in my area is a church group. As an atheist I would not be able to access this service. It would therefore be promoting segregation of communities.'

There is another dynamic that may exclude people with volunteering. Some areas are more likely to have capacity to develop and deliver voluntary provision. This may favour people in more affluent areas. It is also the case that voluntary groups may deliver a preferential or 'cliquey' service that is open to those of specific social backgrounds due to a lack of objective professionalism.

- 3.3.12 Question 12 – We have undertaken an assessment of the impact on individuals and groups of the proposals for the proposed new children's service. This is outlined in the Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA). Please give your views on the impacts identified in the SCIA. Have we missed anything?

Question 12 is an open question 626 people responded to this question. A range of views have been provided largely identifying perceived gaps within the SCIA, it is not clear from the response that all of the comments are fully informed or consistent with having read the brief.

Prevention and social cohesion

Prevention and early intervention are not catered for in the Service and Community Impact Assessment. There is a long term impact on communities of removing early intervention that is not acknowledged. This impact is both on the communities but also on all tax payers as future service costs are likely to be higher. One of the reasons provided is a belief that an inadequate service and economic modelling approach mean that the long term impact of reducing prevention is not fully understood.

"You have failed to comprehend the actual benefits of integrated and universal services and the huge social and economic cost you will be causing by changing from prevention and support to intervention."

The impact on communities from this perspective is an increased number of social care cases in the short, medium and long term. The supplementary point is that the system impact on other services such as GPs, Schools, Health and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services has not been adequately factored in. The removal of preventative services, it is felt, is likely to increase the pressure on these services and create a negative impact.

Building on this first point the removal of the services is also seen as a precursor to a reduction in community cohesion and community involvement. In the long term the community as a whole is likely to suffer from additional pressure and less supporting social infrastructure.

General impact on the family

There is a general impact, that is not listed in the SCIA, on the family including Mum's, Dad's and children, all of whom will suffer from the lack of universal and preventative services. In referring to Children some respondents find it difficult to understand how the authority can meet it's obligations under the 2006 Childcare Act.

"How can the authority
- show how local needs will be identified and met
- demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively
- demonstrate that the outcomes for children would not be adversely affected by any proposed changes."

Women are identified as a group who have been missed out of the analysis. The impact of the proposals, it is felt, are more likely to be negative for women. This may include greater numbers of women suffering from depression and domestic violence.

"As someone who grew up with domestic violence, I know how hard it is for victims of domestic violence to seek help. Without universal services offered by Children's Centres I am concerned that many more victims of domestic violence would remain isolated & not seek the help with this issue that the Centres offer. Such victims are so often hidden, and hard to identify."

Children with special needs are also seen as a potentially disadvantaged group that have not been identified in the SCIA.

'Children with impairments are not mentioned in the SCIA. Many children with additional needs are not from families that require support with their parenting or support from Social Care but parents of a child with additional needs often need some support from other professionals in terms of child development. many children's centres run or host support groups for families with children with additional needs. It's also important that those children receive extra support in terms of readiness for school. They will be adversely affected if open access provision is removed – more so than children without impairments and this should be in the SCIA.'

Stigmatisation and vulnerability

Stigmatisation is mentioned in the SCIA, there is agreement that this is a significant issue but that it is not adequately dealt with via any of the three options that are put forward in the proposals.

Vulnerability is felt to have been largely ignored in the impact assessment. The groups that are 'just under the radar' are likely to be excluded from support that may make the difference to their situation in the long term. This is seen as an omission from the SCIA.

Minority communities

Minority communities may be additionally disadvantaged because of their reliance on the centres for support in language development and integration with the wider community. This may result in children of newly arriving families not receiving the support they need to be ready for school and parents becoming isolated.

'It also has to be borne in mind that many parents and carers do not have the time, resources, education, language and confidence to set up their own organisations to meet their own needs when they have children under five, and might be isolated from any family, ethnic or work-related support networks'

Isolation is seen as a general impact that will be a feature of the community without the opportunities for engagement that the current services provide.

Specific localities

East Oxford is mentioned as having a localised concern and there exist potential for a higher impact that is not mentioned in the assessment. The recent Bullfinch case is seen as a reason to maintain early intervention and prevention services in this area. The makeup of the community is viewed as bringing challenges that will be exacerbated by a reduction in universal services.

"East Oxford is rich in cultural diversity but has a high number of transient families, and some who have little support and very high needs. Our school staff, children's centre staff plus partners in health and social services have been shocked by the overcrowded, impoverished state of housing lived in by many families within our catchment area. Our nursery classes are currently experiencing an increase in children with language, social and emotional problems. Expert play and parent support group professionals at the CC are vital as they also enable introductions to other services and agencies who can liaise with the school."

Rurality

There is agreement that rural communities are likely to be negatively impacted by the proposals. The lack of service alternative and transport infrastructure may lead to isolation.

Rural areas will be at risk, no local services, lack of public transport (cuts to bus services and subsidies on fares proposed) this may leave children, young people and families more vulnerable.

3.3.13 Question 13 – Do you have any other comments on the proposals to create and integrated children's service as set out in the consultation document?

Question 13 was an open question, 627 people choose to respond to it. It invites any other comments and as a result attracted a wide ranging response that pulls out many of the themes that have emerged throughout the rest of the response. This includes the issue of Accessibility, comments on the Model being proposed, highlighting the issue of vulnerability that concerns many individuals, social and health impacts, prevention, comments on the financial rationale and some specifics around centres and services.

This makes this question a good summary of the general dialogue and response to the consultation document as a whole.

Accessibility

The provision of valued services in a local venue is felt to be a great benefit to communities. This is the case across multiple age groups and multiple levels of need ranging from three year olds accessing SEN support services to dads and migrants accessing ESOL classes that are provided on the site. Removal of the centres damages the access to valued community services for each of those groups.

For rural communities there are further issues with transport and distance that make replacement services a more difficult option. It potentially increases isolation and narrows the number of opportunities to access services for these communities. This can also be the case for communities that are based in the towns with travel across town not seen as an option particularly for BME communities. A similar issue of isolation is highlighted for military families living in the County.

Model

Integration is not welcomed by everyone, there is a concern that the needs of 5-19 year olds will take priority over and above the needs of 0-5 year olds in the new system. In addition some see the holistic service as a deskilled service that is unable to cope with the specific needs of each of the age groups that are currently served by specialists.

Built into the model is an inherent stigmatisation of the role of the Children and Families Service. As a Social Care led service those people who need help may refuse or fail to engage because of both the stigma that comes with Social Care and the fear of what might happen as a consequence. This makes the harder to reach even more so.

'Families 'fearful' of referral agencies will no longer receive this valuable service. Open access is an integral element of children's centres functions. Hard to reach, harder to reach.'

In addition, there is concern that any of the new service models cannot meet the needs of the population of Oxfordshire. The outreach element is questioned in terms of its ability to adequately identify and deal with issues such as Domestic Abuse. The model loses the relational aspect of building rapport and empathy over time to understand what is happening with people. This is seen as a disadvantage and likely source of

increased and hidden abuse.

Vulnerability

Many families rely on the services that are provided by the children's centres in particular. The removal of these services creates greater vulnerability because of the lack of accessible support in times of need. The vulnerability that is embedded within the community will become hidden and result in greater use of Social Care in the future. This is seen as undermining the very positive work that the centres and services have provided.

'It makes a huge difference to the start many children get in life, and also in terms of the support it offers to vulnerable families with young children and new babies. Closing the centres is short sighted and only achieves short term financial gain'

There is a related plea from many of the respondents to maintain universal access to services to maintain the benefits that they deliver.

Impact

Centres are there for families and there are various impacts noted on different parts of the family. Children are expected to be disadvantaged on a number of developmental fronts. The loss of breastfeeding support will mean a reduction in breastfeeding generally with detrimental impacts on long-term health. There is also a view that removing support for socialising and transitioning into school will harm children's chances of making that transition well. At the other end of the spectrum the support for teenage pregnancy is seen as vital in preparing new young mothers to provide the best opportunity for new babies, losing this has an additional impact on the next generation.

'I worry that this restructure would reduce opportunities for socialising babies and getting to see a health visitor, not just for ourselves but others in a similar position.'

Parents are also likely to be highly impacted. Those who use the services believe that there is great value in the parenting classes, the breastfeeding support, the opportunities to meet peers and to generally become accustomed to being a parent in a supportive environment. The loss of those services makes it tougher for parents in the future. That might translate into greater isolation and potential increases in issues such as post-natal depression. Overall it has the potential to put the family in a more vulnerable position.

There is a wider impact on the community that benefits from a hub that provides a focus for activity and for integration and community cohesion

The impact is likely to be felt by other services that deal with families, local Health Visitors, GPs and schools all might see an uplift in workload in the short, medium and long term as they pick up work that would have been catered for by the centre. This includes within the social care setting.

"Grave concerns that services like MASH will be under further pressure as children and families and other key partners have nowhere to sign post to.

Leaving work to just statutory requirements is in my view, short sighted - and will lead to far more referrals and the likelihood of children, young people and families 'slipping the net' with the subsequent consequences"

There is a big impact on staff many of whom may experience stress of adapting to a new model or may face redundancy. The loss of staff is seen as undermining the long-term skill base in the authority area, making it less likely that specialist skills and knowledge will exist in the future.

Prevention

Early intervention and prevention work are consistent themes throughout and they are again highlighted in this section. Respondents see huge value in the provision of universal services that can help to identify some of the difficult issues early. This is particularly the case with issues such as domestic violence and postnatal depression. Investing at the earlier stage is felt to be the most financially viable approach whereas the suggested model is seen as storing up additional problems and expense for the future.

Financial Comments

Building on the comments made on prevention, there is concern that developing and investing in a new model is potentially bad value for money. This is both in respect of perceived poorer long-term outcomes and in respect of the 'wasted' investment that has been put into the current set up over the years. Many respondents are keen to explore why council tax rises or other sources of funding cannot be found or implemented to retain the services. Within this vein attention turns to the rest of the authority's budget, particularly to salaries of managers and senior officials.

Comments on specific centres

There are a number of supportive comments around centres and hubs that are made by participants. Some of those highlight valued services and support that characterises the value of the services.

"Topaz is an excellent facility for LGBT+ youth and offers support for all members and the youth workers are easily approachable and easy to talk to. It's a safe space where LGBT+ youth are free to be themselves without judgement or any homophobia occurring."

A repeated concern that is expressed is the increase in safeguarding issues as a consequence of diminished exposure to trained professionals.

There are some specific impacts for parents, for example, the removal of services meaning the loss of valued opportunities for young people.

"Loss of the young carers scheme which all 3 attend which is brilliant for them."

4 Analysis of Stakeholder responses

4.1 Introduction

This report is a standalone document that makes up part of the overall reporting for Oxfordshire's County Councils public consultation on 'The proposed new model for children's services in Oxfordshire. The consultation was open from the 14th of October 2015 and closed on the 10th of January 2016.

During the consultation period, Oxfordshire County Council held a number of meetings for stakeholders and focus groups with service users. The feedback gathered at these events has been recorded and analysed alongside the other channels open for responses.

In total 21 sets of focus group feedback were collected – some of these included more than one group at each location.

8 stakeholder events were conducted, and 3 public consultation events were held across the county, at which notes were taken on discussion, and informal ballots were held on the proposals.

As with all public consultations the response cannot be seen as representative of the population but rather a qualitative cross section of invited stakeholder, users and members of the public. Within the analysis we cannot be clear the extent to which responses are informed by the supporting information that has been provided.

In developing this report a number of verbatim comments have been used to illustrate the points made, this is intended to represent the key points of the face to face dialogue has taken place.

4.2 Summary findings

- A number of ad hoc votes were carried out over the course of the events these show a rejection of the proposals put forward.
- Accessibility and vulnerability are key themes in the stakeholder groups with multiple issues arising from the lack of support from preventative services.
- Rurality is a significant issue from the meeting with the issue of transport and accessibility of the new facilities consistently highlighted. This can lead to isolation for rural families.

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- Impacts on other services are highlighted particularly on schools who are seen to be under pressure and do not have the resources to cope with this. There are also concerns over health facilities that will need to fill the gap on issues such as breast feeding.
 - There will be an impact on young people with children losing consistency and the support that they need to be ready for school.
 - Parents are likely to suffer negative impacts with low levels of support leading to issues such as depression and domestic abuse.
 - Staff are seen as a group who will be impacted with job losses and all that comes with it. There is also a skills deficit that will be left by removing these specialist roles.
 - Community itself will be impacted as local networks and support hubs are lost. This will damage the fabric locally.
 - Suggested different approaches include integration with other services, approaching the issues through commercialisation and charitable fundraising.
 - Volunteering was discussed as a possible solution but it raises questions about safeguarding and oversight that need to be addressed.
 - Within the groups there was criticism of the council and the Government.
 - In the focus groups support and expertise is raised as an important benefit for people using the centres.
 - Impacts on youth services and facilities for young people are seen as negative by young people and all three options are rejected.
 - Further impacts on families including childhood development, parents and wider social impacts that will result from the changes.
 - There is some support for option 2 as the 'lesser of three evils'.

4.3 Ad hoc quantitative voting

At six of the stakeholder meetings held at venues around the county as part of the consultation on the future of children's service in Oxfordshire, parents' representatives present carried out an informal vote with the attendees of the meeting on the proposals presented in the consultation.

These votes were called spontaneously and did not occur at each meeting. As a result there are variations to the wording of the questions between meetings. Voting was carried out by 'show of hands' and the results counted by Oxfordshire County Council staff present.

The voting showcased strong disagreement among attendees at each event with the proposals presented. No votes were recorded in favour of any of the proposals.

The table below outlines the results from these polls.

Table 10: Results of voting at stakeholder meetings

| Date | Venue | Total attendees | Vote Question | Yes/ Agree | No/ Disagree | Abstain | Notes |
|--------|------------|-----------------|---|------------|--------------|---------|--|
| 16-Nov | Oxford (1) | 39 | Raise your hand if you are against all the proposals | 33 | 0 | 6 | |
| 19-Nov | Didcot | 62 | (vote1) Would you support a referendum to approve a rise in council tax (in order to reduce the cuts to children's services)? | 60 | 2 | 0 | The vote on council tax was led by a Cllr attending the meeting as a stakeholder |
| | | | (vote2) Do you support any of the proposals presented? | 0 | 54 | 6 | |
| 20-Nov | Oxford (2) | 45 | Do you agree that "We oppose all 3 proposals put forward"? | 36 | 0 | 1 | Not everyone voted |
| 24-Nov | Banbury | 74 | Raise your hand if you are agree with any of the proposals | 0 | 73 | 1 | |
| 25-Nov | Abingdon | 53 | No vote | | | | |
| 30-Nov | Bicester | 41 | No vote | | | | |
| 07-Dec | Witney | 63 | Vote to reject all 3 proposals | 36 | - | - | No & Abstain votes were not requested |
| 10-Dec | Oxford (3) | 56 | Do you agree that all the proposals are unacceptable? | 40 | 0 | 10 | Not everyone voted |

4.4 Main themes from stakeholder meetings

4.4.1 Accessibility

Vulnerability

A large number of comments were made with regards to the proposals' effect on access for the most vulnerable service users, both children and parents.

A common stated theme is around the importance of, and the negative impact the proposals will have on, the ability to identify vulnerable families through Early Intervention. There are worries that this will in turn lead to more families reaching crisis points.

"How will you recognise children and families at risk in the community without children's centres identifying them? I am worried about how new hubs will cope. It will cost money to train the worker – the voluntary sector will not be able to afford to do this. Perhaps the reason why case numbers are going up is because of such a high performing Early Intervention service."

"There is potential that we will see more crisis points emerging because vulnerable families will not have been supported before things get too bad."

There is also some contention over the service's definition of 'vulnerable', and a concern that many who fall outside of these criteria are still vulnerable to some extent and will be put at risk through lack of access.

"Danger of putting children and families at risk who aren't classed as vulnerable."

"Loss of universal service will mean some families who are potential 'targets' will be missed."

"Private sector? Non profitable services? How will families just under the social threshold be recognised?"

Vulnerability to abuse is cited as a particularly dangerous issue, with those suffering domestic abuse unable to reach more centralised services, and abused children falling 'under the radar'.

"The Children's Centre cooperate with other agencies to support people that have experienced domestic violence. A friendly face offering private support with very difficult issues. This really needs to be recognised."

Children's centres are seen as vital to sufferers of mental health issues such as post-natal depression, who are in danger losing access to the service under the new proposals.

"Vulnerable families will be missed. PND is key as it's the social side is a big factor in supporting families through this."

Hard to reach groups, including traveller and BME communities, are seen as particularly vulnerable and likely to suffer from the proposals.

"How are traveller families going to be supported without the CC outreach workers?"

Transport and Location

The issue of rurality is often cited in response from the events. The remoteness of remaining centres is a concern for many.

In particular, there is concern for a large number of service users who rely on public transport which in more rural areas of the county is described as scarce or insufficient.

It is suggested in several cases that this amounts to discrimination against rural families.

"Oxfordshire is a big county. Service users will not have a local contact if there is no support in the future in the South of the county. It is 15 miles from Sonning Common to Didcot. Public transport links aren't great. Service users will struggle to travel with young children."

"Level of transport variable in rural areas than city and should be considered."

"We reject all three options because rural areas are disadvantaged 78% of population live in villages it is the most rural county in the SE you have to provide services across the county."

The importance of outreach and Health Visitor services is mentioned regularly. There is a suggestion that the demand for these services will increase if fewer local centres are available to families.

"Rural families - isolated. Lack of village facilities - mental health. Outreach work is invaluable."

"Living outside village-can't afford car or petrol = complete isolation-no neighbours. Only statutory visits from HV - easy to fall through net."

Loss of universal access & stigma

The proposed loss of universal access is a major talking point at the events. The large gap between those who rely on universal access and those in need of social care is seen by many as a potential for an increase in vulnerability.

A number of responses through the events mention the history of stigmatisation in previous childcare systems, and the danger that this will become a greater issue again through the abandonment of a universal access approach.

Many suggest that the result of this stigma will be a reluctance to use the service by those most in need of it.

Some assert that the long-term effects of this stigmatisation will result in greater costs instead of the short-term savings made by cutting universal access.

"No universal access means there is no support for people in general who are not needing social plans but need support where would they find out about services in a gentle not official way."

"I am not from round here but I have done some research and I believe that the current Children's Centres replaced a previous stigmatising service. The new centres will stigmatise users as only families with issues will attend them. Also local provision is so important, especially with bus and transport cuts. I would like to know how you will prevent stigmatisation."

"Mixing with 'universal' users and making friends together shows the less able families different values and ways of handling matters, and families offer help and support to others. If you just have 'targeted' families they will feel stigmatised and separate and it will be difficult to engage with them."

4.4.2 Impact

Another key overarching theme that consistently comes through from the stakeholder events is around impact. The main areas of impact are outlined in the following section.

Impact on other services

A number of impacts on other services as a result of the proposals coming to fruition are commented upon at the stakeholder and public events. Schools are one of the main services picked out as likely to bear the brunt of the impact, schools are generally seen as ill equipped to deal with this increase in need.

"Schools do not have structure to support. Small schools have no SENCO - headteacher is SENCO."

"More responsibility being pushed out to schools to pick up issues which are social / emotional / welfare issues rather than educational issues."

"Social services and health services are also expected by some to have to deal with more as a result of cuts to children's centre services."

"Breast feeding negative impact on health budget, Breast feeding clinic at John Radcliffe will be over run, negative effect on health visitor and midwives time if services removed."

"Impact on other services e.g. health visitor using CC's for groups and services."

"Social services impact. The amazing amount of holding and improving local families that is done by children's centres will fall on social services and health."

Impact on individuals

A direct negative impact on individuals was cited regularly at the events. Babies, children and young people were one group identified as losing out on services and safeguarding currently provided by children's centres.

"Children and young people need continuity, and whilst I have my gripes about the so called 'early intervention', has the transition been considered?"

"Worried impact on children i.e. higher exclusion, higher abuse, more NEETs. Higher teenage pregnancy more drug use."

"We won't be able to support children who are being abused/neglected."

There are also concerns about the knock-on effects to educational development, with a particular focus on school-readiness. The lack of children's centre support in this area is seen as likely to lead to developmental problems and more pressure on schools. Adult education is also expected by some to suffer as a result of closures.

"The proposals will also mean increasing barriers to children with disabilities whose special education needs will not be identified early enough."

"This year the children arriving in reception had more needs than in any previous years. Before they arrived we knew about the needs and were able to plan accordingly and put things in place. Without the services for the high profile SEND from vulnerable families, the concern for me is that we will be starting from scratch with each child/family every year. Early intervention for these children in an unrecognised deprived area is crucial."

"Opportunity to learn as an adult, knowing child is supported in crèche. Confidence for work, new skills, etc. No support for adults to learn / improve skills for work and to support children at school. No opportunity to offer in. No experienced crèche staff / centre staff to support the children who are in a crèche while adults learn. Family Learning will be unable to offer universal access with support for both children and adults in Children's Centre working together."

Staff are also identified as adversely affected by the proposals. This is raised both as a point of current staff suffering, and of an adverse effect on the quality of staff in the future.

"Increased unemployment of local people who work in Children's Centres."

"Huge safeguarding risk - although voluntary agencies aware - haven't some degree of training as CC and hub workers."

"Biggest loss - expertise of professionals, known and trusted, (have worked in area for over 20 years), has had huge impact on locality now being penalised because we haven't got more families in vulnerable groups. We have had huge impact on our community, stopping (Outstanding OFSTED always) families becoming vulnerable. we have done a very good job, have been for years saving OCC money."

Impacts on parents, particularly vulnerable parents, are also cited, as they benefit greatly from children's centres as well as their children.

"Mums, Dads and carers on the cusp of social care (protection) needs are likely to be more isolated and only picked up when a crisis occurs. Preventative measures may not be easy to measure but should not be disregarded."

"Isolating parents. Prevent them from seeking help. Precipitate crisis where maybe there wouldn't have been one with local support - postnatal depression, anxiety."

Concern over increased social isolation and loneliness is a message that comes through strongly from the events. Children's centres are seen as an important tool in combating this.

"New families isolated. Peer support available. Post-natal depression rates would increase."

"Having an environment where you can meet new people and make new friendships. I met one of my close friends at east street at a drop in 5 years ago - not having the centres I wouldn't have that opportunity."

Impact on health, including mental health

The health of both children and parents is thought to be at risk by a number of respondents from the stakeholder and public events.

"These are women who do not attend midwife appointments at GP surgeries who are happy and willing to attend midwife appointments in the Children's Centre."

"From a Health visitor point of view there will be fewer quality services to refer to and they will be more anonymous e.g. PND, breastfeeding."

Impact on community and society

Children's centres are cited as an important social asset and a key to integration of parents, children and families into communities. Losing these and early intervention is thought to present a real risk in this regard.

"Loss of local centres - loss of local focus, community cohesion, link to language, childcare, understanding culture."

"If you cut El...Crisis - Increase in crime. Increase in social unrest. Decrease in numeracy and literacy. Increase in safeguarding. Increase in permanent exclusions. Decrease in attendance."

4.4.3 Prevention

The importance of preventative services enabled by children's centres, and in particular early intervention, is seen as paramount for some of those at the events.

Many highlight the long-term detriment that will follow short-term financial gains, with a decrease in prevention now leading to more problems and more expense down the line.

"Activity will escalate to criminality quicker because there is no diversionary activities."

"False economy. Costs will just be devolved to social service, criminal justice, NHS because lack of intervention at an early stage leads to greater and more costly interventions later STORING UP TROUBLE!"

"Research has proven that tackling problems early is financially sensible and produces savings later i.e. requiring additional health input ongoing."

4.4.4 Funding and alternatives

A number of suggestions were made in response to the proposals and the consultation.

Integration

Integrating with other services is cited often as a possible course of action as an alternative to the proposals on offer. In some cases the suggestion is around sharing physical space with other services.

"Cut the buildings not the workers.. There are loads of community buildings we can use.. The biggest schools. Put EIS Workers in each school, cut the issue of access as everyone can access their schools and cuts building costs so that we can spend more money on high skilled quality staff that are in every community."

"Parents looking at options, if the centre closes, a venue that is suitable for parents and children. Ideally the local church."

Another suggestion often made mirrors the one above – to bring other services into children's centres and make them a useful asset for more members of the community.

"Children's centres relatively cheap to run - why not deploy some older age children's workers within them - cheaper/organic/local!"

Fundraising and commercialisation

Suggestions were made to increase the funding for childcare through commercialisation, fundraising and revenue-generating approaches. These include subscription fees sometimes on sliding scales; traditional fundraising schemes such as asking for donations from service users as well as local businesses and other residents; more long-term funding arrangements with local businesses and organisations as well as charities (or functioning as registered charities themselves); charging for certain children's services such as non-statutory care for under 3's and crèche services; hosting and charging for extra services and activities; and letting out buildings to other groups or service providers.

"Annual membership fee - waved for those who can't pay - plus voluntary contributions / donations on top if people want to."

"Using centres to offer income generating groups e.g. yoga to help fund daytime service."

"Fundraising - core funding from council commercial sponsor - banks, factory, supermarket."

Use of volunteers

Voluntary sector input was often discussed at the events. While the worth of volunteers supporting or driving the centres is recognised, substantial doubts are also expressed about how much could be realistically achieved through this method. The likely strain on volunteers, and the limited skill set and funds they likely have in comparison to current trained staff are raised often.

Another worry expressed at the meetings from Consultees was that the proposals would shift more responsibility onto volunteers than appropriate. The detrimental impact on safeguarding is particularly salient – the difficulty of obtaining and checking DBS checks for volunteers are often mentioned.

On the other hand, further use of volunteers was also voiced as a suggestion.

"An expectation that voluntary organisations will step in e.g. churches in order to pick up and provide the open access services - this is a backwards step - such services were taken out of the hands of these volunteer bodies by professional bodies for a whole host of reasons which resulted in a deskilling of the volunteer sector to go back will potential create many issues especially safeguarding."

"If volunteers are used, how will we manage safeguarding? DBS checks are taking months to complete. Centre workers undergo massive amounts of vital training. It would be dangerous to suggest they can be replaced by volunteers. For this to be sustained, volunteers need training in many areas, as well as a support system, to take care of their own mental health."

"Parents model to other parents. No stigma. Cost effective."

4.4.5 Council, government and consultation comments and criticism

There were a number of comments made about the consultation itself, and in particular the events. In the main these were criticisms, either of the quality of the consultation or of its ability to make a difference.

'This question [how do we respond to these proposals?] feels insulting to CC staff as it feels like a 'done deal'. We (CC staff) reject all options'

'Consultation flawed due to no option of status quo. Timing of consultations inappropriate to users e.g. 6pm 2-4pm'

'Someone voiced that first and foremost, children's centres should have been asked about whether they could save money on their own budgets – who knows what choices they may have made'

There were also wider criticisms of national and local government and the policies that are felt to have led to these proposals being made. In particular, a common message was that, since the Conservative County Council had worked hard to help David Cameron's election as Prime Minister, it was within its rights to reject the imposition that had been made.

"It doesn't sit well that saying that OCC says it doesn't agree with central government decisions as it is a Conservative Council."

"it isn't true that there isn't a statutory duty for CCs. Local Tories worked hard to elect the PM. Local Tories should resign to send a message to government."

"OCC is asking us to solve a problem that they have created! Why should we? What are your staff paid for if they need us to sort out this problem?"

4.5 Focus Groups

21 focus groups were held with service users, both adults and children, across the county. Most of these followed a topic guide consisting of four questions, which are outlined below:

- What are your thoughts on the three models?
- What parts of the service are most important to you?
- What would happen if these services (the ones most important to you) didn't exist?
- Are there people, or groups of people that you think will be more affected by any of these proposals than most people?

There was then an opportunity to raise any other questions, concerns or views.

4.5.1 Support and expertise

Many focus group attendees commented on the benefit brought by children's centres in the shape of expertise and support across a range of different areas.

'I've had lots of support on courses and getting back to work and my child gets 2 year old funded place. Centre makes me feel at home. If I didn't have this I would feel so lonely- my friends live a different life.'

'Staff helped me get hold of other services- housing/health visitor'

'Consensus that the support received with the staff was most beneficial to them as parents and to the children who had opportunity to play, receive information about child's development, felt welcomed, included, in a non-judgemental environment.'

4.5.2 Social aspect and networks

The social opportunities afforded to users of children's centres are cited in the focus groups. The new social networks that are developed seen as hugely important to users and the peer support network formed among parents is also beneficial.

'Many parents said how much they valued the opportunity to support each other and that they had made lasting relationships with each other and the staff which meant they were able to share their worries and enjoy their successes'

There are also suggestions that the centre helps mixed communities to integrate in some cases.

'Builds tolerance and acceptance within a mixed community'

'[The proposals will most affect] People who are new to country/ immigrants'

Other parents said they have used the courses that are offered by the Children's Centres and mentioned courses as parenting, first aid, and English classes.

4.5.3 Comments from children and young people

A number of the groups took place with young people, aged between 8 and 16. These Consultees made a range of comments in response to the above questions.

Their response to the proposals was wholeheartedly in opposition to all three options.

Among the older aged young people, from 12-16 years of age, many mention the services particularly important to them at the centres, for example leisure and sporting activities, as well as the space it offers to socialise and speak with the staff.

There are several mentions of the importance the centre to LGBT individuals, with the opportunities it provides them unavailable elsewhere.

'If Topaz and the Terence Higgins Trust (who provide sex education/HIV testing) cease to be funded many young people will be much less aware of the dangers that they may face, and therefore will get hurt. Sex education is rarely taught for gay students in schools, and being cut off from this education could potentially lead to youth getting caught in abusive relationships and contracting even life-threatening diseases.'

For the younger children, aged 8-11, comments recorded are more directive, but unanimously call for a rejection of the proposal to close the children's centre :

'We say YES to youth club and no to the council!'

'YOU KNOW WHAT IM GONNA SAY.....STOP SHUTTING YOUTHY'

'I am going to be happy if you keep it open if you don't I'll be sad'

4.5.4 Response to proposals

General opposition to closure

Some participants of the focus groups were clear that the proposals were not welcomed and that centres should continue with the status quo.

'None of them because the hub is the most important thing and it is bad to shut down 44 services and only open 8 centres.'

Arguments for increased funding

There were a number of comments made arguing that more funding should be contributed to support the families and service users who will lose out from the loss of universal access.

'Will the community be able to apply for some kind of funding to run a universal session? There are not enough pre-school places in this area as it is without the centre children will not be ready for school, there has been so much emphasis on the early years being vital and after all these little ones are going to be our adults of the future.'

Participants suggest introducing charges for families who are able to pay a small fee, or to explore sponsorships with local businesses willing to offer financial support.

'Would be happy to contribute financially to ensure the centre is available to us.'

Vulnerability and accessibility

Although some participants believe that anyone is or can be vulnerable, some groups are seen as more vulnerable than others; people who are socially isolated, single parents, people who are new to the country, families with special needs, and families who cannot access information or do not own a computer.

Users of the service value the open-access and say that without Universal service vulnerable families might feel stigmatised. Participants feel that losing the Universal services will mean that the community will be less integrated.

'I am on social care but don't feel that people judge me when I come here.'

Another vulnerable group that is mentioned are families who live in rural areas where the centres are not easy to access. Parents say public transport is unreliable or expensive, and therefore feel the new model is not acceptable. One participant mentioned that the cost of public transport was not covered by child benefits. Users of the service also mentioned that people with health or mobility issues will have a more difficult time to access the services.

Support for proposals

It should be noted that there are isolated incidences of support, or at least preference, for certain proposals.

Each option is cited by different respondents at least once as the most preferable of the three, but most of these mentions are qualified with a reference to those families who would be missed.

'If I had to choose one option I would choose 2 but would mean vulnerable families would be missed.'

'Consensus that Option 3 is the most appropriate, however not enough detail and concerns re £1 million not being enough for the service across the whole of Oxfordshire. families would be missed.'

'One person said that if they had to choose out of the 3 that option 2 would seem to be the lesser of 3 evils. This was then put to a vote and the consensus was that if one had to be chosen it would be option 2 though here as little enthusiasm'

'Option 1 because there are more services open to younger and older children and young people'

4.5.5 Impact

Impact on children and young people

For children, the proposed changes may mean that they will have lack of play opportunities during the winter months.

Young people feel that they will have nowhere to go to talk about their problems. The centres are seen as a place where they can go when they are bored, and they also build relationships with each other and with the staff. The centres provide them with a place to go when they want to discuss issues, or when they need help and support.

'They help me with problems that I wouldn't say to anyone else.'

Participants argue that consequences will stretch further than the personal life of children and young people, and that it will also affect the community. By keeping children off the streets and giving them a place to go, more serious issues will be prevented. Parents and young people both identify that children will be more likely to get in trouble with the police without youth services to turn to.

'Children would be on streets taking drugs/causing trouble/killing each other instead of being in a safe environment.'

'I wouldn't cope. My children would be in trouble with people and police.'

Young LGBT people expressed they needed the youth services for support and guidance.

'Coming out is scary! You never know who will welcome you with open arms, and who will shove you in the dirt.'

'LGBT and Young Carers I think will be most affected because people are bullied for being LGBT and people struggle more than people realise as young carers.'

Children and young people with special needs and young carers are mentioned as additional vulnerable groups.

'My son would lose some of his independence and myself would be lost because the staff are great help us both. Please don't take our hub away from us. It's too important to a lot of people.'

Impact on development

To the participants, personal development meant both educating parents and children. Parents valued the different courses that were offered, and the access to support and advice from the trained and knowledgeable staff. Children's centres were valued for helping children to develop social skills and preparing young children for school. The environment was seen as 'stimulating' for children and enabled them to learn in a fun and playful way. Parents explained early education was very important to them, because it helped their child's development.

Impact on individuals

Children's Centres were seen as a place where both children and parents can feel safe. Participants said that without the services they would not have a place to go for 'immediate advice and support'. Families could get more isolated and lonely and this could influence their health. New parents, young mothers, or parents who do not have English as their first language, were seen as particularly vulnerable.

'It would be really difficult for me without the ESOL class. I can't communicate with confidence.'

Parents mentioned financial support; from help with benefits to saving money for buying milk by receiving breastfeeding support.

'There is nowhere else for childminders to go even the library's opening times have been reduced. I have done so many courses here that have helped me in so many different ways including first aid, baby massage, sleep workshops, weaning workshops.'

'Children's centres are very preventative for me being a full time working mother I didn't get to meet other people in the community and felt very vulnerable until I started coming to the centre, without it I would definitely struggled maybe even have post-natal depression.'

Impact on social life

Social impact is seen as a major threat. Social isolation for adults and lack of social development for children, or opportunities to socialise, are cited regularly.

'Isolation, for my children as well as for me.'

'Depression would be worse as a result of isolation and this would be a potential additional burden on the NHS.'

4.6 Additional information on stakeholder events

8 stakeholder events were held, shown in the table below:

| Date | Venue | Attendees |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|
| 16 th November | Oxford (1) | 39 |
| 19 th November | Didcot | 62 |
| 20 th November | Oxford (2) | 45 |
| 24 th November | Banbury | 74 |
| 25 th November | Abingdon | 53 |
| 30 th November | Bicester | 41 |
| 7 th December | Witney | 63 |
| 10 th December | Oxford (3) | 56 |

The format of the events generally followed a discussion including two main questions. At each of the events, the first of these questions was:

What does this [the proposals] mean for the children and families using my Children's Centre & Hub?

At all events barring the Didcot event on 19th November, the second question was:

How do we respond to these proposals?

At the Didcot event, the second question was different:

Explore ideas to reduce the impact of issues raised by the proposals to reduce the Early Intervention Service

Points made in discussion, in response to the questions, were recorded and analysed

Focus groups had a different set of four questions

What are your thoughts on the three models?

What parts of the service are most important to you?

What would happen if these services (the ones most important to you) didn't exist?

Are there people, or groups of people that you think will be more affected by any of these proposals than most people?

3 public consultation events were held in addition to the stakeholder events, shown in the table below:

| Date | Venue |
|---------------------------|----------|
| 18 th November | Oxford |
| 23 rd November | Didcot |
| 30 th November | Bicester |

5 Standalone report of emails and letters received

5.1 Introduction

This report is a standalone document that makes up part of the overall reporting for Oxfordshire's County Councils public consultation on 'The proposed new model for children's services in Oxfordshire. The consultation was open from the 14th of October 2015 and closed on the 10th of January.

This report relates to the response via emails and letters. Members of the public and organisations were free to submit freestanding responses through the consultation period via a central email address or through the post.

Overall 88 emails have been received and 36 letters. Of those letters, eight were extended responses and have been separated into a standalone report of their own. One of these postal submissions was correspondence between the Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Secretary of State for Education and Rt Hon Andrew Smith MP, Member of Parliament for Oxford East, relating to the proposed plans for the Children's Centres raised by a constituent in Oxford East. The table here demonstrates the spread by Postcode;

Emails (88) 31 postcode unknown. Three are OX but not specified where.

| Post Code Prefix | No. Responses | Post Code Prefix | No. Responses | Post Code Prefix | No. Responses |
|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------|
| OX1 | 1 | OX10 | 2 | OX26 | 2 |
| OX2 | 9 | OX11 | 2 | OX27 | 1 |
| OX3 | 5 | OX12 | 4 | OX28 | 1 |
| OX4 | 6 | OX14 | 3 | OX29 | 1 |
| OX5 | 1 | OX18 | 1 | OX33 | 3 |
| OX7 | 3 | OX20 | 1 | OX44 | 4 |
| OX9 | 1 | OX25 | 1 | RG9 | 1 |

Most emails are from individuals (82) with a small number from organisations. 62 of the emails come from campaigning organisations.

The views are not representative and should be read as a collection of responses from interested parties who have been motivated to engage with the authority on this issue. In the analysis we cannot be clear the extent to which individuals or organisations have engaged in the materials provided via the web portal and other channels.

In reading this report the reader will find an executive summary that draws together the themes that emerge from the response, followed by a qualitative summary of those key points with verbatim quotes to illustrate the points that have been made.

5.2 Summary findings

- Prevention is seen as essential especially with low income families and is proven to work. It creates a space without stigma where problems can be easily detected. It has much wider community benefits including reducing incidence of crime and antisocial behaviour. There are also a set of health benefits.
- Other services will have to pick up issues that the centres are currently dealing with. For example, schools will need to take the strain on childhood development but at a much later stage. GPs, social workers and the wider NHS will be impacted; centres currently pick up the issues that will need to be dealt with elsewhere.
- Many emails and letters are against the cuts and closure for many of the reasons stated including impact and prevention. Some of the emails were part of a campaign to influence Oxfordshire CC to rethink cuts to 'vital services'.
- Vulnerability is a key theme and is seen as more than just income, the universal part of the service identifies needs that escalate amongst those who are vulnerable. Vulnerability should be prioritised but the authority needs to widen its definition to encompass others who are vulnerable and need support
- There is a clear role for the centres and hubs in the long term health of the people of Oxfordshire. The centre's staff are often trusted in a way that GPs and other practitioners are not it makes it a vital link to good health.
- There is a cost involved in closing services down and replacing them. There will also be a big impact on staff through re-training and redundancies. Overall the approach is likely to cost more in the long term and create additional cost for other services. There should be a way of finding additional funding to sustain the current model.
- Parents may suffer from a lack of personal development and learning, this support for young parents is vital if they are to avoid becoming vulnerable. The proposals are likely to lead to negative impacts such as increased stress and social isolation.

-
- Rural areas have had great success with the children's centres; it was the same level of service enjoyed by urban areas. Removing them is very worrying and it will become difficult to access services both for recreation, health and development in the future because of public transport.
 - There has been significant investment in staff, by cutting them you lose the investment in made over the years and add costs through redundancy and retraining.
 - The consultation documentation contains incorrect information and the consultation is lacks integrity because the decision has already been made.
 - There is criticism of the Government and the council with some citing a reversal on promises in the election.

5.3 Main themes

5.3.1 Prevention

Prevention is an overlapping theme in the emails and letters received. Respondents mention early intervention and prevention for vulnerable families. Some letters or emails describe how Children's Centres are a proven method for prevention and to stimulate development.

Universal access enables staff to detect issues and vulnerability and counteracts stigma. Stigma can form a barrier for vulnerable people to seek help and support at the Children's Centre and this might cause their situation to escalate. Respondents comment that the earlier problems are detected; the more chance families stand to overcome their difficulties.

"They prevent the need for costlier interventions being needed further down the line." Email

Prevention was mentioned in many forms and with different benefits. According to respondents it stretches further than child and family, but the community also benefits. For example, if vulnerable people are helped and supported, they are less likely to be socially excluded or commit crimes.

"If families can access children's centres regardless of circumstance this reduces crime, prevents social exclusion and promotes educational progress" Letter

Another mentioned benefit was that the Children's Centres support people who do not have English as their first language and this can prevent problems later on as well.

Respondents said that Children's Centres play an important part in promoting healthy behaviour and therefore prevent problems with dental health, weight and more. Their close collaboration with Health Visitors was mentioned as very important.

5.3.2 Impact

Impact on other services

A key theme in the letters and emails is the likelihood of increased strain on other services from the new model. Respondents mention that Children's Centres often pick up on issues that otherwise end up at more costly services. The removal of centres and hubs, it is felt, will create greater strain on social workers, GPs and schools as they begin to pick up issues in their absence. Overall there is a view that Children's Centres save money and prevent stress on other services.

Health impacts (including mental health)

Health impacts are mainly mentioned in relation to the preventative and educational aspects of the Children's Centres. There is reference to an important role in long-term health of families in Oxfordshire, especially with the early year's intervention.

There is a view that the centres offer a less intimidating environment that users often prefer to engage with before they decide to go to their GP or mental health services. This is also a benefit for the wider system potentially preventing use of more expensive and intensive services. This is also linked to the role of the Children's Centres to inform families on healthy lifestyles.

Impacts on babies, children, young people

The Children's Centres are seen as a place where children learn how to interact with others and are prepared for school. Respondents expressed concerns about the development of children if they cannot attend the Children's Centre.

There is a fear that child abuse or other protection issues will go unnoticed without the Universal services and that this will have severe consequences for children and young people.

The impact on children and young people is also linked to 'prevention'. Early intervention enables staff to detect problems at an early stage or prevent children from becoming vulnerable.

One respondent expressed concerns over the spaces for 2-year olds funding and wondered if there are enough spaces for children that are entitled to funding.

There are personal testimonies from parents on the impact of closing down the Children's Centres on their own children.

"My daughter calls the children's centre 'My children's centre' as she runs into the super environment eager, excited and happy to be there again. I am sure she feels the safety and sanctuary that I feel when I visit. I am also sure that her seamless joining of a local pre – school has been due to her experience of the high quality provision made by the children's centre – as all children begin to learn at day 1! She also knows many of the pre – school children from Children's centre. "

General impact (including families)

Respondents expressed their concern on what the cuts will mean for families in Oxfordshire. Vulnerable families in particular might have limited or no access to the services. The received Emails and letters explained that this might leave them more vulnerable and socially isolated.

"Teenage families supported by Family Nurse Partnership will also have fewer local centres to access support, potentially resulting in them being less empowered. Many teenagers on the caseload would struggle to take public transport or travel far to go to a children's centre"

Staff impact – loss of jobs, skills, relationships

As well as financial comments, respondents also mentioned the time and training that was invested in the current staff. They felt that the skills and the relationships they build with users of the services, especially with vulnerable families, will be lost.

5.3.3 Accessibility

Universal access

Respondents write that they appreciate how the Universal services currently support families within Oxfordshire. The current approach also lifts some of the weight off other services and enables staff to detect problems at an early stage. The educational aspect of the Children's Centres is seen as a way to prevent problems in the future and as a consequence save additional spending now through other services and in the future.

Without Universal services, families might encounter stigma, especially when the focus is turned to vulnerable groups accessing Social Care led services. Limited access is also seen as a cause of isolation.

“Universal families are less likely to be able to access a local centre for support. This may impact on isolation with a consequential increase in demand for the universal element of the health visiting service.

Transport – location – rural areas (accessibility)

Respondents thought and felt that rural areas need to have the same access as urban areas. With recent cuts on public transport and difficulties for vulnerable groups such as pregnant mothers, travelling could become a difficulty. This was the view of organisations, centre staff and families themselves.

“Teenage families supported by Family Nurse Partnership will also have fewer local centres to access support, potentially resulting in them being less empowered. Many teenagers on the caseload would struggle to take public transport or travel far to go to a children’s centre” Letter, Children’s Centre consultation Oxford Health response

“Rural areas were very grateful when they gained the same level of service to children as enjoyed in the urban areas. The centre has been a huge success and parents are very worried if this much valued facility is removed or downgraded.” Letter, The Chalgrove Children’s Centre

“With my second child I was able to do an anti – natal course at the children’s centre so when heavily pregnant I didn’t have to travel any distance. I was also able to see my midwife at the children’s centre.” Letter from family in Marston

Vulnerability (access, identification, definition)

Vulnerability is a term that is consistently used in the feedback through emails and letters. The term is for some people not defined simply by low income, the presence of universal services creates the space for dedicated and qualified staff to identify families who may be in trouble or in danger of becoming statutorily vulnerable. This is noted as a particular issues in rural areas where less access to services is envisaged in the new service.

A number of other groups are also viewed as vulnerable or potentially vulnerable. Young families and first-time parents are mentioned as vulnerable (more than those on low-income); respondents mention that all young people and children are seen as vulnerable and need to be kept safe. Children and young people with special needs, or young LGBT people are also mentioned as being particularly vulnerable groups.

5.3.4 Financial comments

Respondents direct questions to OCC urging them to identify possible routes towards funding that can help to sustain the current Children's Centres. Other emails and letters look at the long-term costs state that cutting the centres and hubs is a false economy that is likely to end up costing more in other services, for example NHS.

There is also recognition of the costs involved in closing the centres and redundancies and re-training of remaining staff.

"How much will it cost to dismantle the current service and set up the new service and is it worth being so drastic?"

There are comments on how the Government spends money with a call for funding to be found elsewhere either from central Government or locally. There are also concerns on how the proposals have been developed and costed.

"Ideally I would love to see a full costing analysis including risk, however I know the council are not very forthcoming with these documents, if they exist at all, however the above are all points that you would have (hopefully) considered and so I see no reason why you cannot give me, straight, direct answers to my questions."

Oppose cuts – closures

There was opposition to the cuts and a general point that comes through is a rejection of closing the centres because of their overall benefit to families and the community.

"At a recent meeting with new local MP, Victoria Prentis, parents who would be affected by the closure of the unit, made an impassioned plea against closure and presented cases involving the positive changes in the lives of families touched by the Children's Centre; both children and adults have received invaluable support and many have felt that they couldn't live without it."

Many of the responses received through email and letters were against closures and cuts on Children's Centres. A share of the emails were part of a campaign that asked OCC to rethink cutting the 'vital services'. Cuts and closures of Children's Centres are linked to prevention and impact on other services, parents, children and health.

5.3.5 Documentation – consultation comments

Amongst the letters and emails there are a number of comments on the documentation and consultation itself. One email for example states that there is incorrect information within the supporting consultation material and that this needs to be changed to allow people to understand the issues fully.

There is a view and supporting comments from writers that they feel cuts will be made anyway and that the consultation, and their effort of providing feedback, is in vain.

Another set of comments point to the public events and indicate that there was disparity in the location of the events with important areas not included. This raises questions for some about equality of opportunity to contribute to the consultation.

“This feeling has been made evident to the Town Council notwithstanding the decision by OCC not to hold a specific consultation meeting about them in Banbury, but instead to have these meetings only in Oxford, Didcot and Bicester.” Letter, Banbury town Council

5.3.6 Government – Council criticism

Writers express their feelings about the planned changes and cuts to the services. In some cases, respondents mentioned that the cuts to Children’s Centres were not what was promised during the elections.

Several Emails, part of an Emailing campaign, mentioned the Prime Ministers communicated that he is opposed cuts on the frontline Children’s Centres and that this could be avoided by making back-office savings.

“In fact, the Prime Minister David Cameron said children’s services can be paid for by simple back-office savings. Please listen to the Prime Minister and don’t let them close.” Campaigning email

6 Standalone report of detailed submissions

6.1 Introduction

This report is a standalone document that makes up part of the overall reporting for Oxfordshire's County Councils public consultation on 'The proposed new model for children's services in Oxfordshire. The consultation was open from the 14th of October 2015 and closed on the 10th of January.

This report relates to the 8 detailed written responses submitted through the consultation. Members of the public and organisations were free to submit freestanding responses through the consultation period via a central email address or through the post. These responses are included in the totals identified in the 'E-mails and letters' section of the report.

Detailed responses were received from the following organisations:

- Banbury Town Council
- Oxfordshire Health NHS Foundation Trust
- The Slade and Headington Children Centre
- Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB)
- Action for Children
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation
- University of Oxford Department of Education.
- Children's Centre Management Team

6.2 Summary of responses

Below are summaries of the submissions provided in each of these detailed responses. Each summary is an analysis of the main points raised in each contribution

Banbury Town Council

A public meeting was held in Banbury Town Hall on 2nd November, with representations also heard from service users on two further occasions.

The main concerns expressed: loss of universal services, a lower threshold for intervention leading to a loss of preventative services creating a additional pressure on overstretched statutory services such as social workers; impact on schools/health sector.

The Opposition Labour Group of the town council is opposed to all of the preferred options and recommends that the Council ask the County Council to work with it to develop means of retaining the current full range of Children's Centres and their

services in their entirety. Innovative funding solutions such as the 'Cluster' model of Town and Parish Councils set out in 'Oxfordshire Together' provide.

The controlling group do not feel that a solution can be found that retained all the Centres without OCC funding.

The financial constraints on the Town Council's own resources mean that meeting the shortfall to keep threatened centres open would require a 64% increase in their Precept; an increase that is felt to be an intolerable burden on already hard pressed lower income families and may prompt Ministers to cap their sector.

Due to these reasons, there was a feeling that whilst none of the options were desirable, option 3 provided the best outcome for Banbury residents.

Oxfordshire safeguarding children board – response to OCSC

OSCB recognises the current pressures on public sector funding nationally.

The question for OSCB is whether Children's Services will still have the capacity to help keep children safe within the new proposed model.

The standard of child protection service in Oxfordshire were considered high in the most recent Ofsted inspection. The inspector noted that the increase in the numbers of child protection plans and complexity of cases were putting undue pressure on the child protection system.

Concern expressed that there is an upward trajectory of cases coming to the child protection system which will require close analysis of how services are responding to the most vulnerable families.

The OSCB recognises that the reconfiguration of services to establish an integrated 0-19 service across early intervention and statutory social care for 0-19 year olds is in itself a good model.

Three risks are identified and explained, with a concern expressed that reducing services in early help may have a negative impact on the child protection service if there is not sufficient capacity within the new arrangements to deliver the ambition to focus on the most risky children and reduce case loads.

OSCB does not recommend charging for services on the grounds that the support for those most in need will be lost; it is not proportionate option; there are conflicts in meeting statutory responsibilities; it would be complex and resource intensive to administer.

Draft proposal for transformation – from Children's Centre Management team

A detailed submission was received from the Children's Centre Management team and 3 children's centre heads as part of the consultation.

This sets out a proposal out a coordinated approach to communities running their own provision.

The proposal has two strands– a Locality co-ordinator posts which are multi agency and a Community Builder Programme.

A Community Builder Programme would work with local communities in order for them to run community provision. This would be graduated according to areas of need and paid staff would run the direct work with families and children. This programme would focus on educating communities about neglect; provide service in the more rural and inaccessible areas of the county; support transition for families identified through a referral as needing more support but not reaching the thresholds and those who have complete work with the Family Support Team.

The second part includes family support teams in each of the eight Children and Family Resource Centres that oversee the children's centre work according to the OFSTED framework. They would co-ordinate work in order for other agencies and volunteers to contribute to children's centre requirements and oversee the management of the building. The group would have a mix of families with varying levels of need. The coordinator for this post would also manage the Community Builder Programme within their geographic area.

The advantages set out for this model include: ensuring that the legal framework for children's centres is met by Oxfordshire County Council; the provision of a framework for transition; the opportunity for communities, local councils, and local organisations to be involved in running the provision; co-ordinated approach across the area to provide oversight of each areas needs and allow for provision planning in available premises; co-ordinated link with Family Support teams; safeguarding children within the community; flexibility of staffing; combating of the issue of targeted provision being stigmatised; planning and organisation of resources; cost effectiveness in terms of disruption; retention of staff with expertise in parental engagement; and that it will bring in more funding for service to make the proposal sustainable.

The budget for the community builder projects would be £78,389 per project with additional services costing £78,371 for two employment advisors at Grade 10 and £70,000 for a Mobile Children's Centre.

The proposal also sets out income generation from business, charity organisations and social enterprises.

Oxford Health NHS

This response collated responses from different areas across the service that will be affected by the proposed changes. The following concerns were raised regarding the impact on Complex Care, dental, public health and Child and Adolescent Mental Health pathways.

Closure of Children's Centres will mean therapists see young children in clinics. This will affect the effectiveness of the service they receive, as by seeing children in Children's Centres the quality of assessment improves, therapists liaise with staff in the centres and gather more information about children's needs, and more meaningful recommendations for the therapy programme of support can be made. There will be an impact on the costs for health estates as therapists will require more rooms, diminishing

the amount of resources to deliver other services. Universal level support will reduce meaning referrals and a more targeted level of intervention rather than local support and early intervention.

Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs are be a good way of accessing younger children who are too young for pre-school and school but beyond being seen by health visitors (seen at 8 months and 2 years). In the proposed plans most areas are covered, however there is only once centre planned for Banbury which has a large deprived population of around 47,000. Concern that proposed changes may impact on the named Health visitors that Children Centres have who can refer to dental services. Children Centre's also promote good key oral health messages, these opportunities will be reduced with less Children Centre's, although accreditation for Children Centre's for oral health would be easier.

The public health pathway services that would be impacted by the proposals are Health Visiting, Family Nurse Partnership and School Health Nursing. The benefits of the current model for these include immediately local services, provision that is driven by vulnerability and need and involve partnership working between the county Council and Oxford health; information sharing between services; and staff working in partnership to deliver universal services.

The proposed model will mean that universal families are less likely to be able to access a local centre for support, which may impact on isolation and increase demand for the health visiting service. It will be harder for health visitors to identify vulnerable families, as they will not be known to other agencies. Teenage families supported by Family Nurse Partnership will have fewer local centres to access support which may result in them being less empowered. Teenagers on the caseload would struggle to take public transport or travel to access the children's centres. There will be an increase on the travel costs and provisional time for Oxford Health staff. The number of settings that Oxford Health can use to deliver care will be reduced. School Health Nursing who currently at times use children's centres to support families for reasons of anonymity will be less likely to be able to do this.

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) would be impacted by the proposals in a number of ways. Children Services currently provide signposting options pre and post Mental Health assessment and need reassurance that these would remain. The CAMHS service has had a 45% increase in accepted referrals over the past 3 years. This demand has impacted on CAMHS capacity. Reduction in early years help services may result in later identification of mental health concerns in children and young people which may in turn lead to a higher number of urgent referrals and a greater level of need at the point of entry into CAMHS services. There is a concern that a reduction in early intervention will create an issue whereby unaddressed needs will develop and fester leading to more ingrained need requiring significantly more input and resources over a longer period of time, which could be catastrophic for young people and the capacity threshold of services trying to meet the presenting need.

Action for Children

Action for Children responded to the consultation with a document providing evidence from a consultation with children centre staff and recommendations for an alternative model. Three specific concerns are raised their work with children across Oxfordshire.

Firstly, the geographical distance that some service users would need to travel in order to access targeted services in a rural county with limited public transport requires consideration. Secondly, a concern regarding the ability of the new service to meet the needs of families who fall just outside thresholds where early intervention would currently support and reduce the need for escalation. Thirdly, the growing evidence of the importance of the birth-to-two period. This is now gaining increasing prominence in national policy through parliamentary groups and wider support across the early year's sector. Vulnerable children of this age are at particular risk of long term disadvantage and the first 1001 days provides a window to engage and support parents when they are keen to learn and take advice. Concern about how the 0-2 age group will be sufficiently supported.

An alternative model is proposed based on the development of seven clusters delivering support to families in the early years (0-5) and additional whole family support to children and adolescents up to the age of 19. The model would be delivered on a multi-agency basis within an agreed shared framework of delivery for each age group. This will allow the model to provide tailored support to different age groups, reflect different needs and be able to respond to the changing national landscape. Clusters are proposed for Oxford, Banbury and North West Oxon, Bicester and Kidlington, West Oxon, Abingdon and Wantage, Didcot and South East Oxon, and Thame and Easts Oxon. Each cluster would be a building hub used by a range of multi-agency partners, affiliated groups and local businesses. Many services would be delivered using mobile resources in community buildings to provide flexibility to meet the need of target children and families to strengthen delivery in rural areas based on need. Staff with specific expertise would be clustered to benefit from shared learning, models and experience. Technology would be used to deliver more services to a wider range of people. This will include improving access to information through social media, website and facilities such as 'Ask the Health Visitor' as well as apps such as Facebook, Twitter and Whats App; enable agencies/parents to book/register online; and support staff to manage demand and prioritise access through a registration of interest process. Funding for this would be allocated based on a definition of disadvantage using Index Multiple Deprivation data. Similar models are used in other areas that Action for Children operate such as Kirklees. Statutory funding would only deliver targeted services, universal services would be delivered using an affiliated model. A full cost recovery model for some services with fees charged at levels to provide free places for children and families that needed them. Specific fundraising would provide added value. A number of town and parish councils could provide a critical element of funding the affiliated model.

Benefits of this model include the focus on the needs of different life stages, maximising resources, safeguarding and focusing on making a difference.

Slade and Headington Children's Centre

A proposed plan for the Slade and Headington Children's Centre was provided along with details of the current running cost of the service, deprivation and children's outcomes.

The proposal expresses openness to exploring new ways of working. Some considerations are taken into account in the proposal such as the need for evidence based prevention work, alternative use for buildings, voluntary and community sector provision of early years, budget implications and expertise and local knowledge. Five approaches to provide services for the community including Core Protected Plans, voluntary groups using the children centre, services contracted by Oxfordshire County Council; Future Funded Plans, volunteer run groups and other users.

Oxford University Department of Education

The University of Oxford's Department of Education and Department of Social Policy and Intervention, submitted a summary of the results from a six year Evaluation of Children's Centres (ECC) in England conducted between 2009 and 2015.

The impact report summarises the impact of children's centres in improving 13 measured outcomes for a large sample of user families. These outcomes for family, mother and child were chosen to reflect the aims of children's centres to support parents and families, and in the longer term, provide young children with a better start to school.

The ECCE Impact study provided important new evidence about the role of children's centres in promoting better outcomes for different user groups. A number of relatively small positive effects were identified in promoting better outcomes for each user group considered (child, mother, families) and the number of significant effects identified was more than might be anticipated from chance. Taken together they confirm the engagement with children's centres can promote better outcomes especially in terms of family functioning. The evaluation also provides evidence about children's centre's characteristics and processes that promote better child, mother and family outcomes, though again the results do not show one simple pattern of associations.

Appendix 1: Representativeness of respondent data

These tables compare the profile of respondents to the population profile of Oxfordshire (compared to Census 2011 data).

| | Survey response | Census response | | Difference |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|------------|
| Age group | Total | Age group | Total | |
| 19 or under | 1% | 19 or under | 24% | -23% |
| 20-25 | 6% | 20 -24 | 7% | -1% |
| 26-34 | 30% | 25-29 | 7% | +23% |
| 35-44 | 40% | 30-44 | 21% | +19% |
| 45-54 | 11% | 45-59 | 19% | -8% |
| 55-64 | 6% | 60-64 | 6% | 0% |
| 65-74 | 2% | 65-74 | 8% | -6% |
| 75 or over | 0*% | 75+ | 8% | +8% |
| Prefer not to say | 3% | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| Total recorded | 100% | n/a | 100% | n/a |

Respondents from the 26-44 age group are over-represented in this consultation.

| Gender | Survey | Census 2011 | Difference |
|-------------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| Male | 13% | 50% | -37% |
| Female | 83% | 50% | +33% |
| Prefer not to say | 4% | | |
| Total recorded | 100% | | |

Female respondents are over-represented.

| Ethnicity | Survey | Census 2011 | Difference |
|------------------------|--------|-------------|------------|
| White British | 78% | 84% | -6% |
| White other | 12% | 7% | +5% |
| Asian or Asian British | 4% | 5% | -1% |
| Black or Black British | 1% | 2% | -1% |
| Mixed | 2% | 2% | 0% |
| Other | 3% | 0.5% | +2.5% |

The ethnicity of respondents is broadly in line with the ethnicity of the population across Oxfordshire.

Appendix 2: Social Media responses

Social media

322 Tweets were received between 01/10/2015 and 06/01/2016 and most of the Tweets were sent by individuals. 141 Tweets were campaigning Tweets:

- Sign the petition asking @OxfordshireCC to save Oxfordshire's children's centres! (36)
- I've just asked @OxfordshireCC to protect Oxfordshire's children centres. Can you? (24)
- I asked @David_Cameron to spend a day at @OxfordshireCC to see if he can balance the books. (81)

Three Tweets were sent by the Oxford City Council and in two of the Tweets the City Council explains that someone confused Oxford City for Oxfordshire County Council:

@DKHumphreys Hi. @OxfordshireCC runs children's services in the city, not us.

Ten Tweets were sent by Save Oxfordshires Children's Centres (@saveoccc). Most of these Tweets are comments or questions directly to Oxfordshire County Council and are opposing the cuts and closures of Children's Centres.

Children's Centres are an integral part of safeguarding, not apart from it #saveoccc @OxfordshireCC

Together with the campaigning Tweets there are 130 Tweets mentioning David Cameron. Some of the Tweets are variations to the campaigning Tweet and other Tweets are referring to the budget cuts or to comments David Cameron has made on the proposed closures of Children's Centres.

@David_Cameron wrote to @lanhudspeth leader of @OxfordshireCC complaining about cuts. @Ekklesia_COO responds <https://t.co/mlsN3vGEG0>

There were several Tweets that mentioned public consultation meetings. Most comments were from people who were attending one of the public meetings and other Tweets explained briefly what was discussed.

Not all Tweets involved the Children's Centres. There were other comments made on topic like public transport or libraries.

Today @OxfordshireCC released details of subsidised bus cut options for Cabinet to choose 10 Nov. @SaveOurBuses_UK! <https://t.co/DT75OfIfMV>

The Oxford Times, The Oxford Mail and some individuals tweeted links to news messages on OCC cuts.

Our story on David Cameron's clash with the leader of @OxfordshireCC being followed up by the nationals today <https://t.co/8pXm1ShIT3>

None of the Tweets were supporting the cuts, closures or the proposed model.

There were 27 responses via Facebook. Four of the responses were individual Facebook posts and 11 were comments, the rest of the responses were likes to either comments of other people or posts by Oxfordshire County Council. The individual posts were encouraging other people to join the consultation process, and one post was criticising the delay of the consultation. The comments were questions towards the County Council or critique towards the consultation process.

Appendix 3: Analysis of survey by geography and type of respondents

1 Background

This appendix provides further analysis of the key quantitative questions by geography (North, Central and South areas as defined in the consultation) and type of respondent. There are no statistically significant differences in responses from other demographic groups (eg gender, age, ethnicity and so on).

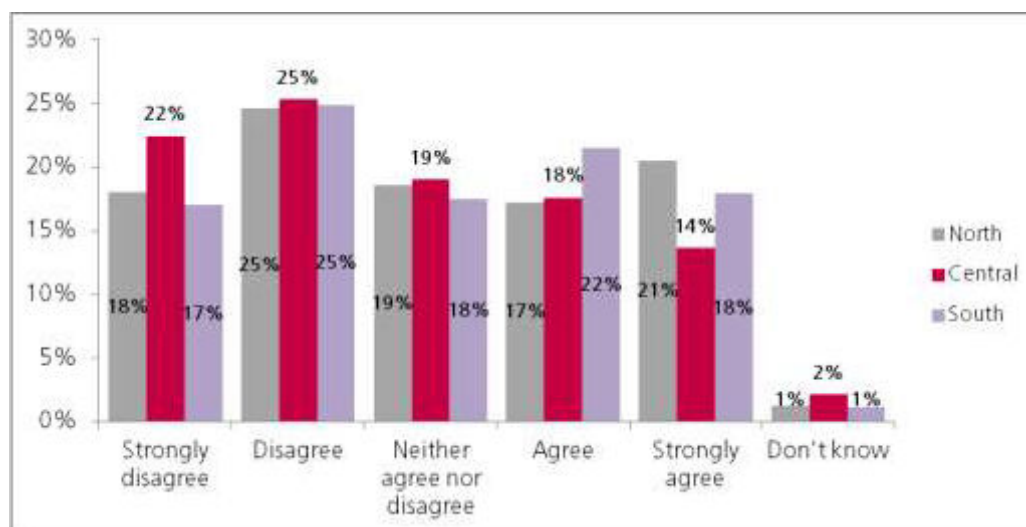
The key questions that have been analysed in this way are:

- The extent to which services should be offered to vulnerable children / families (Q6)
- The extent to which there is agreement to create an integrated children's service (Q7)
- Which of the options proposed were preferred (Q8)

Analysis by geography

The responses have been analysed by the geographic areas defined in the consultation document that cover the North of Oxfordshire, Central Oxfordshire and the South of Oxfordshire.

Q6: Extent to which you agree/disagree with "It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/families than to all children/ families" (by geography)



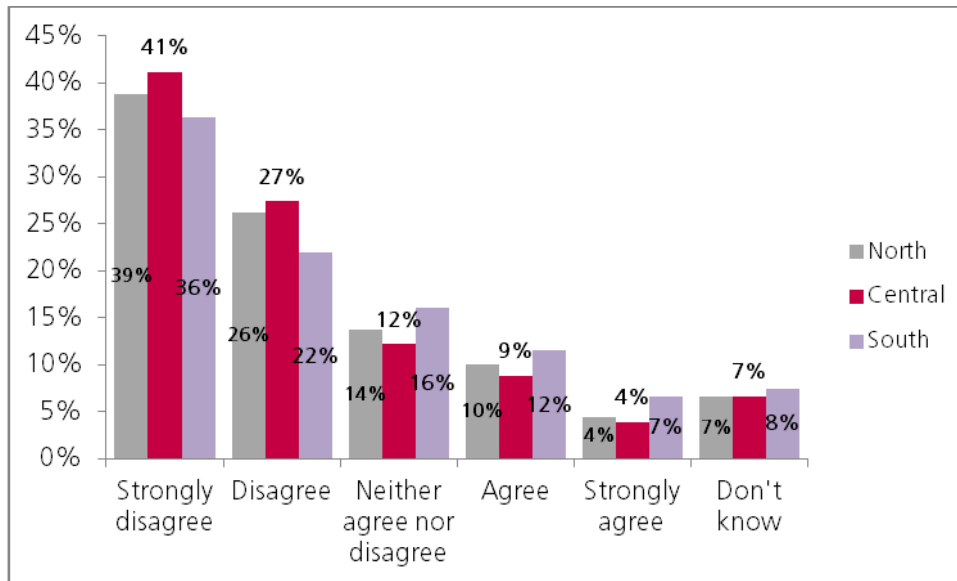
Dataset: 1661 completed responses

- We have seen that the net score for all respondents is -7 percent, taking the negative responses (disagree and strongly disagree) away from the positive

responses. By geography, the net scores are **-5** for the North; **-15** for the Central area; and **-2** for the South.

- The strength of disagreement with the statement is strongest in the Central area and least in the South.
- A fifth of respondents, across the areas, either don't know or are neutral on the statement.

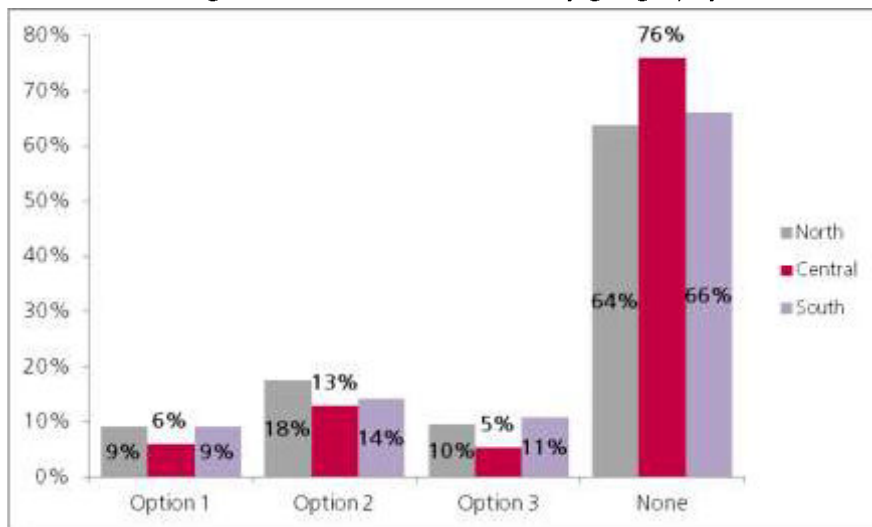
Q7: Extent to which you agree/disagree with the proposal to create an integrated children's service? (by geography)



Dataset: 1667 completed responses

- We have seen that the net score for this question is **-47** (positive minus negative response, excluding neutral). By geographic area, the net scores are: **-51** North area; **-55** Central area; and **-39** South area.
- Disagreement is stronger in the North and Central areas than in the South.

Q8: Which of the three options outlined do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated children's services? (by geography)

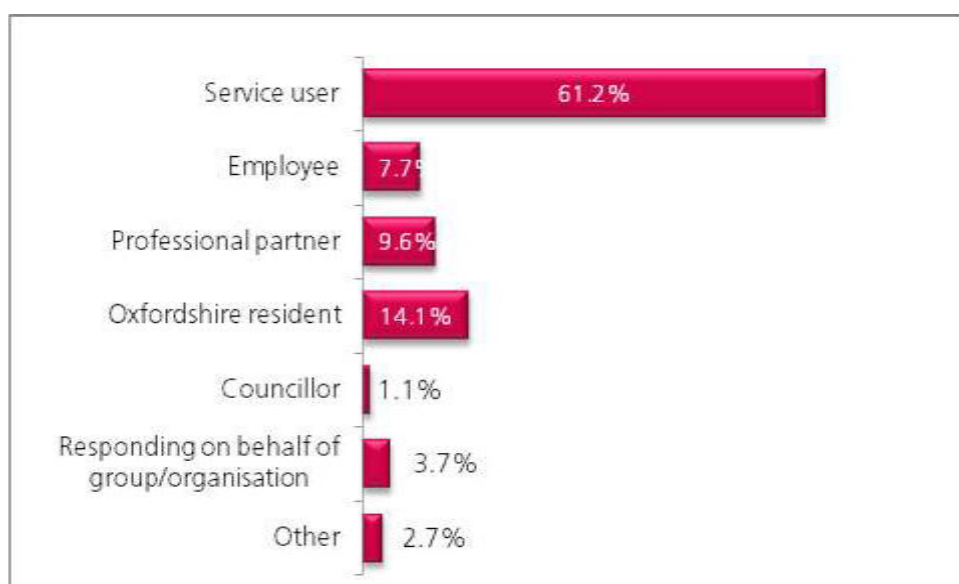


Dataset: 1333 completed responses

- The majority of respondents (at least two-thirds in each area) reject all of the options put forward. 76% of respondents in the Central area reject all options compared to 64% in the North and 66% in the South.
- In each of the areas, Option 2 receives the greatest level of support.

2 Analysis by type of respondent

The key survey questions have also been analysed by type of respondent (ie service user, employee, and so on). These are based on the profile of type of respondents shown below.

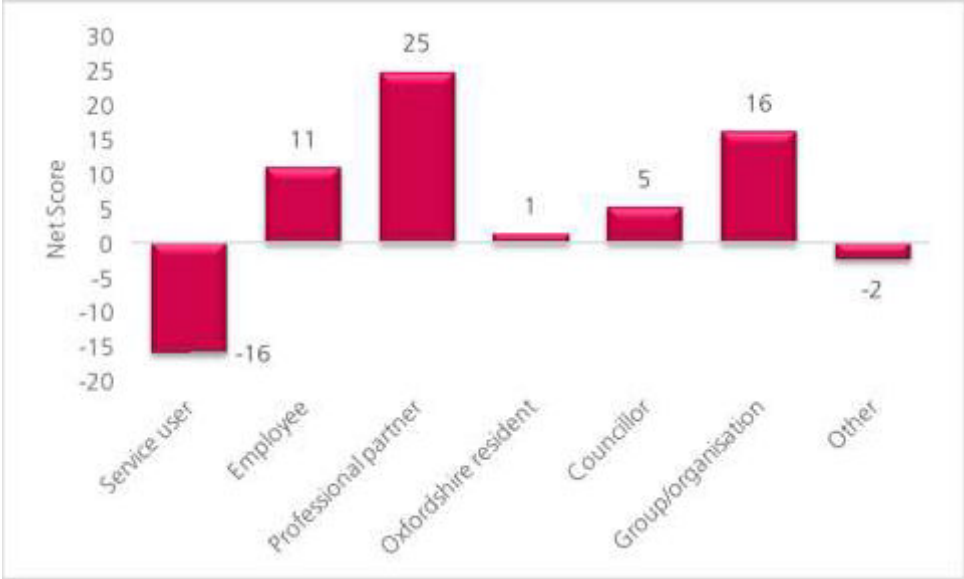


Dataset: 2083 completed responses

“Other” includes friends of service users, volunteers at Children’s Centres and former service users.

The graph below shows the net scores (positive agreement minus negative agreement) for the question gauging the extent to which services should be provided to vulnerable families.

Q6: Extent to which you agree/disagree with "It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/families than to all children/ families" (net score by type of respondent)



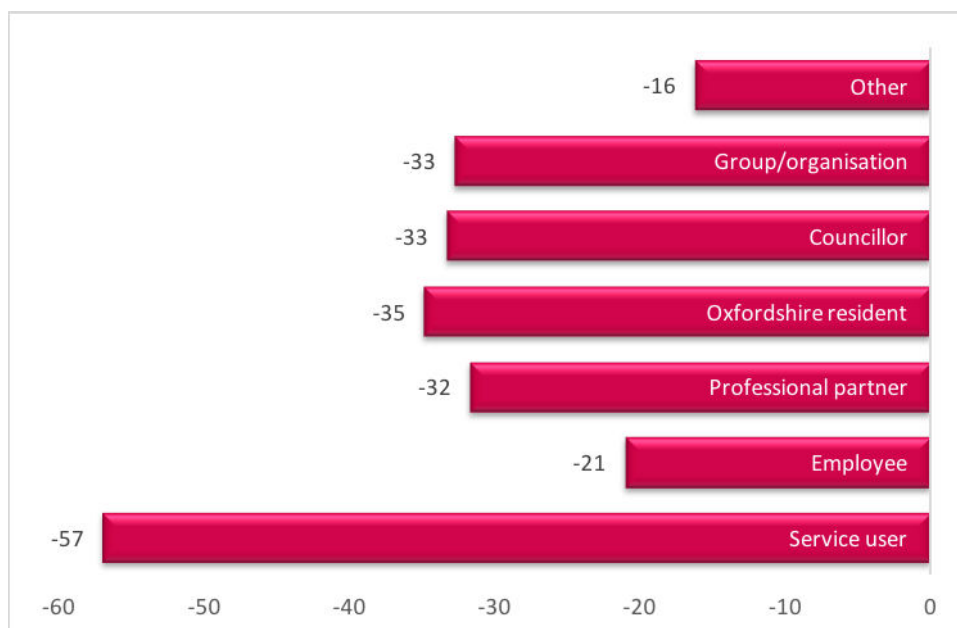
Dataset: 1833 completed responses

- Most respondents tend to agree with the statement that it is important to offer more services to vulnerable children / families than to all. The main group of respondents that disagrees with this statement are service users.

The graph below shows the net scores (positive agreement minus negative agreement) for the question gauging the extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposal to create an integrated children’s service.

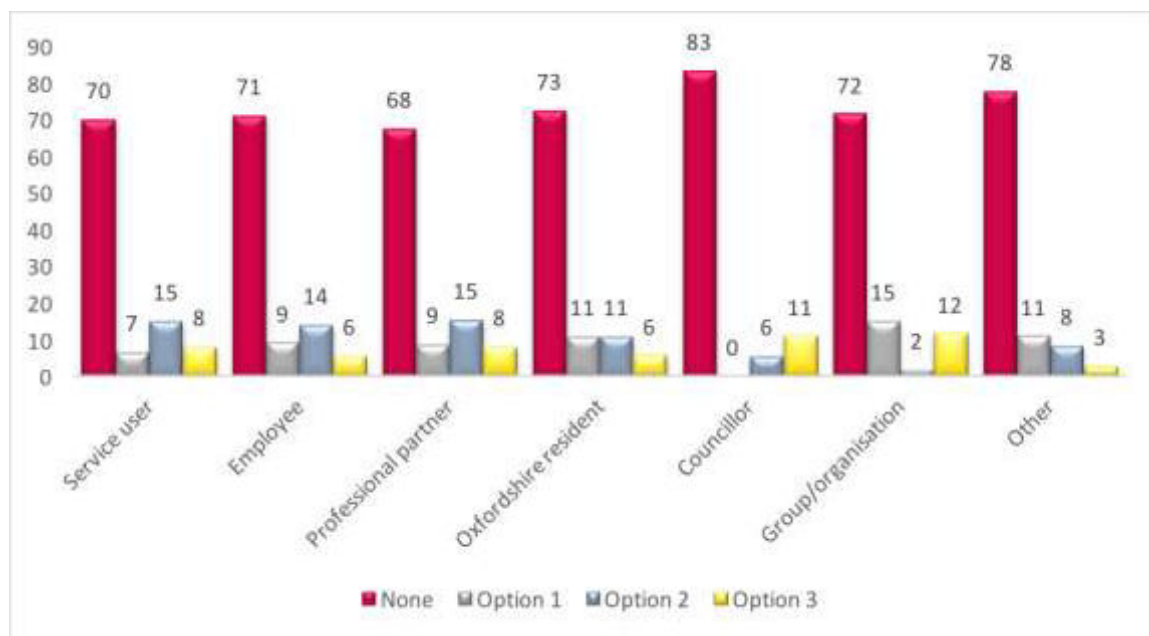
The results show that all respondent groups disagreed with the proposals with service users disagreeing the most (a net score of -57) and with employees and ‘others’ disagreeing the least.

Q7: Extent to which you agree/disagree with the proposal to create an integrated children's service? (net score by type of respondent)



Dataset: 1841 respondents

Q8: Which of the three options outlined do you believe offers the best model for delivering integrated children's services? (percentage response by type of respondent)



Dataset: 1476 respondents

- This shows that there is universal rejection of the options proposed.
- Option 2 is preferred by service users, employees and professional partners.

ANNEX B**An assessment of need: the methodology for selecting locations for the proposed new Children and Family Centres**

This document was included in the supporting information made available during the public consultation

The purpose of this document is to set out the methodology followed to determine locations for the proposed new Children and Family Centres.

1.0 Principles of the methodology

The two principles behind the methodology used to determine the locations of the proposed new Children and Family Centres:

1. Ensure that the proposed future arrangements enable the local authority to continue to be able to do the things it is required to do by law
2. Build on the work undertaken by the cross-party Cabinet Advisory Group on Children's Early Intervention Services and the principles detailed in their report to Cabinet on 23 June 2015

1.1 Legal duties

The Childcare Act 2006 imposes a number of duties on local authorities. The general duty contained in section 1 is to (a) improve the well-being of young children in their area; and (b) reduce inequalities between young children in their area across a range of matters including: physical and mental health and emotional well-being; protection from harm and neglect; education; training and recreation; the contribution made by them to society; and social and economic well-being.

The accompanying statutory guidance, *Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance for local authorities, commissioner of local health services and Jobcentre Plus, April 2013*, sets out the different factors local authorities should be aware of in relation to Children's Centres. Those most relevant to determining the location of Oxfordshire's proposed new Children and Family Centres are as follows:

- ensure that a network of Children's Centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area;
- ensure that Children's Centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport;
- target Children's Centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need;
- demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively;
- not close an existing Children's Centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a Children's Centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have

sufficient Children's Centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of Children's Centres.

The other factors local authorities need to be aware of are:

- together with local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them;
- ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area;
- take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children's Centre provision;
- take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children's Centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best; and
- take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Childcare Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The Local Authority believes that the proposed new model, as detailed in the full consultation documents, responds to these appropriately.

The published guidance, *Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance for local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus. April 2013*, can be found by viewing the following web page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-childrens-centres>

1.2 Cabinet Advisory Group

The Cabinet Advisory Group agreed a set of principles to guide their work and subsequent recommendations to Cabinet on 23 June 2015. The principles most relevant to determining the location of the proposed new Children and Family Centres are as follows:

- To ensure the County Council services are targeted to those in greatest need in both rural and urban locations (i.e. ensure geographic spread);
- To do what the council is required to do by legislation, regulation or policy.

The other principles established by the Cabinet Advisory Group include:

- To ensure the child and families are listened to and that their experience of services is seamless and integrated;
- To support partners to provide universal services;
- To protect the reputation of the Council.

The Local Authority believes that the proposed new model, as detailed in the full consultation documents, responds to these appropriately.

2.0 The methodology for determining the locations

Given the principles set out above, the process for determining the proposed locations was as follows:

1. Define the total number of Children and Family Centres within Oxfordshire;

2. Define the broad geographical spread by assigning a total number of Children and Family Centres to three broad areas within the county (three service areas);
3. Determine the 'ideal' locations of the proposed Children and Family Centres within each service area.

The process undertaken within each of these steps is set out below.

2.1 Define the total number of Children and Family Centres within Oxfordshire

Given the significant budget reductions required, and therefore the need to make clear decisions about how to prioritise spending, a view was taken that, whilst physical premises are valuable, the financial priority should be on continuing to employ as many staff as possible within the new service.

The financial modelling for all elements of the proposed new service model divided the £12 million budget as follows:

| Budget Assumptions | £m |
|--|-------------|
| Continued delivery of Youth, Engagement Service | 1.0 |
| Estimated Premises costs & other supplies and services | 1.5 |
| Amount available for staffing | 9.5 |
| Total Available Budget for Combined Service | 12.0 |

A staffing structure was developed for the new service model which determined that, within the local authority's preferred model (Option 1: No universal services), teams of skilled professionals could be employed to provide services from eight Children and Family Centres.

In developing the staff structure, the priority was to maximise the use of buildings and minimise the proportion of the budget spent on buildings, by ensuring that sufficient staff are available to provide services from each Children and Family Centre throughout the day and into the early evening, and to provide an extensive outreach service to children and families at other venues. Budget for staffing was prioritised over funding the running of buildings.

The same methodology was used to determine the number of professionals, and therefore Children and Family Centres, that could be provided under Option 2 (Limited universal services) and Option 3 (Universal services through community investment).

Under Option 2, there is capacity to provide eight Children and Family Centres. However, as Option 3 proposes a £1 million grant funding to the voluntary and community sector this reduces the budget available for staffing and thereby the number of staff available to provide services through the Children and Family Centres is also reduced. Under Option 3, six Children and Family Centres are proposed.

2.2 Define overall geographic spread of Children and Family Centres within three broad areas of the County

Before identifying specific locations for the proposed Children and Family Centres, a calculation was made to apportion the total number of Centres between the three service areas used by the local authority to organise its services.

These services areas are:

North - covering Cherwell and West Oxfordshire District Council areas

Central - covering Oxford City

South - covering South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council areas.

This approach built on that undertaken by the Cabinet Advisory Group and used the following data sets:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Prior home locations of children who became looked after by Oxfordshire County Council between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of Children who were subject to child protection plans between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of families identified in the wider Phase 1 Thriving Families cohort;
- Oxfordshire County Council child population forecasts 2014-2019.

An apportionment of Centres between each service area was made by comparing the numbers of children in each dataset who live within each service area, weighting the figures for the first four datasets by anticipated population change over the next five years. For each service area a total number of children “in need” was calculated, and the relative “need” between each area was used to apportion the eight Centres. Since this sometimes resulted in non-whole numbers, the figures were rounded to give a final allocation of Childrens Centres for each service area.

This process was carried out for the option of providing eight and six Children and Family Centres across Oxfordshire.

The results were as follows:

| Area | 8 Centres | 6 Centres |
|---------|-----------|-----------|
| North | 3 | 2 |
| Central | 3 | 3 |
| South | 2 | 1 |

2.3 Determine the 'ideal' locations of the proposed Children and Family Centres

Having allocated the total number of Centres by service area, the next step was to determine the 'ideal' locations within each service area. The process for doing this began with the assumption that the main settlements within Oxfordshire were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Children and Family Centres because of their accessibility in terms of transport links, their geographical spread, and that localised deprivation tends to be concentrated in urban areas.

This assumption of locating Centres in the main settlements was then tested using an algorithm that considered the location of 'need' as defined:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Prior home locations of children who became looked after by Oxfordshire County Council between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of Children who were subject to child protection plans between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of families identified in the wider Phase 1 Thriving Families cohort.

Again, these indicators were weighted by population forecasts to give a better indication of where need is likely to be located in the coming years.

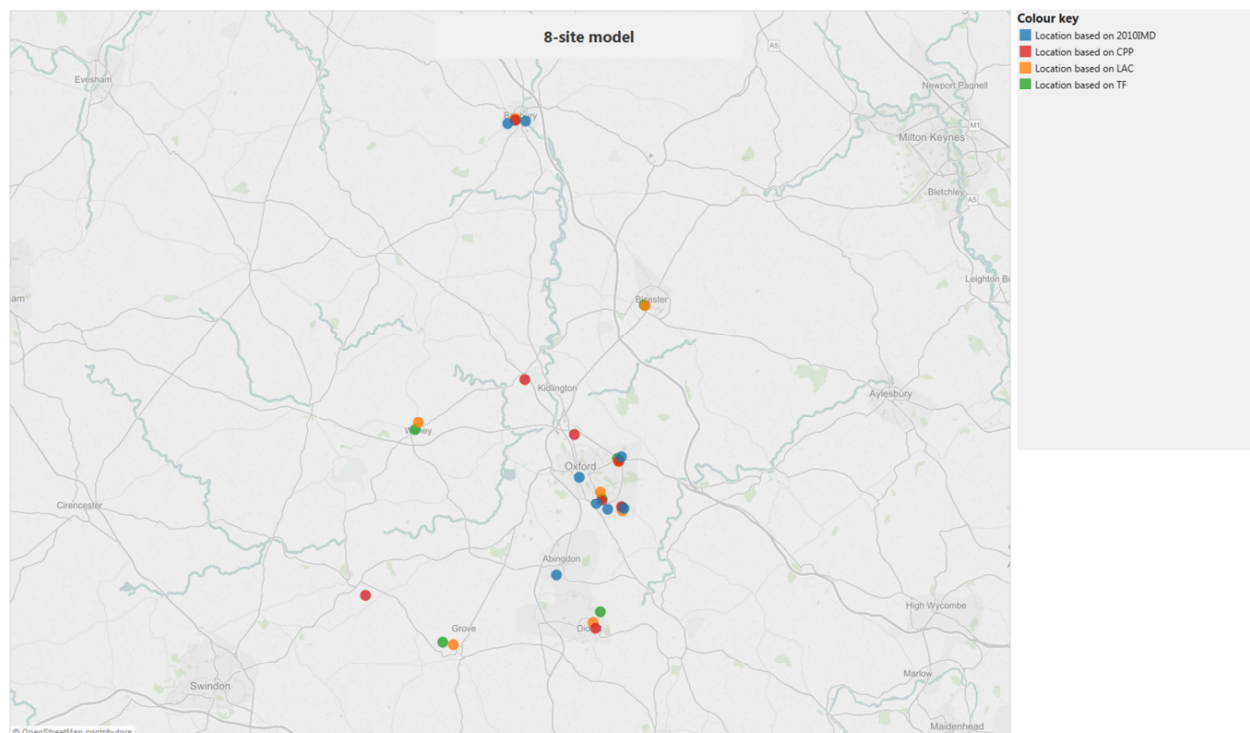
The algorithm was used to test potential Children and Family Centre locations, checking whether each increased or decreased the distance between Centre and family 'in need'. In this way, locations were identified that minimised the average distance between each Centre and families 'in need'.

3.0 The results

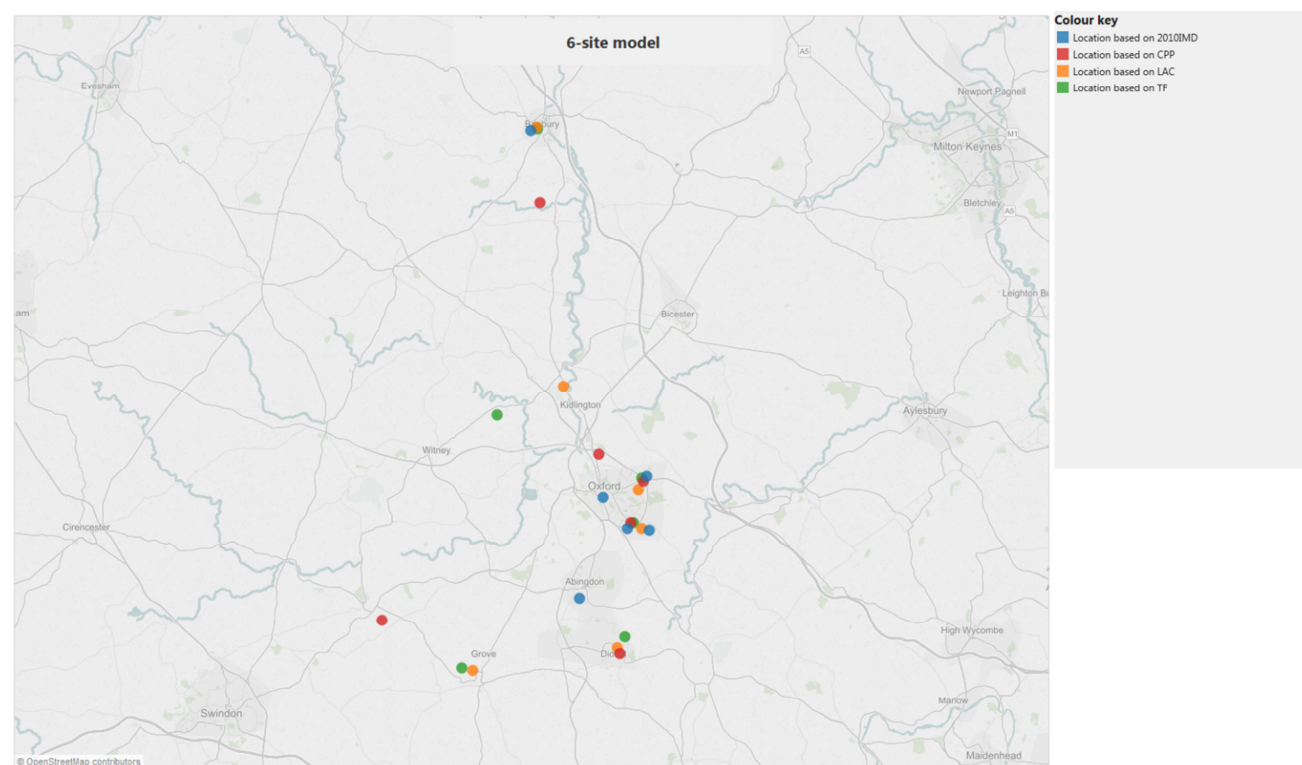
By overlaying the data sets on to a map of Oxfordshire, clusters of need emerged.

However, as the maps show, there was some variation between each indicator of the 'ideal' location identified. Therefore the proposed locations could only be determined through further manual interpretation.

Map 1: Eight Children and Family Centres



Map 2: Six Children and Family Centres



5.0 The locations

Arising from the manual interpretation step, and considering the principles described previously, locations for the proposed Children and Family Centres were identified. These are:

Option 1: No universal services and Option 2: Limited universal services:

Option 1 and 2 set out a model of eight Children and Family Centres.

| North area | | Central Area | South area | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cherwell District | West Oxfordshire District | Oxford City | South Oxfordshire District | Vale of White Horse District |
| Banbury | Witney | Oxford - Blackbird Leys | Didcot | Abingdon |
| Bicester | | Oxford - Rose Hill / Littlemore | | |
| | | Oxford - Barton/Sandhills | | |

Option 3: Universal services through community investment:

Option 3 sets out a model of six Children and Family Centres.

| North area | | Central Area | South area | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cherwell District | West Oxfordshire District | Oxford City | South Oxfordshire District | Vale of White Horse District |
| Banbury | Witney | Oxford - Blackbird Leys | Didcot | |
| | | Oxford - Rose Hill / Littlemore | | |
| | | Oxford - Barton/Sandhills | | |

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DRAFT Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

This document will be refined following the public consultation

Directorate and Service Area:

Children, Education & Families

- Early Intervention Service
- Children's Social Care

What is being assessed:

Future arrangements in Children's Services

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Jim Leivers, Director for Children, Education & Families

Date of assessment:

February 2016

Summary of judgement:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of the proposal to integrate the Early Intervention Service with Family Support Teams within Children's Social Care, while at the same time making budget savings of £8 million.

The impacts of three options for implementing this new model of provision were explored and subject to public consultation between October 2015 and January 2016. All options maintained a focus on preventing the needs of children, young people and families from escalating and ensuring that those who are most vulnerable receive targeted support. Feedback from the consultation and engagement with service users and partner organisations has informed the final proposal for implementation for decision at Cabinet in February 2016.

The Local Authority's preferred option was option one, which included the removal of all universal services. The final revised proposal has been informed by feedback from the public consultation and incorporates provision for a number of issues it raised.

The proposal will largely impact children, young people and families, as the revised proposed option for implementation includes fewer Children and Family Centres and limited open access services. There is also a risk that families accessing targeted support will be stigmatised. Significant analyses of local need, deprivation and accessibility have informed the proposed locations of Children and Family Centres and the outreach provision. Impacts will be mitigated by the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to support and enhance universal service provision, and by working with partners to enable them to deliver services from the Centres. In addition, limited open access services will be provided from the Children and Family Centres.

The proposed staffing reductions are significant and likely to impact on staff morale. Staff will be kept informed and consulted as service changes are implemented and encouraged to access staff support service. A workforce development strategy will map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This assessment has been undertaken in order to understand the impact on different groups of people in Oxfordshire of the proposal to integrate the Early Intervention Service with the Family Support Teams within children's social care, while at the same time making budget savings of £8 million.

The revised model focuses on targeting services to the most vulnerable children and families whilst continuing to work closely with our partner agencies. The new model will retain preventative work through the provision of support to professionals working with vulnerable children, and through targeted support to families with multiple needs who do not require statutory social care input.

The new model comprises a number of different elements:

- I. Locality and Community Support
- II. Family Support for children aged 0-19 and their families
- III. 8 Children and Family Centres and mobile bus
- IV. Outreach service

The assessment considers how the changes brought about by this option may affect the people of Oxfordshire – with particular emphasis on groups with the protected characteristics listed below – and how this can be mitigated.

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“the 2010 Act”) imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions. This proposal is such a function. The three needs are:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.

Complying with section 149 may involve treating some people more favourably than others, but only to the extent that that does not amount to conduct which is otherwise unlawful under the new Act.

The need to advance equality of opportunity involves having due regard to the

need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages which are connected to a relevant protected characteristic and which are suffered by persons who share that characteristic,
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and which are different from the needs other people, and
- encourage those who share a relevant characteristic to take part in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such people is disproportionately low.
- take steps to meet the needs of disabled people which are different from the needs of people who are not disabled and include steps to take account of a person's disabilities.

The need to foster good relations between different groups involves having due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- gender
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Context:

Ongoing cuts in central government funding mean Oxfordshire County Council has to make savings. The council is currently in the process of making approximately £290 million of savings. In February 2014 the budget agreed by Council included savings of £3m in Early Intervention to be achieved by 2017-18. Further savings of £3m were agreed by Council in February 2015, making a total of £6m to be achieved by 2017-18.

As a result of national austerity measures to reduce public sector spending and the level of national debt, further cuts are anticipated to the level of funding to be passed to local government in future years. Proposals to make additional savings of £50million by 2019/20 were put forward for consideration and public consultation in October 2015. However, the provisional local government finance settlement, announced in December 2015, indicates that Oxfordshire County Council will need to save closer to £70million by 2019/20.

There is an expectation that proposals for savings will come from all service areas. As a consequence, the new model of service being proposed for Early Intervention and Children's Social Care takes into account an additional saving of £2 million from the Early Intervention budget, giving a total saving of £8 million on the 2014/15 budget for the service.

Early Intervention currently comprises a range of services delivered through 44 Children's Centres and 7 Early Intervention Hubs. These include open access sessions such as stay and play and youth sessions, as well as targeted programmes and casework that address identified needs. In addition, the Youth Engagement and Opportunities team support education, employment and training opportunities for all 16-19 year olds, and 19-25 year olds who are vulnerable. Oxfordshire's Thriving Families programme is delivered through the Early Intervention Service, providing intensive support to families that have been identified as being in need through the national Troubled Families Programme.

The scale of the budget reductions mean that the current model for providing Early Intervention services is unsustainable. In order to deliver an effective service in the future, it is proposed to integrate the Early Intervention service with Children's Social Care.

Through this integration, the council will be able to achieve the level of savings required whilst providing an effective, safe and coordinated service that meets our statutory obligations. However, the range of support provided by the new service will be reduced, as will the number of locations from which it is delivered. This will have an impact on people across Oxfordshire.

Proposal:

In order to achieve the £8 million savings necessary, a new service will be created by integrating the Early Intervention Service and Family Support Teams. The new service builds on the county council's preferred option, and builds in a number of issues raised during the public consultation.

The new service will comprise of a number of different elements:

- 1) Locality and Community Support
- 2) Family Support for children aged 0-19 and their families
- 3) 8 Children and Family Centres and mobile bus
- 4) Outreach service

Locality and Community Support Service

The aim of the Locality and Community Support Service is:

- To provide advice and guidance to universal services, including schools, health services and voluntary and community groups to enable them to support vulnerable children, young people and families within their community
- To identify emerging needs and safeguarding concerns within the locality
- To be the first point of contact for universal services who have concerns about a child and are considering making a referral to statutory services
- To monitor and oversee the effective implementation of CAF/TACs within the locality
- To develop a good working knowledge of support services in the area and identification of appropriate resources

This new service will build on the work previously carried out by locality co-

ordinators and the current well respected model of locality support. The service will have identified workers who link with universal services, including schools, early years settings, health and other community based provision, to enable concerns to be shared and advice and guidance given in relation to children and young people where there may be child protection issues.

Workers from the service will offer support and advice to any professional who has concerns about a child and coordinate support for vulnerable families within the community. This will include supporting the completion of an early help/CAF assessment to identify the nature of concerns within the family. Where concerns cannot be managed within the community, workers from the service will take the lead in escalating concerns into the new Service.

The Locality and Community Support Service will be organised into three area teams (North, Central and South), with workers being based across the Children and Family Centres located in their areas. The Service will be managed by Team Manager, with Senior Practitioners and Locality Workers based within each of the three areas (North, Central and South). All staff will be experienced child protection and safeguarding professionals, with the Senior Practitioners being qualified social workers. The intention is to develop the Locality and Community Service into a multi-agency service. Discussions are on-going with partners regarding this.

The local authority believes that the creation of this service provides a significant preventative service, enabling vulnerable children to be identified, and support put in place, before concerns escalate. The development of this service increases investment in the support the county council currently provides to universal services.

Family Support Service

The new Family Support Service will integrate the existing Children's Social Care Family Support Teams with the family support functions currently undertaken in the Early Intervention Service, including those of the current Thriving Families and Youth Engagement and Opportunities Teams.

The aim of the service is:

- To provide timely support and interventions to vulnerable families to address safeguarding concerns and reduce risks to children and young people
- To provide case work to children, young people and families requiring statutory and targeted support, including responding to crises within families
- To offer a range of group programmes to children, young people and families who meet the threshold for the service
- To deliver and co-ordinate services within the designated Children and Family Centres
- To provide both casework and group programmes through outreach to venues other than the Children and Family Centres

The service will provide direct case work with both children and their families, taking a whole family approach to planning and support. This approach will

embed that of the current Thriving Families programme and will ensure plans for children are made within the context of their whole family, enabling appropriate support to be put in place for each individual.

In addition to case work, the service will offer a standardised evidence based range of group programmes. These will be designed to address the key risks and issues affecting families, including domestic abuse, parenting skills, school readiness and employment and training support. The service will only provide programmes where there is strong evidence of their positive impact for children and/or families.

The group programmes will be targeted at vulnerable families. However, the Family Support Service will also offer open access sessions within the new Children and Family Centres. This will include stay and play sessions for under 5s and their carers, and youth sessions for young people.

The Family Support Service will be based and operated from the Children and Family Centres. However, workers from the Service will provide an extensive outreach service, meeting children and families at other venues, including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live, to provide individual support. In addition, the group programmes will be offered from venues other than the Children and Family Centres in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them.

Teams will develop strong links with the services in the local vicinity, in particular schools, health, and voluntary and community services. In addition, there are opportunities to further develop this service to broaden the range of professionals working within the teams. Discussions continue with partners regarding this.

The Family Support Service will be organised into three area teams, each managed and overseen by a senior manager reporting to a Deputy Director. Teams will consist of managers, practice managers, social workers, family workers and family support workers bringing a range of experience and expertise to work with children and families. Team Managers will have responsibility for a number of different teams, with the majority of workers supporting children and families where there is a statutory responsibility to do so. However, a number of workers will focus on the provision of targeted support to families identified through the early help/CAF assessment process. Practice Managers will have day to day responsibility for the management of case work with families, with the other team members providing direct support to children and families and delivering group programmes.

The development of the integrated service will increase capacity to support the most vulnerable children and focus resources on children in need to prevent a further escalation of their needs.

Children and Family Centres

Eight Children and Family Centres will be created providing a base for a service for 0-19 year olds and their families. These Centres will be based in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire as follows: Oxford - Blackbird Leys, Oxford - Rose

Hill/ Littlemore, Oxford - Barton/Sandhills. Banbury, Didcot, Abingdon, Bicester and Witney. In addition to the eight Children and Family Centres, a mobile bus service will deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community, as they are less likely to attend the main Centres.

An outreach service will be provided to all parts of Oxfordshire which will help those families who most need intensive support. This will be provided in two ways. Firstly workers from the Family Support Service will travel to meet children and families at other venues, including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live to provide 1:1 support. In addition, targeted group programmes will be offered from alternative venues such as local community centres, which will include the more rural parts of the County, in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them. This will ensure we offer support to vulnerable families and children on a county wide basis.

The local authority is committed to working with partners across universal services, including health, education and the voluntary and community sectors, to provide services to support families. The eight Children and Family Centres will provide a venue for partners to deliver services to children and families.

It is proposed to continue to support, until April 2017, the eleven centres across the county that provide child care with a view to them being financially self-sufficient from April 2017. Supporting these settings will provide a base for the outreach work that will be delivered in those communities. The local authority will also work with these settings to support the delivery of some universal services from the buildings, this could include health visiting services.

Evidence / Intelligence:

The proposal has drawn on evidence from a range of pilots, research and commissioned work both with Oxfordshire and elsewhere. This has included the work of Oxfordshire's Thriving Families team, the North Oxfordshire Neglect pilot, service-level data, research regarding how other Local Authorities have approached their savings pressures, and conversations with key stakeholders.

Further details of the evidence base can be found in the report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care. (available on the Oxfordshire County Council website).

An extensive engagement programme was carried out to ensure that all relevant stakeholders were represented and able to have input into the development of the proposal and options for implementation. The engagement work included a variety of different events with children and young people, parents/carers, council staff, schools, health professionals, the police, voluntary and community organisations, city and district council executives and local political leaders. The information gathered at these events helped to inform the development of the model and shape the consultation options.

For full details of engagement activity see the Engagement Report.

Service performance data, deprivation indices and demographic growth projections were also considered in the development of the proposed new service and the selection of proposed service locations.

The statutory purpose of Children Centres and the rationale for establishing Early Intervention Hubs were also considered alongside how subsequent government policy changes and their effect on current services. Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Early Intervention Hubs, guidance on Children's Centres was revised in April 2013 to clarify what local authorities and statutory partners must do when fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for early childhood services. This includes a duty to ensure there are sufficient Children's Centres to provide evidence-based interventions for families in greatest need of support and that the centres are accessible to all families with young children in Oxfordshire.

A copy of the statutory guidance for local authorities can be found in Annex 3 of the Report to Cabinet, 15 September 2015: Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care. (available on Oxfordshire County Council website).

Developing the new service

With a 50% reduction in the Early Intervention Service budget (from £16 million to £8 million) of which the single largest component is staffing, various models were tested to ensure that the optimum level of resource would be available within the new integrated service. Through this approach the council will be able to deliver the most comprehensive service provision possible, within a significantly reduced budget and without being dependent on the number or location of properties to run the service from.

Different staffing structures have been explored in order to develop a team capable of delivering county wide services with the best balance of skills, enhanced statutory provision and retention of preventative services, as well as support for providers.

The creation of a Locality & Community Support Service was felt to be key to supporting health, schools and other community services to support vulnerable children and families and prevent their needs escalating to the point where they require statutory social care. In addition, the Family Support Service will work with some children and their families who do not reach the threshold for statutory social care services. These children and families will be identified through an early help/CAF assessment and will include, for example, families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health concerns, including post-natal depression, children who are going missing from home and school, and families where there is criminal activity.

Selecting the locations for Children and Family Centres

The process for determining the proposed locations for the new Children and Family Centres was as follows:

- i) Define the total number of Children and Family Centres within Oxfordshire

- ii) Define the broad geographical spread by assigning a total number of Children and Family Centres to three broad areas within the county (three service areas - north, central, south)
- iii) Determine the 'ideal' locations of the proposed Children and Family Centres within each service area

The approach built on that undertaken by the Cabinet Advisory Group and used the following data sets:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation;
- Prior home locations of children who became looked after by Oxfordshire County Council between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of Children who were subject to child protection plans between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
- Home locations of families identified in the wider Phase 1 Thriving Families cohort;
- Oxfordshire County Council child population forecasts 2014-2019.

In order to determine the 'ideal' locations within each service area an assumption was made that the main settlements within the county were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Centres because of their accessibility in terms of transport links, their geographical spread, and that localised deprivation tends to be concentrated in urban areas. This assumption was tested using an algorithm that considered the location of 'need' using the data sets described above. These indicators were weighted by population forecasts to give a better indication of where need is likely to be located in the coming years.

Potential locations were tested by the algorithm to determine whether each increased or decreased the distance between Centre and family 'in need'. Locations were finally chosen based on a mix of factors: settlement size, deprivation (IMD), and other indicators of need.

Since the previous report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, updated Index of Multiple Deprivation data has been released. The methodology set out above has been re-run using this updated data and the 'ideal' locations identified were broadly similar.

Full details of the methodology used are available with the Report to Cabinet 23 February 2016.

Public Consultation

As part of the consultation process we encouraged communities to come forward and let us know about the impact of withdrawing or reducing Early Intervention services in their area. To shape the consultation we took advice from the Institute for Consultation. The consultation itself included public meetings, focus groups and other outreach work with other individuals and groups affected by the proposal. The results of the consultation helped to inform the detailed proposal for the future service, to be considered by Cabinet on 23 February 2016. Key issues highlighted by the public consultation have been incorporated in to the revised proposed model.

Alternatives considered / rejected

| Alternative proposal | Decision |
|--|---|
| Locating a Children and Family Centre in each of the nine Council Localities | <p>It was suggested that in order to ensure good spread of services across the county we should consider locating at least one Children and Family Centre in each locality. The localities are made up of County Council divisions.</p> <p>This approach was discounted as none of the indicators used to investigate areas of greatest need support it. The localities only reflect administrative boundaries.</p> |
| Keeping Early Intervention and Social Care services separate | <p>Maintaining division between complementary services would likely result in multiple handover points for families and families having to repeat their information each time. Through a single management structure it would be possible to have a comprehensive view of the needs of people within each area, and services can be targeted most effectively as a result.</p> <p>Additionally, a multi-function team is more efficient financially. It is able to deliver both the preventative and social care services, and provide greater coverage than multiple separate teams that have to cover the same areas.</p> <p>Feedback from the engagement process demonstrates broad support for an integrated service.</p> <p>For the reasons outlined above this proposal was rejected.</p> |
| Childrens' Centres and Early Intervention Hubs remain separate | This proposal was rejected on the same basis as above. |
| No enhanced support for universal providers | <p>Feedback from engagement activities supports the view that maintaining strong links between universal providers and the local authority is crucial to the success of the model. All the options consulted on included the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service to work with universal service providers to identify families at risk and co-ordinate the provision of services that prevent needs from escalating.</p> <p>As such, this proposal was rejected.</p> |
| Retaining all current intervention and prevention programmes | <p>Current provision of programmes is not equitable across Oxfordshire, with some programmes only being available in specific Children's Centres where staff who are trained to deliver them are based. The programmes delivered by workers in the new service will be available across the county, so that they can be targeted at those who require them most.</p> <p>There is national evidence that supports the effectiveness of certain programmes. Focussing on these services will enable Oxfordshire County Council to deliver the programmes that are</p> |

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| | <p>most likely to be effective and result in positive outcomes for users.</p> <p>For these reasons this proposal was rejected.</p> |
| Charging for certain services | <p>Feedback from the engagement process indicated that there may be willingness to accept charges for certain services. Charging for certain services may generate income that can be used to enhance or expand service provision in other areas.</p> <p>However, the costs of administering a charging model indicate that this would not be a practical option to implement.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p> |
| Option two - Limited universal services | <p>Under this option the provision of universal services would be provided or commissioned by the local authority. Capacity for this would be created by reducing the outreach provided by the service to all part of the county.</p> <p>The dual budget and service pressures within Children's Social Care, mean that the county council must focus its resources on those children and families it has a statutory duty to support. This will be done by targeting services towards the most vulnerable children and families and ensuring resources are prioritised for these groups. Maximising the capacity for the service to provide outreach to vulnerable families across the county needs to be maintained and take priority over the provision of universal services.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p> |
| Option three - Universal services through community investment | <p>Under this option £1million would be made available to the voluntary and community sector for the provision of services to children and families. The resource would be found by reducing the number of Children and Family Centres from 8 to 6, resulting in no Centre in either Abingdon or Bicester, and a reduction in the Service's capacity to deliver outreach and group programmes across Oxfordshire. Maximising the capacity for the service to provide outreach to vulnerable families across the county needs to be maintained and take priority over the provision of funding to the voluntary and community sector.</p> <p>For the reasons described above this proposal was rejected.</p> |

Impact Assessment:

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

Overarching impacts

The proposed option involves reducing the provision of open access services. This will have a negative impact on Oxfordshire's children, young people and families, who will experience reduced access to, and availability of, universal services. Their access will be further limited by having fewer Children and Family Centres, meaning many people will have to travel a greater distance to access Centre based services which may reduce community cohesion.

Despite the proposed removal of open access services, the provision of targeted, evidence based programmes of support for families through the Family Support Service will achieve better outcomes for those in greatest need. Furthermore, an integrated service that combines preventative work with social care, delivered via Children and Family Centres and a network of outreach locations, will have a positive impact on families across the county by providing greater coverage and more consistent contacts within the service for families.

Some specific overarching risks that have been identified are:

| Risk | Mitigation |
|---|---|
| People using targeted services are stigmatised | <p>The revised proposal includes the provision of open access within the eight Children and Family centres which would reduce the risk of stigmatisation.</p> <p>Opportunities to work with partners to provide other services from Children and Family Centres, e.g. health services, will be explored to assist with de-stigmatisation.</p> |
| A reduction in the number of Children's Centres may affect children, young people and families accessing services provided by partners at current sites | The council has been engaging with partner organisations, and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes and their services continue uninterrupted as far as possible. |
| The impact of closing centres that families are reliant on for support will have a negative effect on those children and families | As part of the transition to the new model of integrated working, staff and the public are being kept up to date with developments and will be signposted to other forms of support available. |
| Reducing open access services may limit opportunities for children, young people and families to develop informal networks | <p>The revised proposal includes the provision of open access within the eight Children and Family centres.</p> <p>A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers, such as schools and voluntary/community sector organisations, to enhance or supplement their provision.</p> |

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| | Families will continue to be signposted to other groups and activities operating in their area to help them develop informal networks. |
| The reduction in early intervention services will have an impact on the Oxfordshire community as a whole. The long term costs of providing services to families in crisis will be higher than providing preventative services which will have an impact on resources for all agencies | Early intervention support will be targeted at those families in the most need to reduce the number of families reaching crisis point. |
| The reduction in early intervention services and subsequent increased pressure on the social care services will increase the safeguarding risk to children and young people | The revised proposal for an integrated service of Early Intervention and Children's Social Care will target services to those in greatest need. This includes including children where there are safeguarding concerns. |

Impact on groups with protected characteristics

Reducing the number of Children and Family Centres may temporarily or permanently affect the provision of other services that currently operate from some of the Children's Centres, such as health clinics and breastfeeding support. This will impact on children, young people and families currently accessing these services from sites not included in the proposed list of locations for Children and Family Centres.

Some specific impacts on groups with protected characteristics may be:

| Risk | Mitigation |
|---|---|
| Pregnancy and maternity Reduced access to support for pregnant women and new mothers could increase prevalence of mental health concerns | The Health Visiting service, commissioned by Public Health, will continue to monitor the mental health of pregnant women and mothers with children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where a mental health need is identified. The Health Visiting service also delivers a level of breastfeeding support as part of health visitors' regular contact with new mothers. |
| Gender The reduction in services available will have an impact on women and men who will suffer as a result of the reduction in universal services. | Universal services will continue to be delivered by partners such as health, who will deliver their services from the Children and Family Centres . |

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| <p>A reduction in preventative services and universal services will impact on women who may be more at risk of post-natal depression and domestic abuse</p> | <p>The Health Visiting service, commissioned by Public Health, will continue to monitor the mental health of pregnant women and mothers with children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where a mental health need is identified.</p> <p>The Children and Family Centres will be able to provide a base for the delivery of groups to support women experiencing post-natal depression and domestic abuse.</p> |
| <p>Age The identification of health concerns in young children as a result of contact with trained staff in Children and Family centres, and/or, as a result of parents and carers comparing their child's development to other children in Children and Family Centres, may be affected by a reduction in centres providing an opportunity for concerns to be identified, particularly children who are not covered by the Health Visiting service</p> | <p>The Health Visiting service will continue to monitor the progress of children up to the age of 5 and refer to appropriate support services where concerns are identified.</p> <p>The creation of a Locality and Community Support Service, which supports all professionals working with children, provides a route for emerging needs and safeguarding concerns to be identified among children of any age.</p> <p>This service will provide specialist co-ordination and support to ensure the needs of these children are met.</p> |
| <p>Disability Families where there are disabled parents and/or disabled children where travelling is expensive and challenging will be affected by the need to travel further to access services.</p> <p>The cumulative impact of savings made from supported transport budgets may also increase the risk of limited accessibility.</p> | <p>Children and Family Centres are proposed to be located in larger conurbations that are well served by accessible public transport.</p> <p>The service will provide an outreach service to all parts of the Oxfordshire, meaning children and families will not have to travel to the main Centres to receive a service.</p> |
| <p>Religion or belief The use of religious buildings to provide services could isolate people of different religions or with no beliefs who may not be able to access certain religious buildings, leading to a lack of social cohesion and increased isolation</p> | <p>The council will work with communities with the intention of keeping local centres available for community groups, such as town councils, voluntary or charity groups, to provide universal services.</p> |

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| <p>Race</p> <p>Families from non-British national or ethnic origins may not feel comfortable accessing a specialised service and specialised services, may not be available in all geographical areas. This could lead to a lack of social cohesion and increased isolation.</p> <p>Children from non-English speaking families may not be school ready if they are not able to access universal services to enhance their language development</p> | <p>The council will work with communities with the intention of keeping local centres available for community groups, such as town councils, voluntary or charity groups, to provide universal services.</p> |
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Impacts on areas of deprivation

The proposed option should not have a negative impact on those living in areas of greatest deprivation, as the proposed Children and Family Centre are located in these areas.

The eight proposed Children and Family Centre locations cover the six highest ranked settlements for child deprivation, where 73 per cent of children under 5 live (based on 2011 Census data). These locations would also provide a Centre in every district/city area.

From these locations the Family Support Service will work with the most vulnerable children and families, specifically targeting children in need, those on child protection plans, looked after children and those identified as vulnerable through an early help/CAF assessment.

However, the reduction of council-funded universal services under the proposed option is likely to have a negative impact on the wider community, and vulnerable families who do not live in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire. These families will benefit from the outreach service and other forms of universal support provided by alternative agencies who will be supported by the Locality and Community Support Service.

| Risk | Mitigation |
|--|--|
| <p>Vulnerable families in less deprived areas of the county may struggle to access targeted support because the Children and Family Centres are based in areas of greatest need.</p> | <p>A comprehensive analysis of local need has been completed, taking into account a wide range of indicators to determine the most appropriate Children and Family Centre locations. The proposed locations are centred around the areas of greatest deprivation.</p> <p>The proposal includes an outreach service that will</p> |

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| Early identification of these families may be affected by a reduction in universal services, meaning they do not receive support when they most need it. | enable vulnerable families in less deprived areas without a Centre to access targeted family support services. The Locality and Community Support Service will also support agencies that provide universal services across the county, and ensure that vulnerable families are signposted and referred to targeted support when it is needed. |
| Concerns that relate to a specific locality will not receive appropriate support | Outreach work will be provided by the service, meaning that children and families do not need to travel to the main Centres to receive support. |

Impact on rural communities

The loss of Children's Centres in rural locations will negatively impact rural communities and may contribute to rural isolation, as people in these areas will have to travel further to access centre based services. Data collected by existing Children's Centres shows that more than 50 per cent of all Centre users currently walk to the existing sites, although almost one third drive.

Rural communities will rely on the outreach network for access to targeted family support services.

| Risk | Mitigation |
|---|--|
| Children, young people and families in rural communities will have to travel longer distances to access support, as it will not be based locally to them. Families who do not have cars will need to use public transport which is likely to be indirect and will take longer. There may be an economic impact on rural communities who will have to travel further to access support services. | <p>The proposed option includes targeted outreach to deliver support to families in rural locations.</p> <p>Children and Family Centres are proposed to be located in larger conurbations that are well served by public transport, providing various modes of access for rural communities to centre based services.</p> <p>The mobile bus that is used to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community will be retained to continue to deliver services to these communities that are less likely to attend the main centres.</p> |

Impact on Staff:

The majority of the current budget is spent on staffing. To achieve the required savings, the proposed option includes a significant reduction in staffing levels and changes to the staffing structure, and the location and structure of family support services. These changes will also require a shift in culture and practice.

A reduction in the staffing establishment will inevitably have a negative impact on staff morale, and for some employees the process itself is likely to cause anxiety. This could affect levels of concentration, motivation and absenteeism.

A staff advisory group has been established to allow staff a voice to air concerns, feed into the programme board and to input into the new service delivery model. In addition, formal staff consultation and a structured communications programme will ensure all staff are kept up to date and encouraged to be part of the restructured service, taking up the opportunities for the newly created roles.

The integrated Family Support Service requires that a significant proportion of staff within the service are qualified social workers. As a result, staff within the current Early Intervention Service who do not have a social work qualification will be most affected by the changes.

| Risk | Mitigation |
|--|---|
| A reduction in available funding for staffing will lead to a significant number of job losses and increased unemployment. | Staff will continue to be kept informed of progress with service changes, including the restructure of posts within teams. Staff will be encouraged to access staff support services where applicable. Outplacement support will be offered to staff |
| Staff are not sufficiently qualified in the social work led integrated Family Support Service. | A workforce development strategy is being developed to map the current skills base and identify opportunities for development. |
| Staff morale is low due to a reduction in the staffing establishment, affecting concentration and motivation, absenteeism. | <p>The staff consultation will run in Spring 2016 all members of staff will be encouraged to participate</p> <p>Staff will continue to be kept informed of progress with service changes, including the restructure of posts within teams. Managers are being briefed regularly to help support their staff.</p> <p>Staff will be encouraged to access staff support services where applicable.</p> <p>Staff will be referred to Penna outplacement support if they are not successful in obtaining a role in the new structure. This service supports staff to apply for internal vacancies, consider career development opportunities and redundancy.</p> |
| Staff who are redeployed as part of the restructure may have to travel longer distances to reach their place of work. | The county council have a redeployment policy |

Impact on other Council services:

Children's Social Care currently use Children's Centres and Hubs across the county to facilitate supervised contacts for families. A reduction in centres will reduce the

amount of available space to carry out this duty. Alternative locations and arrangements will need to be made.

No other impacts on council services have currently been identified, but there is an option to explore potential opportunities with other services including (but not limited to) libraries and the fire service.

The proposals for Early Intervention Services will be considered in conjunction with savings proposals for other service areas to ensure there are no unintended consequences for Oxfordshire's residents, or on other council services.

| Risk | Mitigation |
|--|---|
| Reduction in available space to facilitate supervised contacts. Children and families will need to travel longer distances in order to attend contact. | Children's social care to identify alternative locations for contact to take place. The Children and Family Centres will have some capacity to host supervised contact and some space may be available at the child care centres which have support until April 2017. |

Impact on partners and providers:

Providers

The proposed model has a reduced finance with which to commission services. However, there may be opportunities to commission external providers where a specific area of need has been identified.

The council has maintained contact with current external providers regarding the proposal and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement.

Impact on partners

Many of the current Children's Centres are used by other service providers, such as Oxford Health, as venues to provide their services from, e.g. clinics run by health visitors and jointly run parental support classes. The closure of existing centres will impact on partners as they will be required to find alternative venues from which to deliver services.

Whilst it is still the council's intention to provide joint-use facilities within the new service, we acknowledge that there will be fewer centres from which these can be provided.

The council is in conversation with partners who currently use existing sites for their services and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement.

Options for the integration and co-location of services are being discussed as part of the development of the proposal. This could provide positive opportunities for

collaboration and deliver great benefits to children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.

| Risk | Mitigation |
|---|--|
| The voluntary and community sector, schools and other agencies are not capable and do not have the capacity to deliver alternative universal services across Oxfordshire. | <p>A Locality and Community Support Service will continue to work with universal support providers to enhance or supplement their provision.</p> <p>The county council's Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure contract is designed to support growth and development within the sector to make it fit for purpose.</p> <p>As a 'Social Enterprise Place,' Oxfordshire is committed to growing social enterprise communities across the county by bringing together the local councils, universities, businesses, charities, budding social entrepreneurs and local residents.</p> |
| Reduction in the number of Children's Centres could lead to increased pressure on the Health Visiting service due to a reduction in available space to hold clinics and limited accessibility to additional support to refer new mothers / families to. | <p>Engagement with partner organisations has started early and partners are being kept informed of developments to ensure that their service plans reflect necessary changes.</p> <p>This could provide positive opportunities for collaboration and deliver great benefits to children, young people and families across Oxfordshire.</p> |
| A long term impact on health services due to a reduction in breast feeding which has an impact on children's long term health | Breastfeeding support continues to be commissioned by the county council. |
| An increased pressure on schools to support children who start school without being school ready and to support children and families who do not reach the threshold for a service from the new integrated Children's service | <p>The new Locality and Community Support service will provide specialist advice and support to professionals, including those from schools, and will facilitate support to vulnerable families.</p> <p>Targeted support on school readiness will continue be available to vulnerable children.</p> |
| Reduction in external services commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council could lead to increase in unemployment within those services | The council has maintained contact with current external providers about the proposal and will continue to keep them informed of developments through active engagement. |

Action plan:

| Action | By When | Person responsible |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Carry out public consultation on proposals | Sep-Dec 2015 | Jim Leivers |
| Continued engagement with children, young people and families (including service users) regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations | On-going | Jim Leivers |
| Continued engagement with providers regarding impact of proposals and possible mitigations | On-going | Jim Leivers |
| Assess consultation responses and consider whether any community groups with protected characteristics are disproportionately affected by the proposals | On-going | Jim Leivers |
| Update SCIA throughout consultation process as and when relevant feedback is provided | On-going | Jim Leivers |
| Proposal to be considered at Cabinet | 23 rd February | Jim Leivers |
| Staff consultation | Spring 2016 | Jim Leivers |

Monitoring and review:

Person responsible for assessment: Jim Leivers, Director of Children, Education and Families

| Version | Date | Notes |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| V1 | 27 August 2015 | Initial draft |
| V2 | 8 October 2015 | Updated |
| V 3 | 5 February 2016 | Updated following public consultation |
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Annex D - Outline of legislative framework for Children's Centres

The Childcare Act 2006: General Duties

The Childcare Act 2006 (“the Act”) imposes a number of duties on local authorities. The general duty contained in section 1 is to (a) improve the well-being of young children in their area; and (b) reduce inequalities between young children in their area in respect of various matters, including physical and mental health and emotional well-being, protection from harm and neglect, education, training and recreation, the contribution made by them to society and social and economic well-being.

A “young child” is defined by the Act as a child during the period from birth until 31 August following the child’s 5th birthday.

In discharging its functions under the Act, a local authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State published the “Sure Start Children’s Centres Statutory Guidance” in April 2013. A copy of this guidance is found in Annex 5.

Section 3 of the Act states that a local authority must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in its area are provided in an integrated manner, which is calculated to facilitate access to those services, and to maximize the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children. “Early childhood services” are defined by section 2(1) of the Act. They mean (a) early years provision; (b) the social services functions of the local authority, so far as relating to young children, parents or prospective parents; (c) health services relating to young children, parents or prospective parents, (d) the provision of assistance to parents or prospective parents (employment and training) and (e) the service provided by the local authority under section 12 so far as relating to information and assistance to parents/prospective parents.

Section 3(3) of the 2006 Act states that the authority must take steps (a) to identify parents or prospective parents in the authority’s area who would otherwise be unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services that may be of benefit to them and their young children; and (b) to encourage those parents or prospective parents to take advantage of those services.

The Childcare Act 2006: Children’s Centres and Consultation

Prior to 2009, a local authority was free to determine how best to deliver the early childhood services under section 3. However, amendments were made by the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which introduced new sections 5A-5E. Section 5A(1) of the Act states that arrangements made by a local authority under section 3 must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of Children’s Centres to meet local need. “Local need” is defined as the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority’s area.

Section 5A(5) of the Act states that a service is “made available” by providing the service or by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on gaining access to the service. Local authorities must consider whether early childhood services should be provided through a Children’s Centre. A local authority must take into account whether providing a service through a Children’s Centre would (a) facilitate access to it; or (b) maximize its benefit to parents, prospective parents and young children: see section 5E of the Act. Section 5E(7) states that, for the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this section is to be taken as preventing a local authority or any of its relevant partners from providing early childhood services other than through a Children’s Centre.

Section 5D(1) of the Act states that a local authority must secure that such consultation as they think appropriate is carried out before any significant change is made in the services provided through a children’s centre (including a change to location), or before anything is done that would result in a Children’s Centre ceasing to be a Children’s Centre.

Statutory guidance

The statutory Guidance published by the Secretary of State is attached at Annex 4. Chapter 2 provides guidance on the duty under section 5A of the Act. Members are invited to pay particular attention to pages 9 and 10 of the Guidance. This states that local authorities should:

- ensure that a network of Children’s Centres is accessible to all families with young children in their area;
- ensure that Children’s Centres and their services are within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport;
- together with local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them;
- target Children’s Centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need;
- demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively;
- ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area;
- not close an existing Children’s Centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children’s centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children’s centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of Children’s Centres;
- take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children’s Centre provision;
- take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children’s Centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best; and

- take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Childcare Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The Guidance states that consultation must take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children's Centre provision and must take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children's Centres in their authority.

Local authorities should consult everyone who could be affected by the proposed changes, for example, local families, those who use the centres, Children's Centres staff, advisory board members and service providers. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations.

The consultation should:

- explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganization of services
- Be clear how respondents views can be made known
- Provide adequate time for those wishing to respond
- Announce decisions following consultation publicly and explain why decisions were taken

Summary

The broad duty therefore is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that there is sufficient provision of Children's Centres to meet local need. Therefore, in considering any significant changes to or the closure of any Children's Centres, it is important that the local authority ensure it is satisfied as to:

- that a proper consultation has been undertaken
- the extent of the local need
- whether there are sufficient Children's Centres to meet that need
- if it is considered that there are not sufficient children's centres to meet local need then whether it is reasonably practicable to provide additional Children's Centres

ANNEX E

Click on link below to published Guidance:

Sure Start Children's Centres statutory guidance for local authorities, commissioners of local health services and Jobcentre Plus. April 2013

Alternatively cut and paste the following web address into the address bar on Internet Explorer:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sure-start-childrens-centres>

CABINET 23 FEBRUARY

The Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting Service

Report by Deputy Director for Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding

Introduction

1. The impact of increasing workloads and reducing resources is affecting the current capacity in both Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting. Along with other Children, Education and Family services these areas of work need to change so as to address the high levels of demand. These services are part of a wider Children's Social Care service and include a range of specialist and quality assurance functions that are provided countywide and managed under a deputy director. These are all statutory services geared towards protecting the most vulnerable children in Oxfordshire.
2. The safeguarding service performs the statutory regulatory and quality assurance functions of the local authority in relation to children. The service is targeted at the children in the highest levels of need and is essential to ensuring the quality of social work practice. There are three arms to the service:
 - The independent oversight of child protection planning and looked after children's cases and placements;
 - The investigation of allegations against staff and carers by the Designated Officer; and,
 - The development of social work practice and standards led by the Principal Social Worker.
3. The growth in the child protection and looked after populations and the increase in regulatory functions over the last four years has led to pressures in the independent reviewing service (IROs). Oxfordshire's pattern of growth is higher than the national pattern, however it is more in line with authorities that have had a high profile child sexual exploitation issue and/or are judged as 'good' by Ofsted, with both groups showing a greater increase in child protection activity than the national figure. Thames Valley Police report increased sexual offending against children. Children's mental health services have also experienced substantial growth in demand. There is an increase in child neglect cases and more over-11s coming into both the child protection and looked after systems.

Analysis of local quantitative and qualitative data reveals a greater sensitivity to risk by professionals and the public, and more responsive services driving demand for statutory interventions.
4. In order to meet these demands and create manageable caseloads, IRO and manager posts have been created. Kingfisher has had its own 0.5 fte IRO post to quality assure all high risk child sexual exploitation cases. Permanent

recruitment has proved challenging, leading to temporary and agency appointments to relieve unavoidable pressures

5. Whilst there are no current plans to reshape either the role or existing structure of the Children's Disability service, it is important to give regard to the work of the service as this has a significant potential impact upon spend patterns and the extent of service provision. Disability provision must remain a priority for the Council and as such only limited reduction and change is possible without having a serious impact on the ability to meet current and projected obligations. This is not a service that has received a high profile in the Council and therefore its work and priorities is set out in some detail below.
6. The service provides statutory services for children with complex disabilities and their families. The services are targeted to prevent families breaking down under the strain of caring and to improve children's developmental outcomes. A proportion of children are at risk of abuse or neglect and a small number enter care and need permanent placements. Transition to adulthood is recognised to be a particularly vulnerable time when young people need smooth transfers to adult provision.
7. Parents and children have been actively involved in service-design over many years and continue to do so at the present time. Services are delivered in close co-operation with schools, special educational needs staff and health colleagues
 - Specialist social workers work with 500 children and young people
 - Daytime short breaks are a statutory requirement provided to 900+ children: commissioned from a range of organisations at a cost of £1.3m
 - 3 residential homes provide 82 children with overnight respite care and permanent care: commissioned from Barnardos at a cost of £2.845m (OCC contribution is £1.6m)
 - 20 children receive respite foster care for 2 nights per month
 - 250 children receive direct payments so that they can purchase their own respite breaks.
 - 140 severely disabled children receive care and behavioural support in their own homes
 - There is a statutory duty to fund working parents who need accessible childcare and small grants to support parents in their caring role for very high needs children.
 - A small number of children are looked after in residential schools and full-time foster placements. £1m
8. Since 2011, efficiencies have been realised by closer partnership working with parents groups and provider services. There is a limited provider market and robust contract monitoring is used to ensure commissioned services deliver value for money.

9. The contracts with Barnardos and short break providers end in 2017. The council is proposing to find £250,000 in savings by undertaking a review across services and re-commissioning, with a view to achieving greater efficiencies.
10. The priority will be to continue being as effective as possible in supporting families to continue caring for their children at home, using family-friendly community services, respite breaks and more intensive input when necessary. This avoids the need for high cost residential care and children living at long distances from home. It lays the ground for successful transitions into adulthood, without transferring high cost care packages to be picked up by adult services post-18yrs.
11. In addition to safeguarding and disability the third major area of the service is Corporate Parenting. This service provides placements and support services for children and families on the edge of care, in care and post-care in permanent placements and for care-leavers in semi-independent settings. .At any one time, the number of children and young people supported exceeds 1000.
12. 600 children are currently in care. This is in line with statistically similar authorities, but represents a 16% rise over the last 4 years. Currently the trend of children entering care continues to rise. A similar trend is seen nationally, however, the increase in Oxfordshire is higher than elsewhere.
13. A relatively small proportion of children - under a third (199 out of 606 at the end of December) are not in in-house foster or residential homes, but are looked after in high cost residential and independent foster placements. 28% of looked after children are placed outside the Oxfordshire boundary, of whom most are more than 20 miles away and living at distance from their birth families. This is not because they have very uncommon and specialist requirements, but because the county has insufficient provision locally and at the right cost to meet the needs of the majority of this group. The service has performed well to prevent the proportion from rising in the face of an 16% increase in the LAC population since 2014. However, achieving a reduction in the proportion of children placed externally is the highest priority.

The table below shows the numbers of children in different placement types and the average cost per week

| | Number in placement 31/12/15 | Average cost per week |
|--|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| IFA Placements | 112 | £835 |
| In house foster care | 202 | £481 |
| External residential placements | 87 | £3,402 |
| In-house residential | 12 | £2,924 |
| Other (placed with parents; placed with family & friends etc.) | 193 | variable |
| Total | 606 | |

14. The consequence of this insufficiency is a serious disadvantage for the Council and for children: they are at risk of losing their connections with their families, schools, communities and professionals who know them well. An additional £7.4m had to be added to the placement budget last year to contribute to the rising costs from increasing numbers of looked after children.

In 2013, the Council approved the 2013-16 Placement Strategy which set out how Oxfordshire would strengthen edge of care interventions to keep children with their families wherever possible, support friends and family care arrangements, increase in-house fostering for harder to place children and build on success in achieving permanency for many of our looked after children. The Council also committed capital investment to building four new children's homes in the county, which together with our two existing homes, will provide a residential care pathway aimed at keeping vulnerable adolescents within the county and returned to their families as soon as possible.

15. In 2015, the Residential and Edge of Care staff team has begun its recruitment and started to provide a 7-day a week daytime and evening service working with children on the edge of care and at risk of placement breakdown. Together with children's social workers and dedicated input from health partners, schools, education, youth justice and police, improved risk management and care planning is being implemented.
16. The 4 new children's homes are in the course of being built and will open in the spring and summer of 2016. The Council's fostering recruitment campaign has increased the rate of new approvals and the proportion of children in in-house foster placements and placed with 'family and friends' approved carers has increased. The service is reviewing its support programmes for carers to ensure that best value is being secured, carers are developed and retained and children's placements are stable.
17. The indications are that by providing services differently and by ensuring the safeguarding, planning and interventions are of the highest quality, the Council can achieve both good outcomes and improved efficiencies. The twin priorities of the service are to ensure the corporate parenting service delivers the best possible outcomes for children and to convert the anticipated efficiencies into savings in the placement budget.

Issues

18. Limited structural changes are needed within this arm of the service. Most of the work undertaken is increasingly efficient and effective in delivering to the priorities of the Council. There are however significant capacity issues that need to be addressed as part of the Directorate's organisational change programme. These include:
 - Frontline capacity in the IRO service to meet the increase in statutory cases, currently unfunded

- Staffing of the new children's homes and edge of care service, planned as part of the Placement Strategy to be funded by savings made on external placements

Proposals

19. The Safeguarding service proposes a new structure according to the following priorities:
 - Sufficient IRO posts based on statutory ratios for LAC, review intervals for child protection, regulatory requirements and activity trends.
 - On the basis of current workloads this is likely to be 7 posts (including 5 current unfunded posts) with a unit cost of £50,000
 - An efficient use of management resources that prioritises supervision of IROs through the creation of 1.5 p/t senior IRO posts and reduces the current number of service manager posts down to 1fte
 - The combining of the Safeguarding Manager post and the Principal Social Worker post to create a single Safeguarding & Standards Manager overseeing the whole safeguarding service and achieving savings at tier 3 management level.
20. The Residential & Edge of Care Service will recruit new staff over the course of 2016 in order to deliver the new children's homes and strengthen edge of care interventions. This will include sufficient staff working shifts with children in care, children in short term respite arrangements and providing child and family-based interventions to prevent entry to care and placement breakdown.
21. The aim is that the Placement strategy described above will deliver savings in costs of external placements which will cover the costs of running the new Children's Homes, and the costs of the Residential and Edge of Care Service so that the overall impact is cost neutral to the CEF Directorate. The service is reviewing the impact of the strategy on costs and is developing reports to be provided to the Placement Strategy Board and to Cabinet to monitor delivery and demonstrate that cost neutrality. This will need to take account of increasing numbers of children becoming looked after.
22. The Corporate Parenting service will also need to review the impact of the strategy when considering if there are any further opportunities for efficiency in the context of further savings required as a result of the local government settlement.

RECOMMENDATION

- 23 **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
- (a) Agree the proposals outlined in paragraph 19-22
 - (b) Agree that a further report outlining in detail the proposed staffing arrangements and costs be made to the March 2016 Cabinet meeting.

HANNAH FARNCOMBE

Deputy Director for Corporate Parenting & Safeguarding

Contact Officer: Hannah Farncombe, 01865 815273

February 2016

CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Future Arrangements for Education Support for Oxfordshire Schools

Report by Interim Deputy Director - Education and Learning

National Drivers for Change

1. **Government announcements** make clear the expectation that by the end of this administration, in 2020, all schools should have become academies. The publication of the legislation is awaited, which may outline how this will be achieved. However, every statement adds to the view that local authorities will cease to have anything other than vestigial accountability for statutory aspects of education in the future.
2. **The Education and Adoption Bill** will make provision for schools in England that are causing concern, including requirements for their conversion into academies and about intervention powers. The third reading of the Bill was on 4 February 2016.
3. There have also been a number of recent significant financial statements from central government. The first, through the **local government settlement**, made it clear that on top of already significant savings, another £23 million had to be identified within Oxfordshire. The Children, Education & Families (CEF) Directorate will have to share a part of this additional amount.
4. Also announced was an immediate 10% reduction in the **Education Services Grant (ESG)**, with a reduction of 75% over the life of the Parliament. This reduces the income for education services for the Local Authority, but importantly also for academies, reducing their ability to purchase external school improvement services.
5. In February 2016 a consultation on the **National Funding Formula** will be launched. The average amount of 'per pupil school funding' individual local authorities in England receive from the Government each year varies considerably. Funding is distributed to schools using local funding formulae, which gives different weights to different factors. Consequently, there are differences in the amount of per pupil funding received by individual schools for pupils with similar characteristics across the country. The Government has confirmed it will consult on a new national funding formula early in 2016, with revised funding arrangements being brought in from 2017-18. Reform is needed, but the fine detail is likely to be controversial because of the potential for winners and losers where redistribution is required because there is no additional money available. The Government has said any changes will be phased in and there will be a transitional period to help smooth implementation.

Local Financial Situation

6. Gross financial disparities are unfair, and school funding should more closely reflect area, school and pupil characteristics. The f40 Group of local authorities, of which Oxfordshire is one, has been particularly vocal in the campaign for school funding reform.
7. It is hoped that Oxfordshire schools may gain in time from the funding reforms, but there is uncertainty about the proposals that will be made in the consultation and implementation is some way off.
8. All local schools are experiencing, and will continue to experience, a tightening of their financial position. The real terms reduction in school funding has resulted in a hardening of opinion as expressed at **Schools Forum**, that most **Dedicated Schools Grant** (DSG) funding should be allocated directly to schools and not retained and spent centrally.
9. Increasing numbers of children with **Special Educational Needs** (SEN) and high cost out of county placements are placing further pressure on the High Needs Block of the DSG. The current projected overspend for the year is £0.947m. There are also associated transport costs which add to pressures on the Home to School Transport budget. The projected overspend on SEN Home to School Transport (non DSG funded) is currently £2.268m.

Emerging Local Solutions

10. Given the drivers for change as articulated above, it is right that the Children, Education & Families Directorate considers fundamental change for the future. Cabinet will be aware of the developments within Children's Social Care. It is now timely that the same interrogation of services is undertaken within the Education and Learning Service.
11. The role of the Local Authority is changing fundamentally and will continue to do so over the coming years, so any solution has to be flexible and nimble enough to keep developing.
12. The Oxfordshire Education Strategy 2015 states that the role is defined as follows:
 1. *Provide an inspirational educational vision.*
 2. *Maximise use of influence to shape the system.*
 3. *Act as champion and advocate for all children and their families.*
 4. *Achieve a collective approach towards vulnerable pupils.*
 5. *Champion and promote educational excellence, whether schools are maintained, academies or free schools that are part of, and accountable to, the local educational community.*
 6. *Put the use of pupil performance data at the heart of what teachers, schools and the Local Authority do.*

7. *Have an overview of the performance of all schools and settings. To prevent the slide into poor performance in schools irrespective of the status of the provider.*
13. The Education and Learning Service will consider the practical implementation of these functions in defining its statutory duties and ensure that it meets those within its existing resource, that any extraneous activity is ceased and that over time capacity reduces in line with reducing responsibilities.
14. It is proposed, therefore, that the Education and Learning Service will focus on three priorities - Education Sufficiency, Education Quality and Vulnerable Learners. In brief, these areas will include, among others, the following statutory responsibilities, although final allocation has not yet been finalised:

| Vulnerable Learners | Education Sufficiency | Education Quality |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and assessment of SEN • Maintaining the Local Offer • Promoting the educational achievement of Looked After Children and leadership of the Virtual School • Educational Psychology Service • Promoting the effective participation of all young people with SEND or Care Leavers in education, employment and training up to the age of 25 • SEN transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Academy conversion • Pupil place planning • Attendance support • Exclusion and reintegration • Elective Home Education • Pupils missing education • Childcare sufficiency • Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training • Child Performance and Employment licences • Home to School transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioning support and challenge to meet Local Authority statutory responsibilities for schools causing concern • Overview of outcomes in all schools and settings through efficient and effective use of data • Safeguarding • SACRE • Use of formal powers of interventions • Early education quality • Moderation of assessment • Support for governing bodies • Maintaining systems for Education and Learning services to |

| Vulnerable Learners | Education Sufficiency | Education Quality |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | charge schools and settings for services |

Traded Services

15. In October 2015, Cabinet agreed in principle to proceed with the development of a traded service for the Schools and Learning Service to provide school improvement services to Oxfordshire schools. This proposal was included in the MTFP proposals for 2016-17 and beyond, with the expectation that savings of £1.4m could be identified over a three year period through this approach.
16. The introduction of greater Council savings through the local government financial settlement announced in December 2015, the proposed reduction by 75% of the Education Services Grant, the tightening of schools' budgets and a reducing role for local authorities in education places the prospect of the success of an enhanced **traded service**, launched at precisely the time when budgets are tightening, at jeopardy.
17. Proposals within this paper suggest there is potentially greater, and more certain saving from the alternative of not proceeding with a greater level of trading, but reducing the offer to schools to fulfil our statutory functions.
18. In line with government policy it is, therefore, proposed that Oxfordshire County Council should not expand an offer to its schools through an enhanced traded service.
19. The risk of not maintaining the quality of schools in Oxfordshire through the provision of in-house services will be mitigated by the work of the Strategic Schools Partnership in their commissioning of school to school support, using the good and outstanding practice in schools to help improve the quality of the rest.
20. There is also a risk to the performance of vulnerable learners, which will be mitigated by the actions of the Vulnerable Learners service with a close focus on the implementation of the priorities within the Excellence and Equity in Education strategy.

Leadership Arrangements

21. This implementation of purely statutory duties will inevitably mean a reduction in some of the services currently provided. There would be a narrower remit than is currently the case, so the leadership arrangements for the service will have to change to reflect this.
22. The Deputy Director role is currently filled on an interim basis. This arrangement comes to an end in March 2016. Internal leadership arrangements will be made from existing resource, ensuring robust strategic leadership arrangements, with a place on the Directorate Leadership Team.

This will mean that as schools progressively convert to academy status, the leadership of the service is flexible and agile enough to adjust to the changing circumstances.

23. In detail, this means that three of the current five leadership roles will continue, retaining their current responsibilities and sharing those of the Deputy Director. There would be a 'primus inter pares' role for one, to provide direct liaison with the Director for Children, Education & Families and for schools. This arrangement would be reviewed after six months to ensure that it is effective, fit for purpose, and able to adapt to continually changing circumstances, as more schools convert to academy status and the financial situation develops.
24. Detail of how the shape of the service will develop and the implementation of leadership roles will be the subject of a subsequent paper. That will also be the time to consider which, if any, services dealing or trading with schools in other directorates of the Council should be formally transferred to Education and Learning if they align with the strategic and statutory responsibilities of those services.

Financial and Staff Implications

25. Current Budget Position – Schools and Learning 2015-16:

| Service Area | Gross Expenditure | Grant Income | DSG Income | Other Income & Recharges | Net Expenditure |
|-------------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 | £000 |
| Governor Services | 436 | | | -351 | 85 |
| Business Development | 87 | | | | 87 |
| School Improvement | 608 | | | | 608 |
| Schools Causing Concern | 421 | | | | 421 |
| Vulnerable Learners | 397 | | -154 | | 243 |
| Narrowing the Gap | 659 | | -200 | -421 | 38 |
| Looked After Children | 1,185 | -665 | -329 | | 191 |
| Social Inclusion | 617 | | -476 | | 141 |
| TOTALS | 4,410 | -665 | -1,159 | -772 | 1,814 |

26. The proposed savings of £1.4m represents a reduction of 77% of the total net budgeted expenditure for the Schools and Learning area for 2015-16. These MTFP savings will be achieved, mainly by reducing services in response to

changing Local Authority responsibilities, partly as a result of continuing academy conversions, and potentially as a result of further changes that may come out of the Education Services Grant consultation expected in Spring 2016.

27. This will result in staff redundancies. The current estimated redundancy costs are expected to be in the region of £300k. Current staffing of the service includes 48.37 fte specialists and 17.09 fte administrative staff.
28. Local Authority (LA) net budgets are funded from a variety of sources, including the Education Services Grant (ESG). This is allocated to LAs on the basis of pupil numbers and is intended to fund a number of core LA education responsibilities. As mentioned above, ESG will be reduced by 75% over the life of this parliament, although details of implementation and timing have still to be confirmed for years after 2016-17. The amount of funding due to be received by the Authority is expected to reduce substantially from the current estimate of £4.3m for 2016-17 to around £1m, or potentially less, by 2019-20.
29. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funds a substantial part of education services, including some of the services in Schools and Learning. DSG is divided into 3 Blocks: Schools, Early Years and High Needs. The main on-going source of DSG funding in the Schools and Learning area is from DSG High Needs Block, and relates to vulnerable learners, Looked After Children and inclusion teams. The total DSG High Needs Block funding allocated in 2015-16 is £1.159m and it is expected that this level of contribution can continue in the near future for continued provision of these services. This will need to be reviewed if there are growing pressures elsewhere in the DSG High Needs Block, and also in response to the national funding formula consultation which will change the way that DSG is allocated to local authorities and the amount.

Equalities Implications

30. None at this stage

RECOMMENDATION

31. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to approve the proposed arrangements for Education and Learning Services as outlined in the attached report.

REBECCA MATTHEWS

Interim Deputy Director – Education and Learning

Contact Officer: Rebecca Matthews, Interim Deputy Director – Education and Learning (01865 815125)

February 2016

CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care

Report by Jim Leivers, Director of Children, Education and Families

Introduction

1. On 15 September 2015, Cabinet agreed to commence with a public consultation on proposals to redesign the county's children's services to focus support on the most vulnerable children, and consequently reconfigure existing the existing Early Intervention Services.
2. The public consultation ran from 14 October 2015 until 10 January 2016, and views were gathered on three options for delivering a new children's service which would support 0-19 year olds (up to 25 years if children have additional needs) , and their families, and integrate services currently provided by Children's Centres, Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Social Care.
3. All three options put forward for public consultation proposed the reconfiguring of the work of the Early Intervention and Children's Social Care Services to create one integrated service for 0-19 year olds, and their families. This service would target vulnerable children, and those at risk and include the creation of up to 8 Children and Family Centres located in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire. The three options can be summaries as follows:

Option 1: Create 8 Children and Family Centres, and target support at those most in need via the Centres and an extensive outreach service to all parts of the County. Under this option, universal/open access services would cease to be provided or commissioned.

Option 2: Create 8 Children and Family Centres, and target support at those most in need via the Centres. Limited universal/open access services would be provided by reducing outreach support

Option 3: Create 6 Children and Family Centres and make £1million available to the community and voluntary sector to provide services to children and families.
4. In February 2016 the county council will set its budget for the coming financial year. It is anticipated this will reflect the significant reduction in available funding from Central Government and require Children Education and Families Directorate to reduce further spending on its early intervention and preventative services. The decision of county council will build upon those taken in 15/16 and reduce the funding within the Early Intervention Service budget from £16 million to £8 million. These reductions are largely to be met from Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs.
5. In addition, to the budget decisions within the Early Intervention Service, the county's Children's Social Care Service is dealing with growing numbers of child protection, looked after and children in need cases (as defined by the Children Act 1989). Between March 2011 and March 2015 the number of children on a child protection plan rose by 71 per cent. Although this increase is much higher

than the national average of 16 per cent, and that of our statistical neighbours, it is in common with other authorities that have been through high profile Child Sexual Exploitation cases.

6. Concomitant to, and associated with, the rise in children on child protection plans, the number of children who are looked after by the local authority has risen by over 20% per cent, from 427 in March 2011, to a 514 in March 2015.
7. The rise in activity within Children's Social Care has created unsustainable pressures in the service. The average caseload for social workers within the Family Support Teams has risen to 20 children, from an average of 16 last year, with caseloads ranging from 14-32. This has led, during 2015/16, to significant overspends within Children's Social Care as additional staff have been required to address workload pressures.
8. In order to address these pressures and costs it is necessary to fundamentally reorganise the Directorate. This includes new organisational arrangements within Schools and Learning as well as Children's Social Care and Safeguarding. A full scale redesign of children's services is required to move resources away from early help and open access services into the prioritisation of statutory engagement and intervention as the primary drivers to proposed organisational change. Integrating those services currently provided by Children's Social Care with elements of those within the existing Early Intervention Service is the most cost-effective and safest way to ensure children are protected and vulnerable families receive the support they need to prevent issues escalating further.

Public Consultation

9. In September 2015 Cabinet required the proposals to reduce preventative and early intervention services be the subject of detailed consultation with the local community and professional organisations. This exercise was led by the Cabinet member for children's services and supported by members of the specially constituted cross party Cabinet Advisory Group. The consultation period commenced on 14 October and ended on 10 January 2016. It has been independently supported and verified by The Campaign Company. A copy of the full report from The Campaign Company is provided in Annex 1.
10. In summary, most of the consultees were not supportive of change but wished to retain the status quo and for it to be delivered through current arrangements. These outcomes are not surprising. The current form of provision is popular and well regarded by service users and professional organisations engaged with Children Centre and Early Intervention Hub provision.
11. Following decisions made by Council in regarding Directorate funding in 2015 and likely reductions in 2016/17 it is no longer possible to sustain current provision and consequently the priorities of the service need to change. However, a number of issues arising from the consultation will where possible be built into new organisational arrangements. These include:
 - Provision of preventative services which stop concerns about vulnerable children escalating to a point where they require statutory support

- Agreement with health to enable health professionals to deliver universal and targeted services to the wider community from the Children and Family Centres,
- Operating a mobile bus service to provide services to rural communities and the traveller community as they are less likely to attend the main Centres.
- Running open access sessions from the Children and Family Centres, enabling children and families living in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire to attend stay and play and youth sessions, and reduce any stigma associated with attending the Centres.

Approach to the public consultation

12. The county council is required by law to consult service users and other stakeholders before making any service changes that might lead to the closure of Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs.
13. To meet this requirement, the council organised a three-month consultation (14 October 2015 to 10 January 2016) to inform service users, other stakeholders and the wider public about the proposed changes and enable them to have their say.
14. The consultation process was designed to ensure that information was provided in an accessible way, and to gather and represent a wide range of views. The council received 2,715 responses to the consultation and engaged with over 850 people at meetings and events.

A full list of the public consultation activities is provided in Appendix 1.

Enabled participation

15. Consultation was carried out via an on-line and hard copy questionnaire, at public meetings, focus groups with service users and workshops with invited stakeholders including service user representatives from Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs. The questionnaire, and supporting information, was made available on the council's website and in paper copies in all Children's Centres, Early Intervention Hubs and libraries.
16. The focus groups which were held with service users provided an opportunity for children, young people and families to explain the importance of Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs in their lives and the impact potential changes could have.
17. Those affected by the proposed changes were able to make informed responses. Consultation documents and meetings presented the reasons for the public consultation and details of three proposed options for a new 0-19 service model. This included how the council would continue to fulfil its obligations to meet the needs of families with children under the age of five as part of a new service model.
18. We made sure the views of vulnerable service users from disadvantaged communities and minority groups were represented by holding discussions in

one-to-one sessions, group activities such as open access youth sessions, focus groups and meetings.

19. The proposals to transform the Early Intervention Service, including the reduction in funding, was publicised through the local media, with extensive TV, radio and print coverage throughout the consultation period. The proposals were also publicised through social media.

Independent analysis

20. To ensure the results were analysed impartially, the county council contracted The Campaign Company, an independent company experienced in analysing responses to public consultations, to review the results and produce an independent report. The full report is provided in Annex 1 of this document.
21. Anything received by the county council prior to the opening of the consultation date was included in the submissions made to The Campaign Company. Although the consultation closed on 10 January 2016, responses continued to be collected and submitted to The Campaign Company until 12 January 2016, to allow for postal delays.
22. Responses received after 12 January 2016 were not included in the analysis of the consultation, but were included in a file of 'late responses' available for Members to view.

Summary of consultation response

Profile of respondents

23. Overall, the breakdown of response to the consultation was as follows:

| Consultation channel | Number of responses |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Paper questionnaire | 666 |
| Online questionnaire | 1575 |
| E-mails | 88 |
| Letters | 36 |
| Tweets | 322 |
| Facebook posts | 28 |
| Total | 2715 |

24. In addition to the responses noted above, 32 sets of notes were taken at consultation meetings, 3 at public meetings, 8 at stakeholder meetings and 21 at small focus group meetings held by Children's Centres and Hubs.
25. Evidence suggests that public consultations are not representative exercises as some members of the local community will be more motivated to respond to them than others. When compared to census data, young people and men are under represented among respondents, whereas women and those aged 25-44 years were more likely to respond. This is not surprising given these groups are the most frequent users of the current services. The ethnicity of respondents, broadly matches that of Oxfordshire's population.

26. 61 per cent of those who responded to the questionnaire describe themselves as a user of Children's Centres and/or Early Intervention Hubs. However of these almost 75 per cent were a user of a Children's Centre rather than a Hub.

27. Questionnaire respondents use the children's centres and early intervention hubs for a number of services but 69 per cent cited 'Stay and Play' sessions and 'Family Drop-ins' as the most commonly used services. The next most commonly cited service used was 'Health Visitor' with 44 per cent of respondents.

Key themes from consultation responses

28. Rejection of all proposals

Feedback

The most significant message that has emerged from the survey element of the consultation is that all the proposals put forward were largely rejected by respondents, with 71 per cent favouring none of the options proposed in the consultations. Option 1 and Option 3 were favoured by eight per cent and Option 2 by 14 per cent.

Furthermore a significant portion of respondents indicated a reluctance to engage in a dialogue around the removal of universal services that are open to anyone, citing concerns that their engagement might be viewed as tacit support for one or more of the proposals. Many of the responses included a defence of universal services and a rejection of the proposals.

Response

The county council understands that people highly value the services currently available and are very motivated in opposition to cuts to these services. However, the financial pressures on the council mean that it is not possible to continue to provide the same broad range of service into the future.

The county council has produced a final revised proposal for the service based on all the feedback received.

29. Opposition to integration of services

Feedback

Over two thirds of survey respondents rejected the proposal to deliver integrated services for 0-19 year olds.

Response

The council has to respond to growing pressures in children's social care, year on year increases in the number of complex cases, whilst making significant reductions in service budgets.

To achieve this we need to integrate services both across Children's Social Care and Early Intervention and work increasingly closely with our partners such as health and schools. Through this duplication and management levels can be reduced, maximising the numbers of front line staff that can be retained and

support provided to the most vulnerable children who the council has a statutory duty to protect and support.

30. Disagreement to targeting services to vulnerable children and families

Feedback

The statement within the survey, *"It is important to offer more services to vulnerable children/families than to all children and families,"* while supported by a reasonably large minority (36.5 per cent), was rejected by the majority.

Response

The county council has a legal obligation to support those children and families who are most at risk or in greatest need. With reducing resources it is no longer possible to provide the same level of open access provision that is currently enjoyed by many people, and continue to meet our legal responsibilities.

The county council is proposing to provide limited open access provision within the Children and Family Centres and will work with groups such as parish, town and district councils and voluntary and community groups to develop their own community based open access services.

31. Concern over loss of preventative services

Feedback

There is a strong case put forward for the retention of preventative services in order to stop the needs of families escalating to a point where they require more expensive statutory support.

Response

The county council acknowledges the vital role that prevention plays in providing early support to children and families that could otherwise escalate to crisis point.

The new model will retain preventative work through the creation of a Locality and Community Support Service, which will provide advice and guidance to universal services, including schools, health services and voluntary and community groups to enable them to support vulnerable children and families within their communities. In addition, the Family Support Service will provide targeted early help to families with multiple needs to prevent their needs escalating to a point where they require statutory social care input.

In addition, a range of services outside the scope of these proposals, will continue to work to identify and support families on important issues such as post-natal depression and breastfeeding, according to need. These include GP services, maternity services, health visiting and school health nurse services.

32. Associated Health and Social Impacts

Feedback

Local provision of breastfeeding support was cited as highly beneficial to many and in some cases has supported mothers to breastfeed for longer. Removal of local support will undermine the realisation of the associated health benefits.

The potential loss of early identification and support of parental mental health issues was identified, particularly around post-natal depression.

The reduction in local networks and social capital that will arise from removing opportunities for parents to mix in a local environment was highlighted in feedback. This will particularly affect those families who are either new to an area, or who have English as a second language.

Response

The council continues to commission support post-natal and breastfeeding services via Public Health and it is the intention that these services, along with other universal and targeted support will continue to be available from Children and Family Centres.

Throughout the public consultation, the council has had discussions with groups, including parents, district, town and parish councils to explore the continued use of buildings that cease to be funded by the Service. A framework has been established to inform this work and the local authority is committed to continuing this work over the coming months.

33. Issues with accessibility within the new proposed model

Feedback

Respondents suggested that the loss of 'on the doorstep' provision will reduce the accessibility of the service. In particular a case is made that this will isolate families living in rural areas, and those not able to drive.

Response

By locating Children and Family Centres in the most deprived areas of the county, the county council intends to provide good access to the highest concentration of children in need or at risk of neglect or harm.

Outreach support will be provided to children and families ensuring vulnerable children and families receive support wherever they live. In addition, a mobile bus will provide services to rural communities and traveller communities.

34. Funding of services

Feedback

There is significant general opposition to cutting services. In addition, arguments are put forward that the cuts should not be made from children's services and should be found from other areas of the council.

Response

Funding from Central Government has reduced significantly. The council has a legal obligation to produce a balanced budget and is looking across all service areas for savings.

35. Alternative proposals**Feedback**

Just over 51 per cent of those that responded to a question about whether they had any alternative proposals for how the council could meet the £8 million savings included some suggestions:

- Seeking additional innovation and efficiencies from the existing centres
- Alternative sources of funding (including from central government, third sector or others)
- Increasing council tax

Response

The county council has been reducing its budgets for some time however, the scale of savings now required means that further innovations and efficiencies based on maintaining current service provision will not be sufficient. A full scale redesign of children's services is required to move resources away from open access services into statutory services to ensure safe and effective services for vulnerable children and families.

By far the most significant contributing factor to the level of savings required is the large reduction in the funding the county council receives from central government. This has resulted in a reduction in excess of £210million in funding for county council services. As such, it is not realistic to request additional funding from central government.

Additional sources of funding are available to charity and community organisations, but local authorities are not able to access this funding stream. This is one of the reasons the county council is interested in working with community groups, to support them to develop their own services.

The county council is not able to raise council tax by more than two per cent without carrying out a referendum of all the residents in Oxfordshire. Assuming popular support for this, it is estimated that even a rise of 10 per cent would not be enough to maintain current services.

Future service

36. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to providing safe and effective services for vulnerable children and their families. Given both the budgetary and workload pressures within Children's Social Care, this means that services must be prioritised for those children that the local authority has a statutory duty to support.

Children and families supported

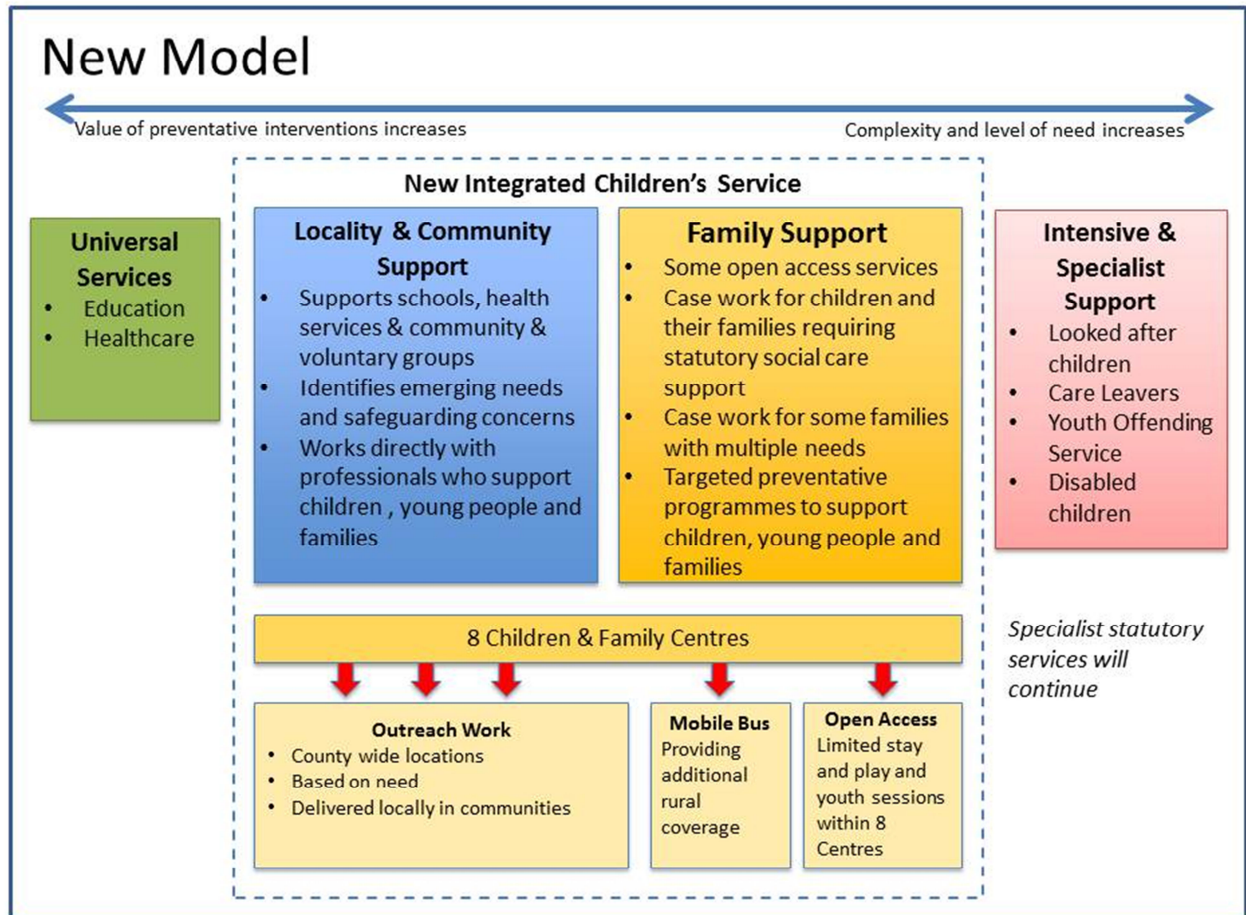
37. The new service will prioritise support to those children the local authority has a statutory duty to support. These are children on child protection plans, looked

after children in the care of the local authority and children in need as defined by the Children Act 1989

38. There will be limited capacity within the Service, however, to provide some targeted support to prevent needs escalating. This will be directed to vulnerable young people who are not in education, employment or training, and children and their families who have multiple needs. These children and families will be identified through an early help/CAF assessment and will include, for example, families affected by domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health concerns, including post-natal depression, children who are going missing from home and school, and families where there is criminal activity.
39. In addition to the statutory and targeted support, open access services will be available to children and families living in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire delivered out of the new Children and Family Centres. For example, stay and play and youth sessions.
40. The new service will also have capacity to support professionals working with vulnerable children and families within community-based/universal services, including health, education and early years providers. Experienced child protection professionals will co-ordinate work, support professionals working with children and families and provide specialist safeguarding advice to ensure children are safe

Structure of service

41. The new service will comprise of a number of different elements:
- i) Locality and Community Support
 - ii) Family Support for children aged 0-19, and their families
 - iii) 8 Children and Family Centres and mobile bus
 - iv) Outreach service
42. The diagram below provides an illustration of the new service, with the elements outlined in a dotted line showing the new integrated service.



Locality and Community Support

43. The aim of the Locality and Community Support Service is to:
- To provide advice and guidance to universal services, including schools, health services and voluntary and community groups to enable them to support vulnerable children, young people and families within their community
 - To identify emerging needs and safeguarding concerns within the locality
 - To be the first point of contact for universal services who have concerns about a child and are considering making a referral to statutory services
 - To monitor and oversee the effective implementation of CAF/TACs within the locality
 - To develop a good working knowledge of support services in the area and identification of appropriate resources
44. This new service will build on the work previously carried out by locality co-ordinators and the current well respected model of locality support. The service will have identified workers who link with universal services, including schools, early years settings, health and other community based provision, to enable concerns to be shared and advice and guidance given in relation to children and young people where there may be child protection issues.
45. Workers from the service will offer support and advice to any professional who has concerns about a child and coordinate support for vulnerable families within the community. This will include supporting the completion of an early help/CAF

assessment to identify the nature of concerns within the family. Where concerns cannot be managed within the community, workers from the service will take the lead in escalating concerns into the new Service. In addition, the service will offer support to build capacity among community groups looking to establish services in their localities.

46. The Locality and Community Support Service will be organised into three area teams (North, Central and South), with workers being based across the Children and Family Centres located in their areas. The Service will be managed by Team Manager, with Senior Practitioners and Locality Workers based within each of the three areas (North, Central and South). All staff will be experienced child protection and safeguarding professionals, with the Senior Practitioners being qualified social workers. The intention is to develop the Locality and Community Service into a multi-agency service. Discussions are on-going with partners regarding this. Staff within the service will work extended hours to ensure support is available to children and families when they require it.
47. The local authority believes that the creation of this service provides a significant preventative element and mitigates some of the concerns raised in the consultation about the early identification of vulnerable families. Through this service vulnerable children will be identified, and support put in place, before concerns escalate. The development of this service increases investment in the support the county council currently provides to universal services.

Family Support

48. The new Family Support Service will integrate the existing Children's Social Care family support teams with the family support functions currently undertaken in the early intervention service, including those of the current Thriving Families and Youth Engagement and Opportunities Teams.
49. The aim of the service is:
- To provide timely support and interventions to vulnerable families to address safeguarding concerns and reduce risks to children and young people
 - To provide case work to children, young people and families requiring statutory and targeted support, including responding to crises within families
 - To offer a range of group programmes to children, young people and families who meet the threshold for the service
 - To deliver and co-ordinate services within the designated Children and Family Centres
 - To provide both casework and group programmes through outreach to venues other than the Children and Family Centres
50. The service will provide direct case work with both children and their families, taking a whole family approach to planning and support. This approach will embed that of the current Thriving Families programme and will ensure plans for children are made within the context of their whole family, enabling appropriate support to be put in place for each individual.
51. In addition to case work, the service will offer a standardised evidence based range of group programmes. These will be designed to address the key risks

and issues affecting families, including domestic abuse, parenting skills, school readiness and employment and training support. The service will only provide programmes where there is strong evidence of their positive impact for children and/or families.

52. The group programmes will be targeted at vulnerable families. However, the Family Support Service will also offer open access sessions within the new Children and Family Centres. This will include a stay and play sessions for under 5s and their carers, and youth sessions for young people.
53. The Family Support Service will be based and operated from the Children and Family Centres, however workers from the Service will provide an extensive outreach service, meeting children and families at other venues including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live to provide individual support. In addition, the group programmes will be offered from venues other than the Children and Family Centres in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them. The proposals around outreach are included to mitigate some of the concerns raised during the public consultation about accessibility of services, in particular to the more rural areas of Oxfordshire.
54. Teams will develop strong links with the services in the local vicinity, in particular schools, health, and voluntary and community services. In addition, there are opportunities to further develop this service to broaden the range of professionals working within the teams and discussions continue with partners regarding this.
55. The Family Support Service will be organised into three area teams, each managed and overseen by a senior manager reporting to a Deputy Director. Teams will consist of managers, practice managers, senior practitioners, social workers, family workers and family support workers bringing a range of experience and expertise to work with children and families. Managers will have responsibility for a number of different teams, with the majority of workers supporting children and families where there is a statutory responsibility to do so. However, a number of workers will focus on the provision of targeted support to families identified through the early help/CAF assessment process. Practice Managers will have day to day responsibility for the management of case work with families, with the other team members providing direct support to children and families and delivering group programmes. Staff within the service will work extended hours to ensure support is available to children and families when they require it.
56. The development of the integrated service will increase capacity to support the most vulnerable children and focus resources on children in need to prevent a further escalation of their needs.

Children and Family Centres

57. Eight Children and Family Centres will be created providing a base for a service for 0-19 year olds and their families.
58. These Centres will be based in the most deprived areas of Oxfordshire as follows:

| North Area (Cherwell & West Oxfordshire District Council areas) | Central Area (Oxford City Council area) | South Area (Vale of White Horse & South Oxfordshire District Council areas) |
|---|---|---|
| Banbury | Oxford - Blackbird Leys | Abingdon |
| Bicester | Oxford - Rose Hill / Littlemore | Didcot |
| Witney | Oxford - Barton/Sandhills | |

Methodology used to identify locations

59. The process for determining the proposed locations for the new Children and Family Centres was as follows:
- i) Define the total number of Children and Family Centres within Oxfordshire
 - ii) Define the broad geographical spread by assigning a total number of Children and Family Centres to three broad areas within the county (three service areas - north, central, south)
 - iii) Determine the 'ideal' locations of the proposed Children and Family Centres within each service area
60. The approach built on that undertaken by the Cabinet Advisory Group and used the following data sets:
- Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD);
 - Prior home locations of children who became looked after by Oxfordshire County Council between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
 - Home locations of Children who were subject to child protection plans between 31st March 2011 to 31st March 2015;
 - Home locations of families identified in the wider Phase 1 Thriving Families cohort;
 - Oxfordshire County Council child population forecasts 2014-2019.
61. In order to determine the 'ideal' locations within each service area an assumption was made that the main settlements within the county were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Centres because of their accessibility in terms of transport links, their geographical spread, and that localised deprivation tends to be concentrated in urban areas. This assumption was tested using an algorithm that considered the location of 'need' using the data sets described above. These indicators were weighted by population forecasts to give a better indication of where need is likely to be located in the coming years.
62. Potential locations were tested to determine whether each increased or decreased the distance between Centre and family 'in need'. Locations were finally chose based on a mix of factors: settlement size, deprivation (IMD), and other indicators of need.
63. Since the previous report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, updated Index of Multiple Deprivation data has been released. The methodology set out above has

been re-run using this updated data and the 'ideal' locations identified were broadly similar.

64. Full details of the methodology used to determine locations was made available as part of the public consultation and is provided in Annex 2.

Buildings suitable for Children and Family Centres

65. Work has begun to identify local authority buildings that could be suitable for a Children and Family Centre and have capacity to house the new integrated Service and its associated functions. While further, more detailed, work is required before finalising the exact location of each Centre the table below shows those identified following the preliminary review:

| Area | Locality | Building identified through preliminary review |
|---------|-----------------------|---|
| North | Banbury | Banbury Early Intervention Hub, Hilton Road |
| | Bicester | Bicester Early Intervention Hub, The Courtyard, Launton Road |
| | Witney | West Oxfordshire Early Intervention Hub, Witan Way |
| Central | Barton/ Sandhills | The Roundabout Centre, Waynflete Road, Barton |
| | Rose Hill/ Littlemore | Rose Hill and Littlemore Children's Centre, Ashhurst Way, Rose Hill |
| | Blackbird Leys | Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Way |
| South | Abingdon | Abingdon Early Intervention Hub, The Net, Stratton Way |
| | Didcot | Didcot Early Intervention Hub, The Vibe, Park Road |

66. In addition to the eight Children and Family Centres, a mobile bus service will deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community as they are less likely to attend the main Centres.

67. During the public consultation suggestions were received as to which buildings could be suitable for the Children and Family Centres. These proposals will be considered as part of the more detailed work to finalise the buildings.

Outreach

68. An outreach service will be provided to all parts of Oxfordshire which will help those families who most need intensive support. This will be provided in two ways, firstly workers from the Family Support Service will travel to meet children and families at other venues, including their home, school and other locations close to where the family live to provide 1:1 support. In addition, targeted group programmes will be offered from alternative venues such as local community centres, which will include the more rural parts of the County, in order to ensure families do not have to travel extensive distances to attend them. This will ensure we offer support to vulnerable families and children on a county wide basis.

Role of partners

69. Universal services are accessible to all children and families regardless of need. They have a key role in identifying children and families who are in need of additional support and providing information and advice to these families. The local authority is committed to working with partners across universal, and targeted services, including health, education, employment and the voluntary and community sectors to provide services to support families. The eight Children and Family Centres will provide a venue for partners to deliver services to children and families.
70. It should be noted that a wide range of related services remain outside the scope of these proposals. These include GP services, maternity services, health visiting and school health nurse services. These services will continue to work to identify and support families on important issues such as post-natal depression and breastfeeding according to need.

Child care settings

71. Eleven of the current Children's Centres offer child care on the same site. These are:

- East Street Centre, Calder Close, Banbury, OX16 3WR
- The Sunshine Centre, Edmunds Road, Banbury, OX16 0PJ
- North Banbury Centre, Hardwick School, Ferriston, OX16 1XE
- Britannia Road Centre, Grove Street, Banbury, OX16 5DN
- The Ace Centre, Burford Road, Chipping Norton, OX7 5DZ
- Slade Children's Centre, Titup Hall Drive, Wood Farm, Oxford, OX3 8QQ
- East Oxford Children's Centre, The Union, Collins Street, Oxford OX4 1EE
- Grandpoint Children's Centre, 47 Whitehouse Road, OX1 4QH
- Rosehill Littlemore Children's Centre, Ashhurst Way, Rose Hill, OX4 4RF
- Elms Road Children's Centre, Elms Road, Botley, OX2 9JZ
- Stephen Freeman Children's Centre, Freeman Road, Didcot, OX11 7BZ

72. It is proposed to continue to support these child care settings until April 2017 with a view to them being financially self-sufficient from April 2017. Supporting these settings will provide a base for the outreach work that will be delivered in those communities. The local authority will also work with these settings to support the delivery of some universal services from the buildings, this could include health visiting services.

Future use of other buildings

73. Throughout the public consultation, the local authority has had discussions with groups, including parents, district, town and parish councils to explore the continued use of buildings that cease to be funded by the Service. A framework has been established to inform this work and the local authority is committed to continuing this work over the coming months.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Assessment

74. When a professional or member of the public has safeguarding concerns about a child they make a referral to Oxfordshire's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

(MASH). This co-located multi-professional team aims to identify risks to vulnerable children, at the earliest possible stage by providing a safe and speedy triage to determine the most effective interventions. As such it is a gateway between universal services (such as Schools and GPs) and statutory services e.g. police and social care. Where concerns meet the threshold for statutory social care services, workers within the MASH liaise with one of the three area Children and Family Assessment Teams who undertake a full assessment of the child's needs and put in place a plan to address them and reduce the risks to the child.

75. Under the new service structure the Locality and Community Support Service will become the first point of contact for professionals who have concerns about a child, except where there are immediate safeguarding concerns. Given this it is necessary to review the role of the MASH, and the number of workers required to deliver it. This work, involving all agencies who are partners in the MASH, has commenced and will be presented to Cabinet in a future report as part of a wider report.

Emergency Duty Team

76. The local authority currently provides an emergency out of hours' service which provides support to vulnerable adults and children. Due to organisational changes taking place within children and adult social care a review of the current out of hours' arrangements is underway. It is proposed that any resultant changes to this service are implemented following a consultation process with staff.

Equalities Implications

77. See Service and Community Impact Assessment in Annex 3.

Financial and Staffing Implications

78. The budget agreed by Council in February 2014 included savings of £3m in Early Intervention to be achieved by 2017-18. Further savings of £3m were agreed by Council in February 2015 making a total of £6m to be achieved by 2017-18.
79. The Service & Resource Planning 2016/17 report presented to Cabinet on 26 January 2016 sets out budget proposals for 2016-17 to 2019-20 which will be considered by Council on 16 February 2016. Council needs to make further savings beyond those in the existing Medium Term Financial Plan to reflect the implications of spending reductions announced in the National Budgets in both March and July 2015, and also the provisional local government finance settlement announced on 17 December 2015. An additional £23m of savings on top of the previous estimate of £50 million will need to be identified in future years. As a consequence, it is likely that the additional £2 million savings from the Early Intervention budget that were consulted on will be required. However, this is subject to a decision made by Council on 16 February 2016 in setting the 2016/17 budget and future Medium Term Financial Plan.
80. The existing budgets for the service areas that are proposed to be combined are set out in the table below:

| Service Area | 2015-16 Net Budget * £m |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Early Intervention Hubs | 5.8 |
| Children's Centres | 7.7 |
| Youth, Engagement & Opportunities | 1.5 |
| Thriving Families | 0.2 |
| Less: Pay budget / Vacancy factor saving share | -0.2 |
| Sub-total – Early Intervention * | 15.0 |
| Add: Budgets for Family Support Teams | 4.0 |
| Total Budget for Combined Service before savings | 19.0 |
| Further Savings agreed for 2016-17 to 2017-18 | -5.0 |
| Potential additional savings | -2.0 |
| Revised Total Budget for Combined Service | 12.0m |
| * The 2015-16 net budget has already been reduced by £1m of the original £6m planned savings | |

81. The new service model, is based on the available budget of £12m and the assumptions in the table below. The available staffing budget determines the number of staff/ teams that are affordable in the new structure and the number of potential centres:

| Budget Assumptions | £m |
|---|-------------|
| Continued delivery of Education, Employment and Training responsibilities | 0.7 |
| Estimated Premises costs & other supplies and services | 1.5 |
| Amount available for staffing | 9.8 |
| Total Available Budget for Combined Service | 12.0 |

82. Any transitional support to child care settings will need to be found from the Service budget, potentially delaying the achievement of the full savings.
83. It is expected that by reducing the number of locations where existing services are delivered, there will be potential for alternative use of sites. However, there is a risk that some capital grant funding associated with some sites may need to be repaid.
84. Some capital work is expected to be required to make existing sites suitable for use as locations for the new Children and Family Centres, at an indicative cost of £1.9 million. The initial budget provision of £1.9m will be funded from corporate resources held within the capital programme. Depending on the outcome of the programme, the capital programme could be reimbursed from the disposal of residual county council sites and any savings on alternative use of residual sites that address budget provision already earmarked in the capital programme.

Redundancies

85. These proposals will result in significant levels of redundancies. While exact numbers, and the specific posts affected, cannot yet be confirmed it is estimated that over 200 staff employed by Oxfordshire County Council, and within Children's

Centres managed by schools, are likely to be affected. The county council will support staff to seek alternative employment opportunities with the local authority, however, these are likely to be limited as all Directorates are implementing savings plans.

Commissioned Services

86. The county council currently commission a number of organisations to provide services on its behalf within the Early Intervention Service. These include contracts for the management of 15 Children's Centres, to smaller contracts for work with groups or individuals. A number of the smaller contracts will cease from April 2016, while those for the provision of Children's Centres will continue until September 2016. Where providers are running Children's Centres on behalf of the local authority, discussions are on-going to ascertain what, if any, responsibilities the county council may have to the staff within these services.

Legal Implications

87. The report to Cabinet on 15 September 2015, "Future Arrangements in Children's Social Care" set out the legal duties incumbent on the local authority in relation to Children's Centres. These are provided in Annex 4 and Annex 5.

Meeting legal responsibilities

88. The county council believes that the proposed new model of service meets the requirements placed on the local authority as set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and statutory guidance:

- *take steps to identify parents and those expecting a baby in their area who are unlikely to take advantage of early childhood services available and encourage them to use them*

The Service will continue to receive notifications of all new born children and will work with health professionals to identify all those that are vulnerable and ensure the appropriate support is provided.

- *ensure there are sufficient children's centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need*

In developing the new Service, the priority has been to maximise the number of staff available to provide services, including outreach, to children and families; maximise the use of the proposed Children and Family Centres; and minimise the proportion of the budget spent on buildings. By doing this the new Service will be able to meet the needs of vulnerable families across Oxfordshire.

- *A network of Children's Centres accessible to all families with young children in their area*

It is intended that the eight proposed Children and Family Centres will be located across Oxfordshire in the most deprived areas of the county. However, through a partnership with health that delivers a universal offer, including antenatal and post-natal support, families from across the county will have access to services delivered from the Children and Family Centres. In addition,

sessions will be run from each Centre which will be open to any family wishing to attend.

- *Children's Centres and their services within reasonable reach of all families with young children in urban and rural areas, taking into account distance and availability of transport*
- *demonstrate that all children and families can be reached effectively*

The methodology used to identify the locations of the Children and Family Centres, includes an assumption that the main settlements within Oxfordshire were likely to be the most appropriate locations for the Children and Family Centres because of their geographical spread and accessibility in terms of transport links. This was tested by a further calculation that took into account travelling time to the proposed Centres and minimised the average distance between each Centre and families 'in need'.

Further, the new service will provide outreach across Oxfordshire and a mobile bus service, meaning that children and families will not have to travel to the Centres in order to receive service.

- *With local commissioners of health services and employment services, consider how best to ensure that the families who need services can be supported to access them*

Strong partnership working is a key part of the new model of service. Health services provide a universal services from antenatal support onwards. Their role is to identify vulnerable families and ensure families receive the appropriate support. Through our model of integrated working workers from the new service will work closely with health professionals so families receive the right support at the right time.

Support around employment forms a key part of the Trouble Families agenda, by integrating this provision into the new service, families will receive continue to receive advice and support enabling them to take advantage of employment and training opportunities.

The Locality and Community Support Service, will provide a co-ordinated response to identifying and directing resources towards vulnerable families The ambition is that this team will be multi-agency and work in communities alongside universal services particularly schools, early years settings and Health to identify vulnerable families as soon as problems first emerge and ensure the family receives appropriate support. Where targeted / specialist support is required referrals will be made into the appropriate service.

- *target Children's Centres services at young children and families in the area who are at risk of poor outcomes through, for example, effective outreach services, based on the analysis of local need*

The new service will target those children and families in greatest need and prioritise the available resources for them. Services will be provided from the

Children and Family Centres, whose location in the most deprived areas of the County was determined through a needs analysis, and by outreach services that will offer both 1:1 and group support at venues across the Oxfordshire.

- *ensure that opening times and availability of services meet the needs of families in their area*

Staff within the new service will operate extended hours to ensure support is available to children and families when they most need it. In addition, the new service will have strong links with the Emergency Duty Team, and other county council teams to ensure appropriate support is available across the week.

- *not close an existing Children's Centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children's centre site, the outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of Children's Centres;*

Children's physical and mental health and emotional well-being will continue to be supported by universal services provided by health, education and other professionals. The Locality and Community Support Service will develop strong links with universal provider within the local area, enabling vulnerable children to be identified and where necessary targeted services put in place to support them.

Services provided by Children's Social Care will continue to be available to protect children from harm and neglect. There will continue to be a clear referral process into safeguarding services to ensure children are protected.

Ensuring that children are ready for school is a key function of Children's Centres and this will remain a priority in the proposed new model of service. Through the targeting of services to those most in need, support will continue to be available to children to prepare them for starting school. Through the continued provision of support throughout childhood, the service will prepare vulnerable children to take advantage of the opportunities offered by education, training and recreation.

- *take into account the views of local families and communities in deciding what is sufficient Children's Centre provision*

Local families and communities have been invited to give their views through the public consultation process. These have been taken into account in shaping the new service and where concerns have been raised we have adapted features of the new model to mitigate these.

- *take account of families crossing local authority borders to use Children's Centres in their authority. Families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best*

Due to financial and service pressures within the County, the Children and Family Centres will provide targeted and statutory services to children and families living within Oxfordshire. Where universal providers, such as health, are delivering services from the new Centres some of these services may remain accessible to families living within other local authorities, where it is appropriate for them to do so.

- *take into account wider duties under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 and under the Child Poverty Act 2010*

These duties will be met by targeting services to children and families the local authority has a statutory duty to support.

Implementation

89. The work to restructure the Directorate is complex and will take a number of months. The current timetable for implementation is as follows:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| 23 February 2015 | Report to Cabinet |
| April 2015 | Commence staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new service |
| Summer 2015 | Staff interviews and confirmation of posts within new structure |
| By late Autumn 2015 | Integrated service commences within new Children and Family Centres |
| By April 2017 | Work with 10 child care settings around sustainability |
| On-going | Work with interested groups regarding continued use of buildings not funded by the Service |

Recommendations

90. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED:

- That eight Children and Family Centres are developed in the locations set out in the report. These Centres will deliver services that meet the authority's statutory duties relating to Children's Centres and deliver statutory and targeted services to vulnerable children and families
- That limited open access services are provided from within the eight Children and Family Centres
- A mobile bus is retained to deliver services to rural communities and the traveller community as these communities are less likely to attend the main centres
- To continue to support the child care settings currently based in Children's Centres through to April 2017. During this time the authority will work with the centres to ensure they are financially self-sufficient from April 2017.
- Approve the inclusion of £1.9m budget in the capital programme for the new Children and Family Centres to be funded from the unallocated corporate resources.
- Commit to continue conversations with organisations and groups that have shown an interest in using alternative funding streams to enable centres to remain open

- Commence a staff consultation on the staffing structure for the new Service, to include proposals for an Emergency Duty Team.

JIM LEIVERS
Director for Children's Services

February 2016

Appendix 1 - Public consultation activities

The council received 2,715 responses to the children's services consultation and engaged with over 850 people at meetings and events.

The consultation ran between Wednesday 14 October 2015 and Sunday 10 January 2016, and comprised of:

Online consultation

All consultation documents were published on the council's consultation website, including a link to an online questionnaire and a suite of supporting information available to read online or download. The website url was publicised in printed materials, adverts, press releases and linked to in social media posts on the council's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Online consultation included:

- Consultation document and summary explaining the reason for the consultation and three proposed options for a new 0-19 service model
- Questionnaire with guidance notes available to complete online or print and return by freepost
- Profile of each Children's Centre and Early Intervention Hub
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Summary documents translated into seven languages with further available on request
- Information on how to request consultation documents in an alternative format
- An email address and helpline number were also publicised

Printed consultation materials

- Paper copies of the consultation documents and questionnaires made available at Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs (and for onward distribution to service users), at County Hall, in libraries and at the public consultation events and stakeholder meetings
- Posters were displayed posters in/around Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs
- Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs gave out copies of the consultation information and questionnaire to service users via one to one, group sessions and focus groups
- Picture explanation of the proposed new model was made available for use in focus groups with young people

Events, meetings and community visits

- 146 attended public meetings held in Oxford, Didcot and Bicester. Council representatives explained the consultation, heard views from the public on the proposed options for a new 0-19 service model and answered questions
- 433 people attended eight stakeholder events, held in a workshop format, which explained the consultation and the proposed options for the new model, asked stakeholders questions and recorded feedback on the proposed new

model. Attendees included representatives from Children's Centre Advisory Groups, Early Intervention Hubs, parents, health, schools, faith, voluntary sector and justice partners

- 183 staff attended three staff listening events
- 21 focus groups held at Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs with parents and young people in December 2015 and January 2016
- One of these focus groups, held at Abingdon Early Intervention Hub, involved young people from TOPAZ, representing lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender young people across Oxfordshire
- Meetings held with local travellers communities in Wheatley and Redbridge
- Meetings held with schools to identify options for future use of buildings.
- Meetings held with education, health, district councils and voluntary sector stakeholders to discuss the proposed new model
- Meetings held with representatives from Churches, including the Bishop of Dorchester, to discuss the potential contribution of faith groups to the proposed new model
- Visits to Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs by members of the CAG and Leader of the Council.

Service user engagement

Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs supported the consultation process by raising awareness with service users and providing any assistance necessary to aid their participation. Activities included:

- Discussions in team meetings for staff to then discuss the consultation with service users in 1:1 sessions and in group activities (e.g. open access sessions)
- Promotion of consultation on their Facebook pages
- Gathered feedback from youth club service users 8-12 year olds and 13-19 year olds via flip charts at youth club sessions
- Gathered feedback via Christmas community event from parents and young people
- Included details on the consultation in newsletters and mailings to service users and in schools newsletters and local publications
- Facilitated a meeting between Councillors and parents
- Held discussions with health partners who then were able to speak to service users
- 21 focus groups held at Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs with parents and young people in December 2015 and January 2016

Stakeholder briefings

Representatives from the following stakeholder groups were directly informed about the consultation through newsletter articles and email briefings:

- Oxfordshire County Councillors
- District Council Chief Executives
- Oxfordshire Parish and Town Councils
- Oxfordshire MPs

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Commissioned service delivery partners
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Early Years Board
- Oxfordshire schools
- Academics
- Staff

Other stakeholder communications included:

- Presentation on the consultation made at all elected member locality meetings
- Letter sent to all Members to encourage them to be actively involved in the consultation process by participating in their local stakeholder event
- Post-public meetings communications with stakeholders included:
 - Media article by Cllr Tilley summarising feedback thus far, addressing key concerns raised and encouraging continued input into consultation, published 10/12/15, Oxford Mail
 - Stakeholder email briefing with key facts summary sent 10/12/15 to above stakeholder list

Publicity

The consultation was publicised throughout the county via posters in Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs, digital communications (news stories on the council's website and social media channels), paid for advertising in local newspapers (Henley Standard, Banbury Guardian, The Oxford Times, The Oxford Mail, The Herald Series, and Bicester Advertiser) and PR (media releases and articles).

Through these channels information was provided on the public meetings and how to take part in the consultation. In addition, the council also directly informed representatives from key stakeholder groups about the consultation in briefings and newsletters. Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs publicised the consultation on their Facebook pages, in newsletters and emails to service users.

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CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

2015/16 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY DELIVERY REPORT

Report by the Chief Finance Officer

Introduction

1. This report focuses on the management of the 2015/16 budget. Parts 1 and 2 include projections for revenue, reserves and balances as at the end of December 2015. Capital Programme monitoring is included at Part 3.
2. The forecast directorate position for the year is currently an anticipated overspend of +£4.1m (+1.0%) against a net budget of £416.8m as shown in the table below. This compares to an anticipated overspend of +£5.5m (+1.3%) reported to Cabinet in December 2015 and +£4.2m (+1.0%) reported this time last year.
3. Directorates have, and continue to work to reduce the forecast overspend by management action which includes a freeze on non-essential recruitment, and a stop on any non-urgent or uncommitted expenditure.
4. Annual reductions in the budget since 2010 mean there is less flexibility to manage pressures as they arise in year. The on-going impact of the increased demand particularly in Home to School Transport, Children's Social Care Staffing and Waste has been considered through the Service & Resource Planning Process for 2016/17. However, whilst the in-year pressures are expected to be managed in part, it is anticipated that the use of contingency and general balances will be required to bring the budget back into balance. This will be set out in the Provisional Outturn Report to Cabinet in June 2016.

| Directorate | Latest Budget 2015/16 £m | Forecast Outturn 2015/16 £m | Forecast Outturn Variance 2015/16 £m | Forecast Outturn Variance 2015/16 % |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| Children, Education & Families (CE&F) | 107.8 | 111.5 | +3.8 | +3.5 |
| Social & Community Services (S&CS) | 211.0 | 211.3 | +0.3 | +0.1 |
| Environment & Economy (E&E) | 83.6 | 83.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Corporate Services (CS) | 14.4 | 14.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Public Health (*) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 416.8 | 420.9 | +4.1 | +1.0 |
| Public Health (*) | | | | |
| Expenditure | 28.9 | 29.1 | +0.2 | +0.7 |
| Grant and Other Income & Transfer from Reserves | -28.9 | -29.1 | -0.2 | -0.7 |
| Total¹ | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

¹ Public Health is funded by a ring-fenced grant of £30.4m from the Department of Health. On 4 November the Council received notification that this grant would be reduced in-year by £1.9m. The forecast overspend of +£0.2m will be funded by a transfer from reserves at year end.

5. The following annexes are attached:

| | |
|---------|---|
| Annex 1 | Original and Latest Budget for 2015/16 |
| Annex 2 | 2015/16 Virements & Supplementary Estimates |
| Annex 3 | Ring-fenced Government Grants 2015/16 |
| Annex 4 | Treasury Management Lending List |
| Annex 5 | Forecast Earmarked Reserves |
| Annex 6 | Forecast General Balances |
| Annex 7 | Capital Programme Monitoring |

6. Directorate reports setting out the detail behind this report are available from the contact officers named at the end of this report or in the Members' Resource Centre.

Part 1 - Revenue Budget

Children, Education & Families

7. The directorate is forecasting an overspend of +£3.8m. There is also a -£0.6m forecast underspend on services funded by Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).
8. There are two main areas identified as overspending that reflect increasing activity and demand; Special Educational Needs (SEN) Home to School Transport and increasing numbers of children requiring intervention from Children's Social Care leading to increased workload and staffing costs in front line social work teams and related legal costs. The Directorate is addressing the overspend by freezing vacancies other than for front line social workers required to maintain safe caseloads, and is reviewing all areas of expenditure. However, these overspends are unlikely to be resolved in the short term given the increased demand. The proposed future integration of Early Intervention, Children's Centres and Family Support aims to match available resources to demand.

CEF1 Education & Learning

9. The Education & Learning service is forecasting to overspend by +£1.1m.
10. In 2014/15 Home to School Transport overspent by £1.3m. The overspend was due to increased costs associated with transporting primary school pupils and increased use of taxis, particularly for pupils with SEN. The budget for 2015/16 was increased by £1.2m from 2015/16 as part of the budget and medium term plan agreed by Council in February 2015. The current forecast for 2015/16 is an overspend of +£2.3m relating to SEN transport. The overspend relates to a combination of growth in demand for services and an increase in the average cost per passenger journey. The increase cost of passenger journeys arises from an increase in the number of contracts and more single passenger journeys. This is partly offset by an underspend of -£0.4m on mainstream transport, due in the main to the impact of the route efficiency programme with the number of routes and passengers reducing by 13% and 8% respectively.
11. There are predicted underspends totalling -£0.8m in other areas of the Education & Learning service. Following Government announcements in December 2015 and feedback received by the service, the strategy for

the Education and Learning service has undergone a change of direction to focus on statutory services as set out elsewhere on the agenda. As such the transfer of £0.3m from that service to earmarked reserves reported previously is no longer included in the forecast position.

CEF2 Children's Social Care

12. Children's Social Care is forecast to overspend by +£2.8m.
13. As a result of significant increases in the number of children becoming looked after in the last two to three years, additional ongoing funding of £7.4m from 2015/16 was agreed as part of the budget and medium term plan agreed by Council in February 2015. An underspend of -£0.6m on the increased budget for external agency placements is forecast. This forecast includes projected spend for existing clients and an estimate of £0.3m for new placements that could arise during the rest of the year. At the end of March 2015, there were 527 looked after children, an increase of 111 (27%) from April 2013. At 31 December 2015, the number had increased to an all-time high of 606.
14. Service Management and Central Costs are forecast to overspend by +£1.5m. The growth in numbers of children requiring services from Children's Social Care has increased the workload across a number of services, and required additional administrative support for front line social workers as well as resulting in high legal costs. In particular there has been a need for more administrative support around Child Protection Conferences and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). There has also been additional work around restructuring Early Intervention and Children's Social Care requiring interim consultant support. The Directorate is undertaking a review of all posts and budgets across the whole service, in order to identify the on-going staffing requirement, any necessary realignment of budgets and how to address any remaining shortfall.
15. The growth in demand is also resulting in projected overspends in the Corporate Parenting area. The forecast overspend of +£0.3m mainly relates to overspends on the in-house fostering service (+£0.1m) reflecting a 12% increase in children placed in foster care over the last 12 months. The inter-agency budget is forecast to overspend (+£0.2m) because there are increased numbers of children being placed with adopters from other authorities. There are also pressures in Family Placement teams (+£0.1m) reflecting the use of agency staff to cover vacancies. These overspends are offset by underspends of -£0.1m in the rest of the service.
16. The increase in the number of young people requiring intervention from Children's Social Care has had a significant impact across all Children's Social Care teams including Referral & Assessment (+£0.6m), Family Support (+£0.3m), Safeguarding (+£0.6m), Looked After Children and Leaving Care (+£0.3m) and Asylum (+£0.4m). Staffing has been increased to keep workloads at a safe level, including use of temporary agency staff, due to on-going problems with recruiting social workers. These are partly offset by small underspends totalling -£0.7m across the Early Intervention service.

17. The Youth Offending Service is now forecasting an overspend of +£0.1m, largely as a result of confirmation from the Youth Justice Board of an in-year grant reduction of an equivalent amount.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

18. Services funded from DSG are forecast to underspend by -£0.6m compared to the 2015/16 DSG allocation of £261.2m. The position reflects a significant pressure on out of county Special Educational Needs (SEN) placements (+£0.9m) offset by expected underspends relating to the free early education entitlement for disadvantaged two year olds and three and four year olds. This is however subject to change as the Early Years DSG block will be adjusted reflecting actual take up and may reduce. The significant pressure on out of county SEN placements is consistent with the pressures on Home to School SEN transport costs.
19. The use of one – off unspent DSG funding of £11.1m held in reserves at the end of 2014/15 has been considered by Schools Forum. Any funding not already committed is likely to be needed to contribute to the pupil growth and basic needs revenue funding (including pre-opening and diseconomy of scale costs) for the creation of new schools and academies, as approved by Schools Forum in December 2014.

Social & Community Services

20. The directorate is forecasting an overspend of +£0.3m. This includes the Council's risk based share of the joint Council and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) position on the various pooled budgets.

S&CS1 Adult Social Care

21. Adult Social Care is forecast to overspend by +£1.0m on non-pool services. There are also overspends of +£0.8m on the Older People and Equipment Pooled budget and +£0.2m on the Physical Disabilities Pooled Budget. The overspends are partly offset by an underspend of -£0.1m on the Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget and by using -£0.9m of funding from the Independent Living Fund and Social Care in Prisons Grant on a one-off basis in 2015/16.

Older People and Equipment Pooled Budgets

22. The Older People and Equipment Pool is forecast to overspend by +£2.3m. It is assumed that the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group will make an additional contribution of £1.0m to offset part of the overspend which relates to Non-Emergency Patient Transport. Under the risk share agreement the County Council's share of the remaining overspend is +£0.8m.
23. The Social Care spend on packages and placements is the most significant pressure on the Older People's Pool. The forecast for Social Care Home placements is an overspend of +£3.6m which is partially offset by an underspend of -£0.8m on Home Support. Demand for care home placements has been significantly higher than expected during the year. The average number of weekly placements has increased from 11.5 to 11.9 during the year which is against the trend seen in the preceding year when the number of new placements fell. The budget

CA7

was set on the basis of a decrease in demand to ten placements per week.

24. The Council's position also includes a forecast overspend of +£0.2m for the Social and Healthcare Team which is managed within the Customer Service Centre by Environment and Economy.
25. There is also an underspend on Prevention and Early Intervention of -£1.8m. This includes underspends on the Reablement service and Carers grants.
26. The Clinical Commissioning Group services are forecast to overspend by £1.1m, including the overspend of £1.0m on Non-Emergency Patient Transport. This pressure has arisen from the non-delivery of savings and increased activity, particularly for transportation of bariatric patients. The other significant pressure against the Clinical Commissioning Group's budget is a forecast overspend of +£0.7m on Home Support which is partially offset by an underspend -£0.5m on prevention and early support.

Physical Disabilities Pooled Budget

27. The Physical Disabilities Pooled Budget is forecast to overspend by +£0.3m. Under the risk share agreement the County Council share of the overspend is +£0.2m.
28. The Care Homes budget is forecast to underspend by -£0.2m. This is due to the full year effect of the lower number of placements made during 2014/15 and an on-going reduction in 2015/16. The forward forecast reflects the assumption that number of placements remains at the current level throughout the year. If the overall downward trend in client numbers continues there will be a decrease in the forecast spend, partially offset by lower client income.
29. The Home Support budget is forecast to underspend by -£0.1m at year end. Although client numbers have been broadly stable over the last three months, there is an overall upward trend in year.
30. The Council's Acquired Brain Injury budget is now forecast to overspend by +£0.2m. There are 11 clients funded from this budget compared to an average of eight clients during 2014/15.
31. The Clinical Commissioning Group services are forecast to overspend by +£0.4m. Of this, +£0.3m relates to an overspend on the Care Homes budget.

Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget

32. £4.6m was added to the Learning Disabilities pooled budget in 2015/16 to reflect pressures arising due to increased demand. On this increased budget, the Learning Disabilities Pool is forecast to underspend by -£0.1m. Under the risk share agreement the County Council is responsible for 85% of any variation.
33. The Personalisation and On-going Support budget which includes Social Care and Continuing Health Care funded service users is forecast to overspend by +£0.6m. This forecast includes the in-year impact of the

CA7

closure of the Independent Living Fund and includes additional budget to meet this pressure. This overspend is offset by underspends including - £0.2m on in-patient beds and -£0.5m on Out of Area treatments which reflects the low usage of bed based health provision in year.

Independent Living Fund

34. The Independent Living Fund was closed on 30 June 2015 and responsibility transferred to local authorities from 1 July 2015.
35. Adult Social Care has undertaken a review of all 204 recipients of the Independent Living Fund in Oxfordshire in order to transition them into Local Authority funding. This process has resulted in a new personal budget and support plan for these people. In some cases, where this has resulted in a reduction in the total funding available to individuals, short term transition funding has been agreed. Additionally, a revised financial assessment has been completed for each person.
36. Following the Independent Living Fund closure, a grant of £3.0m has been provided to the County Council. On 3 November 2015 Council agreed to add expenditure budgets of £1.7m to the Learning Disabilities Pool and £0.6m to the Physical Disabilities Pool to meet the increased costs to the pools of the agreed personal budgets. Council also agreed that the £0.6m balance of the grant would be used to offset the overspend on the Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget in 2015/16 and the full year effect of the additional expenditure from the closure of the Independent Living Fund in 2016/17. In light of the reduction in the overspend on the Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget the £0.6m will be used to offset overspends elsewhere in Adult Social Care.

Social Care in Prisons Grant

37. The Council receives an un-ringfenced grant of £0.2m for new responsibilities relating to the assessment of and meeting the care needs for offenders residing in prisons, approved premises or bail accommodation within Oxfordshire. This funding was originally put into the Older People's Pool to fund increased workload within the Locality teams relating to the new duty. However, the additional activity has been minimal and has been absorbed within existing budgets. This funding will be used to offset the overall directorate position in year and has been identified as a savings option for 2016/17.

Adult Social Care: Non – Pool Services

38. There is a forecast overspend of +£1.0m for services outside of the Pools. This includes an overspend of +£0.5m on the Mental Health budget due to increased demand for the services and partly as a result of the Supported Independent Living Pathway becoming blocked. The pressure in future years is being managed through the new Mental Health Outcomes Based Contract which includes a risk share arrangement. The delay to the contract start date has contributed to this in year pressure.
39. There are also overspends on Adult Protection and Mental Capacity (+£0.1m), Emergency Duty Team (+£0.3m), and Money Management (+£0.1m).

SCS3 Fire & Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety

40. The Service is forecasting an underspend of -£0.7m of which -£0.5m relates to Fire and Rescue. This is driven primarily by vacancies for whole-time firefighters and retirements during the year. Recent recruits are included in the forecast underspend but at this stage in the year it is less likely that further recruitment will have a significant impact on expenditure.
41. In addition to the underspend above, there is currently a further underspend of -£0.2m against the budget for on-call firefighters. This forecast is likely to change due to its dependency on the number of emergency calls attended, which can fluctuate due to adverse weather and large incidents which by their nature are unplanned. Depending on the overall position for the directorate and council any underspend would be returned to balances at year end in line with Council policy.

Environment & Economy

42. The directorate is forecasting a breakeven position.

EE1 Strategy & Infrastructure

Strategy & Infrastructure are forecasting an underspend of -£ 0.4m which relates to Planning Regulation (-£0.2m) and Localities, Policy & Programme (-£0.2m) due to staffing vacancies and maximising infrastructure funding receipts.

EE2 Commercial Services

43. Commercial Services is forecasting to underspend by -£0.6m.
44. Due to predicted increases in tonnages of waste disposal arising from the economic upturn and an increase in the number of households in Oxfordshire, an additional £1.0m of funding was added to the Waste Management budget from 2015/16 as part of the budget and medium term plan agreed by Council in February 2015. Despite this, there is currently a forecast overspend of +£1.4m for this service area. Approximately 58% of total waste disposed of is recycled and composted. An estimated overspend of +£0.4m partially relates to increases in tonnage, but is predominately due to the general increased cost of disposal, most significantly the cost of wood processing. Approximately 36% of waste disposed of is processed through the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility. An overspend of +£0.5m is mostly due to the cost of business rates payments being higher than originally budgeted for. There is also a shortfall in income realisation of +£0.1m. The remaining overspend of +£0.4m is mainly due to increased site operations.
45. Supported Transport is forecasting an overspend of +£0.3m. This is due to higher Integrated Transport Unit (ITU) operational costs (+£0.2m) and an overspend on Concessionary Fares (+£0.1m). Further work is being undertaken to consider recovering the increased cost of the ITU through recharging service directorates.
46. The overspends above are partly offset by the current unallocated (-£1.2m) element of the Highways Maintenance Delivery budget. The impact of offsetting this budget against overspends means that there is no funding available for further unplanned ad hoc works or increased

external demand on maintenance budgets above that already forecast. There is also an underspend of -£0.7m on Network and Asset Management which mainly relates to patching spend being funded by the Capital Programme.

EE3 Oxfordshire Customer Services

47. Oxfordshire Customer Services is forecast to overspend by +£1.0m. This relates in part to the underachievement of income from schools (+£0.7m) due to a combination of academy transfers and maintained schools' uptake of services. A review is already underway to consider the mechanisms for managing the cost of service delivery as volumes change over time. ICT is forecast to overspend (+£0.3m) mainly due to the additional operational cost of the Data Centre, further management action is needed to determine the funding for this pressure.
48. Transition and one-off costs associated with the transfer of services to Hampshire County Council total £2.9m in 2015/16. This will be funded in part by using the Oxfordshire Customer Services Development Reserve and by temporary use of other E&E reserves as reported previously. As planned, costs will be recouped over the next seven years and borrowing from other reserves will also be repaid over this period.

Corporate Services

49. The forecast breakeven position reflects overspends on Corporate Services and Business Support and Law and Governance which are partly offset by an underspend arising from staff vacancies in the Policy Team.

Public Health

50. On the 4 November the Council received notification from the Department of Health of an in-year grant reduction of £1.9m. The directorate has brought forward savings planned for 2016/17 and 2017/18 to meet the majority of this reduction. A small overspend of +£0.2m is forecast which will be met by a transfer from the Public Health Reserve.

Virements and Supplementary Estimates

51. There are no new virements requiring Cabinet approval this month. Annex 2d shows virements Cabinet need to note.

Ringfenced Grants

52. As set out in Annex 3, ring-fenced grants totalling £322.9m are included in Directorate budgets and will be used for the specified purpose. Since the last report the Council has received £1.0m for the autumn and spring term allocations of the PE and Sport Grant which will be delegated to schools. Any grants unspent at year end will be held in the Grants & Contributions Reserve for use in 2016/17, or returned to the funding body.

Business Strategy Savings

53. The forecasts shown in this report incorporate Business Strategy savings that were agreed by Council in February 2015 and previous years. In total £42.8m of savings are incorporated into the budget for 2015/16. £40.7m (95%) of the savings have been delivered or are on track to be delivered.

CA7

£0.4m (0.9%) is currently at some risk of not being achieved and a further £1.8m (4.1%) is at significant risk of not being achieved.

54. £0.9m of savings at significant risk of not being achieved relate to savings for reducing agency and contracted staff and introducing a vacancy factor. Of this, £0.6m is across services in Children, Education & Families, £0.2m relates to Cultural Services and £0.1m in the Music Service. This position may improve as the year progresses and general staff turnover takes place.
55. Other savings at significant risk of being achieved are £0.5m saving from the implementation of the Energy Recovery Facility due to the pressures reported in paragraph 42 above and £0.2m relating to income generated through sponsorship and providing other services in the Network & Asset Management Service, both within Environment & Economy. Alternative savings are being made and the directorate is forecasting a break-even position for the financial year (as set out in paragraph 42).

Treasury Management

56. The latest treasury management approved lending list (as at 1 February 2016) is shown in Annex 4. There have been no changes to the list since the last report.
57. The table below shows average in-house cash balances and average rates of return for November and December 2015. The forecast outturn for interest receivable and return on investments for 2015/16 currently totals £3.35m, exceeding the budgeted figure of £2.06m. Borrowing costs are currently forecast to be in line with the budget.

| Month | Average cash balance | Average rate of return |
|----------|----------------------|------------------------|
| November | £317.561m | 0.81% |
| December | £303.782m | 0.84% |

Part 2 – Balance Sheet

58. Annex 5 sets out earmarked reserves brought forward from 2014/15 and the forecast position as at 31 March 2016. These reserves are held for specified one – off projects, contractual commitments and to support the Medium Term Financial Plan.
59. As set out in the Provisional Outturn Report to Cabinet on 23 June 2015, revenue reserves were £63.6m at the end of 2014/15. These are currently forecast to reduce to £49.1m by 31 March 2016.

Grants and Contributions

60. The balance of unspent DSG is forecast to be £8.5m by 31 March 2016. This is likely to be needed to address expected budget pressures in future years in funding for pupil growth, or basic need revenue funding for the creation of new schools and academies.
61. Other ring-fenced grant underspends held in the Grants and Contributions Reserve for use in 2015/16 in line with the grant criteria include £0.9m for revenue Section 106 contributions and £0.3m for the

Social Work Improvement Fund. There is also £0.3m funding for the Local Enterprise Partnership.

62. Under the terms of the Public Health grant it is legitimate to use the funding on functions which have a significant effect on, or in connection with, the exercise of the public health functions specified in Section 73B(2) of the National Health Service Act 2006. Contributions of £0.2m towards Domestic violence prevention and support and £0.4m to Cycle Improvement Capital schemes will be made during 2015/16. In November 2015 Council agreed to transfer £2m to the capital programme to fund the development of Children's Homes. This is in addition to the £2m Council agreed in May 2014. The total £4m contribution will reduce the cost of prudential borrowing for the scheme from £0.5m to £0.2m. After these additional contributions and a £0.2m contribution to offset the 2015/16 overspend the balance of Public Health grant funding is forecast to be £0.6m by 31 March 2016.

Children, Education & Families

63. School balances are forecast to be £20.9m as at 31 March 2016. A report setting out the reasons why schools have held high balances for a number of years was considered by Education Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2015. It was agreed to continue to remind schools of the need to spend revenue funding on current cohorts of pupils as part of the annual budget setting process and to continue to challenge schools that have consistent surplus balances.
64. Other reserves held by the Directorate are forecast to reduce from £4.2m to £2.2m by 31 March 2016. Many of the key projects and pressures supported by reserves in 2014/15 are continuing in 2015/16.

Social & Community Services

65. Social & Community Services reserves are forecast to reduce from £3.8m to £3.0m by 31 March 2016. Within this, the Older People Pooled Budget Reserve will reduce from £2.9m to £1.7m as £1.2m has been transferred to the pool in year to support additional Discharge to Assess activity, the Workforce programme and Dementia services.

Environment & Economy

66. Reserves held by the Directorate are forecast to reduce from £8.3m to £4.3m by 31 March 2016. As previously reported the forecast includes the temporary use of £2.9m of reserves (including the Catering Investment Fund, Dix Pit Reserve and Joint Use Reserve) to fund transition and one-off costs relating to the transfer of services to Hampshire County Council and the Supported Transport Programme. This will be repaid over the next seven years as originally planned.

Corporate Reserves

67. The Efficiency Reserve totalled £1.7m at 1 April 2015. Of this £1.1m is committed to be used for one-off projects during 2015/16. The remaining £0.6m, along with an additional contribution of £2.0m will be used for one – off projects supporting the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Other Reserves

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68. Other Reserves, which include Insurance, Capital and Cash flow reserves, are forecast to total £46.1m at 31 March 2016. The Budget Reserve is forecast to be £8.7m at the year end and is required to manage the cash flow implications of the pressures and savings included in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Balances

69. As set out in Annex 6 general balances are forecast to be £16.5m as at 31 March 2016 after taking into account the projected Directorate overspends. This compares to an expected £17.5m as set out in the MTFP approved by Council in February 2015 and the risk assessed level of £17.4m.
70. In setting the budget for 2015/16, a Corporate Contingency of £3.6m was agreed. In addition, in July 2015, Cabinet agreed a virement of £0.5m from the contribution to the Older People and Equipment Pooled Budget to Corporate Contingency taking the total to £4.1m. The contingency is held predominantly to manage any high risk demand led budgets.
71. The Service & Resource Planning Report to Cabinet in January set out that £3.1m of the contingency would be used to contribute to the budget reserve to meet the deficit position in 2016/17. This leaves £1m to meet any of the reported overspends that cannot be managed during the remainder of the financial year.

Part 3 – Capital Monitoring

72. An updated capital programme is being considered by Council on 16 February 2016. This reflects forecast expenditure as at the end of December 2015, so effectively also forms the monitoring position for this report.
73. A summary of the changes since the last programme considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2016 as part of the Service & Resource Planning Process is set out in the table on the next page.

| Directorate | Last Approved Programme * £m | Last Reported Programme ** £m | Latest Forecast Expenditure *** £m | Variation to Last Reported Programme £m |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Children, Education & Families | 51.3 | 52.6 | 52.7 | +0.1 |
| Social & Community Services | 6.3 | 5.8 | 5.6 | -0.2 |
| Environment & Economy - Transport | 53.4 | 52.9 | 52.4 | -0.5 |
| Environment & Economy - Other | 11.2 | 10.3 | 10.3 | 0.0 |
| Corporate Services | 12.3 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 0.0 |
| Total Directorate Programmes | 134.5 | 133.8 | 133.2 | -0.6 |
| Schools Local Capital | 2.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Earmarked Reserves | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.0 |
| Total Capital Programme | 136.8 | 136.1 | 135.5 | -0.6 |

* Approved by Cabinet 20 October 2015

** Considered by Cabinet 26 January 2016

*** As per proposals to Council 16 February 2016

74. Significant in-year variations for each directorate are listed in Annex 7b. New schemes and total programme/project budget changes for Cabinet to note are listed in Annex 7c. For completeness this shows the latest forecast position compared to the last capital programme approved by Cabinet on 20 October 2015.
75. £1.0m of the £3.5m planned expenditure on the DfT Challenge Fund Programme has been re-profiled to 2016/17 due to procurement delays on the carriageway edge strengthening element of the programme meaning construction will not now commence until April 2016.

Actual & Committed Expenditure

76. As at the end of December actual capital expenditure for the year to date (excluding schools local spend) was £70.1m. This is 53% of the total forecast expenditure of £133.1m. Actual and committed spend is 88% of the forecast.

Five Year Capital Programme Update

77. The total forecast 5-year capital programme (2015/16 to 2019/20) is now £595.7m. This has decreased by £6.7m compared to the programme considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2016. The table on the next page summarises the variations by directorate and the main reasons for these are explained in the following paragraphs.

CA7

| Directorate | Last Approved Total Programme (2015/16 to 2018/19)* £m | Last Reported Total Programme (2015/16 to 2019/20)** £m | Latest Updated Total Programme (2015/16 to 2019/20)*** £m | Variation to Last Reported Programme £m |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Children, Education & Families | 138.4 | 211.5 | 206.0 | -5.5 |
| <i>CEF reductions to be identified</i> | -5.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Social & Community Services | 38.6 | 38.9 | 38.9 | 0.0 |
| Environment & Economy – Transport | 157.6 | 197.4 | 196.9 | -0.5 |
| Environment & Economy – Other | 35.4 | 39.2 | 38.5 | -0.7 |
| Corporate Services | 14.8 | 27.3 | 27.3 | 0.0 |
| Total Directorate Programmes | 379.0 | 514.3 | 507.6 | -6.7 |
| Schools Local Capital | 4.3 | 6.1 | 6.1 | 0.0 |
| Earmarked Reserves | 43.1 | 82.0 | 82.0 | 0.0 |
| Total Capital Programme | 426.4 | 602.4 | 595.7 | -6.7 |

* Approved by Cabinet 20 October 2015

** Considered by Cabinet 26 January 2016

*** As per proposals to Council 16 February 2016

78. The variation in the Children, Education & Families Directorate from the capital programme presented to Cabinet in January 2016 is due to the removal of the £5.5m loan to the King Alfred's Academy to support their strategy to move from three sites to two. The Education Funding Agency has not approved the proposal and will instead offer a loan facility to Academy Schools for this type of work.
79. The County Council has taken on delivery of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) Growing Places Fund project to renovate the currently disused Backhill Tunnel rail underpass and provide a pedestrian and cycle connection from Milton Park to the A4130. A total budget of £0.807m is now included in the transport programme following delegated approval by the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer. Work is expected to complete in November 2016.
80. Following completion of feasibility works, Cabinet are recommended to approve the full budget of £11.165m for the Eastern Arc Phase 1: Access to Headington project and to proceed to detailed design. This is funded from the Local Growth Fund (£8.200m) and developer contributions (£2.965m). This has reduced by £1.335m compared to the programme considered by Cabinet on 26 January 2016 due to the separation of a proportion of local developer funding for bus service improvements from the infrastructure improvement project budget. The infrastructure improvement project consists of a package of cycle, pedestrian, bus and junction improvement measures which are expected to be completed by Spring 2018. The objectives of the project are to reduce congestion and improve the overall accessibility of the area by enabling conditions for a

CA7

more comprehensive bus service to operate and encourage greater uptake in walking and cycling. An Outline Business Case is available as a background paper.

81. Cabinet are recommended to approve an increase of £0.935m for the A34 Milton Interchange scheme due to increased design and construction costs. This will need to be managed within the overall Local Enterprise Partnership funding envelope (prudential borrowing supported by business rate growth).

RECOMMENDATIONS

82. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) note the report;**
 - (b) note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 4;**
 - (c) approve an increase of £0.935m for the A34 Milton Interchange scheme;**
 - (d) approve the full budget of £11.165m for the Eastern Arc Phase 1: Access to Headington project and to proceed to detailed design; and**
 - (e) note the changes to the Capital Programme set out in Annex 7b and 7c.**

LORNA BAXTER

Chief Finance Officer

Background papers: Directorate Financial Monitoring Reports to the end of November and December 2015
Eastern Arc Phase 1: Access to Headington Stage 1
Outline Business Case
Milton Interchange Out of Tolerance Report

Contact Officers: Katy Jurczynszyn, Strategic Finance Manager –
Financial Strategy & Monitoring (01865 323975)

February 2016

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation to Budget | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|-----|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Budget | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| CEF | Children, Education & Families | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 419,141 | 0 | 2,574 | 0 | 421,715 | 434,524 | 12,809 | A |
| | Gross Income | -312,092 | 0 | -1,823 | 0 | -313,915 | -322,928 | -9,013 | A |
| | | 107,049 | 0 | 751 | 0 | 107,800 | 111,596 | 3,796 | A |
| SCS | Social & Community Services | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 220,716 | 0 | -5,399 | 0 | 215,317 | 215,597 | 280 | G |
| | Gross Income | -11,968 | 0 | 7,630 | 0 | -4,338 | -4,338 | 0 | G |
| | | 208,748 | 0 | 2,231 | 0 | 210,979 | 211,259 | 280 | G |
| EE | Environment & Economy | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 158,099 | 0 | -3,886 | 2,615 | 156,828 | 159,168 | 2,340 | G |
| | Gross Income | -81,518 | 0 | 8,306 | 0 | -73,212 | -75,540 | -2,328 | A |
| | | 76,581 | 0 | 4,420 | 2,615 | 83,616 | 83,628 | 12 | G |
| CEO | Corporate Services | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 31,736 | 0 | -6,946 | 0 | 24,790 | 26,785 | 1,995 | R |
| | Gross Income | -12,943 | 0 | 2,568 | 0 | -10,375 | -12,383 | -2,008 | R |
| | | 18,793 | 0 | -4,378 | 0 | 14,415 | 14,402 | -13 | G |
| PH1 | Public Health | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 31,023 | 0 | -2,169 | 0 | 28,854 | 28,854 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -31,023 | 0 | 2,169 | 0 | -28,854 | -28,854 | 0 | G |
| | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Less Recharges to Other Directorates | -67,832 | | | | -67,832 | -67,832 | 0 | |
| | | 67,832 | | | | 67,832 | 67,832 | 0 | |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 792,883 | 0 | -15,826 | 2,615 | 779,672 | 797,096 | 17,424 | A |
| | Directorate Income Total | -381,712 | 0 | 18,850 | 0 | -362,862 | -376,211 | -13,349 | A |
| | Directorate Total Net | 411,171 | 0 | 3,024 | 2,615 | 416,810 | 420,885 | 4,075 | G |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation to Budget | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|-----|-------------|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------|---|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Budget | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---------|---|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Page 198 | Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves | -7,241 | | | | -7,241 | -4,141 | 3,100 |
| | Contribution to (+)/from(-) balances | 2,000 | | | -2,615 | -615 | -4,690 | -4,075 |
| | Pensions - Past Service Deficit Funding | 830 | | | | 830 | 830 | 0 |
| | Contingency | 4,029 | | 1,030 | | 5,059 | 1,959 | -3,100 |
| | Capital Financing | 33,768 | | | | 33,768 | 33,768 | 0 |
| | Interest on Balances | -4,199 | | | | -4,199 | -4,199 | 0 |
| | Strategic Measures Budget | 29,187 | 0 | 1,030 | -2,615 | 27,602 | 23,527 | -4,075 |
| | Unringfenced Government Grants | -15,777 | | -4,054 | | -19,831 | -19,831 | 0 |
| | Council Tax Surpluses | -7,472 | | | | -7,472 | -7,472 | 0 |
| | Revenue Support Grant | -62,305 | | | | -62,305 | -62,305 | 0 |
| | Business Rates Top-Up | -37,085 | | | | -37,085 | -37,085 | 0 |
| | Business Rates From District Councils | -29,466 | | | | -29,466 | -29,466 | 0 |
| | Council Tax Requirement | 288,253 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 288,253 | 288,253 | 0 |

KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS
Balanced Scorecard Type of Indicator

| | | |
|--------|--|---|
| Budget | On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget | G |
| | On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget | A |
| | Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget | R |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|------|---|-----------------|--|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| CEF1 | Education & Early Intervention | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 84,212 | | -15,452 | 0 | 68,760 | 71,536 | 2,776 | A |
| | Gross Income | -47,648 | | 667 | 0 | -46,981 | -48,628 | -1,647 | A |
| | | 36,564 | 0 | -14,785 | 0 | 21,779 | 22,908 | 1,129 | R |
| CEF2 | Children's Social Care | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 57,390 | | 19,034 | 0 | 76,424 | 81,557 | 5,133 | R |
| | Gross Income | -4,678 | | -3,359 | 0 | -8,037 | -10,368 | -2,331 | R |
| | | 52,712 | 0 | 15,675 | 0 | 68,387 | 71,189 | 2,802 | A |
| CEF3 | Children, Education & Families Central Costs | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 5,908 | | -66 | 0 | 5,842 | 5,748 | -94 | G |
| | Gross Income | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1 | -1 | |
| | | 5,908 | 0 | -66 | 0 | 5,842 | 5,747 | -95 | G |
| CEF4 | Schools | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 256,136 | | -942 | 0 | 255,194 | 260,188 | 4,994 | G |
| | Gross Income | -255,596 | | 869 | 0 | -254,727 | -259,761 | -5,034 | G |
| | | 540 | 0 | -73 | 0 | 467 | 427 | -40 | R |
| | Non Negotiable Support Service Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 15,641 | | | 0 | 15,641 | 15,641 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -4,316 | | | 0 | -4,316 | -4,316 | 0 | G |
| | | 11,325 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 11,325 | 11,325 | 0 | G |
| | Less recharges within directorate | -146 | | | | -146 | -146 | 0 | G |
| | | 146 | | | | 146 | 146 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 419,141 | 0 | 2,574 | 0 | 421,715 | 434,524 | 12,809 | A |
| | Directorate Income Total | -312,092 | 0 | -1,823 | 0 | -313,915 | -322,928 | -9,013 | A |
| | Directorate Total Net | 107,049 | 0 | 751 | 0 | 107,800 | 111,596 | 3,796 | A |

KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS

On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget
 On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget
 Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget

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Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| SCS1 | Adult Social Care | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 182,406 | | -5,699 | 0 | 176,707 | 177,723 | 1,016 | G |
| | Gross Income | -16,004 | | 7,766 | 0 | -8,238 | -8,238 | 0 | G |
| | | 166,402 | 0 | 2,067 | 0 | 168,469 | 169,485 | 1,016 | G |
| SCS2 | Joint Commissioning | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 7,163 | | -260 | 0 | 6,903 | 6,903 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -2,727 | | -136 | 0 | -2,863 | -2,863 | 0 | G |
| | | 4,436 | 0 | -396 | 0 | 4,040 | 4,040 | 0 | G |
| SCS3 | Fire & Rescue, Emergency Planning and Community Safety | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 3,193 | | 23,664 | 0 | 26,857 | 26,121 | -736 | A |
| | Gross Income | -1,691 | | -525 | 0 | -2,216 | -2,216 | 0 | G |
| | | 1,502 | 0 | 23,139 | 0 | 24,641 | 23,905 | -736 | A |
| SCS4 | Fire & Rescue and Emergency Planning (merged with SCS3 Community Safety) | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 23,104 | | -23,104 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Gross Income | -525 | | 525 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 22,579 | 0 | -22,579 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Non Negotiable Support Service Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 13,829 | | | 0 | 13,829 | 13,829 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 13,829 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13,829 | 13,829 | 0 | G |
| | Less recharges within directorate | -8,979 | | | | -8,979 | -8,979 | 0 | G |
| | | 8,979 | | | | 8,979 | 8,979 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 220,716 | 0 | -5,399 | 0 | 215,317 | 215,597 | 280 | G |
| | Directorate Income Total | -11,968 | 0 | 7,630 | 0 | -4,338 | -4,338 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Total Net | 208,748 | 0 | 2,231 | 0 | 210,979 | 211,259 | 280 | G |
| KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS | | On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget | | | | | | G | |
| | | On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget | | | | | | A | |
| | | Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget | | | | | | R | |

October Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report: Social & Community Services
CABINET - 23 February 2015

Pooled Budgets

| Original Budget £m | Latest Budget £m | | Variance Year End 2015 £m | Forecast Variance October 2015 £m | Change in Variance £m |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| | | <u>Older People's & Equipment Pool</u> | | | |
| 70.725 | 70.909 | Oxfordshire County Council | +0.760 | +0.604 | +0.156 |
| 33.897 | 33.897 | Better Care Fund | +0.000 | +0.000 | +0.000 |
| 82.699 | 83.078 | Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group | +1.734 | +1.392 | +0.342 |
| 187.321 | 187.884 | Total Older People's & Equipment Pool | +2.494 | +1.996 | +0.498 |
| | | <u>Physical Disabilities Pool</u> | | | |
| 12.027 | 12.001 | Oxfordshire County Council | +0.163 | +0.125 | +0.038 |
| 7.219 | 7.345 | Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group | +0.095 | +0.076 | +0.019 |
| 19.246 | 19.346 | Total Physical Disabilities Pool | +0.258 | +0.201 | +0.057 |
| | | <u>Learning Disabilities Pool</u> | | | |
| 68.755 | 70.565 | Oxfordshire County Council | -0.058 | +0.272 | -0.330 |
| 13.083 | 13.083 | Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group | -0.010 | +0.048 | -0.058 |
| 81.838 | 83.648 | Total Learning Disabilities Pool | -0.068 | +0.320 | -0.388 |
| 151.507 | 153.475 | Total Oxfordshire County Council | +0.865 | +1.001 | -0.136 |
| 33.897 | | | | | |
| 103.000 | 103.506 | Total Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group | +1.819 | +1.516 | +0.303 |
| 254.507 | 256.981 | Total Pooled Budgets | +2.684 | +2.517 | +0.167 |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|-----|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| EE1 | Strategy and Infrastructure | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 13,304 | | 69 | 0 | 13,373 | 14,674 | 1,301 | R |
| | Gross Income | -5,835 | | -69 | 0 | -5,904 | -7,624 | -1,720 | R |
| | | 7,469 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7,469 | 7,050 | -419 | R |
| EE2 | Commercial | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 118,492 | | 659 | 2,615 | 121,766 | 119,714 | -2,052 | G |
| | Gross Income | -38,221 | | -392 | 0 | -38,613 | -37,203 | 1,410 | A |
| | | 80,271 | 0 | 267 | 2,615 | 83,153 | 82,511 | -642 | G |
| EE3 | Oxfordshire Customer Services | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 33,001 | | -1,056 | 0 | 31,945 | 35,036 | 3,091 | R |
| | Gross Income | -13,505 | | 5,209 | 0 | -8,296 | -10,314 | -2,018 | R |
| | | 19,496 | 0 | 4,153 | 0 | 23,649 | 24,722 | 1,073 | A |
| | Non Negotiable Support Service Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 7,090 | | -3,558 | 0 | 3,532 | 3,532 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -37,745 | | 3,558 | 0 | -34,187 | -34,187 | 0 | G |
| | | -30,655 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -30,655 | -30,655 | 0 | G |
| | Less recharges within directorate | -13,788 | | | | -13,788 | -13,788 | 0 | G |
| | | 13,788 | | | | 13,788 | 13,788 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 158,099 | 0 | -3,886 | 2,615 | 156,828 | 159,168 | 2,340 | G |
| | Directorate Income Total | -81,518 | 0 | 8,306 | 0 | -73,212 | -75,540 | -2,328 | A |
| | Directorate Total Net | 76,581 | 0 | 4,420 | 2,615 | 83,616 | 83,628 | 12 | G |

KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS

On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget

On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget

Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget

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Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|------|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| CEO1 | Corporate Services Business Support | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 848 | | 67 | 0 | 915 | 1,007 | 92 | R |
| | Gross Income | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 848 | 0 | 67 | 0 | 915 | 1,007 | 92 | R |
| CEO2 | Human Resources | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 2,741 | | 2,519 | 0 | 5,260 | 5,214 | -46 | G |
| | Gross Income | -3 | | -878 | 0 | -881 | -881 | 0 | G |
| | | 2,738 | 0 | 1,641 | 0 | 4,379 | 4,333 | -46 | G |
| CEO3 | Corporate Finance & Internal Audit | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 3,597 | | 3,070 | 0 | 6,667 | 6,773 | 106 | G |
| | Gross Income | -705 | | -1,194 | 0 | -1,899 | -1,991 | -92 | A |
| | | 2,892 | 0 | 1,876 | 0 | 4,768 | 4,782 | 14 | G |
| CEO4 | Law & Culture | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 17,907 | | -9,014 | 0 | 8,893 | 10,879 | 1,986 | R |
| | Gross Income | -7,201 | | 1,084 | 0 | -6,117 | -8,033 | -1,916 | R |
| | | 10,706 | 0 | -7,930 | 0 | 2,776 | 2,846 | 70 | A |
| CEO5 | Strategy & Communications | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 916 | | -30 | 0 | 886 | 743 | -143 | R |
| | Gross Income | 0 | | -2 | 0 | -2 | -2 | 0 | G |
| | | 916 | 0 | -32 | 0 | 884 | 741 | -143 | R |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|------|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| CEO6 | Corporate & Democratic Core | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 2,141 | | 0 | 0 | 2,141 | 2,141 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 2,141 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,141 | 2,141 | 0 | G |
| | Non Negotiable Support Service Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 5,879 | | -3,558 | 0 | 2,321 | 2,321 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -7,327 | | 3,558 | 0 | -3,769 | -3,769 | 0 | G |
| | | -1,448 | 0 | 0 | 0 | -1,448 | -1,448 | 0 | G |
| | Less recharges within directorate | -2,293 | | | | -2,293 | -2,293 | 0 | G |
| | | 2,293 | | | | 2,293 | 2,293 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 31,736 | 0 | -6,946 | 0 | 24,790 | 26,785 | 1,995 | R |
| | Directorate Income Total | -12,943 | 0 | 2,568 | 0 | -10,375 | -12,383 | -2,008 | R |
| | Directorate Total Net | 18,793 | 0 | -4,378 | 0 | 14,415 | 14,402 | -13 | G |

KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS

On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget

On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget

Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget

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Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015
Budget Monitoring

| Ref | Directorate | BUDGET 2015/16 | | | | | Outturn Forecast Year end Spend/Income | Projected Year end Variation | Projected Year end Variance Traffic Light |
|-----|---|--------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Original Budget | Brought Forward from 2014/15 Surplus + Deficit - | Virements to Date | Supplementary Estimates to Date | Latest Estimate | | | |
| (1) | (2) | £000 (3) | £000 (4) | £000 (5) | £000 (6) | £000 (7) | £000 (8) | underspend - overspend + £000 (9) | (13) |
| PH1 | LA Commissioning Responsibilities - Nationally Defined | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 14,728 | 0 | -650 | 0 | 14,078 | 14,568 | 490 | A |
| | Gross Income | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 14,728 | 0 | -650 | 0 | 14,078 | 14,568 | 490 | A |
| PH2 | LA Commissioning Responsibilities - Locally defined | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 15,629 | 0 | -1,523 | 0 | 14,106 | 13,849 | -257 | G |
| | Gross Income | -604 | 0 | 286 | 0 | -318 | -318 | 0 | G |
| | | 15,025 | 0 | -1,237 | 0 | 13,788 | 13,531 | -257 | G |
| PH3 | Public Health Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 94 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 98 | 98 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 94 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 98 | 98 | 0 | G |
| PH4 | Grant Income | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Gross Income | -29,847 | 0 | 1,883 | 0 | -27,964 | -27,964 | 0 | G |
| | | -29,847 | 0 | 1,883 | 0 | -27,964 | -27,964 | 0 | G |
| | Transfer to Public Health Reserve | | | | | | -233 | -233 | |
| | Non Negotiable Support Service Recharges | | | | | | | | |
| | Gross Expenditure | 572 | 0 | | 0 | 572 | 572 | 0 | G |
| | Gross Income | -572 | 0 | | 0 | -572 | -572 | 0 | G |
| | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Less recharges within directorate | 0 | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | 0 | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| | Directorate Expenditure Total | 31,023 | 0 | -2,169 | 0 | 28,854 | 28,854 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Income Total | -31,023 | 0 | 2,169 | 0 | -28,854 | -28,854 | 0 | G |
| | Directorate Total Net | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | |

KEY TO TRAFFIC LIGHTS

On track to be within + /- 2% of year end budget
On track to be within + /- 5% of year end budget
Estimated outturn showing variance in excess of + /- 5% of year end budget

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Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015

NEW VIREMENTS FOR CABINET TO NOTE

| Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate) | Month of Cabinet meeting | Month of Directorate MMR | Narration | Budget book line | Service Area | Permanent / Temporary | Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000 | Income - increase / + decrease £000 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| CEF | Feb | Dec | Transfer of Budget to Schools & Learning | CEF1-1 | Management & Central Costs | Temporary | -134.3 | 0.0 |
| | | | | CEF1-4 | Education | Temporary | 134.3 | 0.0 |
| SCS | Feb | Dec | Transfer of budget from Learning Disabilities Pool to Safeguarding Team | SCS1-2C | Pooled Budget Contributions | Temporary | -160.0 | 0.0 |
| CD | Feb | Dec | (blank) | CEO1 | Chief Executive & Business Support | | -350.3 | 350.3 |
| | | | | EE3-5 | Customer Service Centre | | -64.0 | 64.0 |
| | | | | SCS2-1 to SCS2-5 | Joint Commissioning | | 64.0 | -64.0 |
| | | | | SCS3-1 | Gypsy and Traveller Sites | | 350.3 | -350.3 |
| | | | Cost Centre Group Change EE3-3 to CEO3-5 | CEO3 | Corporate Finance & Internal Audit | | 50.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | EE3-8 | Pensions, Procure to Pay (P2P) | | -50.0 | 0.0 |
| EE | Feb | Dec | Additional LEP Funding 15/16 | EE1-6 | Local Enterprise Partnership | Temporary | 67.0 | -67.0 |
| | | | Surveys & Repairs | EE2-31 to EE2-34 | Network & Asset Management | Temporary | -160.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | EE2-4 | Delivery | Temporary | 160.0 | 0.0 |
| Grand Total | | | | | | | -93.0 | -67.0 |

**Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015**

Ringfenced Government Grant Details - 2015/16

| Directorate | 2015/16 Budget Book | In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously reported | In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time | Latest Allocation |
|--|------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| Children, Education & Families | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Asylum (UASC & Post 18) | 0.795 | | | 0.795 |
| Dedicated Schools Grant | 262.644 | -1.427 | | 261.217 |
| Education Funding Agency – Sixth Form and Bursary Funding | 4.537 | | | 4.537 |
| PE and Sport Grant 2014/15 (£1.013m payable in 2014/15 with a further instalment of £0.723m in April 2015) | 0.723 | | 0.958 | 1.681 |
| Pupil Premium | 10.149 | | | 10.149 |
| Remand | 0.064 | | | 0.064 |
| Universal Infant Free School Meals | 5.693 | | | 5.693 |
| Youth Justice Board | 0.680 | -0.072 | | 0.608 |
| Total Children, Education & Families | 285.285 | -1.499 | 0.958 | 284.744 |
| Social & Community Services | | | | |
| Delayed Transfers of Care - Department of Health | | 0.170 | | 0.170 |
| | | | | 0.000 |
| Total Social & Community Services | 0.000 | 0.170 | 0.000 | 0.170 |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015

Ringfenced Government Grant Details - 2015/16

| Directorate | 2015/16 Budget Book | In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously reported | In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time | Latest Allocation |
|---|------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Environment & Economy | | | | |
| Environment & Economy Directorate Grants | 3.697 | | | 3.697 |
| Skills Funding Agency - Adult Education | 0.209 | | | 0.209 |
| Education Funding Agency (Formerly the YPLA) | 1.000 | | | 1.000 |
| Local Sustainable Transport Fund Grant | 0.795 | | | 0.795 |
| Bus Service Operators Grant | 0.242 | 0.377 | | 0.619 |
| DCLG - Foodwise Project | | 0.095 | | 0.095 |
| Natural England | | | | 0.000 |
| Subtotal Environment & Economy Directorate Grants | 5.943 | 0.472 | 0.000 | 6.415 |
| | | | | 0.000 |
| Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership | | | | 0.000 |
| Regional Growth Fund - Oxford Innovation Business Support | 0.896 | 0.148 | | 1.044 |
| BIS - Oxford Innovation Business Support | 0.250 | -0.197 | | 0.053 |
| SEEDA - Oxford Innovation Business Support | 0.144 | | | 0.144 |
| DCLG (Local Enterprise Partnership Funding) | 0.500 | | | 0.500 |
| City Deal Skills Grant | 0.590 | | | 0.590 |
| Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership | 2.380 | -0.049 | 0.000 | 2.331 |
| | | | | 0.000 |
| Total Environment & Economy | 8.323 | 0.423 | 0.000 | 8.746 |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 23 February 2015

Ringfenced Government Grant Details - 2015/16

| Directorate | 2015/16 Budget Book | In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously reported | In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time | Latest Allocation |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| | £m | £m | £m | £m |
| Public Health | | | | |
| Public Health Grant | 30.419 | -1.883 | | 28.536 |
| Total Public Health | 30.419 | -1.883 | 0.000 | 28.536 |
| Chief Executive's Office | | | | |
| Music | 0.642 | | | 0.642 |
| Arts Council | | 0.048 | | 0.048 |
| Find Your Voice | | 0.015 | | 0.015 |
| Total Chief Executive's Office | 0.642 | 0.063 | 0.000 | 0.705 |
| Total | 324.669 | -2.726 | 0.958 | 322.901 |

December Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET 23 February 2016
Oxfordshire County Council's Treasury Management Lending List
as at 01 February 2016

| Counterparty Name | Lending Limits | | | |
|---|---------------------|------------------|-------|--------------|
| | Standard Limit £ | Group Limit £ | Group | Period Limit |
| <u>PENSION FUND Call Accounts / Money Market Funds</u> | | | | |
| Santander UK plc - PF A/c | | | | 6 mths |
| LloydsBank plc - Callable Deposit A/c (OXFORDCCPEN) | | | | 9 mths |
| Standard Life Sterling Liquidity Fund - (Pension Fund) (formerly Ignis) | | | | 6 mths |
| Svenska Handelsbanken - Call A/c (Pension Fund) | | | | 364 days |
| | | | | |
| <u>Call Accounts / Money Market Funds</u> | | | | |
| Santander UK plc - Main A/c | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | a | 6 mths |
| Close Brothers Ltd - 95 day notice A/c | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 | d | 6 mths |
| Lloyds Bank plc - Callable Deposit A/c | 25,000,000 | 25,000,000 | b | 9 mths |
| Svenska Handelsbanken - Call A/c | 25,000,000 | 25,000,000 | c | 364 days |
| Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Reserves Fund | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Deutsche Managed Sterling Fund | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Federated (Prime Rate) | 12,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Standard Life Sterling Liquidity Fund - (County Council) (formerly Ignis) | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquidity Fund | 5,000,000 | | | O/N |
| Legal and General Investment Management | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Barclays current A/c | 15,000,000 | | t | 100 days |
| Barclays 100 day notice A/c | 15,000,000 | | t | 100 days |
| Santander 95 day notice A/c | 15,000,000 | | a | 6 mths |
| | | | | |
| <u>Money Market Deposits</u> | | | | |
| Santander UK plc | 15,000,000 | 15,000,000 | a | 6 mths |
| Bank of Montreal | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Bank of Nova Scotia | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Bank of Scotland | 15,000,000 | 25,000,000 | b | 9 mths |
| Barclays Bank Plc | 15,000,000 | | t | 100 days |
| Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Close Brothers Ltd | 10,000,000 | 10,000,000 | d | 6 mths |
| Commonwealth Bank of Australia | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Coventry Building Society | 15,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Credit Suisse | 15,000,000 | | | 100 days |
| Danske Bank | 15,000,000 | | | 100 days |
| DBS Bank (Development Bank of Singapore) | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Debt Management Account Deposit Facility | 100% Portfolio | | | 6 mths |
| English, Welsh and Scottish Local Authorities (limit applies to individual authorities) | 30,000,000 | | | 3 years |
| HSBC Bank plc | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Lloyds TSB Bank plc | 25,000,000 | 25,000,000 | b | 9 mths |
| Landesbank Hessen-Thuringen (Helaba) | 20,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| National Australia Bank | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| National Bank of Canada | 10,000,000 | | | 100 days |
| Nationwide Building Society | 15,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Rabobank Group | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Royal Bank of Canada | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| Standard Chartered Bank | 15,000,000 | | | 6 mths |
| Svenska Handelsbanken | 25,000,000 | 25,000,000 | c | 364 days |
| Toronto-Dominion Bank | 25,000,000 | | | 364 days |
| United Overseas Bank | 25,000,000 | | | 6 mths |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET -23 February 2016
EARMARKED RESERVES

| Earmarked Reserves | 2015/16 | | | | October 2015 Forecast Balance at 31 March 2015 £000 | Change in Provision Outturn Closing Balance to February £000 | Commentary |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| | Balance at 1 April 2015 £000 | Movement | | Balance at 31 March 2016 £000 | | | |
| | | Contributions from Reserve £000 | Contributions to Reserve £000 | | | | |
| Revenue Reserves | | | | | | | |
| Schools' Reserves | 21,919 | -1,053 | 77 | 20,943 | 20,866 | 77 | Increase since February relates to the new school set up fund of £5.9m which will be used to address expected budget pressures in future years in funding for pupil growth, or basic needs revenue funding for the creation of new schools and academies. |
| Cross Directorate Reserves | | | | | | | |
| Vehicle and Equipment Reserve | 2,375 | -208 | 835 | 3,002 | 2,604 | 398 | Forecast includes funding for Fire & Rescue Service vehicles and equipment. |
| Grants and Contributions Reserve | 18,724 | -7,143 | 0 | 11,581 | 13,495 | -1,914 | Forecast includes £8.537m Dedicated Schools Grant and £0.637m Public Health Grant. |
| ICT Projects | 634 | -350 | 0 | 284 | 284 | 0 | To be used to fund ICT projects that span financial years including Framework-i in CE&F and the replacement for OCN |
| Government Initiatives | 1,086 | -851 | 0 | 235 | 235 | 0 | |
| Total Cross Directorate | 22,819 | -8,552 | 835 | 15,102 | 16,618 | -1,516 | |
| Directorate Reserves | | | | | | | |
| CE&F | | | | | | | |
| CE&F Commercial Services | 951 | -638 | 157 | 470 | 736 | -266 | To be used to support commercial services within CE&F. Includes Oxfordshire Children's Safeguarding Board (£0.032m), Outdoor Education Centres (£0.313m) and Governor Services (£0.157m). |
| Thriving Families | 1,761 | -262 | 0 | 1,499 | 1,499 | 0 | Will be used to fund Thriving Families project in 2015/16 and future years. Directorate Leadership Team agreed to use £0.5m of balance to offset other pressures in 2014/15. |
| Children's Social Care | 726 | -706 | 0 | 20 | 20 | 0 | £20k balance of carry forwards for Framework i developments post, volunteer co-ordinator post, work on adoption process and Corporate Parenting review. £206k carry forward requested relating to Supported Housing funding from ASC. £500K retained to cover transitional set up costs related to the Placement Strategy and in particular the new Children's Homes, mainly in relation to staffing. |
| Foster Carer Loans | 220 | 0 | 17 | 237 | 220 | 17 | To meet Children's Act loans write off and interest costs in future years. |
| Academies Conversion Support | 470 | -470 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To manage the costs arising in legal services, human resources, property, finance and other areas as a consequence of school conversions to academies, and to provide the opportunity to investigate and implement alternate trust structures for groups of schools considering conversion to academies. |
| Early Intervention Service Reserve | 28 | -28 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To fund various projects with the Early Intervention Service and the replacement of equipment |
| Total CE&F | 4,156 | -2,104 | 174 | 2,226 | 2,475 | -249 | |
| S&CS | | | | | | | |
| Older People Pooled Budget Reserve | 2,866 | -1,166 | 0 | 1,700 | 1,700 | 0 | To be used in future years as agreed by the Joint Management Group |
| Physical Disabilities Pooled Budget Reserve | 544 | 0 | 0 | 544 | 544 | 0 | To be used in future years as agreed by the Joint Management Group |
| Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget Reserve | 95 | 0 | 0 | 95 | 95 | 0 | £0.095m relates to the transfer of property |
| Fire Control | 40 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 40 | 0 | Funding of the proposed joint Thames Valley Fire Control Centre, including specific revenue grant for this programme. Costs relating to the secondary control room will slip into 2015/16 |
| Fire & Rescue & Emergency Planning Reserve | 129 | 0 | 350 | 479 | 479 | 0 | To be used for unbudgeted fire hydrant work and renewal of IT equipment |
| Community Safety Reserve | 156 | 0 | 0 | 156 | 156 | 0 | This reserve will be used for improvements to play areas at the Wheatley and Redbridge Gypsy and Travellers sites and to support the cost of complex Trading Standards investigations. |
| Total S&CS | 3,830 | -1,166 | 350 | 3,014 | 3,014 | 0 | |
| E&E | | | | | | | |
| Highways and Transport Reserve | 37 | -4 | 0 | 33 | 33 | 0 | One off budget contribution will now be used to support bridges investigation work in 2014/15. |
| On Street Car Parking | 1,445 | -1,402 | 1,476 | 1,519 | 1,519 | 0 | This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute and a summary of the income and expenditure is included in the Provisional Outturn Report to Cabinet in June. |
| Countryside Ascott Park - Historical Trail | 21 | 0 | 1 | 22 | 22 | 0 | To be used to fund future repair and maintenance costs |
| SALIX Energy Schemes | 376 | 0 | 0 | 376 | 376 | 0 | To be used for energy saving schemes in the future |
| Oxfordshire Waste Partnership Joint Reserve | 12 | -12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | This reserve holds the revenue proportion of the unutilised element of the performance reward grant secured by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (OWP) |
| Dix Pit Engineering Works & WRC Development | 730 | -730 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To fund engineering (cell) work at Dix Pit waste management site and any other on-going liabilities due to the closure of other landfill sites. |
| Waste Management | 380 | 0 | 0 | 380 | 380 | 0 | To fund financial liabilities due to any contract deficit mechanism payments as part of the Energy from Waste Contract. |
| Property Disposal Costs | 235 | -179 | 0 | 56 | 120 | -64 | To meet disposal costs in excess of the 4% eligible to be charged against capital receipts |
| Developer Funding (Revenue) | 475 | 0 | 0 | 475 | 475 | 0 | To meet the costs of monitoring Section 106 agreements |
| West End Partnership | 56 | 0 | 0 | 56 | 56 | 0 | This reserve is to ring-fence funding relating to the West End Project |
| Catering Investment Fund (formerly FWT) | 1,118 | -1,118 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To be used to fund catering improvements in Schools plus a contingency for unforeseen costs |
| Asset Rationalisation | 237 | -237 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Investment fund for the implementation of the asset rationalisation strategy |
| Job Clubs | 7 | -7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To be spent on Job Clubs in 2014/15 |
| Minerals and Waste Project | 46 | -46 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | To fund the Minerals and Waste project |
| Joint Use (moved from CE&F) | 814 | -1,047 | 233 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Will be used to support the joint-use agreements with the district councils in future years. |

Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET -23 February 2016
EARMARKED RESERVES

| Earmarked Reserves | 2015/16 | | | | October 2015 Forecast Balance at 31 March 2015 £000 | Change in Provision Outturn Closing Balance to February £000 |
|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|
| | Balance at 1 April 2015 £000 | Movement | | Balance at 31 March 2016 £000 | | |
| | | Contributions from Reserve £000 | Contributions to Reserve £000 | | | |
| LABGI Funding to support Local Enterprise Partnership | 198 | -66 | 0 | 132 | 132 | 0 |
| OCS Development Reserves | 262 | -262 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Money Management Reserve | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Oxford Western Conveyance | 350 | 0 | 350 | 700 | 700 | 0 |
| Oxfordshire - Buckinghamshire partnership | 398 | -398 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cultural Services Reserve | 1,029 | -472 | 0 | 557 | 557 | 0 |
| Total E&E | 8,226 | -5,980 | 2,060 | 4,306 | 4,370 | -64 |
| Chief Executive's Office | | | | | | |
| Coroner's Service | 40 | 0 | 0 | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| Council Elections | 232 | 0 | 199 | 431 | 431 | 0 |
| Registration Service | 404 | 0 | 0 | 404 | 404 | 0 |
| Total - CEO | 676 | 0 | 199 | 875 | 875 | 0 |
| Directorate Reserves | 16,888 | -9,250 | 2,783 | 10,421 | 10,734 | -313 |
| Corporate | | | | | | |
| Carry Forward Reserve | 196 | -196 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Efficiency Reserve | 1,748 | -1,098 | 2,000 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 0 |
| Corporate Total | 1,944 | -1,294 | 2,000 | 2,650 | 2,650 | 0 |
| Total Revenue Reserves | 63,570 | -20,149 | 5,695 | 49,116 | 50,868 | -1,752 |
| Other Reserves | | | | | | |
| Insurance Reserve | 4,516 | 0 | 0 | 4,516 | 4,516 | 0 |
| Capital Reserves | | | | | | |
| Capital Reserve | 23,335 | 0 | 0 | 23,335 | 23,335 | 0 |
| Rolling Fund Reserve | 2,541 | -2,541 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Prudential Borrowing Reserve | 8,898 | -203 | 950 | 9,645 | 9,645 | 0 |
| Total Capital Reserves | 34,774 | -2,744 | 950 | 32,980 | 32,980 | 0 |
| Cash Flow Reserves | | | | | | |
| Business Rates Reserve | 0 | 0 | 494 | 494 | 0 | 494 |
| Budget Reserve - 2013/14 to 2016/17 | 8,806 | -6,926 | 6,777 | 8,657 | 6,956 | 1,701 |
| Total Cash Flow Reserves | 8,806 | -6,926 | 7,271 | 9,151 | 6,956 | 2,195 |
| Total Other Reserves | 48,096 | -9,670 | 8,221 | 46,647 | 44,452 | 2,195 |
| Total Reserves | 111,666 | -29,819 | 13,916 | 95,763 | 95,320 | 443 |

| Commentary |
|---|
| This reserve contains LABGI funding that has been allocated by Cabinet to support the Local Enterprise Partnership . |
| To be used to develop the Customer Service Centre and the Transforming Oxfordshire Customer Services Project |
| Contingency in case of an overspend if income received is less than budget |
| To hold Oxford Western Conveyance flood relief scheme contributions |
| This reserve is to ring-fence funding for the Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Partnership graduate teacher training programme |
| To be used to update software & hardware to maintain an effective library management system. |
| |
| |
| This was used to support the project in 2014/15 |
| This will be used to fund future elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve. |
| To be used for refurbishing the Registration buildings and facilities |
| |
| |
| |
| The Carry Forward reserve allows budget managers to carry forward under and over spent budgets between financial years in accordance with the County Council's budget management arrangements. subject to Cabinet approval. |
| This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the business strategies and the Medium Term Financial Plan. |
| |
| |
| |
| This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years. Contributions include £2m from the Public Health Reserve for use on the Children's Homes project. |
| This reserve has been established to facilitate, through forward funding, the timely provision of infrastructure that supports planned growth. |
| This reserve was created as part of the 2008/09 budget setting process to meet the costs of borrowing for increased funding for the capital programme. Similar contributions are to be made each year with draw downs being required as costs are incurred. |
| |
| |
| |
| This reserve is being used to manage the cash flow implications of the variations to the Medium Term Financial Plan. |
| |
| |
| |

December Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report
CABINET - 15 December 2015
General Revenue Balances

| Date | Forecast 2015/16 | | Budget 2015/16 £m |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| | £m | £m | |
| General Balances: Outturn 2014/15 | 22.247 | | 17.517 |
| County Fund Balance | | 22.247 | 17.517 |
| Planned Contribution to Balances | | 2.000 | 2.000 |
| Planned Contribution from Balances | | | |
| Original forecast outturn position 2015/16 | | 24.247 | 19.517 |
| Additions | | | |
| Underspend on Strategic Measures | | | |
| Transfer to Efficiency Reserve and Budget Reserve to be approved by Council 14 July 2015 | -4.700 | | |
| | | -4.700 | 0.000 |
| Calls on balances deducted | | | |
| Transport Safeguarding Assurance Framework | -0.565 | | |
| Total calls on balances | | -0.565 | -2.000 |
| Automatic calls on/returns to balances | | | |
| | | 0.000 | |
| Additional Strategic Measures | | 0.000 | |
| Other items | | 0.000 | |
| Net General Balances | | 18.982 | 17.517 |
| Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Grant Funding received in 2013/14 | | 3.039 | |
| less planned use of grant for schemes in 2014/15 | | -1.629 | |
| add grant not required in 2014/15 | | 0.640 | |
| less planned use of grant for schemes in 2015/16 | | -2.050 | |
| Total Balances including Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Grant | | 18.982 | 17.517 |
| Total Gross Expenditure Budget | | 831.083 | 831.083 |
| Balances as a % of Gross Expenditure | | 2.28% | 2.11% |
| Net Balances | | 18.982 | |
| Calls on / returns to balances agreed but not actioned | | | |
| | | 0.000 | |
| Calls on / returns to balances requested in this report | | | |
| Forecast Variation at Year End | | | |
| Less forecast directorate overspend (as set out in Annex 1) | | -4.075 | |
| Add estimated underspend on Strategic Measures | | 1.290 | |
| Underspend on On-Call Firefighters | | 0.235 | |
| Revised Outturn position | | 16.455 | |

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| Directorate | Latest Approved Capital Programme (Cabinet October 2015) | | | Latest Forecast | | | Variation | | | Current Year Expenditure Monitoring | | | | Performance Compared to Original Programme (Council February 2015) | | |
|---|---|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------|----------------------------------|
| | Current Year | Future Years | Total | Current Year | Future Years | Total | Current Year | Future Years | Total | Actual expenditure to date | Commitments | Expenditure Realisation Rate | Actuals & Commitments | Current Year | Variation | Use of Resources Variation |
| | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | % | % | £'000s | £'000s | % |
| Children, Education & Families 1 - OCC | 51,331 | 87,040 | 138,371 | 52,671 | 153,302 | 205,973 | 1,340 | 66,262 | 67,602 | 31,105 | 19,838 | 59% | 97% | 43,420 | 9,251 | 21% |
| Social & Community Services | 6,284 | 32,373 | 38,657 | 5,624 | 33,255 | 38,879 | -660 | 882 | 222 | 2,773 | 1,226 | 49% | 71% | 3,304 | 2,320 | 70% |
| Environment & Economy 1 - Transport | 53,434 | 104,141 | 157,575 | 52,374 | 144,468 | 196,842 | -1,060 | 40,327 | 39,267 | 29,376 | 21,667 | 56% | 97% | 61,644 | -9,270 | -15% |
| Environment & Economy 2 - Other Property Development Programmes | 11,205 | 24,264 | 35,469 | 10,308 | 28,263 | 38,571 | -897 | 3,999 | 3,102 | 3,855 | 4,634 | 37% | 82% | 13,672 | -3,364 | -25% |
| Corporate Services | 12,291 | 2,495 | 14,786 | 12,232 | 15,044 | 27,276 | -59 | 12,549 | 12,490 | 7,268 | 349 | 59% | 62% | 3,160 | 9,072 | 287% |
| Total Directorate Programmes | 134,545 | 244,499 | 379,044 | 133,209 | 374,332 | 507,541 | -1,336 | 124,019 | 122,683 | 74,377 | 47,714 | 56% | 92% | 125,200 | 8,009 | 6% |
| Schools Local Capital | 2,031 | 2,296 | 4,327 | 2,031 | 4,092 | 6,123 | 0 | 1,796 | 1,796 | 1,330 | 0 | 65% | 65% | 2,200 | -169 | -8% |
| Earmarked Reserves | 334 | 42,716 | 43,050 | 334 | 81,674 | 82,008 | 0 | 38,958 | 38,958 | | | | | 0 | 334 | 0% |
| OVERALL TOTAL | 136,910 | 289,511 | 426,421 | 135,574 | 460,098 | 595,672 | -1,336 | 164,773 | 163,437 | 75,707 | 47,714 | 56% | 91% | 127,400 | 8,174 | 6% |

Financial Monitoring Report - Cabinet February 2016

CAPITAL PROGRAMME: 2015/16 TO 2019/20

In-year Expenditure Forecast Variations

| Project / Programme Name | Previous 2015/16 Forecast* | Revised 2015/16 Forecast | Variation | Comments |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|---|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | | |
| Children, Education & Families Capital Programme | | | | |
| Basic Need | | | | |
| Existing Demographic Pupil Provision (Basic Needs Programme) | 545 | 400 | -145 | Projects being developed. Draw down of budget provision for the projects below. |
| Banbury, Hill View - Expansion to 3FE (ED825) | 2,000 | 1,800 | -200 | On-site. Forecast completion May 2016. |
| Hook Norton - Expansion to 1.5FE (ED827) | 0 | 450 | 450 | Stage 2 approved. Mobilisation - forecast completion Aug 2016. |
| Bicester, Longfields - Expansion to 2FE (ED871) | 0 | 600 | 600 | Stage 2 approved. |
| Banbury, Queensway - Expansion to 2FE (ED831) | 0 | 300 | 300 | Stage 2 approved. |
| Growth Portfolio | | | | |
| Didcot, Great Western Park (Primary 1) - 14 classroom (ED816) | 4,500 | 4,000 | -500 | On-site, Out of Tolerance report approved. Forecast completion Sept 2016. |
| Bodicote, Longford Park - 10 classroom (ED866) | 3,000 | 3,500 | 500 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Sept 2016. |
| Bicester Exemplar Eco-development - Primary 1 Phase 1 (7 classroom) (ED865) | 3,250 | 2,750 | -500 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Sept 16. |
| Didcot, Great Western Park - Secondary (Phase 1) (ED836) | 500 | 2,250 | 1,750 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Aug 17. |
| Oxford - Barton (West) | 500 | 250 | -250 | Stage 0 approved. |
| Children's Home Programme | | | | |
| Children's Home Programme | 372 | 0 | -372 | Draw down of budget provision for the Eynsham project below. |
| Witney - Move on Home (ED847/4) | 0 | 602 | 602 | On-site. Forecast completion July 2016. |
| Annual Programmes | | | | |
| Schools Energy Reduction Programme | 250 | 0 | -250 | Budget provision of £0.250m p.a. funded from prudential borrowing. Removed - Capital budget setting |
| Other | | | | |
| Early Years Entitlement for Disadvantage 2 year olds | 1,000 | 700 | -300 | Re-profile due to fewer projects commencing. |
| Other small changes | 5,835 | 5,490 | -345 | |
| CE&F TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | 1,340 | |
| Social And Community Services Capital Programme | | | | |
| Fire Equipment (SC112) | 53 | 203 | 150 | Stage 2 Approved - Breathing Apparatus |
| ECH - New Schemes & Adaptations to Existing Properties | 1,125 | 501 | -624 | 50 flat scheme at Yarnton completed - Oct 2012. |
| Other small changes | 471 | 285 | -186 | |
| S&CS TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | -660 | |

| Project / Programme Name | Previous 2015/16 Forecast* | Revised 2015/16 Forecast | Variation | Comments |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | |
| Environment & Economy - Highways & Transport Capital Programme | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Schemes | | | | |
| Hinskey Hill Northbound Slip Road | 521 | 297 | -224 | Due to a review of the scheme (including consideration of alternative options and consultation with bus operators), there is a delay to the programme with the completion date now expected to be summer 2018 |
| Harwell Link Rd Section 2 Hagbourne Hill | 2,088 | 2,767 | 679 | Construction started Sept 15. Completion expected July 16. |
| Harwell, Oxford Entrance | 175 | 75 | -100 | Draw down of project contingencies. On hold - A decision has been taken to delay work on this scheme until after the Vale Local Plan examination has concluded. The scheme design (and cost) is heavily influenced by whether there is development on land opposite Harwell Campus. Start date delayed to Summer 16. Potential cost increase to be addressed with LEP. |
| Loop Farm Link Road | 608 | 207 | -401 | The scheme is currently being reviewed to ensure the preferred option of a link road is robust in planning terms. Completion date of still Spring 2019. Funding gap £4m |
| Eastern Arc Phase 1 Access to Headington (project development) | 300 | 603 | 303 | LGF funding confirmed. Stage 1 BC to February Cabinet. |
| Milton Interchange | 6,371 | 6,720 | 349 | Completion expected April 2016 Increasing construction costs - budget increase to be requested at Cabinet 23 February 2016. |
| A34 Chilton Junction Improvements | 4,305 | 4,658 | 353 | Completion expected September 2016 |
| Milton Park Employment Access Link: Backhill Tunnel | 0 | 380 | 380 | New Scheme approved under delegated sign off. Growing Placed Fund - LEP |
| Frideswide Square | 3,945 | 4,090 | 145 | Draw down of contingencies. |
| Bicester Park and Ride | 2,906 | 3,036 | 130 | Complete |
| Bicester Perimeter Road (Project Development) | 300 | 0 | -300 | Options appraisal ongoing - expected to conclude in March 16 |
| Witney, A40 Downs Road junction (contribution) | 1,250 | 0 | -1,250 | Reprofiled based on s278 agreement |
| Highways Maintenance | | | | |
| Edge Strengthening | 1,100 | 400 | -700 | Challenge Fund works reprofiled to April 16 due to procurement delays |
| Resurfacing | 390 | 50 | -340 | |
| Embankment Stabilisation Programme | 505 | 668 | 163 | New allocations from Earmarked Reserves approved CAPB 6/10 |
| Network Rail Electrification Bridge Betterment Programme | 300 | 60 | -240 | Reprofiled to reflect likely contribution in line with NR programme |
| Other small changes | 16,169 | 16,162 | -7 | |
| TRANSPORT TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | -1,060 | |
| Environment & Economy Capital Programme (excluding Transport) | | | | |
| Asset Utilisation Programme | 1,951 | 1,344 | -607 | No further projects identified for delivery this year |
| Waste Recycling Centre Infrastructure Development | 340 | 150 | -190 | |
| New Salt Stores & Accommodation | 0 | 50 | 50 | Capital Budget Setting process. |
| Other small changes | 184 | 34 | -150 | |
| E&E TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | -897 | |

| Project / Programme Name | Previous 2015/16 Forecast* | Revised 2015/16 Forecast | Variation | Comments |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | | |
| <u>Corporate Services Capital Programme</u> | | | | |
| Bicester Library (CS13) | 1,396 | 651 | -745 | On-site, forecast completion Feb 16. |
| Didcot Station Car Park Expansion | 8,620 | 1,426 | -7,194 | Local Growth Fund |
| Centre for Technology, Innovation & Skills (Activite Learning) | 0 | 3,500 | 3,500 | Local Growth Fund |
| Centre for Applied Superconductivity | 0 | 880 | 880 | Local Growth Fund |
| Oxford City Council - Oxpens Site Development | 0 | 3,500 | 3,500 | Local Growth Fund |
| | | | | |
| CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | -59 | |
| | | | | |
| CAPITAL PROGRAMME TOTAL IN-YEAR VARIATION | | | -1,336 | |

*As approved by Cabinet October 2015

Financial Monitoring Report - Cabinet February 2016

CAPITAL PROGRAMME: 2015/16 TO 2019/20

New Schemes & Budget Changes

| Project / Programme Name | Previous Total Budget* £'000s | Revised Total Budget £'000s | Variation £'000s | Comments |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Children, Education & Families Capital Programme | | | | |
| Basic Need | | | | |
| Existing Demographic Pupil Provision (Basic Needs Programme) | 13,428 | 67,926 | 54,498 | Projects being developed. Draw down of budget provision for the projects below. Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| Watchfield - Expansion to 2FE (ED834) | 1,745 | 1,726 | -19 | Complete Sept 2015. |
| Hook Norton - Expansion to 1.5FE (ED827) | 89 | 1,430 | 1,341 | Stage 2 approved. Mobilisation - forecast completion Aug 2016. |
| Bicester, Longfields - Expansion to 2FE (ED871) | 36 | 2,390 | 2,354 | Stage 2 approved. |
| Banbury, Queensway - Expansion to 2FE (ED831) | 37 | 881 | 844 | Stage 2 approved. |
| Programme reductions to be identified | -5,814 | 0 | 5,814 | Removal of funding deficit - Basic Need |
| Growth Portfolio | | | | |
| Bodicote, Longford Park - 10 classroom (ED866) | 5,868 | 8,974 | 3,106 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Sept 2016. |
| Bicester Exemplar Eco-development - Primary 1 Phase 1 (7 classroom) (ED865) | 6,787 | 7,560 | 773 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Sept 16. |
| Didcot, Great Western Park - Secondary (Phase 1) (ED836) | 21,040 | 21,671 | 631 | Stage 2 approved. On-site. Forecast completion Aug 17. |
| Oxford - Barton (West) | 6,998 | 7,200 | 202 | Stage 0 approved. |
| Didcot, Great Western Park - Primary 2 (14 classroom) | 6,233 | 6,600 | 367 | Stage 0 approved. |
| Bicester - Secondary P1 (incl existing schools) | 14,205 | 16,000 | 1,795 | Stage 0 approved. |
| Project Development Budget | 450 | 600 | 150 | |
| Children's Home Programme | | | | |
| Children's Home Programme | 2,253 | 665 | -1,588 | Draw down of budget provision for the Eynsham project below. |
| Witney - Move on Home (ED847/4) | 31 | 1,389 | 1,358 | On-site. Forecast completion July 2016. |
| Annual Programmes | | | | |
| Schools Access Initiative | 1,600 | 1,950 | 350 | Programme Contingency of £50k returned to Capital Programme. £400k Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| Health & Safety - Schools | 1,200 | 1,450 | 250 | £50k transfer to SSMP as work undertaken as part of programme. £300k Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| Temporary Classrooms - Replacement & Removal | 1,210 | 1,525 | 315 | Peppard - Complete Aug 2015. £35k returned to capital programme. £350k Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| Schools Accommodation Intervention & Support Programme | 350 | 425 | 75 | £25k Programme budget returned to capital programme. £100k Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| School Structural Maintenance (inc Health & Safety) | 7,500 | 9,300 | 1,800 | Future years are subject to confirmation of the level of capital maintenance grant and priority approval. £1,750k Capital Budget Setting Process. |
| Schools Energy Reduction Programme | 1,000 | 0 | -1,000 | Budget provision of £0.250m p.a. funded from prudential borrowing. Removed - Capital budget setting |
| CE&F TOTAL PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | 73,416 | |

| Project / Programme Name | Previous Total Budget* | Revised Total Budget | Variation | Comments |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---|
| | £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | |
| Social And Community Services Capital Programme | | | | |
| Fire Equipment (SC112) | 500 | 650 | 150 | Stage 2 Approved - Breathing Apparatus |
| Oxfordshire Care Partnership | 8,900 | 9,000 | 100 | Cabinet 29th January 2013. On site, forecast completion April 16. |
| Other small changes | 2,866 | 2,838 | -28 | Settlement of Final Accounts. |
| S&CS TOTAL PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | 222 | |
| Environment & Economy - Highways & Transport Capital Programme | | | | |
| Integrated Transport Schemes | | | | |
| Kennington & Hinksey Roundabouts | 7,328 | 7,473 | 145 | Estimated final cost based on final accounts and remaining works as a result of safety audit. Budget increase approved by Director for E&E and CFO. |
| Eastern Arc Phase 1 Access to Headington (project development) | 349 | 11,165 | 10,816 | LGF funding confirmed. Stage 1 BC to February Cabinet. Note - £1.3m reduction in value from Cabinet Proposals due to element of funding restricted to bus services. |
| Bicester London Road - Cycle/Pedestrian Bridge | 0 | 3,600 | 3,600 | LGF funding confirmed. Stage 0b BC to begin design to be submitted in first quarter of 2016. |
| Science Vale Cycle Network Improvements | 0 | 4,520 | 4,520 | LGF funding confirmed. Work to date has been first stage feasibility, with a number of route options identified. Stage 0b BC to begin design to be submitted in first quarter of 2016. Construction expected to commence autumn 2016. |
| Milton Park Employment Access Link: Backhill Tunnel | 0 | 807 | 807 | New Scheme approved under delegated sign off. |
| East-West Rail (contribution) | 3,535 | 3,685 | 150 | Growing Placed Fund - LEP |
| Highways Maintenance | | | | |
| Carriageway Schemes | 12,739 | 10,434 | -2,305 | Highways Maintenance Programme update - Capital Budget Setting Process |
| Surface Treatments | 18,217 | 32,340 | 14,123 | |
| Footway Schemes | 4,758 | 4,626 | -132 | |
| Drainage | 3,900 | 4,720 | 820 | |
| Bridges | 6,825 | 9,210 | 2,385 | |
| Public Rights of Way Foot Bridges | 389 | 489 | 100 | |
| Street Lighting Maintenance & Column Replacement | 1,960 | 4,135 | 2,175 | |
| Traffic Signal Maintenance & Replacement | 0 | 1,000 | 1,000 | |
| Oxford, Cowley Road | 0 | 790 | 790 | |
| Embankment Stabilisation Programme | 623 | 798 | 175 | New allocations from Earmarked Reserves approved CAPB 6/10 |
| Other small changes | 775 | 873 | 98 | |
| TRANSPORT TOTAL PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | 39,267 | |
| Environment & Economy Capital Programme (excluding Transport) | | | | |
| SALIX Energy Programme | 2,139 | 2,341 | 202 | Lightening & boiler control works approved. |
| Minor Works Programme | 1,704 | 1,904 | 200 | Capital Budget Setting Process |
| Health & Safety (Non-Schools) | 195 | 245 | 50 | Capital Budget Setting Process |
| New Salt Stores & Accommodation | 0 | 2,800 | 2,800 | Capital Budget Setting process. Note £0.7m reduction in value from Cabinet proposals |
| Other small changes | 439 | 289 | -150 | |
| E&E TOTAL PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | 3,102 | |

| Project / Programme Name | Previous Total Budget* | Revised Total Budget | Variation | Comments |
|---|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| £'000s | £'000s | £'000s | | |
| <u>Corporate Services Capital Programme</u> | | | | |
| Centre for Technology, Innovation & Skills (Activite Learning) | 0 | 4,500 | 4,500 | Local Growth Fund |
| Centre for Applied Superconductivity | 0 | 4,490 | 4,490 | Local Growth Fund |
| Oxford City Council - Oxpens Site Development | 0 | 3,500 | 3,500 | Local Growth Fund |
| CORPORATE SERVICES TOTAL | | | 12,490 | |
| PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | | |
| CAPITAL PROGRAMME TOTAL | | | 128,497 | |
| PROGRAMME SIZE VARIATION | | | | |

*As approved by Cabinet October 2015

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Annual Safeguarding Review of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers

Report of the Director of Children's Services

Purpose

1. This report focuses on Oxfordshire's current position in respect of three areas of preventative work:
 - a. **Prevention before occurrence of harm**
 - Numbers and rates of CYP in care
 - Growth in UASCs and response
 - Reasons for becoming looked after
 - Findings of North Neglect Pilot
 - Care Proceedings
 - b. **Prevention of recurrence of harm**
 - Residential and Edge of Care Service (REoC)
 - Family Group Conferencing
 - ATTACH
 - Short and long-term placement stability
 - Types of placement: Fostering, Adoption, Residential, Out of County
 - Missing from care
 - Numbers of reviews on time and numbers of CYP participating
 - c. **Prevention of impairment**
 - Health
 - Education
 - Care Leavers

Introduction

2. This report reviews the performance and outcomes of Looked After Children and Care Leavers since April 2014 and identifies key challenges moving forward particularly around understanding the causes for and then addressing the growth in the looked after population. This report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in January 2016 and will be presented to the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) in April 2016.
3. There is assurance through local performance monitoring and the Ofsted Inspection in May 2014 that, overall, looked after children are appropriately safeguarded and performance for both looked after children and care leavers remains good. 2016 will provide the first opportunity to fully review whether the Council's overarching Placement Strategy is now delivering its critical objectives: keeping our riskiest and most vulnerable children closest; becoming the most

“fostering friendly county in the country”; developing a seamless edge of care, fostering and residential pathway that flexibly responds to children and families; no out of county placements except when highly specialist provision is required by 2018; improved outcomes for children and young people; and reduction in placement and associated costs.

4. Achieving these objectives requires our key partners in health, schools, police, housing and the voluntary sector to be fully signed up to four key cultural challenges; moving from defensive to defensible practice in terms of risk management; more shift/flexible working and enhancing Oxfordshire's capacity to respond “out of hours” to support families in crisis; multi-agency family focused interventions at a time of severe challenge on resourcing; and supporting schools to achieve the highest standards around inclusive practice whilst developing high quality alternative education provision.
5. This report provides encouraging early evidence that the Placement Strategy is already having an impact on front line practice. The Residential and Edge of Care Service (REoC) is now set up to offer more robust interventions earlier, to respond more flexibly at evenings and weekends and to provide the same wrap around support to our edge of care cohort that is offered to those with "looked after" status. The purpose of these interventions is to promote stability of care for children whether this is in their family of origin or as a looked after child and to ensure that they are both safe and securely attached to their parents/carers.
6. The local authority is also reaping the benefits of the additional resource invested in recruiting in-house foster carers and achieving and supporting permanency for all looked after children. Oxfordshire is on track to approve over fifty new foster carers in 2015-16. We continue to see a significant rise in approvals of friends and family carers and we have built on our already strong performance around securing adoption, special guardianship and residence orders. Achieving permanency provides the best outcomes for our looked after children and keeps our placement costs down.
7. The Supported Housing provision was re-commissioned in April 2015 with providers being challenged to demonstrate a more flexible approach to keeping young people with increasingly complex needs both safe and supported within the pathway and the county council taking responsibility for prioritising admissions. A Review of the impact and outcomes of the re-commissioning will be completed in March 2016 and go to the Health and Wellbeing Board for evaluation but there is early evidence that providers are stepping up to the challenges of supporting this most risky and vulnerable cohort. This report does focus on the significant rise in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children (UASCs) and makes recommendations for meeting the growing challenges in this area. These challenges are affecting all local authorities across the UK and are not unique to Oxfordshire.
8. All service changes have taken into account the significant learning from recent serious case reviews.

a. Prevention before occurrence of harm

Numbers and rates of children and young people in care

9. The number of children looked after by Oxfordshire increased by 11% from 31 March 2014 (463) to 31 March 2015 (514). This increase saw Oxfordshire move from the 9th lowest (of 152 authorities) to 14th lowest. At 30 November 2015, 603 children were looked after which represents a 17% increase in numbers from 31 March 2015, and would place Oxfordshire 26th lowest if national rates had remained the same as at 31st March. Over the five year period 2011 to 2015, Oxfordshire saw a 16% growth in children looked after compared with 3% nationally.

Children and Young People looked after in Oxfordshire

| | 31/03/2014 | 31/03/2015 | 30/11/2015 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Total Looked After | 463 | 514 | 603 |
| Of whom are unaccompanied asylum seekers | 21 | 42 | 62 |
| Percentage from a Black & Minority Ethnic background | 23% | 27% | 28% |
| Percentage with a disability | 3% | 3.1% | 5.6% |
| Male | 254 | 291 | 260 |
| Female | 209 | 223 | 343 |
| 0-9 years old | 181 | 171 | 214 |
| 10-15 years old | 168 | 205 | 230 |
| 16+ years old | 114 | 138 | 159 |

10. On 31 March 2015, there were 85 children who were the responsibility of other local authorities who were living in Oxfordshire (Source: Children looked after in England including adoption: 2014 to 2015, published 10 December 2015).

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

11. The number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) who were accommodated by Oxfordshire rose by 50% 2014/15 (21 to 42), at 30 November 2015 there were 62 UASCs accommodated. We supported 32 new arrivals from 01.04.15 until 31.12.15. 50% of these were under 16 at the time of arrival and 50% were aged 16 and over. These rises are similar to those experienced by other local authorities.
12. This increased demand has led to unanticipated pressure on availability of placements and on budgets across foster care, residential care and supported housing provision. There are safeguarding concerns in relation to this group: both in terms of keeping safe those who have newly arrived and of keeping safe those they are placed with. At the time the young person is placed their needs, risks and vulnerabilities are completely unknown. Managing these risks should be understood alongside other related agenda such as PREVENT. The numbers of new arrivals are fluctuating and unpredictable therefore require systems which

can flex sufficiently to meet changing demand safely and cost effectively. Unless there is a significant decrease in the number of new arrivals, the overall number of UASCs requiring our support and accommodation in the fostering, residential and Supported Housing Pathway will continue to increase as new arrivals are entering faster than established UASCs are discharged. Very few UASCs get refugee status, and without this it is impossible to move them out of the Pathway as they cannot work or access benefits and social housing, and we continue to have a duty to house and support them. The delays in processing asylum claims by the Home Office exacerbate this problem, and efforts to try and address this have not proved successful.

13. New arrivals need time and intensive support to learn about life in the UK, cultural differences and keeping themselves safe. This is provided by their social workers and housing workers and via the Orientation Programme which is commissioned from The Children's Society. During this period of learning, they are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and negative influences from more established members of the asylum-seeking community. There is of course also very positive support provided to new arrivals by more established asylum seekers, which is vitally important to their learning and their emotional well-being.
14. Staff have been made fully aware of the risks of trafficking and a specific protocol is used by staff and the police. Awareness of the PREVENT strategy and the risks posed by radicalisation is equally critical. Some new arrivals have relatives in the UK. There is a contact protocol in place to address safeguarding needs. Some UASCs go missing, almost immediately and the missing children policy is followed thoroughly. Many new arrivals have mental and physical health needs due to abuse and trauma they have suffered in their home countries and on their journeys to the UK, and in adjusting to life without their families. It is essential that these needs are met swiftly by professionals who have knowledge and experience, particularly counselling support. The UASC team closely monitors any concerns about drugs or sexual exploitation amongst the UASC cohort with the police, Key2 housing provider and the CSE Kingfisher Team.
15. As they turn 18 and many of their claims for asylum are refused, this cohort of young people become particularly vulnerable to exploitation, and also under pressure to exploit others. The Home Office continues to deport very few former UASCs. This means that they are left with no recourse to public funds and no legal right to work. The UASCs whom we continue to support are believed to be under pressure to support and help these members of their communities, which can lead to them letting people stay in their accommodation, and sharing their incomes with them.

16. The table below shows the changing pattern of the nationality of the UASCs who are presenting to Oxfordshire.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children/YP presenting in period:

| Nationality | Afghan | Albanian | Chechan | Egyptian | Eritrean | Ethiopian | Iranian | Iraqi | Sudanese | Syrian | Turkish | Vietnamese | Total |
|----------------|--------|----------|---------|----------|----------|-----------|---------|-------|----------|--------|---------|------------|-----------|
| 2013/14 | 5 | 13 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 26 |
| 2014/15 | 6 | 13 | 0 | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 38 |
| 2015/16 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 29 |

17. Whilst national trends are difficult to predict the following tentative conclusions can be drawn to inform future planning. Children and young people continue to leave Eritrea in large numbers, and there is now an established Eritrean community in Oxford. Albanians are almost certain to be refused the right to remain by the Home Office, so may be choosing to stay in the UK illegally and not make themselves known to authorities. We need to continue to carry out thorough age assessments and not rush to place young people with members of the community who have "found" them and want to care for them as these links may be exploitative. Syrians are presently leaving their country in family groups as it remains so dangerous for anyone to stay behind. The Syrian Vulnerable People's Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) offers support only to whole families, so their accommodation is negotiated with local housing authorities, not the county council. We believe that the majority of minors we support have some links in the local area or UK so families have some reassurance that someone will be keeping an eye on their child. These local links may not yet be established within the Syrian community. We anticipate an increase in the numbers of Afghani young people arriving, given the worsening security situation in this country and well-established Afghani community in Oxford.
18. This report recommends that a strategic task group comes together in 2016 to make sure we are taking a proactive approach to safeguarding UASCs and ensuring that not all the support services are concentrated in the City so we can begin to use housing provision and develop support across the whole county.

Reasons why children become looked after

19. 287 children entered care in 2014/15, 148 for the reason of abuse or neglect. 45 children who started to be looked after in 2014/15 had had a previous episode of care. 21 of these were within 12 months of the previous care episode. 178 had been subject to a child protection plan, of these 115 had been subject in the 12 months prior to the care start date.

Needs of children becoming looked after in period:

| Category of Need | Year ending 31/03/14 | | Year ending 31/03/15 | | 30/11/2015 | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| Abuse or Neglect | 130 | 43.3% | 148 | 75.5% | 134 | 68.4% |
| Child's Disability | 7 | 2.3% | 2 | 1.0% | 4 | 2.0% |
| Parental illness or disability | 23 | 7.7% | 22 | 11.2% | 13 | 6.6% |
| Family in acute stress | 45 | 14.7% | 32 | 16.3% | 23 | 11.7% |
| Family dysfunction | 63 | 21.0% | 43 | 21.9% | 33 | 16.8% |
| Socially Unacceptable Behaviour | 3 | 1.0% | 1 | 0.5% | 2 | 1.0% |
| Absent Parenting | 29 | 9.7% | 39 | 19.9% | 31 | 15.8% |
| Total | 300 | | 287 | | 240 | |

Abuse or Neglect by sub category

| Sub Category | Year ending 31/03/2014 | Year ending 31/03/2015 | Year ending 31/03/2016 (at 30/11/2015) |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Abandoned (including home alone) | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Child or young person as abuser | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Child sexual exploitation | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| Deliberate Self Harm | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| Domestic Violence | 22 | 19 | 15 |
| Emotional Abuse | 8 | 3 | 8 |
| Neglect | 35 | 47 | 53 |
| Physical Abuse | 30 | 21 | 18 |
| Sexual Abuse | 9 | 13 | 12 |
| Not Recorded | 16 | 38 | 26 |
| Total becoming looked after under the category of Neglect or Abuse | 130 | 148 | 134 |

The key findings from the North Pilot

20. Between January 2015 and May 2015 OCC led a pilot project in the North of Oxfordshire which focused on establishing more effective ways of working to support better outcomes for children on Child Protection Plans for neglect. It involved a wide range of practitioners from services, including, health, schools, social care, criminal justice, Children's Centres and Early Intervention Hubs. The key findings were:

- **Multi-professional working is critical** to effectively support and challenge families with Child Protection Plans for neglect to make and sustain change. A

collective agency approach must be based on a shared understanding of the child protection issues and a clear definition of what needs to change.

- **Family engagement is the critical factor** in enabling change. For a family to be engaged, they must understand what needs to change and feel involved in the decisions about how to make that change. Where there is non-engagement, effective multi-agency working is even more critical to bring the different skills, expertise and relationships of different practitioners together to engage the family.
 - Effective multi-professional working is developed through **opportunities to share knowledge across services and participate in multi-professional training**, as this builds confidence, knowledge and a common language and understanding among professionals.
 - Ensuring there is capacity for practitioners to **deliver intensive support** to support, and test, a family's capacity for change is vital to instigating positive change in complex families. Practitioners must enable families to change by modelling the required change, not by completing it for them.
 - Understanding and planning for the needs of the whole family is vital to achieving better outcomes. Embedding the **'Think Family' approach**, services for children and adults plan together for the needs of the whole family is critical if support networks are to be made sufficiently robust to sustain positive change. Practitioners must be proactive in making these connections and links.
 - Practitioners need to be able to **assess and adequately evidence the impact of neglect on outcomes and the capacity of families to enact change**. The right tools need to be in place to support this and enable practitioners to be confident in gathering and presenting evidence of change, or the lack of it, and its implications for the child's outcomes.
21. The pilot made a number of practical recommendations as to how professionals could strengthen their joint work with families, in order to improve outcomes for children. These recommendations included:
- i. Strengthening the function of the core group, which is the forum where issues are identified and actions agreed between professionals and with the family
 - ii. Ensuring that support is in place at critical points during the child's journey, for example when the move schools
 - iii. Strengthening professionals knowledge of neglect and their ability to evidence its impact
 - iv. Ensuring support is in place for the whole family by improving links and communication between services for children and those for adults.
22. Following the conclusion of the pilot, a task group, made up of professionals from a range of agencies, has been established by OSCB to implement the recommendations across the County. We anticipate that improved practice in neglect will have a dual impact on the care system: risks to children will be reduced and they will continue to remain in their families of origin, avoiding harm

and family breakdown; and children whose needs can only be met by leaving their families of origin will enter care at an earlier stage having suffered less damaging and harmful experiences.

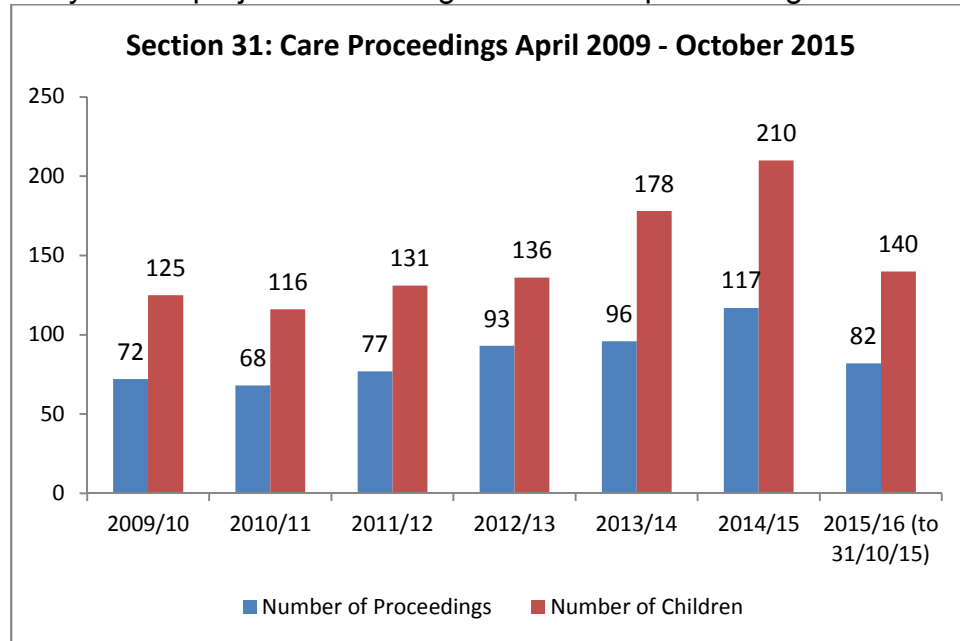
Previous interventions for children commencing a period of care

| | 01/04/2014-31/03/2015 | | 01/04/2015-30/11/2015 | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Number who became looked after in period | 287 | | 240 | |
| Previous Interventions | Any point prior to entering care | 12 months prior to entering care | Any point prior to entering care | 12 months prior to entering care |
| - None (excl. UASCs) | 38 | 80 | 41 | 61 |
| - UASC | 38 | 38 | 29 | 29 |
| - Early Intervention Service | 66 | 50 | 68 | 54 |
| - Child in Need Plan | 19 | 18 | 19 | 17 |
| - Child Protection Plan | 178 | 115 | 142 | 111 |
| - Looked After | 45 | 21 | 28 | 12 |
| Number with more than one previous intervention | 77 | 31 | 71 | 36 |
| Number who had a request made to REoC Service | n/a | n/a | 31 | 31 |

23. There has been previous concern about some children coming into care before intensive family support interventions have had an opportunity to divert or prevent the need for the child to become looked after. With the formation of the new Residential and Edge of Care service families are now being advised that the area social work team and REoC will work together to test out intensive support packages over a period of at least four weeks seeking to reduce risk and improve outcomes before accommodation is considered. This will apply in all situations where there are not immediate safeguarding risks.

Care Proceedings

24. The table below evidences a dramatic and sustained rise in the number of children subject to care proceedings within Oxfordshire over the past three years. If we have the same rate of children and proceedings to the end of this year the projected 15/16 figures are 141 proceedings and 240 children.



b. Prevention of recurrence of harm

Residential and Edge of Care (REoC) Service

25. Over recent months the Corporate Parenting has undergone a significant restructure, part of which has seen the formation of our new Residential and Edge of Care Service (REoC). The REoC team is now working alongside the area teams to provide intensive therapeutic, behavioural and practical, flexible community support packages for children on the edge of care or placement disruption and young people on the edge of homelessness. These packages allow us to better determine risk levels for these children and to weigh up the risks of placing the child in care against those of keeping them in the community. It also allows us to properly assess and plan which outcomes need to improve and monitor whether the community support package or the placement is having the desired impact.
26. REoC will be the initial point of entry to a three tiered residential and edge of care pathway (2 new Assessment Centres, our current 2 Children's Homes, and 2 further Move On provisions) being implemented over the next 9 months. The pathway is closely aligned to our fostering provision to ensure we can step children up and down according to their needs. The first Assessment and Move On homes open in Thame and Didcot in February/March 2016 and bring together alternative education and outdoor learning provisions, Lead Advisory Teachers, qualified Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Psychologists, Psychiatrist, Family Therapist and Health Nurses, whom form a team around the child and family, providing an intensive therapeutic intervention programme, with the added value of being available out of office hours, and incorporating a rapid response provision.
27. Staff will work both residentially, and provide flexible Edge of Care services to vulnerable families, thus allowing them to develop consistent relationships with young people and their families as they move through the pathway. The second Assessment and Move On Homes in Eynsham and Witney will follow later when completed in the summer of 2016. REoC will be taking on "case holding responsibility" for up to 30 cases and have delegated authority for up to another 170 families in each Assessment Centre. Between 1st April 2015 – 1st December 2015 the REoC service has worked with 270 referrals particularly focusing on practical family support and respite during evenings and weekends.
28. The REoC service has been radically reconfigured for two critical reasons:
 - To ensure that within county more of our children have access to safe, flexible, specialised, and adaptive family centred care planning, that is underpinned by warm, trusted and nurtured relationships with professionals; where we can more closely monitor that interventions are improving their outcomes.
 - To significantly reduce our spend on the external placement budget.

29. There is growing evidence from the REoC service that respite interventions and direct work with children, young people and their families is helping to achieve:
- i. Fewer children entering care, more secure attachments within families and increased ability to safely care for children.
 - ii. Placement stability within the wider LAC population including fostering and adoption.
 - iii. Planned and appropriate entry to the care system for those children who cannot stay with their families, with a better understanding of the risks and needs of a child which has informed better placement matching and stability
 - iv. Rigorous referral and assessment practice which has led to more scrutiny/challenge of care plans and risk assessments.
 - v. More regular review of outcomes and risk assessments
 - vi. Cost effective support for young people
30. A longer term evaluation will be needed to explore how the added function of short term residential care can achieve the goal to safely prevent care and produce positive longer term attachments and outcomes for children (particularly adolescents) and their families. As of January 2016 REoC is using Outcome Star data to monitor progress for children and their families referred to the service.

The Family Group Conference (FGC) Service.

31. Over the past 12 months the FGC service has refined its focus and works much more closely with families subject to safeguarding and legal proceedings. The FGC process has been used, with some success, to encourage families to come together to explore their difficulties. A number of families have come together very effectively to put forward positive care plans within the family network. During 2014-15 all FGC coordinators have received advocacy training and we have seen an increase in participation of young people in their FGC. In the past 12 months 294 young people have participated in person in their FGC. The participation of fathers/male carers has increased: 84 fathers attended an FGC (88% of possible total). On average we achieve 10.5 family members attending their FGC.
32. In 2014 -15:
- 128 initial FGCs were held.
 - 69 review FGCs were convened.
 - 73% of families who had an initial FGC also participated in a review - this is a higher level of engagement in the process than reported by other authorities.
33. Discussions have been held with the area social work teams and Fostering service to consider a role for the FGC process in tackling the demand for multiple family and friends viability assessments when legal proceedings have

been initiated. We are looking to work with the local judiciary to use an FGC to narrow down the field so that potentially only two assessments are conducted.

34. To date in 2015-16 75% of referrals to the FGC service relate to families where there are identified safeguarding concerns or legal proceedings are being considered. In many of these cases the FGC has contributed to a reduction in the level of statutory intervention with families.

The ATTACH team.

35. The Attach team works directly with all kinds of carers on enhancing placement stability for LAC and adopted young people. The team is made up of 3.6fte senior Social Workers and Clinical psychologists. Clinical work is underpinned by a theoretical understanding of the importance of attachment relationships on all aspects of a child's development. A Fostering attachments group is run twice yearly for foster carers and adoptive families. The team is critical to maintain Oxfordshire's excellent performance around short and long term placement stability which improves outcomes and keeps placement costs down (see paras 40 and 41).
36. In addition to assessment and clinical intervention the team offers consultation to Social Workers, schools, LAC health nurses and paediatricians and the adoption Support team. The team also carries out sibling assessments to advise in legal proceedings when care planning is required for a number of children from the same family. Since April 2015 six sibling assessments have been completed.
37. From 1st April 2015 Attach has received 112 enquiries of which 82 have been accepted as referrals to the team for direct assessment and/or treatment work. The team currently holds a combined caseload of 111 cases. Nearly 70% of young people referred to Attach are aged 13 years and under. 50% of current referrals are for adopted children and their families.
38. The, Consultant clinical Psychologist has led a multi-disciplinary group working to develop a model of therapeutic assessment and intervention for the new REoC service which is joined up with CAMHs
39. To better measure it's outcomes and impact the Attach team is ensuring that: baseline measures are undertaken with all referred families; RCADS (assessment measure of depression/anxiety in the child) are used in appropriate cases; SDQ reviews will continue where LAC Nurses log high scores for LAC; validated measures are used with all group work to strengthen evaluation; a systemic measure of trauma will be initiated; client satisfaction feedback questionnaire (based on IAPT guidelines) will be encouraged and collated to help monitor the development of therapeutic intervention; and feedback will be sought from referring Social Workers to ensure that therapeutic intervention is integrated with wider practice.

Short-term placement stability

40. In 2014/15 7% of children who were looked after had 3 or more placements within the year. At 30 November 2015 4% of looked after children had had 3 or more placements. Regular monitoring continues of these children who have two moves in the year to enable short-term targeted interventions to try and prevent a third placement move in the year.

Long-term placement stability

41. Long-term placement stability is measured as children aged under 16 who have been looked after for more than 2½ years, who have been in the same placement for at least 2 years. Oxfordshire's performance of 70.5%. Provisional figures at 30 November 2015 are showing that this rate will be maintained for 2015/16.

Types of placement: Fostering, Adoption, Residential, Out of County

42. 56% of children looked after at 31 March 2015 were in a placement provided by the local authority, this is line with the national and statistical neighbour figures, 38% of children looked after were in a placement provided by the private sector.
43. Nationally 61% of looked after children were placed within the local authority area, Oxfordshire's statistical neighbour group (which includes Buckinghamshire, Hampshire and Hertfordshire) was below the national average at 59%, Oxfordshire had 71% of its children looked after placed within the County.

Children looked after at 30 November 2015, by placement location

| Placement Type | Placement Location | | | Total |
|---|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | Oxfordshire | Neighbouring Authority | Other Authority | |
| Placed for adoption | 16 | 3 | 13 | 32 |
| Secure Unit | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Children's Home | 39 | 21 | 33 | 93 |
| Placed with parents/person with parental responsibility | 12 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Independent Living | 41 | 1 | 0 | 42 |
| Foster placement with relative or friend | 84 | 9 | 10 | 103 |
| Foster placement with other carer | 242 | 41 | 26 | 309 |
| NHS/Health Trust | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Family centre or mother and baby unit | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Residential school | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| Total | 440 | 78 | 85 | 603 |
| At 30 November 2014 | 363 | 70 | 76 | 512 |

Fostering

44. At the end of November 2015 of the 603 children looked after, 411 were placed in a foster placement (including 103 placed with family and friends). Oxfordshire currently has 339 in-house foster carers who offer a range of provision from relief and short break care to long term and specialist provision.
45. Recruitment and retention of foster carers remains the highest priority due to the need to sustain in-house provision to meet the demand for in-house placements and replace those who leave for reasons such as age/retirement etc. There is also pressure being experienced across the country on the existing pool of foster carers because young people are now entitled to stay with their carers until the age of 21 under new Staying Put arrangements. Choice of local placements is critical to placement stability as it enables the children to maintain key relationships within their existing school or support network.
46. In November 2015 we launched a campaign for Oxfordshire to become the "most fostering friendly county in the country" based on our feedback from foster carers about what makes a difference in terms of recruitment and retention. A fostering friendly covenant has been developed. Foster Carers who work for participatory employers now qualify for up to 5 days paid leave to undertake fostering duties. So far Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfam, Oxford City Council, Home For Good (fostering and adoption charity), Fitzwaryn School (The Propeller Academy Trust), and the Bishop of Dorchester have signed the pledge with other partners such as Oxford University likely to sign in 2016. 28 new unrelated foster carers have been recruited since April 2015 and there has been a significant increase in approval of Family and Friend carers resulting in increased in house fostering provision. This year we have successfully recruited a number of foster carers to provide permanent foster placements. This has resulted in significant savings for the local authority (on the costs of IFA and residential provision) and enabled these children to remain in Oxfordshire close to local support networks.
47. This year has also seen the development of a Supported Lodgings scheme managed within the Fostering Service. To date two Supported Lodgings placements have been made, three more carers have been approved and when fully operational the scheme will provide up to 16 placements for young people assessed through the supported housing pathway.

Foster Care Support

48. During the past year the following new initiatives have been launched to improve support to foster carers as this is one of the most significant factors in retaining foster carers:

Keeping Foster and Kinship Carers Supported (KEEP), a training programme based on MTFC principles, is offered to mainstream foster and kinship carers. OCC was a pilot for KEEP Standard for mainstream/ kinship carers with children aged 5- 12. This proved very successful and a number of staff have been trained to deliver KEEP Standard and two further programmes:

- KEEP Safe for carers of adolescents
- ADoPT for adopters

49. This year Oxfordshire was selected as one of 5 local authorities to participate in the TEND Programme Pilot (Training to Enhance & Nurture Development) as part of the Department for Education (DfE) Innovation Programme. TEND is a new group video coaching programme designed specifically to support foster and kinship carers who are caring for infants aged 0-48 months. We are running two TEND Programmes this year, the first of which has just been completed. A grant of £70,000 was awarded to OCC to pilot this Programme. These Programmes have been instrumental in supporting and retaining carers and contributing to placement stability.

Mockingbird Family Model

50. Earlier this year Oxfordshire was one of 8 fostering agencies to be awarded DfE funding (£150,000) to pilot the Mockingbird Family Model (MFM). MFM is an award-winning, innovative model for foster care, developed in Seattle, USA, which focuses on peer support for foster carers. The model develops a hub and constellation fostering service, which establishes a sense of extended family and community around our Looked After children and young people. To date two MFM hubs have been launched, one in the North and one in the city and a third hub is planned for the South.

Out of Hours Telephone Support for Foster Carers

51. We have recently launched an out of hours telephone support for foster carers dealing with more challenging young people and children and families known to REoC. The service is provided from 5pm to 11pm during the week and 8am to 11pm at week end and combines experienced managers offering telephone support with family support workers who provide a rapid response going into the home when required.

Adoption

52. Achieving permanency remains the single most important factor in improving outcomes and safeguarding children's welfare within the care system. 37 children were adopted in 2014/15, this represents 15% of children who ceased care in the year, and this figure remains in line with our statistical neighbours and slightly below the national figure of 17%. The average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, for those who were adopted in the year, was 451 days, the national average was 628 days, our statistical neighbour average was 624 days, (14/15 national data not yet published). 27 children have been adopted up to the end of November 2015.

Special Guardianship Orders

53. 17% of children (39 children) who ceased care in 2014/15 exited due to a Special Guardianship Order being made, this figure is higher than both the

national and statistical neighbour figure of 11% (14/15 national data not yet published). 19 children have had a SGO made up to the end of November 2015.

Residence Orders

54. Nine (4%) children exited care due to a Residence Order in 2014/15. 7 children have exited care to a Residence Order up to the end of November 2015.

Adoption Support Fund

55. This year saw the launch of the Adoption Support Fund. This is a government fund for the provision of support to adoptive families. The local authority can now make an application to this fund on behalf of adoptive families to access funding for support such as therapeutic support for adopted children. The local authority must undertake an assessment to determine the need for this support. It has just been announced that this funding will be extended and increased over the coming year.

Regional Adoption Agencies

56. As part of the Adoption Reform Programme, in June 2015 the Government issued a paper titled Regionalising Adoption. The aim of the regionalisation agenda was to:
- speed up matching of children with adopters
 - improve adopter recruitment to make sure that it is more effective and linked to the needs of children waiting
 - Ensure that high quality adoption support services are available nationally
57. The paper proposed the creation of Regional Adoption Agencies which would take the form of local authorities and Voluntary Adoption Agencies joining together to deliver services. The government has allocated £4.5 million to support the move to Regional Adoption Agencies. Adopt Berkshire is the shared adoption service for the Boroughs of Bracknell Forest, The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Wokingham. In October 2015 Adopt Berkshire together with Oxfordshire, Reading Borough Council, Slough Borough Council and The Cornerstone Partnership submitted an Expression of Interest to form a new regional Adoption Agency. This was successful and the government has allocated funding to support this development. The first phase will involve Slough and Reading with a view to Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes joining in the second phase. A project team has been established to develop a model for the new RAA involving representatives from each agency. The anticipated timescale for implementation is over the next two years.

Out of County Placements

58. At 31 March 2015, 28% of children were placed outside of the local authority boundary. Given that the 31 March 2014 figure was 27% Oxfordshire has therefore done well to find in county capacity to meet the 11% rise in care population over this twelve month period.

| | 20 miles or less | | Over 20 miles | | *Distance known or not recorded | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| | Inside LA boundary | Outside LA boundary | Inside LA boundary | Outside LA boundary | Inside LA boundary | Outside LA boundary |
| Oxfordshire | 54.0% | 4.0% | 11.0% | 22.0% | 7.0% | 2.0% |
| National | 54.0% | 23.0% | 4.0% | 14.0% | 3.0% | 3.0% |
| Statistical Neighbour | 58.0% | 11.0% | 8.0% | 18.0% | 2.0% | 2.0% |
| At 31/12/2015 | 55.0% | 4.0% | 9.0% | 22.0% | 8.0% | 2.0% |

* "Home" address unknown or distance not recorded. This may occur with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children or, for reasons of confidentiality, distance and LA of placement may not be recorded for some children including some children placed for adoption. The good news is that more children are being placed closer to home and within Oxfordshire, despite the 18% increase in numbers of LAC from 31/03/14.

59. The council only places children with providers who are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, unless, in exceptional circumstances, where permission is granted by the Corporate Parenting Manager. Other pre-placement checks and visits to homes are made for planned residential placements in line with the regulations. If the Ofsted rating falls below 'good' for any fostering provider they are removed from the approved provider list.

Missing from Care

60. The current position in relation to Looked After Children who are reported missing:
- At 30 September 2015 Oxfordshire was responsible for the welfare of 577 looked after Children (LAC), including supporting 47 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).
 - Of these, 91 children were in residential placements, 12 in our local authority provision, and 79 in private residential placements, many of whom are more than 20 miles from the young person's home address.
 - 103 children were placed with an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA), an increase of 10.7% since 1 April 2015, of whom 45 were in Oxfordshire. If a young person goes missing from such a placement the local authority must be notified in line with the Missing Children's Strategy published in August 2014.

61. Comparison and Trends (based on the last 12 months):

When the above figures are compared with September 2014, the following trends are observed:

- There has been a 10.7% increase in our LAC population
- There has been a 17.5% increase in the presentation of UASCs
- There has been a 19.7% increase in the placement of children in private residential placements
- There has been a 9.6% increase in the placement of children within Independent Fostering placements (IFAs)

62. Numbers of missing children:

The table below shows the total number of children who have been reported as missing to Thames Valley Police (TVP) in the period 1 April - 30 September 2015. To better understand the context and frequency of the missing episodes reported, they have been organised into 4 escalation scales (fewer than 5 episodes, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19 and 20+).

| Number of episodes | Number of Children | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 01/04/14 to 30/09/14 | 01/04/15 to 30/09/15 |
| Fewer than 5 episodes | 327 | 463 |
| 5-9 episodes | 22 | 27 |
| 10-14 episodes | 2 | 3 |
| 15-19 episodes | 1 | 1 |
| 20+ episodes | 4 | 1 |
| Total | 356 | 495 |

This shows over the two year period 2014 -2015:

- A 39.0% increase in overall Missing Children's reports being made to TVP.
- Of these, 40.6% are open cases to Children's Social Care (CSC)

63. The Missing Childrens Panel is of the view that this increase is attributable to improved reporting and recording of information rather than increasing numbers of children going missing. The increased figures should therefore be seen as a sign of agencies (including schools and supported housing providers) being far more effective and proactive in reporting missing episodes than hitherto.

64. It is evident that the number of children with 10-20+ repeat missing episodes has actually reduced. When set against the significant increases in our LAC population and the increased use of statutory placements, this suggests that we

are managing our repeat missing children cohort more effectively by using Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Plan (MARAMP) processes. This is supported by a recent report which illustrates that CSC have completed about as many MARAMP's in the first 5 months of this year as we did for the duration of 2014/15. As of September 2015 there is facility for MARAMP's (for both LAC and non-LAC children and families) to be available to frontline officers within the Risk Management Occurrence within NIECH (Thames Valley Police IT system). This has allowed missing risks to be more clearly understood by operational staff; and has enabled proportionate responses to be assigned to the enquiry without compromising need or risk.

Numbers of reviews on time

65. Ensuring LAC Reviews are held on time is critical to ensuring children are safeguarded. In 2014/15 Oxfordshire Reviewed 92% of children on time and 95% of those reviewed participated in their Review. The timeliness has been maintained for the first six months of 2015/16 (national data is no longer published). Robust monitoring is now in place to challenge late Reviews on a monthly basis.

c Prevention of impairment

Achieving best possible outcomes for LAC

Health

66. Oxfordshire continues to improve performance for children looked after with 99% of all children who had been looked after for at least 12 months at 31 March 2015 receiving a health assessment.

Health measures for Looked After Children

| | Oxfordshire 2013/14 | Oxfordshire 2014/15 | Statistical Neighbour average 2014/15 | National average 2014/15 |
|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Aged 0-4 receiving a health check | 100.0% | 100.0% | 92.0% | 89.4% |
| Annual health assessment | 96.0% | 99.0% | 87.8% | 89.7% |
| Immunisations up to date | 90.0% | 93.2% | 92.8% | 87.8% |
| Identified with substance misuse problem | 8.4% | 8.4% | 7.0% | 5.0% |
| Emotional and behavioural health of children | 16.9 | 15.8 | 14.3 | 13.9 |

Education

67. Educational performance is fully covered in separate reporting through the Education Scrutiny Committee.

Care Leavers

68. Oxfordshire County Council currently supports 389 care leavers to become independent adults. 81 of these are unaccompanied asylum seeking care leavers. This year 2015, we are supporting 33 care leavers between the age of 21 – 25yr compared to 24 in 2014 as we are keeping cases open to enable educational studies to be completed or until the transition to adult support services is made.
69. Wellbeing support:
An increasing number of care leavers are accessing Mental Health support (39 in 2013 to 54 in 2015) There are other care leavers who would benefit from this service but are not engaging with it currently. Likewise this is the situation for those young people involved with drug and alcohol services. This group of young people will be identified in the current 16 - 25yrs transition group work to ensure we are endeavouring to meet their needs and are ready to respond at the point they are ready to engage.
70. Half of the young people who are engaged with Mental Health Services are maintaining EET and are suitably housed, the other half are maintaining their

accommodation however are not at the point whereby EET is achievable. There is a greater emphasis from Ofsted and DfE for improved EET outcomes and long term suitable housing.

71. Education, Employment and Training (EET):
Our current EET performance for care leavers 16 - 25yrs is 66% which is an increase on this time last year (55%). For the year 2014 the overall national EET position of care leavers was 59 %. In Oxfordshire in 2014 our NEET 19yr olds dropped to 23.2% (whole cohort 3.7%) from 32.5% which is a move in the correct direction. Performance is being regularly reviewed as part of the county councils new EET strategy for care leavers.
72. 5 of our care leavers successfully completed university this year and we currently have 11 attending university. We have also had an increase in the number of former care leavers approaching us to reengage with EET between 21 and 25 yrs. of age who had been closed to us at their 21st birthday. We have made a positive offer to the 6 young people who applied to us this year, which is an increase from the 2 applications that we received in 2014 following the extended duty that the leaving care act introduced to this group.
73. On-going barriers to increasing EET performance include higher costs of travel as well as an increasing number of young people with complex difficulties which impedes their ability to participate in EET. We are offering financial incentives to young people to engage in EET so that it is more beneficial than remaining on benefits. We also acknowledge that only 124 of the 389 care leavers (31%) have achieved level 2 GCSE education or above therefore, this combined with low self-esteem results in them being less competitive in the marketplace. We changed our incentive system in the last financial year from giving a cash lump sum £200 at 19yrs for 6months of EET engagement, to a weekly allowance for 100% attendance. This change has seen positive results especially in the south of the county where EET performance increased from 29% to 45% (16% increase).
74. Oxfordshire County Council has agreed to introduce a positive recruitment policy which will ensure that care leavers will be guaranteed an interview for jobs within the council. Previously this only applied to apprenticeships. This is something that we asked for last October at CPP and are happy to report that we have been able to achieve this. We are now extending the challenge to our partner organisations and commissioned service providers to offer opportunities to care leavers to help grow their skills, experiences and opportunities.
75. Some of our most vulnerable young people are moving into our care leaving population due to child sexual exploitation, Asylum Seeking and youth homelessness. Securing suitable housing to ensure their safety and wellbeing brings about new challenges and new financial demands.
76. At December 31 2015 89% of our care leavers population (347/389) is suitably housed. Although this figure puts us significantly above the national average and statistical neighbours, providing suitable accommodation, support and independence preparation remains a focus for us. The leaving care act requires

us to avoid moving young people who are settled. We currently have 10 care leavers in foster placements under Staying Put legislation post 18yrs which is offering those settled in long term foster placements an experience similar to their non-care peers. For the majority of our care leavers the accommodation will be provided within our new Supported Housing Pathway and an exit plan at the end of this. Approximately 69 of our care leavers will need the security of District council social housing. Oxford City Council continues to be the major provider and meets with OCC on homelessness prevention and priority Move On spaces for our care leavers.

77. Challenges:

- The budget pressures and savings to be made further to the government's announcement in the comprehensive spending review.
- Increases in LAC leading to increase in care leavers. This plus greater numbers of care leavers returning for EET and those continuing in EET place an additional cost on budgets. Each case needs reallocation of workers, active case support and financial assistance.
- Accommodation that is affordable, supportive, offers stability and is that is close to home.
- Our exit pathway presents us with great challenges as our housing stock in Oxford is limited and we are in competition with a large university student population. Procuring private rental accommodation needs creative thinking such as paying rent on behalf of care leavers for a minimum of 6 months so that landlords know that the y/p is supported and the rent is paid.
- Challenging our partner agencies to provide opportunities for our care leavers. Viewing children that we take into care as everybody's responsibility to bring up in a positive way that creates opportunities for them. Companies could offer work experience, mentoring/coaching, apprenticeships and taster days.

Learning from serious case reviews relevant to LAC/Leaving Care

78. In 2015, the OSCB has undertaken a number of serious case reviews and a learning review of 6 children who were the victims of CSE. An 'Eyes On' summary of the learning review was published on 5th January '16. Two SCRs are signed off by the Board, one of which is also a domestic homicide review, and due to publish in the first quarter of 2016. The findings and recommendations of these reviews are not specific to looked after children, but apply to all children, particularly those who are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation or neglect and therefore at risk of family breakdown and entering care.
79. Notable learning themes which practitioners are integrating into their practice with children on the edge of care, in care and leaving care are:

- Ensuring all safeguarding incidents are thoroughly investigated in neglect cases and that the child protection planning is specific about risks, actions and consequences.
- The importance of taking time to build and prioritise relationships between children/young people and individual professionals
- Improving access to child and adolescent services for mental health, emotional and behavioural support
- Joined up multi-agency risk assessment and planning in regard to young victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse
- Improving multi-agency responses to young people who present serious risks in the community.
- Asking schools to review their approach to children who are vulnerable through CSE and not to place those children on partial timetables or exclude them without discussions with other professionals about alternative safe provision.

Conclusion and recommendations

80. This paper demonstrates that the number of children entering care is increasing and correlates to the high levels of activity in the child protection system. The development of our Residential and Edge of Care Service is an advancement in our capacity to prevent the harm that leads to children coming into the care system and needs to work 'upstream' i.e. targeted early at the children who are most likely to come into care.
81. This paper **RECOMMENDS** that further analysis of the child in need and child protection populations are undertaken to isolate more specific risk factors for care and what constitutes an effective intervention. This work should draw on the learning and recommendations of the Neglect pilot and OSCB's reviews of adolescents who have died and suffered or caused serious harm.
82. This paper **RECOMMENDS** that a multi-agency group is established to devise a county-wide strategy to respond to the growing challenges nationally of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and Refugee families.
83. Oxfordshire has taken a radical and proactive approach to the spiralling costs of external placements and has significantly invested to create in-county edge of care, fostering and residential capacity. The effectiveness of this investment in safeguarding, improving outcomes and reducing external placement costs will require close scrutiny over the coming year. This paper **RECOMMENDS** that the Placement Strategy Board is tasked with measuring the impact and cost savings of the Placement Strategy reporting up to Cabinet.

JIM LEIVERS

Director of Children Education Families

05 February 2016

Contact Officer: Matthew Edwards, Corporate Parenting Manager; Tel: 01865 323097

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CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

STAFFING REPORT – Quarter 3 2015/16

Report by Chief HR Officer

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on staffing numbers and related activity for the period 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015. Progress will be tracked throughout the year on the movement of staffing numbers from those reported at 31 March 2015 as we continue to deliver our required budget savings. We also continue to track reductions since 1 April 2010 to reflect the impact on staffing numbers as we progress with our Business Strategy.

Current numbers

2. The staffing number (FTE) as at 31 December 2015 was 3524.51 employed in post. These figures exclude the school bloc. We continue to monitor the balance between full time and part time workers to ensure that the best interests of the Council and the taxpayer are served. The numbers as at 31 December 2015 were as follows - Full time 2506 and Part time 1852. This equates to the total of 3524.51 FTE employed in post.
3. The changes in staffing numbers since 31 March 2015 are shown in the table below. A breakdown of movements by directorate for this financial year is provided at Appendix 1.

| | FTE Employed |
|--|--------------|
| Reported Figures at 31 March 2015 – Non-Schools | 3865.68 |
| Changes – actual | -341.17 |
| Reported Figures at 31 December 2015 – Non-Schools | 3524.51 |

Quarter 3 Update

4. We remain committed to redeploying displaced staff wherever possible. This is getting more difficult as staffing numbers reduce across the Council and there was only one redeployment this quarter.
5. An HR approval process is in place to ensure rigorous challenge takes place before any new post is created/existing vacancy is filled by

CA9

recruitment. In addition, managers are being asked to consider alternatives to recruitment and make the best use of the resources they already have where the work has to continue. A review is currently taking place around the recruitment approval process. The aim is to tighten up the process even more to help deal with future reductions as a result of budget cuts, and to ensure our employees are deployed in the most efficient and cost effective way.

6. We recognise that operational services are critical and cannot be left without any cover. Prudent use of agency staff is therefore deployed to ensure continuity of service. In common with all employers, the council deploys agency staff as cover for instances of maternity leave, illness and short-term gaps in recruitment where a permanent replacement is not due to arrive until sometime after an employee has left.
7. The cost of agency staff this quarter is reported as £2,806,463 which is an increase to the previous quarter. As reported last quarter this expenditure is now being processed and reported through the Integrated Business Centre with Hampshire. It has become more difficult to analyse the spend to ensure the figure reported is accurate and it has become apparent that there are some items coded incorrectly which is being investigated. A recruitment drive is also underway to recruit social workers which have been notoriously hard to fill posts and would decrease the necessity of engaging agency social workers.
8. We will continue to track progress on staff number movements during the year ahead. The overall reduction in FTE employed since 1 April 2015 is 8.8%. This means that we have seen a reduction of 32.85% in FTE employed since 31 March 2010 (1,724 posts).

Accountability

9. Staffing numbers continue to be monitored rigorously. All new posts are reviewed by the Deputy Directors.

Recommendation

10. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report

STEVE MUNN
Chief HR Officer

25 January 2016
Contact Officer: Sue James, HR Officer, 01865 815465.

STAFFING REPORT 31 DECEMBER 2015

| DIRECTORATE | FTE Employed at 31 December 2015 | Changes in FTE Employed since 31 March 2015 | Cost of Agency Staff * £ |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES | 1196.92 | -21.63 | 1,118,768 |
| PUBLIC HEALTH | 22.77 | 1.29 | 0 |
| SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES | 688.11 | -43.34 | 921,646 |
| COMMUNITY SAFETY | 346.74 | -26.13 | 30,172 |
| ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY | 385.34 | -99.33 | 303,283 |
| OXFORDSHIRE CUSTOMER SERVICES | 355.37 | -191.73 | 252,305 |
| CORPORATE SERVICES | 314.66 | 50.46 | 180,289 |
| CULTURAL SERVICES | 214.60 | -10.76 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 3524.51 | -341.17 | 2,806,463 |

Please note: Where employees are absent eg on maternity leave or long term sick and have been temporarily replaced, both the absent employee and the temporary employee will have been counted.

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 4 FEBRUARY 2016

CALL IN OF A DECISION BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS – ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

A request has been received to call in the decision for scrutiny by the following Councillors:

Councillor Greene
Councillor Hards
Councillor Christie
Councillor Tanner
Councillor Beal
Councillor Curran
Councillor Pressel
Councillor Price
Councillor Webber
Councillor Smith

The background and reasons given for the request by the councillors are:

“At the Cabinet Member for E&E meeting on 14 January, Councillor Hudspeth standing in for Councillor David Nimmo Smith, approved various traffic orders to allow a through route for buses along the pedestrianized section of Station Road Didcot.

Councillor Greene (Didcot East and Hagbourne) in speaking against the application raised the issue of a petition which was presented at Council last year and which had about 1500 signatures. That petition was not brought to the attention of officers who prepared OCC's response to the planning application for the Orchard Centre Phase 2, as was acknowledged on the 14th.

Councillor Hards (Didcot West) spoke referring to a pre planning public consultation on the possible Orchard Centre Phase 2 development in November 2013, which was the first time the public had been alerted to the possibility of closing the bus link along High Street, but in granting the order Councillor Hudspeth said that the possibility went back some years before 2013. That is believed to be based on a misunderstanding and the matter should be reconsidered (issue 2).

Councillor Hards also referred to the granting of Garden Town status to Didcot and the public statement that the completion of the Northern Perimeter Road was the Leader of SODC's number one priority. If that is the case, and if the completion of the Northern Perimeter Road would as claimed relieve the congestion at the Jubilee Way roundabout, then an alternative route for buses may not be required (issue 3).

A representative from Hammersons also spoke at the meeting and he made a new offer, to pay £10,000 towards the cost of establishing a Residents Parking Zone on the affected part of Station Road. Councillor Hudspeth established that that was a new proposal and it is considered that the offer needs to be formalised BEFORE any work starts on the proposed bus link.

Reasons for this Request

1. That the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal;
2. Ian Hudspeth, in giving his decision, was wrong to say that routing buses along Station Road had been around before November 2013. Previous work to extend the Orchard Centre had made no mention of closing High Street and sending buses along Station Road instead;
3. Whilst it is true that the final section of the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road has been planned for about 30+ years, Garden Town status clearly makes the prospect of completion of it a realistic proposition. Paragraph 8(a) of item 11 on the Cabinet Agenda for 26 January refers. Also John Cotton is on record as saying that that road would both relieve the congestion at the Jubilee Way Roundabout, and that its completion would be his number one priority should money become available through the Garden Town designation. Therefore if Mr Cotton is right on both counts a new bus link would not be required.
4. New information about funding of £10000 for a controlled parking zone was provided at the meeting by the Consultants and that offer needs to be properly evaluated before any irrevocable steps to open up Station Road are taken."

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT – 14 JANUARY 2016

PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS – ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. This report presents comments and objections received in the course of the statutory consultation on the proposals to introduce and amend various traffic restrictions in Station Road and The Broadway, Didcot, as part of the Orchard Centre (phase 2) development.

Background

2. In July 2015 South Oxfordshire District Council approved – following very extensive local consultation including the planned changes to local bus routes – a planning application for the expansion of the Orchard Centre which includes more retail units, restaurants, parking, open space and a new gym.
3. The principal effect in respect of traffic movement of the approved plans is the re-opening of the southern end of Station Road to buses and pedal cycles only, with access to the bus lane being controlled by rising bollards, in place of the existing bus provision in High Street (between Broadway and Hitchcock Way) which will be closed. Details of the proposed traffic regulation orders for Station Road, including the section not currently highway just north of Broadway, and on Broadway itself in the vicinity of the proposed new signalled junction with Station Road are shown at Annexes 1 – 4.

Consultation

4. The formal consultation on the proposals was carried out between 5 November and 4 December 2015. This comprised letters being sent to approximately 255 residential and business properties in the immediate area, street notices being placed at intervals along the roads affected, public notices being published in the Didcot Herald on 4 November and the Oxford Times on 5 November 2015. In addition information was sent by email to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire and ambulance services, Didcot Town Council, Bus Operators and the local Members, while a dedicated page was added to the County's online consultation portal to allow people to view and respond to the proposals.
5. Eighteen responses were received, comprising 9 objections, 8 responses raising one or more areas of concern, and 1 response in support; the

responses are summarised at Annex 5. Copies of all the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.

6. Thames Valley Police had no objection in principle to the proposals but did raise a concern that pedestrians crossing the bus lane had no specific crossing provision, and that while the rising bollards should effectively control access by cars and other larger vehicles, motorcycles would be able to bypass the bollards in contravention of the proposed restriction. The police also raised queries about possible obstruction of the bus route as a result of loading during permitted loading hours.
7. County Councillor Hards raised a number of specific concerns relating to the suitability of Station Road for use by buses, the provision for loading and deliveries, and parking issues including the proposed loss of three disabled bays and some spaces used by residents of Station Road.
8. The response from a local bus company raised a number of concerns regarding the viability and technical details of the scheme; these, together with the response supplied by the developer's consultant, are detailed at Annex 7.
9. A local taxi operator challenged the exclusion of taxis from the bus lane, citing that almost all the bus lanes in operation in other parts of the county permit use by taxis, as does the current bus only link in the High Street at the eastern side of the existing Orchard Centre.
10. Harwell Parish Council objected to the proposals to allow buses to use the pedestrian area of Station Road adjacent to The Cornerstone arts centre building.
11. Didcot First, a local organisation promoting Didcot, raise similar concerns on the safety of buses using the pedestrian area and queries on the wider management of buses in the vicinity, including the existing bus stops nearby.
12. The manager of The Broadway public house raised concerns over loading provision under the proposed new layout and traffic restrictions.
13. The remaining objections and concerns were largely from residents of Station Road; these included concerns over the suitability of Station Road as a bus route, and concerns over road safety, noise and emissions, and the loss of parking.

Response to objections and concerns

14. The concern of the police over the safety of pedestrians crossing the bus lane is noted; however experience of roads with similar restrictions (principally Queen Street in Oxford) is that these operate with good levels of safety and that bus drivers exercise high levels of care when travelling through such areas. Their concern that motorcyclists may contravene the proposed restriction (given that the proposed rising bollards would not stop motorcycles from travelling within the bus lane) is also noted; again experience of other

bus lanes has been that abuse by motorcyclists is in practice very rare. The concern relating to potential obstruction by loading vehicles is noted and the operation of the scheme if approved will be monitored to determine if this is an issue requiring further investigation. The proposals have been the subject of an independent road safety audit at both the preliminary and detailed design stages.

15. Many of Cllr Hards concerns were the subject of consideration by South Oxfordshire District Council at their Planning Committee meeting on 29 July 2015 at which approval for the Orchard Centre phase 2 development was granted. Annex 6 shows the developers' consultants responses to detailed concerns raised in that consultation, and the paragraphs within this Annex particularly relevant to these concerns include paras 1,2, 7 and 13.
16. The proposal to remove the 3 disabled parking bays that are currently at the southern end of Station Road adjacent to the cinema also raised concerns. Although not on the public highway a total of 9 new disabled parking spaces are proposed as part of the development, 4 of which are proposed to be located in the new Station Road car park, which will be in an equivalent location to the spaces to be removed from Station Road.
17. A clause has been included within the draft Section 106 agreement for the developers to pay for the monitoring of on-street parking on Station Road and White Leys Close and to fund the implementation of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) , which would restrict parking to residents only, if this is judged to be required. This provision is considered to adequately address concerns were raised by local residents over the proposed amendments to waiting restrictions in Station Road.
18. The concerns of the local taxi operator that taxis are not proposed to be allowed to use the proposed bus lane are noted. A taxi rank is currently located on High Street, which is approximately 30m in length. Taxis are able to arrive and depart the rank from both Broadway and Hitchcock Way. The re-provision of a taxi rank at a new location opposite the petrol filling station (26m in length) ensures that taxis continue to benefit from a waiting facility. The pick-up / drop-off layby outside Sainsbury's will be maintained. A further taxi facility is proposed within the Broadway car park (17m in length), since this is closer to the retail units and it ensures that customers have a choice. It is anticipated that this would accommodate the level of demand for taxi use, and that when considering the wider interests of pedestrians and road safety in minimising the use of the proposed bus lane, the current proposal to limit the use of the bus lane to buses and pedal cycles only is appropriate.
19. Harwell Parish Council's concerns over the proposed bus lane through the current pedestrian area do not cite any specific issues, but are presumed to relate to road safety and pedestrian amenity. The comments given above on the Thames Valley Police response on road safety apply; it is accepted that the proposal may result in some loss of pedestrian amenity but this needs to be balanced against the wider benefits of the development.
20. The concerns of Didcot First relating to the use of the bus stops are noted.

High St is not officially a bus terminus and no bus stands are provided there. Therefore, Station Rd has been designed with bus stops but it will not be a terminus. It is proposed to provide 3 bus stops on Station Road; 2 boarding and alighting stops and 1 alight-only bus stop. The 2 boarding and alighting bus stops are proposed to have a bus shelter with seating. However, it is not proposed to provide a bus shelter for the alight only stop as there will be no bus passengers waiting at the bus stop. The design of the bus stops has been agreed by the County Council with the developer.

21. The issue of loading for The Broadway public house is being investigated by the developer's consultants, who will be liaising with the manager on this matter.
22. The concerns of residents responding to the consultation primarily related to the use of the road by buses and also the proposed changes to parking provision; Annex 6 provides a detailed response to these issues. Additionally some concerns were raised by residents over potential structural damage to properties on Station Road caused by vibration from the bus traffic. Station Road has previously operated as the main town centre bus route up until 2002. There is no reason to suggest that reopening it as a bus route would cause any structural damage to buildings.
23. As part of the development scheme Station Road is to be widened on the east side to assist two-way bus operation. As part of this work the eastern half of the road will be resurfaced and tests have been undertaken recently on to determine the current condition of the rest of the road; the results are currently being analysed to determine how much resurfacing of the remainder of Station Road is required.
24. Pedestrian safety on Station Road (particular children and other vulnerable groups) was cited as a concern from a number of respondents. The pedestrian facilities on Station Road will be maintained and there will continue to be footways on both sides of the carriageway, ensuring sufficient provision of segregation from other road-users.
25. Some respondents also expressed concerns about the impact of the bus route on those businesses with outdoor seating, and whether they would be able to continue to provide this in the shared space. The proposals do not include any physical changes to the existing seating areas and the businesses will be able to continue providing outdoor seating for customers.
26. Concerns were raised about the proposed management and control of bus flows to prevent more than one bus at a time through shared surface part of Station Road. It is planned that the proposed rising bollards will restrict access to the shared space area for permitted vehicles only, and as such will not 'gate' buses. Given the relatively low frequency of buses that are anticipated to use Station Road, it is not considered necessary to 'gate' bus traffic at this time but this will be kept under review as bus services in Didcot respond to local growth.

27. The concern that the removal of the High Street bus route will add additional traffic to Jubilee roundabout is not correct; the proposed Station Road bus route was selected instead of routing buses via the Jubilee roundabout.
28. The potential impact of traffic generation from the car rental business on the Station Road bus route and vehicle traffic was cited as concern. However as this is an existing operation it is not considered relevant in relation to the proposed changes to the traffic restrictions on Station Road.
29. A minor concern was raised that the proposed rising bollards to manage the bus flows will make it difficult for service vehicle access to the telephone exchange. However a detailed design swept path analysis has been undertaken for all movements that will be required to be made, and this is not considered to be an issue.

How the Project supports LTP3 Objectives

30. The proposals would help facilitate the flow of motor traffic in the area.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

31. Funding for the proposal is being delivered by the developers of the Orchard Centre (Phase 2); the appraisal of the proposals and consultation has been undertaken by E&E officers as part of their normal duties.

RECOMMENDATION

32. **The Cabinet Member for the Environment is RECOMMENDED to approve implementation of the proposals as advertised.**

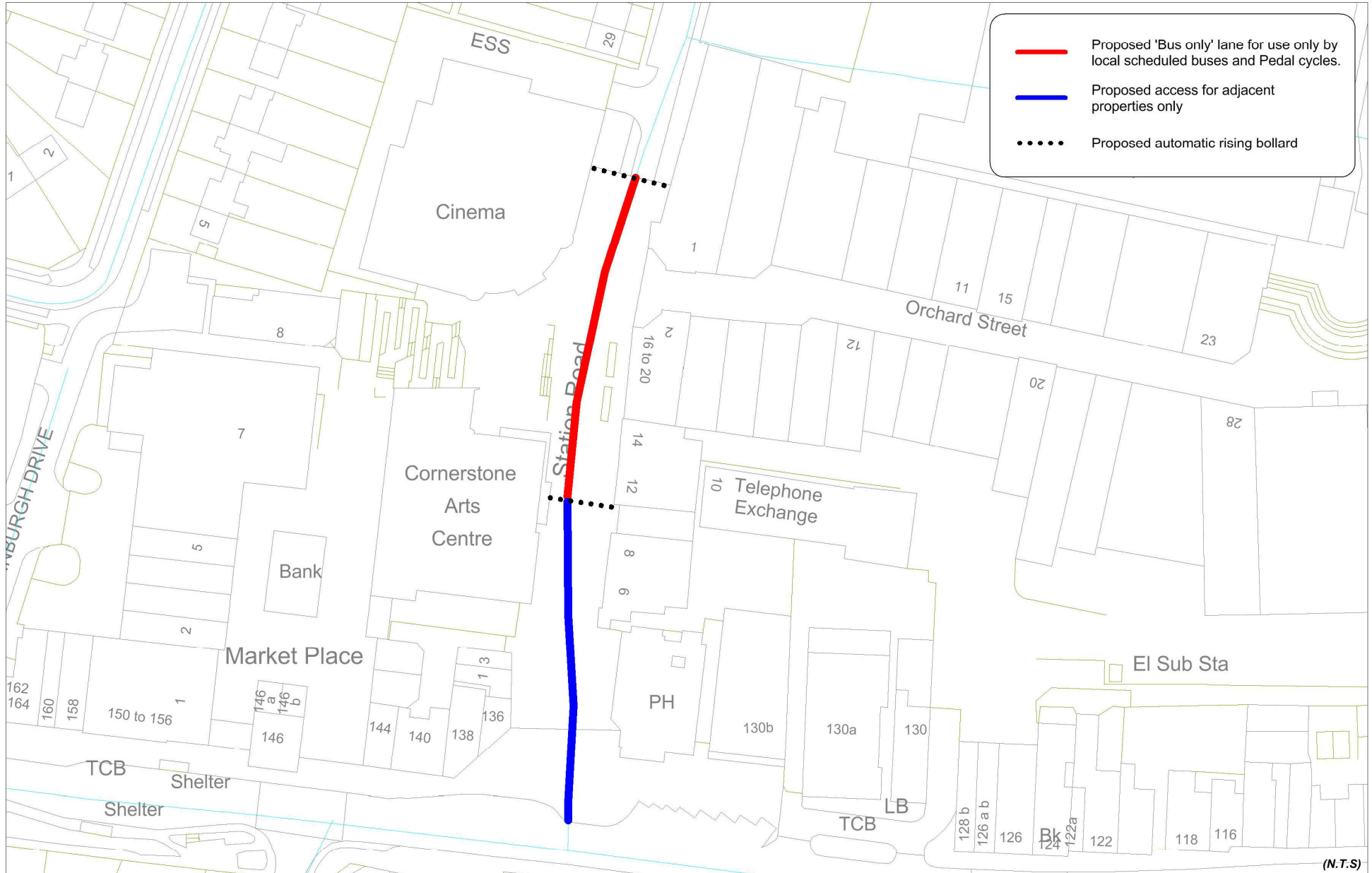
MARK KEMP

Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Consultation responses

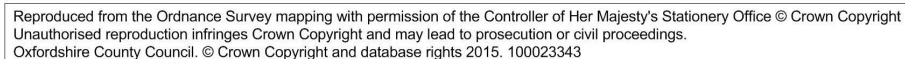
Contact Officers: Owen Jenkins 01865 323304

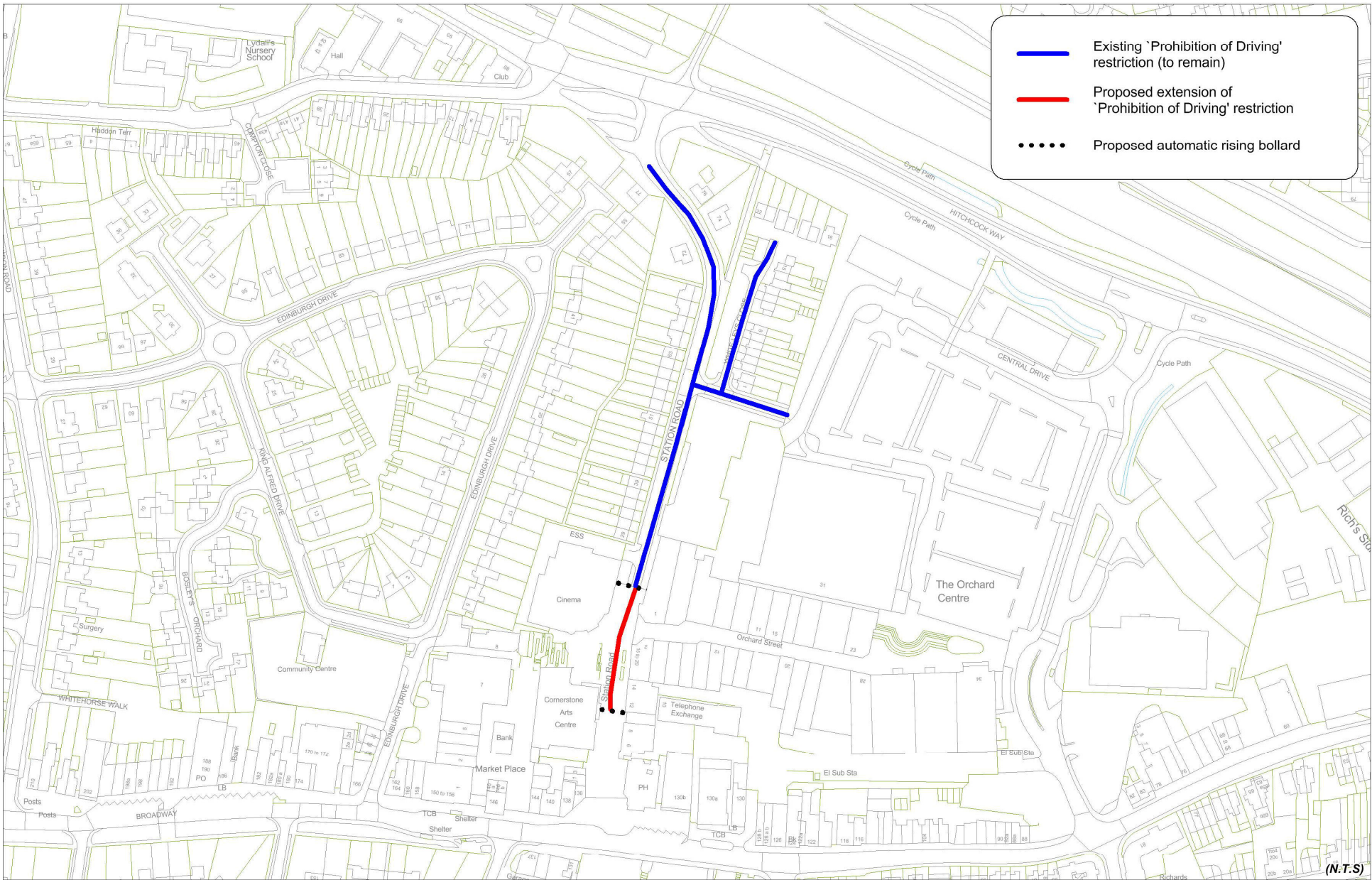
January 2016





Map centre:
easting. 452803, northing. 190258





ANNEX 5

| RESPONDENT | SUMMARISED COMMENTS |
|-------------------------|--|
| Thames Valley Police | <p>No objection – but has the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not against highway improvements providing all aspects of public safety have been addressed, and notes that the proposed rising bollards will ensure that the bus lane will be self-enforcing other than motorcycles. ▪ Raises query about the safety of a pedestrian area shared by buses and cycles ▪ Restrictions will feature extremely low in terms of enforcement activity by Thames Valley Police, and notes that disabled badge holders will be able to park within the road outside the proposed loading ban periods. ▪ All lines and signs need to be in accordance with The Traffic Signs and General Directions 2002 before any order comes into force. |
| County Councillor Hards | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of bus route on local business in Station Road, ▪ Loss of residents parking, ▪ Delivery to business has been underestimated, and the proposed lining will not allow sufficient room for buses to pass at these times, ▪ ‘Proper’ bus shelters with seats are required at all stops, ▪ Removal of disabled bays is not acceptable, suitable replacements are required, ▪ Suitability of carriageway to accommodate two buses passing at bends on Station Road. ▪ |
| Harwell Parish Council | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effect on local business/community facilities with buses traffic. |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Thames Travel | <p>No objection – but has the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to ensure that delivery vehicles do not impede bus traffic during permitted loading times, ▪ Wishes to ensure that the dimensions of the carriageway and associated features are fit for purpose in so much that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two buses can pass on Station Road without parked vehicles impeding passage, ○ Carriageway width needs to be at minimum 6.2 metres (preferably 6.75 metres), ○ Safety concerns about rising bollards in terms of ‘fail-safe’ procedures, ○ Drivers vision should not be impeded by vegetation/planting, ○ Unsure about priority given to buses exiting Station Road onto Broadway. |
| Local Business, (Taxi Company) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of access for Taxi operators, unlike those other bus lanes in the County, the current bus lane is a key pick up/drop off point for many elderly and disabled taxi users, ▪ Safety concerns over vulnerable pedestrians through not allowing taxi access, ▪ Concerned about bus management i.e. buses remaining in place for extended periods, ▪ Would rather see the area adjacent to Station Road designated as new car park being used as a small bus terminus. |
| Didcot First | <p>No objection – but has the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerned about provision of bus stops and management of bus flow, as well as the lack of Bus Terminus facility, ▪ Concerned about loss of bus shelters and seating, ▪ Would rather see the area adjacent to Station Road designated as new car park being used as a small bus terminus, ▪ Feels that buses trying to pass in this confined area would be extremely hazardous to pedestrians, ▪ Bringing buses into the pedestrian area will also have a dramatic effect on emissions and air pollution. |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Resident, (Lydalls Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feels the bus lane through Station Road will have a negative impact on the currently well-used pedestrian area, ▪ Believes the removal of disabled bays discriminates against those with mobility issues, ▪ Use of pole & flag bus stops in place of sheltered seating as seen currently, ▪ Feels the loss of further residents parking will add to the already significant pressure on spaces, ▪ Concerned over safety of buses exiting onto Broadway, ▪ Concerned about safety of buses passing at bend on Station Road, ▪ Believes the extension of driving prohibition will be meaningless unless effectively enforced (unlike the current order), ▪ Concerned over the potential environmental effects, such as loss of established trees, ▪ Suitability of carriageway to accommodate two buses passing in terms of width. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of residents parking. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Loss of residents parking. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety of buses traveling along Station Road, ▪ Removal of disabled bays, ▪ Loss of residents parking. |

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Resident, (White Leys Close) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Impact of buses on local residents, ▪ Access to properties & vehicles, ▪ Safety of residents, particularly children, ▪ Increased noise pollution & pedestrian activity. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buses passing at bend on Station Road, ▪ Bus lane does nothing to alleviate traffic problems in local area. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Road Suitability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerns about the bend at the northern end of Station Road, particularly potential damage to large Horse Chestnut tree within conservation area, ○ Concerned about potential structural damage to buildings on Station Road caused by heavy bus flow, ○ Concerned about damage to overhead wires across Station Road, have already been damaged by taller vehicles, ○ Concerned about noise & air pollution, especially as buses wait at the bollards, ○ Concerned about damage to road surface which is already heavily damaged, ○ Concerned about positioning of bus stop by White Leys Close, reducing visibility for vehicles trying to enter/exit, also the fact that the bus stop is being located in a conservation area, ○ Concerned about enforcement of prohibition of driving order for Station Road & White Leys Close, current order has only had limited success and would require effective enforcement, ○ Concerned about the negative impact that buses would have on the major pedestrian access into town, ○ Concerned that routing buses through Station Road not enhance or preserve an established |

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| | <p>Conservation area,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned that plans to alter the loading prohibitions would have a negative effect on the local businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of pedestrianised zone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned that the introduction of buses to the Station Road area will have a detrimental effect on business, especially those with outside seating areas, ○ Concerned about increased danger in Station Road to children and other vulnerable pedestrians, ○ Concerned that the introduction of traffic along Station Road would create a split between 'Old' and 'New' Didcot, ○ Concerned that the area outside Cornerstone will be impacted by the introduction of regular traffic, especially impacting the various outdoor events. ▪ Changing Existing Bus Arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Concerned that the new bus stops would add an additional load to shoppers using them, as the locations are 250m apart on a 14m gradient, ○ Feels that bus stops should be located as close as possible to the amenities people using them require. |
| Online Response, (unknown) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feels that Station Road is not suitable for bus traffic, being too narrow to accommodate two buses passing each other, ▪ Concerned that enforcement has not been addressed properly, especially due to the removal of High Street as a rat-run may cause drivers to seek Station Road as an alternative, ▪ Feels that the use of signed only enforcement will not be sufficient, considering the current restrictions are not adhered to, ▪ Concerned that the re-alignment of the bend on Station Road will have an impact on the tress within the Conservation area, ▪ Concerned about the potential of conflict between vehicles at the northern bend on Station Road, especially between motor vehicles and pedal cycles, |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Believes that by adding bus traffic to Station Road will compromise the safety of local residents on a currently quiet road, ▪ Concerned that the bus traffic on Station Road will have detrimental effects on residents, primarily visual and noise pollution, ▪ Concerned about the reduction in parking for local residents, ▪ Concerned that loading bays will further reduce the available space for pedestrians, having an adverse effect on the area as a whole, ▪ Concerned that the accessibility to the pedestrian zone for vulnerable pedestrians (i.e. disabled) will be impacted by the proposals, ▪ Feels that the proposed bus route will have an adverse effect on the character and environment of the area. |
| Resident, (Station Road) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Suitability of carriageway to accommodate two buses passing, ▪ Safety of residents, particularly children & other vulnerable pedestrians, ▪ Increased noise & air pollution from bus traffic. |
| Resident, (Brunstock Beck) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effect on local business that provide outside seating/eating facilities, ▪ Increased noise & air pollution from bus traffic. |
| Email Response, (unknown) | <p>Objects - due to the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety of pedestrians due to possible conflict with buses on Station Road |

Annex 6 - Responses by Developers' Consultants to concerns raised in consultation

The Developer's consultants' have supplied the further comments detailed below in relation to concerns raised in the consultation, although note that these have already been considered as part of the Planning Committee and/or as part of the Stage 1 & Stage 2 Safety Audits.

The references to Committee Report and Committee Addendum Report relate to the South Oxfordshire District Council Planning Committee Meeting on 29 July 2015; the full documents are available on the South Oxfordshire District Council web site: <http://democratic.southoxon.gov.uk/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=1785>

1. Removal of residential parking on Station Rd - The houses along Station Road do not have any parking due to the period in which they were constructed. The residents therefore have to park on the road. However, they do not have any right to park or allocated parking." The existing residential parking along Station Rd is 130.5m in length. It is proposed to reduce the length of the residential parking by 4.5m to 126m. Using the largest length of an on-street parking bay (6.6m), there would be 19.1 parking bays in 126m and 19.8 parking bays in 130.5m. Using the smallest length (4.5m), there would be 28 parking bays in 126m and 29 parking bays in 130.5m. Therefore, there residents on Station Rd would lose a maximum of 1 on-street parking bay. A clause has been included within the draft S106 for Hammerson to pay for monitoring of on-street parking on Station Rd and White Leys Close and implementation of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) if required. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 4)*
2. Station Rd not wide enough for two-way buses - OCC objection to Station Rd bus route subsequently removed. Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 'Thames Travel' point 3 states that "OCC have removed their objection to the Station Road proposal and accepts this is a suitable alternative to the High St, they have not raised any technical objections in terms of highway safety and convenience, road width or visibility concerns." Station Road is to be widened under the proposals and the scheme has been designed to accommodate buses travelling in both directions at the same time. *(see also: Paragraph 7.12 of Committee report)*
3. Danger to pedestrians in Station Rd shared space (bus and pedestrian conflict) - This was not raised as an issue in the Stage 1 or 2 Road Safety Audits (RSAs). In relation to resident's concerns about safety, there are examples of other places such as Oxford City Centre and Newbury town centre where shared surface streets with bus routes through them work effectively and safely. A safety audit of Station Road has been undertaken and submitted as part of the amended plans to ensure that

pedestrian safety is fundamental to the scheme through the design, layout and hard and soft landscaping. The Safety Audit demonstrates that the proposal will not adversely affect safety and can provide an appropriate and safe route.” (see also: *Paragraph 7.13 of the Committee Report*)

4. Conflict between delivery vehicles and buses in shared space on Station Rd - OCC have reviewed the scheme and have not raised any objection with regard to deliveries. The shared space has been designed to allow deliveries to take place and buses to route through the space. Street furniture has been located so as not to interfere with vehicular movements within the shared space. (see also: *Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 7*)
5. Effect on trees, particularly the Horse Chestnut Tree on Station Rd - The developer is entering into a S278 Agreement to widen Station Road in order to allow for the two-way movement of buses. The tree is not subject to a Tree Protection Order and the Arboricultural Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) has not raised any concerns about the impact of the proposals on the horse chestnut tree. There is also a planning condition (Condition 22 – Tree Protection Station Road) that relates to the protection of this tree.
6. Noise and air quality impact from buses in Station Rd - the proposal will not adversely affect air quality or noise levels. In addition, with regards to potential Noise and Air Quality, respectively, no objection was made by the Environmental Health Officer. (see also: *Paragraph 7.22 of the Committee Report*)
7. Road safety issues with buses, cars and cyclists travelling around the ‘blind bend’ on Station Rd - The safety audit undertaken on behalf of the applicant demonstrates that the proposal will not adversely affect safety and can provide an appropriate and safe [bus] route.” The scheme has been designed to accommodate buses travelling in both directions on Station Rd at the same time. (see also: *Paragraph 8.4 of the Committee Report*)
8. Insufficient clearance for buses to pass under the overhead cables - Station Road was previously used by vehicles and buses before the first phase of the Orchard Centre was constructed. There were no issues during this time that I have been made aware of in relation to the impact on overhead power cables.” It is proposed to widen Station Rd and provide new, higher utility poles on the eastern side of Station Rd in order to raise the cables. However, residents are concerned that on the western side of Station Rd the cables will continue to be attached to the houses and there will therefore not be sufficient clearance. The typical height of a double decker bus is 4.4m and a typical height of a 2 storey house is 5.7m to eaves. The bus will be over 8m from the house (e.g. width of house frontage, footway and on-street parking bay) and as such the cables will be higher at this point than at the house. Figure 1 below provides a cross section of Station Rd, which demonstrates that there will be sufficient

clearance. The detailed proposals will be approved by the highway authority as part of the S278 Agreement. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 5)*

9. Alternatives to Station Rd bus route have not been investigated - SODC also commissioned an independent study by Glanvilles to assess the potential bus options, which concluded that two-way buses on Station Road was the preferred option. This is not a matter to object to the proposed TRO changes for Station Rd as it has already been dealt with as part of the planning process. *(see also: Committee report paragraph 7.10)*
10. Station Rd is a conservation area and routing buses along it would not enhance or preserve the area - Paragraphs 7.26 to 7.30 of the Committee report deals with the impact on the conservation area.
11. Impact on privacy of houses adjacent to proposed Station Rd bus stops - In terms of the impact on neighbour's privacy from double decker buses, it is unlikely that these buses would be stationary for long periods of time that would create a sustained level of overlooking that would be detrimental to the amenity of neighbours. Station Road up until approximately 10 years ago was not pedestrianised and therefore vehicles including buses travelled along it. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 6)*
12. Proposed bus stop at Station Rd/White Leys Close would reduce visibility to vehicles exiting onto Station Rd - OCC have removed their objection to the Station Road proposal and accepts this is a suitable alternative to the High St, they have not raised any technical objections in terms of highway safety and convenience, road width or visibility concerns." The proposed bus stop would be located on Station Road to the south of the junction with White Leys Close. Vehicles exiting from White Leys Close would be travelling north on Station Road (i.e. turning right out of White Leys Close) and so vehicles would have visibility to oncoming vehicles. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 'Thames Travel' point 3)*
13. Reducing the permitted times for deliveries in shared space would impact on local businesses - OCC have reviewed the scheme and have not raised any objection with regard to deliveries. Businesses would be able to have deliveries any time during the day except for three hours in the morning (0700-1000) and evening (1600-1900) that coincide with the network peak periods. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 7)*
14. Tight turn from Station Rd into Broadway and traffic impact of buses turning right from Broadway into Station Rd - OCC have removed their objection to the Station Road proposal and accepts this is a suitable alternative to the High St, they have not raised any technical objections in terms of highway safety and convenience, road width or visibility concerns." Swept path

analysis of the proposed Station Road / Broadway junction has been undertaken to ensure that all vehicles that will use the junction will be able to turn safely into and out of it. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 'Thames Travel' point 3)*

15. Impact of delivery vehicles on visibility splays at Station Rd/Broadway junction - OCC have reviewed the scheme and have not raised any objection with regard to deliveries. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 7)*
16. Increased walking distances to Station Rd bus stops and also 'uphill' - The current bus stops are approximately 60m from the entrance to Sainsbury's the new ones along Station Road will be approximately double this distance. However, bus users will be closer to the shops to the west of Orchard Centre, the cinema and Cornerstone. *(see also: Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 point 3)*

ANNEX 7**Summary of Bus Company Written Representation**

| Issue Ref | Summary of issue raised | Issue raised by which Objectors? (OCC Reference) | Considered as part of Planning Committee or Safety Audits | Further Clarification |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 1 | Can we ensure that two 12m buses can pass each other the whole length of Station Road and that parking does not impede this. | Bus Operator | Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 deals with the points raised by the bus operator. | The scheme has been designed to accommodate buses travelling in both directions on Station Rd at the same time. |
| 2 | The width of the road needs to be 6.75m to allow buses to pass easily. The minimum is 6.2m. | Bus Operator | Committee Addendum Report paragraph 4.0 deals with the points raised by the bus operator. | Station Road is over 6.2m along its entire length except a small section (16.5m) just north of the bend, where the width reduces to 6.0m. Drawing Number 110350/A/71 attached to this note illustrates the road widths and shows the small section where the road is less than 6.2m wide. Should there be an occasion where two buses meet at this point they may need to stop and let the other bus past. The stopping sight distance (SSD) along the entire length of Station Rd, including at the bend, is greater than the required 43m for a 30mph road and therefore buses will have adequate visibility of oncoming vehicles (Drawing Number 110350/AT/T01). |
| 3 | Deliveries will be permitted at the south end of Station Road outside the hours of 0700-1000 | Bus Operator | | Deliveries will not be permitted for the peak 6 hours of the day, when bus movements through the shared space will be at their highest. The |

| Issue Ref | Summary of issue raised | Issue raised by which Objectors? (OCC Reference) | Considered as part of Planning Committee or Safety Audits | Further Clarification |
|-----------|---|--|---|--|
| | and 1600-1900. Would like to see a ban on deliveries between 0700-1900. Concern about delivery vehicles blocking buses. | | | shared space has been designed to allow deliveries to take place and buses to route through the space. Street furniture has been located so as not to interfere with vehicular movements within the shared space. |
| 4 | Rising bollards – what will happen if the transponder fails. | Bus Operator | | Rising bollards generally use an electric or hydraulic mechanism installed under the carriageway to raise and lower the bollard, either manually or automatically in response to a trigger from the driver or vehicle. A cabinet is located nearby at the roadside, which contains all of the control and communication equipment needed to raise and lower the bollard and to enable remote monitoring of bollard operation by the local authority (or other delegated authority) as well as providing for remote lowering/raising of the bollard. Vectos is currently in discussion with OCC to understand what the course of action would be if the system failed and the likelihood of such an occurrence. |
| 5 | Landscaping on Station Road southern end needs to be low height so that drivers vision is not impeded. | Bus Operator | | The landscaping will be designed so as not to impede visibility of pedestrians and drivers of vehicles. The landscaping will be maintained. |
| 6 | How will buses egress from | Bus Operator | | It is proposed to provide a new signal controlled |

| Issue Ref | Summary of issue raised | Issue raised by which Objectors? (OCC Reference) | Considered as part of Planning Committee or Safety Audits | Further Clarification |
|-----------|--|--|---|---|
| | Station Road onto Broadway? How will buses egress the northern end of Station Road to access the railway station? | | | junction at Station Road / Broadway. The existing signal controlled junction of Station Road / Cow Lane will be retained. |
| 7 | Timing of stopping up of High Street and opening of Station Road for buses. | Bus Operator | | The stopping up of High Street will not be permitted until the Station Road works are complete and the road is operational for buses. |

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT (INCLUDING TRANSPORT)

Extract of the MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 14 January 2016 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.52 am

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth (In place of Councillor David Nimmo Smith) – in the Chair

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Nick Hards (for Agenda Items 2 and 4)
Councillor Anne Purse (for Agenda Item 3)
Councillor Patrick Greene (for Agenda Item 4 and 5)
Councillor Rodney Rose (for Agenda Item 7)
Councillor Steve Curran

Officers:

Whole of meeting G. Warrington (Law & Governance); M. Kemp and D. Tole (Environment & Economy)

Part of meeting

| Agenda Item | Officer Attending |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 & 6 | J. Sherwood (Environment & Economy) |
| 6. | P. Mulvihill (Environment & Economy) |

The Leader of the Council (deputising for the Cabinet Member for Environment) considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting and decided as set out below. Except as insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

Councillor Hudspeth advised that he was deputising for the Cabinet Member for Environment Councillor David Nimmo-Smith and wished him a speedy recovery following recent hospital treatment.

45/15 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

Petition

Councillor Purse presented a petition (220 signatures) organised by residents of Horton-cum-Studley regarding withdrawal of subsidies to the 118/108 bus services. She advised that a second on-line petition, which also called for the protection of these services would obviously include signatures from outside the relevant area.

The submitted petition highlighted that “the service was an essential part of the community for the following reasons:

- They were an isolated rural community without any amenities such as a shop, post office or pub.
- Many residents were elderly without cars and were dependent on the bus to access Headington or Oxford for shopping and other such facilities.
- Many in the village used the bus in order not to drive into Oxford where cars were discouraged and parking difficult and expensive. That also helped reduce ‘carbon footprints’.
- Many used the bus to get to work and children who attended school in Oxford also made very good use of the bus which was full in the early morning. Loss of bus service would inevitably increase car usage at rush hour times which was highly undesirable.”

The Leader of the Council referred the petition to the Director for Environment & Economy to respond.

Public address

| <i>Speaker</i> | <i>Item</i> |
|--|--|
| Tim Foxhall – Consultant David Bird – Consultant County Councillor Patrick Greene (Didcot East & Hagbourne) County Councillor Nick Hards (Didcot West) |))) Item 5 – Orchard Centre (Phase 2))Didcot)) |
| Jane Imbush Dr Janice Bridger Frank Dumbleton County Councillor Patrick Greene (Didcot East & Hagbourne) |))) Item 6 – Traffic Improvements –)Hagbourne & Chilton Areas) |
| Ben Arrowsmith (on behalf of a local resident) Colin Alderman – Minster Lovell Parish Council Warwick Robinson – West Oxfordshire District Council County Councillor Rodney Rose (Charlbury & Wychwood) |))) Item 7 – Amendment of One-way)Traffic restriction – Old Minster Lovell)))) |

47/15 PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS - ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

(Agenda No. 5)

The Leader of the Council considered (CMDE5) comments and objections received in the course of a statutory consultation on proposals to introduce and amend various traffic restrictions in Station Road and The Broadway, Didcot as part of the Orchard Centre (Phase 2) development.

Tim Foxhall (Glanvilles) explained that his company had provided support to both District Council and county highway officers and that the orders currently before the Leader of the Council were fundamental to the success of the scheme. Having reviewed the findings of Vectos the other consultants involved he agreed that objections lodged could be met.

David Bird (Vectos) advised that his company had worked closely with both County and District Councils and he was satisfied that all issues had been fully considered and addressed. Thames Travel and Oxford Bus Company were now content with the road width proposed for Station Road and that there would be sufficient emergency procedures should there be any failures of the rising bollards. As all servicing would take place off-street there would be no interruption to bus flow. He confirmed one resident parking place would be lost but advised that Hammersons had agreed a provision of £10,000 towards the cost of a controlled parking zone. The scheme had been fully assessed with full safety audits carried out and there were no technical reasons why the scheme should not be approved.

Councillor Patrick Greene opposed the recommendation. He referred to a petition of over 1,500 signatures against the Station Road bus route proposals which had been presented to the County Council in April 2015 but not mentioned in the report currently before the Leader of the Council. Comparisons between this scheme and Queen Street in Oxford were misleading as the situation in Didcot was very different. He felt that opponents to this scheme had been denied a fair opportunity to present their views particularly at meetings at South Oxfordshire District Council and he asked that those concerns be conveyed to the District Council. He urged the Leader not to approve the scheme or at the very least defer to enable all necessary information to be considered including the petition previously presented to Council.

Mr Kemp confirmed that he had not been aware of the petition referred to by Councillor Greene.

Councillor Nick Hards also opposed the proposals and referred to a pre-planning public exhibition for the Orchard Centre Phase 2 proposals held in November 2013 which had been the first time that a large number of the public had first been alerted to the proposed arrangements for buses including closure of the bus link along High Street. He also referred to congestion at the Jubilee Way roundabout and asked if consideration had been given to the recent award of Garden Town status and how that might affect what was now being proposed. The proposals also needed to be considered in the light of a statement from the Leader of South Oxfordshire District Council who had referred to the need to reduce traffic into the town and that the Northern Perimeter Road remained a first priority. The current road layout worked

well with the large open space outside the Cornerstone well used. Some of that would relocate but not all and he mentioned the cinema, which had large numbers of children attending the Saturday morning show as a potential area of conflict. He was not convinced that the proposal had been looked at properly and whether consultants had in fact looked at the situation to see what happened on the ground and advised that only yesterday a large lorry had been unloading which would have inevitably held up any buses. He referred to a letter from Jenny Wilson (also submitted on behalf of 1500 local residents) objecting to the proposal.

Mr Tole advised that the report dealt with how traffic and safety implications of a planning permission issued by another authority could be best managed. It was not the function of the report to consider the rights or wrongs of that decision. Although the number of buses involved would not be great the use of Station Road for buses had been the main focus of objection. He accepted that the situation could change as Didcot grew but the road would only be used by buses with no other through traffic. The question had been asked if this was a suitable route for buses with comparisons made to Queen Street and, whilst the two routes were not exactly the same, buses used Queen Street without significant problems and, as similarly trained and experienced drivers would be using Station Road it was reasonable to expect that would be the case here and that vehicles would be present in a controlled way. County officers considered that would be the case and although the introduction of buses into the street would require pedestrians to learn and adapt but measures would be introduced to assist with that. It was inevitable that the area would change but he did not accept that all sitting areas would be affected and whilst the offer of funding for a CPZ had been welcome it was unlikely that that could be taken up due to lack of adequate enforcement. The one parking space to be lost was not one of long standing having only been in situ for 3 or 4 years. Regarding the letter from Jenny Wilson that had referred to a number of detailed design issues which would be addressed as the scheme developed. Bus shelters would be provided on Station Road with issues of loading accommodated through a combination of careful design and planned delivery by local businesses. The road would be widened with the number of buses adapting to local needs. There would not be a constant stream of buses. The issue of further investment in the strategic network was not a matter for consideration now and the County Council needed to focus on its response to the proposals put forward by the developer and agreed by the District Council. He had not been aware of the earlier petition presented to the County Council but confirmed that this consultation had been free standing and had focussed around the recent planning process.

Responding to questions from the Leader of the Council:

Mr Tole confirmed a £10,000 offer of funding towards a CPZ but as that was a brand new offer it had not been included in any S106 agreement but that it could be used towards funding a much wider scheme in the future.

Mr Sherwood confirmed that the whole length of Station Road would be resurfaced to a suitable standard. The only difference between the northern and southern sections being the need to introduce traffic restrictions on one.

Mr Tole confirmed that the main part would be widened on the east side of the southern section with the whole width resurfaced.

Mr Tole confirmed that it was not possible to impose a legal limit below 20 mph. Oxford's Queen Street had an advisory limit of 5 mph and that would be applied in this instance. Bus operation was now very controlled and these measures would to a large extent be self-enforcing by bus operators.

Mr Sherwood confirmed that detailed design would be carried out as part of the planning process and not in consultation with local businesses and residents.

The Leader of the Council recognised that the status of the northern perimeter road had been ongoing for the past 20 years and that the recent award of Garden Town status for Didcot was no guarantee that that situation would change. The County Council needed to deal with the detail of the issued planning permission and he could see no reason why the situation, which existed in Queen Street, which was not bus dominated, could not be successfully transposed to Didcot. He also hoped that proposals for a suitably enforced CPZ could be pursued and that developers would take on board local views as part of the detailed design work. Therefore having regard to the arguments and options set out in the documentation before him, the representations made to him and the further considerations set out above he confirmed his decision as follows:

to approve implementation of the proposals for bus lane and waiting restrictions as advertised.

Signed.....
Leader of the Council

Dated.....

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY – 4 FEBRUARY 2016

PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS – ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

Report by the Deputy Director of Environment and Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

In accordance with of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Proper Officer has agreed to a request from the following Councillors for a Call In of the Cabinet Member for Environment's decision made on 14 January 2016 (Councillor Hudspeth substituting for Councillor Nimmo Smith) in relation to 'Proposed Bus Lane & Parking/Waiting Restrictions – Orchard Centre (Phase 2), Didcot by the following Members:

- Councillor Greene
- Councillor Hards
- Councillor Christie
- Councillor Tanner
- Councillor Beal
- Councillor Curran
- Councillor Pressel
- Councillor Price
- Councillor Webber
- Councillor Smith

The Cabinet Member decision was to approve the implementation of proposals for bus lane, loading and waiting restrictions (as advertised) to restrict access along a planned new stretch of highway to the south of Station Rd.

The proposed changes were brought to Cabinet Members Decisions following South Oxfordshire District Council considering a planning application for redevelopment of Phase 2 Didcot Orchard Centre at their Planning Committee on 29th April 2015. A resolution to grant planning permission subject to prior completion of Section 106 Agreement was given.

The proposed development includes the stopping up of High Street. An application for Stopping up Order has been made by the developer (pursuant to S247 Town and Country Planning Act 1980) to the Secretary of State.

A traffic regulation order limiting traffic use of highway must be for one or more of the reasons set out in Section 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (in this case the Statement of Reasons referred to Sections 1 (1)(a) "for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the

likelihood of any such danger arising” and 1 (1)(c) “for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic”)) and in considering the making of the Traffic Regulation Orders the highway authority must, so far as practicable having regard to various identified matters including all other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant, secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. A matter which must be considered is the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of passengers.

In addition, through the s278/38 approval process the County Council, as Highway Authority, will ensure that design and construction meets the required specification including completion and approval of relevant safety audits.

Reasons for the Call In Request and Responses

1. That the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal;

A petition was received by Cabinet on 14th April 2015 with a response sent on 18th April confirming that we would reflect, as appropriate, on concerns raised when preparing our response to the planning application.

The County Council's response to the planning application, which was considered by the Planning Committee, was submitted on 22nd May 2015 with an update submitted on 9th July 2015 following an amendment to the original application and receipt of further information.

In composing that submission the County Council considered the overall transport needs to mitigate the development and the petition that they had responded to. As the petition was effectively part of the planning application process, it was not relevant to the consideration of the Traffic Regulation Order as this is a legal vehicle that is being used to address the impact of the decision of the Planning Authority.

2. Ian Hudspeth, in giving his decision, was wrong to say that routing buses along Station Road had been around before November 2013. Previous work to extend the Orchard Centre had made no mention of closing High Street and sending buses along Station Road instead;

Whilst Cllr Hudspeth's recollection may have been incorrect, it had no bearing on the decision regarding the Traffic Regulation Order which is looking to address the impact of the decision of the Planning Authority.

3. Whilst it is true that the final section of the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road has been planned for about 30+ years, Garden Town status clearly makes

the prospect of completion of it a realistic proposition. Paragraph 8(a) of item 11 on the Cabinet Agenda for 26 January refers. Also John Cotton is on record as saying that that road would both relieve the congestion at the Jubilee Way Roundabout, and that its completion would be his number one priority should money become available through the Garden Town designation. Therefore if Mr. Cotton is right on both counts a new bus link would not be required.

Whilst a clear aspiration for the County Council, the funding required to deliver the Northern Perimeter Road has not yet been secured and so it is not possible to put a timeframe on the delivery of this scheme.

A bus link through the Orchard Centre not only avoids congestion at Jubilee Way roundabout, but also provides good permeability and access to the Orchard Centre by bus.

Prior to the submission of the development proposals to expand the Orchard Centre the County Council had expressed the need to retain a bus route with associated stops through the Orchard Centre, but was not explicit about how this should be achieved. The specific proposal submitted by the developers, as part of their planning application, was assessed by the County Council and considered by the planning Committee as part of the planning process.

Clearly, as Didcot develops the transport network will evolve and change accordingly. The response by the County Council, as Highway Authority, to South Oxfordshire District Council regarding the mitigations needed for the Orchard Centre development were made based on our current understanding of the network and its performance.

4. New information about funding of £10,000 for a controlled parking zone was provided at the meeting by the Consultants and that offer needs to be properly evaluated before any irrevocable steps to open up Station Road are taken.”

Any offer to contribute to the provision of a Controlled parking Zone will have no impact on the bus movements required around Didcot and so is not relevant to the consideration of the Traffic Regulation Order.

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CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

Note of the Meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2016

1. At their meeting on 4 February the Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment (Councillor Hudspeth substituting) made on 14 January 2016 following proper notice of a call in.
2. The Committee AGREED to refer the decision back to Cabinet on the grounds of material concerns in that the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal.

Summary of the Material Concerns

3. During discussion Members heard that the petition had been taken into account in consideration of the County Council's response to the planning application determined by South Oxfordshire District Council. In response to questions, officers confirmed that it had not been specifically referred to in that response.
4. Concern was expressed that the existence of the petition, and that it had been taken into account during the planning process had not been communicated during the decision making process for the Cabinet Member decision on 14 January 2016. It was felt that when including background in a report then all background should be included. Members felt that it should be referred back to cabinet so that the decision could be considered in the light of all the facts including the petition.
5. Members in noting that the petition had been submitted to full Council raised concerns that local members had not been advised of the petition and kept informed of the response. They considered that something extra was needed with regard to a protocol on Member engagement and will raise this separately with the Audit & Governance Committee.

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CABINET 23 FEBRUARY 2016

PROPOSED BUS LANE & PARKING/WAITING RESTRICTIONS – ORCHARD CENTRE (PHASE 2), DIDCOT

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Introduction

1. On 4th February 2015 the Performance Scrutiny Committee considered the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment made on 14th January 2016 (Councillor Hudspeth substituting for Councillor Nimmo Smith) following proper notice of call in. The Committee agreed to refer the decision back to Cabinet for it to consider in the light of the following aspect of the decision:
 - That the officers dealing with the matter had not been made aware of the fact that a 1500+ signature petition had been presented to Council opposing the proposal.
2. This report presents comments and objections received in the course of the statutory consultation on the proposals to introduce and amend various traffic restrictions in Station Road and The Broadway, Didcot.
3. The proposed Traffic Regulation Order is the legal vehicle that is being used to address the impact of the decision of the Planning Authority regarding the Orchard Centre (phase 2) development.

Background

4. The Orchard Centre (phase 2) development was considered at SODCs Planning Committee on 29th July 2015. A resolution to grant planning permission, subject to prior completion of Section 106 Agreement, was given.
5. The County Council's response to the planning application was submitted on 22nd May 2015 with an update submitted on 9th July 2015 following an amendment to the original application and receipt of further information. Copies of these can be found at Annex 8 & 9.
6. A petition was received by Cabinet on 14th April 2015 in relation to the Planning Application. The County Council sent a response on 18th April (see Annex 10) confirming that officers would reflect, as appropriate, on concerns raised when preparing the response to the planning application. SODC had also received a petition of over 1000 signatories in response to the planning application and included this fact and a summary of their concerns within the Planning Committee Report at Appendix 3 .

7. The proposed development included the creation of a new highway through the Orchard centre (south of Station Road) and the stopping up of the existing bus link along High Street. The development plans intended the re-opening of the southern end of Station Road to buses and pedal cycles only, with access to the bus lane being controlled by rising bollards, in place of the existing bus provision in High Street (between Broadway and Hitchcock Way) which will be closed. Details of the proposed traffic regulation orders for Station Road, including the section not currently highway just north of Broadway, and on Broadway itself in the vicinity of the proposed new signalled junction with Station Road are shown at Annexes 1 – 4 (Annexes 1-7 are part of the original report to the Cabinet Member for Environment on 14 January 2016).
8. An application for the Stopping-Up of High St has been made by the developer to the Secretary of State (pursuant to S247 Town and Country Planning Act 1980). The decision is currently still under consideration due to outstanding objections. The County Council does not have an objection. Original correspondence in response to the developer contacting us about their proposal is attached at annex 11.

Consultation

9. The formal consultation on the proposals was carried out between 5 November and 4 December 2015. This comprised letters being sent to approximately 255 residential and business properties in the immediate area, street notices being placed at intervals along the roads affected, public notices being published in the Didcot Herald on 4 November and the Oxford Times on 5 November 2015. In addition information was sent by email to statutory consultees, including Thames Valley Police, the Fire and ambulance services, Didcot Town Council, Bus Operators and the local Members, while a dedicated page was added to the County's online consultation portal to allow people to view and respond to the proposals.
10. Eighteen responses were received, comprising 9 objections, 8 responses raising one or more areas of concern, and 1 response in support; the responses are summarised at Annex 5. Copies of all the consultation responses are available for inspection in the Members' Resource Centre.
11. Thames Valley Police had no objection in principle to the proposals but did raise a concern that pedestrians crossing the bus lane had no specific crossing provision, and that while the rising bollards should effectively control access by cars and other larger vehicles, motorcycles would be able to bypass the bollards in contravention of the proposed restriction. The police also raised queries about possible obstruction of the bus route as a result of loading during permitted loading hours.
12. County Councillor Hards raised a number of specific concerns relating to the suitability of Station Road for use by buses, the provision for loading and deliveries, and parking issues including the proposed loss of three disabled bays and some spaces used by residents of Station Road.

13. The response from a local bus company raised a number of concerns regarding the viability and technical details of the scheme; these, together with the response supplied by the developer's consultant, are detailed at Annex 7.
14. A local taxi operator challenged the exclusion of taxis from the bus lane, citing that almost all the bus lanes in operation in other parts of the county permit use by taxis, as does the current bus only link in the High Street at the eastern side of the existing Orchard Centre.
15. Harwell Parish Council objected to the proposals to allow buses to use the pedestrian area of Station Road adjacent to The Cornerstone arts centre building.
16. Didcot First, a local organisation promoting Didcot, raise similar concerns on the safety of buses using the pedestrian area and queries on the wider management of buses in the vicinity, including the existing bus stops nearby.
17. The manager of The Broadway public house raised concerns over loading provision under the proposed new layout and traffic restrictions.
18. The remaining objections and concerns were largely from residents of Station Road; these included concerns over the suitability of Station Road as a bus route, and concerns over road safety, noise and emissions, and the loss of parking.

Response to objections and concerns

19. The concern of the police over the safety of pedestrians crossing the bus lane is noted; however experience of roads with similar restrictions (principally Queen Street in Oxford) is that these operate with good levels of safety and that bus drivers exercise high levels of care when travelling through such areas. Their concern that motorcyclists may contravene the proposed restriction (given that the proposed rising bollards would not stop motorcycles from travelling within the bus lane) is also noted; again experience of other bus lanes has been that abuse by motorcyclists is in practice very rare. The concern relating to potential obstruction by loading vehicles is noted and the operation of the scheme if approved will be monitored to determine if this is an issue requiring further investigation. The proposals have been the subject of an independent road safety audit at both the preliminary and detailed design stages.
20. Many of Cllr Hards concerns were the subject of consideration by South Oxfordshire District Council at their Planning Committee meeting on 29 July 2015 at which approval for the Orchard Centre phase 2 development was granted. Annex 6 shows the developers' consultants responses to detailed concerns raised in that consultation, and the paragraphs within this Annex particularly relevant to these concerns include paras 1,2, 7 and 13.

21. The proposal to remove the 3 disabled parking bays that are currently at the southern end of Station Road adjacent to the cinema also raised concerns. Although not on the public highway a total of 9 new disabled parking spaces are proposed as part of the development, 4 of which are proposed to be located in the new Station Road car park, which will be in an equivalent location to the spaces to be removed from Station Road.
22. A clause has been included within the draft Section 106 agreement for the developers to pay for the monitoring of on-street parking on Station Road and White Leys Close and to fund the implementation of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) , which would restrict parking to residents only, if this is judged to be required. This provision is considered to adequately address concerns were raised by local residents over the proposed amendments to waiting restrictions in Station Road.
23. The concerns of the local taxi operator that taxis are not proposed to be allowed to use the proposed bus lane are noted. A taxi rank is currently located on High Street, which is approximately 30m in length. Taxis are able to arrive and depart the rank from both Broadway and Hitchcock Way. The re-provision of a taxi rank at a new location opposite the petrol filling station (26m in length) ensures that taxis continue to benefit from a waiting facility. The pick-up / drop-off layby outside Sainsbury's will be maintained. A further taxi facility is proposed within the Broadway car park (17m in length), since this is closer to the retail units and it ensures that customers have a choice. It is anticipated that this would accommodate the level of demand for taxi use, and that when considering the wider interests of pedestrians and road safety in minimising the use of the proposed bus lane, the current proposal to limit the use of the bus lane to buses and pedal cycles only is appropriate.
24. Harwell Parish Council's concerns over the proposed bus lane through the current pedestrian area do not cite any specific issues, but are presumed to relate to road safety and pedestrian amenity. The comments given above on the Thames Valley Police response on road safety apply; it is accepted that the proposal may result in some loss of pedestrian amenity but this needs to be balanced against the wider benefits of the development.
25. The concerns of Didcot First relating to the use of the bus stops are noted. High St is not officially a bus terminus and no bus stands are provided there. Therefore, Station Rd has been designed with bus stops but it will not be a terminus. It is proposed to provide 3 bus stops on Station Road; 2 boarding and alighting stops and 1 alight-only bus stop. The 2 boarding and alighting bus stops are proposed to have a bus shelter with seating. However, it is not proposed to provide a bus shelter for the alight only stop as there will be no bus passengers waiting at the bus stop. The design of the bus stops has been agreed by the County Council with the developer.
26. The issue of loading for The Broadway public house is being investigated by the developer's consultants, who will be liaising with the manager on this matter.

27. The concerns of residents responding to the consultation primarily related to the use of the road by buses and also the proposed changes to parking provision; Annex 6 provides a detailed response to these issues. Additionally some concerns were raised by residents over potential structural damage to properties on Station Road caused by vibration from the bus traffic. Station Road has previously operated as the main town centre bus route up until 2002. There is no reason to suggest that reopening it as a bus route would cause any structural damage to buildings.
28. As part of the development scheme Station Road is to be widened on the east side to assist two-way bus operation. As part of this work the eastern half of the road will be resurfaced and tests have been undertaken recently on to determine the current condition of the rest of the road; the results are currently being analysed to determine how much resurfacing of the remainder of Station Road is required.
29. Pedestrian safety on Station Road (particular children and other vulnerable groups) was cited as a concern from a number of respondents. The pedestrian facilities on Station Road will be maintained and there will continue to be footways on both sides of the carriageway, ensuring sufficient provision of segregation from other road-users.
30. Some respondents also expressed concerns about the impact of the bus route on those businesses with outdoor seating, and whether they would be able to continue to provide this in the shared space. The proposals do not include any physical changes to the existing seating areas and the businesses will be able to continue providing outdoor seating for customers.
31. Concerns were raised about the proposed management and control of bus flows to prevent more than one bus at a time through shared surface part of Station Road. It is planned that the proposed rising bollards will restrict access to the shared space area for permitted vehicles only, and as such will not 'gate' buses. Given the relatively low frequency of buses that are anticipated to use Station Road, it is not considered necessary to 'gate' bus traffic at this time but this will be kept under review as bus services in Didcot respond to local growth.
32. The concern that the removal of the High Street bus route will add additional traffic to Jubilee roundabout is not correct; the proposed Station Road bus route was selected instead of routing buses via the Jubilee roundabout.
33. The potential impact of traffic generation from the car rental business on the Station Road bus route and vehicle traffic was cited as concern. However as this is an existing operation it is not considered relevant in relation to the proposed changes to the traffic restrictions on Station Road.
34. A minor concern was raised that the proposed rising bollards to manage the bus flows will make it difficult for service vehicle access to the telephone exchange. However a detailed design swept path analysis has been undertaken for all movements that will be required to be made, and this is not considered to be an issue.

How the Project supports LTP3 Objectives

35. The proposals would help facilitate the flow of motor traffic in the area.

Financial and Staff Implications (including Revenue)

36. Funding for the proposal is being delivered by the developers of the Orchard Centre (Phase 2); the appraisal of the proposals and consultation has been undertaken by E&E officers as part of their normal duties.

RECOMMENDATION

37. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve implementation of the proposals as advertised.**

MARK KEMP

Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Commercial)

Background papers: Consultation responses

Contact Officers: Owen Jenkins 01865 323304

February 2016

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Purpose of document

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

This report contains officer advice in the form of a strategic localities response and technical team response(s). Where local member have responded these have been attached by OCCs Major Planning Applications Team (planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

District: South Oxfordshire

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Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Strategic Comments

- **Object for the reasons given below**

- Inability to fully assess the impact of the development proposals
- Lack of detail to demonstrate proposed re-provision of bus link and associated stops can be successfully and satisfactorily delivered.

Comments:

The expansion of Orchard Centre is supported in principle and a welcomed investment to help support a growing and changing face of Didcot. It will have a large and positive impact on Didcot and the surrounding area.

However, it must be well planned and take into account the wider place requirements. From the County Councils perspective the impact and transport network requirements is particularly important.

Didcot lies within the Science Vale area which will see significant growth in the coming years. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) recognises the importance of the Science Vale area and it is included within the emerging Local Transport Plan 4 as well as supported in the Corporate Plan 2014/15 – 2017/18. It is also recognised in the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan.

The proposal is broadly in line with South Oxfordshire's adopted Core Strategy specifically policy CSDID2. However, there are two areas where OCC have concerns about specific adherence and believe require further work and evidence is required. These are the final two bullet points of policy CSDID2 (The Orchard Centre) as highlighted below:

Permission will be granted for a mixed-use retail-led development to include: on land at the Orchard Centre (as shown on the Adopted Policies Map) provided that the scheme:

- *provides additional car parking and servicing including reconfiguring the existing provision where necessary; and*
- *considers alternatives to the spine road through the site.*

Taking the two requirements above in turn:

- 1) The County Council is concerned over the level of car parking proposed to serve the development. This has the potential to create on street parking issues and impact on the shopping centres on-going vitality and attractiveness. Further evidence is required to allay concerns over the potential overflow of parking onto the surrounding road network and the impact on junctions in the immediate vicinity.

- 2) The County Council understands the applicants desire to stop-up the High Street, through the Orchard Centre, to allow phase 2a to be delivered as designed; however a suitable alternative will need to be delivered and operational before we would agree to the highway being stopped up. The applicant will need to demonstrate a suitable re-provision of the bus link and bus stops which supports the priority destinations of Didcot station, Orchard Centre and the Broadway.

The applicant has shown an alternative (via Station Rd) that, in principle, is on a suitable alignment. However, the current application does not fully demonstrate how this will be satisfactorily delivered. Further work and a greater level of detail is required to demonstrate that this alternative link can be successfully delivered.

The County Council is keen to work with the developer and District Council to develop the proposals and evidence submitted to try and overcome these concerns.

Officer's Name: Paul Fermer

Officer's Title: Locality Manager – Science Vale

Date: 22 May 2015

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Transport

Recommendation

Objection

Key issues

- Safe and satisfactory operation of the proposed alternative bus route down Station Road is not demonstrated.
- This link would need to be operational before the existing bus route was closed and stopped up.
- The trip generation estimates presented in the TA are considered to be an under estimate by virtue of the dataset and methodology used.
- The car parking provisions are considered inadequate.
- The traffic impact scenario presented in the TA is not considered realistic.
- The Framework Travel Plan is inadequate and will require substantial improvement.
- There are a number of traffic safety issues that require clarification or amendment.
- Land required on Hitchcock Way is within Highway boundary and may be required for capacity improvements.
- A full drainage strategy will need to be submitted.

Legal Agreement required to secure

Section 106/278 arrangement to provide high-quality public transport infrastructure in Station Road, consisting of two high quality bus shelters to an agreed standard including seating and internal lighting, two bus stop pole/flag/information case units and two real-time information displays.

Bus shelters to be procured, owned and maintained by the Orchard Centre as other street furniture is within the shopping centre. The Premium Route bus stop pole/flag/information case units and electronic displays, and on-going maintenance thereof, would be procured by County Council through its call-off contract, so a section 106 contributions of £14,000 would be required.

Travel plan monitoring fees of £2,040.

Conditions

If the local planning authority is minded to permit this proposed development then the following conditions should apply.

3107 Close existing access
3304 Plan of parking provision
3401 Cycle parking facilities
3503 Construction traffic management
3504 Green travel plans

A condition that the construction of the new shopping centre buildings, and closure of the existing bus link, cannot proceed before successful implementation of the proposed new bus link through Station Road, to the satisfaction of the County Council.

The Framework Travel Plan will be strengthened to include customer trips to and from the site as well as employees working at the site. It will also include a range of short medium and longer term actions to support sustainable travel to and from the site. This improved travel plan will be submitted for approval to the Travel Plan Team at Oxfordshire County Council before first occupation. It will provide realistic estimates of all trips to and from the Orchard Centre.

Before the commencement of the development, a fully designed scheme utilising a sustainable drainage system for the surface water drainage of the development needs to be submitted and once approved the scheme needs to be implemented prior to the occupation of any dwelling to which the scheme relates. This is to ensure the effective and sustainable drainage of the site and to avoid flooding.

Informatives

Prior to commencement of development, a separate consent must be obtained from OCC Road Agreements Team for the new highway vehicular access under S278 of the Highway Act. Contact: 01865 815700; RoadAgreements@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

We have established that there is an area of public highway (within OCC ownership) that would be required if the plans remain as they are. The land to the west of the petrol filling station is shown on a number of plans (including Orchard Centre Didcot Option 3A Site Plan Revision 15) to extend to the north for additional car parking. This area of land has public highway status but has not been included in the stopping up consultation.

Detailed Comments

Transport Strategy Team

OCC understands the applicants desire to stop-up the High Street, through the Orchard Centre, to allow phase 2a to be delivered as designed. However a suitable alternative will need to be delivered and operational before OCC would agree to the highway being stopped up. The applicant will need to demonstrate a suitable re-provision of the bus link and bus stops which supports the priority destinations of Didcot Station, Orchard Centre and the Broadway.

The County Council is being consulted separately on the proposed stopping up of Public Highway under Section 247 Town & Country Planning Act for High Street and its response to both the planning application and stopping up order are aligned.

The applicant has shown an alternative route via Station Rd that, in principle, is on a suitable alignment. However the current application does not fully demonstrate how this will be satisfactorily delivered. Further work is required to convince OCC that this alternative link can be successfully delivered. Further technical analysis of the proposed alternative is set out under the Road Agreements Team response below.

Land to the west of the petrol filling station is shown on a number of plans to extend to the north for additional car parking. This land is an area of public highway and has not been subject to a stopping up order. Hitchcock Way is likely to see an increase in the number of trips in future years as Didcot expands. OCC may require this road to have changes made to it to aid with capacity improvements, such as widening. Therefore OCC would need to be satisfied that any land taken would not jeopardise future capacity improvements. Decking of the car park could be considered to reduce the amount of land outside the applicant's ownership.

Transport Development Control

The planning application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA). The TA notes that *"A Transport Scoping Report was submitted to OCC on 13th January 2015."* However, it does not note that OCC responded to that scoping report throwing into question some of the key data and assumptions relied on in the methodology. A subsequent technical note from developer's consultant argues that in favour of the adopted methodology, but does not adequately demonstrate its validity.

Trip Generation

The trip generation methodology in the TA is underpinned by the asserted principle that an increase in floor space at an existing retail centre will not lead to a directly proportional increase in the number of trips that the centre will attract, and that the overall trip rate per unit area will decrease. This concept is acceptable in principle. However, its quantification in the TA and the data on which it is based is disputed.

The factor used to uplift trip generation according to the increase in floor space at the Orchard Centre is taken from before and after studies of the increase in customer numbers as a result of Sainsbury's supermarket extensions. This is applying a food retail outcome to a comparison shopping proposal, and it is highly likely that shopper behaviour will differ greatly between the two forms of retail.

The TA asserts that *"The use of this data for assessing non-food planning applications has been accepted by a number of planning and highway authorities in recent years."* and cites five examples, details of which are provided in Appendix D. However appendix D contains only the Sainsbury's data and a technical note responding to comments from Kent County Council and the Highways Agency regarding the Ashford Retail Park. Other examples are not detailed and cannot therefore be verified. Notwithstanding this fact, OCC would not necessarily accept the acceptance of a methodology and dataset by another highway authority as a precedent.

Despite its unsuitability noted above, the Sainsbury's data at Appendix D has been reviewed. The data relates to 53 store extensions undertaken between 2002 and 2003. Of these 53 extensions it is noted that 11 actually experienced a decrease in measured patronage after they were extended. Given that the TA accepts that the Orchard Centre will experience an increase in trips it would seem counter-intuitive at best to calculate that increase using a

dataset that includes reductions in patronage. The presence of negatives in the database also points to the possibility that other factors may be at work at certain sites, and that therefore the data is not a pure reflection of the patronage outcome of a store expansion.

At paragraph 5.6 the TA states that *“This methodology is also particularly relevant to the Orchard Centre Extension since there is an existing Sainsbury’s supermarket at the Orchard Centre which contributes to a significant proportion of the existing trip generation.”* This statement is spurious since the Sainsbury’s itself is not expanding. If the Sainsbury’s itself were expanding then the data at Appendix D may be considered suitable to that element of the expansion plans.

The TA then sets out to try and demonstrate that retail extensions attract a small proportion of new trips. It cites a survey of trip linking at Lakeside at Thurrock (para 5.7), but OCC fails to see how this demonstrates that assertion.

Before and after traffic count data is also presented for three retail extensions and a new Savacentre which show insignificant changes in traffic flow. However, the precise location and context of these observations is not given, and neither is the nature of the retail development to which they relate. These cannot therefore be accepted as demonstrating the rate at which a retail expansion attracts extra trips. For example, it could be that the roads in question were already at capacity and no expansion of adjacent capacity would register as an increase in hourly traffic.

All of this data and evidence is considered of only passing relevance at best, and certainly does not point to a reliable trip generation uplift factor for the proposed Orchard Centre expansion.

Based on the Sainsbury’s expansion records the TA selects a 12% uplift of observed trips as its central case for analysis, with a 16% uplift to be analysed as a sensitivity test. This is based on an increase in gross internal area of 10,699m² which represents an increase over the existing floor space of 42%. The use of this number is at odds with the 15,029m² gross external area quoted in paragraph 1.3 of the introduction and implied in Table 3.2. If compatible measures of area are used then the increase in floor area would be 60% with a similarly higher uplift to be applied to observed trips and a greater impact on the transport network.

OCC contests that the chosen uplift factor to be applied to observed trips generated by the existing Orchard Centre is inappropriate and unrealistically low for the following reasons:

- It is based on data from extensions to Sainsbury’s stores, which do not represent comparison shopping;
- The database contains negative values which are counter intuitive;
- It has been calculated using incompatible measures of floor area.

The TA considers trips to the gym and asserts that they are largely linked trips, but offers no justification for this. It applies an 80% reduction to TRICS data. OCC considers it highly unlikely that the proportion of gym related trips that are linked to the Orchard Centre would be this high, and would need to see some justification of this assumption using empirical data before it could be accepted.

For the reasons set out above the trip generation estimates set out in Tables 5.4 and 5.5 of the TA are considered too low and are therefore disputed by OCC. Also, nowhere in the TA is the estimated trip generation for the existing permitted use presented. These trips are deducted from the uplifted observed trips before the estimates are presented in Tables 5.4 and 5.5. It is therefore not possible to verify the estimates presented in Tables 5.4 and 5.5.

The trip attractions for the motorised presented in Table 5.8 and 5.9 do not match the vehicle trip attractions in table 5.4 and 5.5.

Car Parking

Table 3.2 of the TA presents existing and proposed floor space and car parking provisions at the Orchard Centre. The table reveals that a 60% increase in floor area at the Orchard Centre is met by only a 15% increase in car parking provision, and that the rate of provision equates to one space per 51.1m². This rate of provision is well below the maximum standards set out by SODC, and leads to concern that the car park provision will be inadequate.

Para graph 6.15 of the TA states that “... *it should also be remembered that car parking standards for retail uses are maximum standards and given that the parking provision does not exceed the maximum, the proposal is therefore policy compliant.*” This argument is considered too simplistic, and ignores the real possibility that the car park will reach capacity at peak times and generate both on-street parking and queues on surrounding streets.

A car park occupancy survey and an accumulation analysis are both presented. No details are presented as to how the survey was undertaken. The TA states that the dwell time at the car park has been increased by 12 minutes, but does not say what the existing or assumed dwell time is. It is not therefore possible to verify the accuracy of the accumulation analysis.

The accumulation analysis presented shows car park occupancy at over 90% during the Saturday peak hour for both the 12% and 16% uplift scenarios. This is sufficiently close to capacity to generate queues into the car park as vehicles within it circulate in search of vacant spaces. Given that OCC considers the trip generation estimates to be too low, a more realistic trip generation scenario would worsen the car park accumulation analysis.

Impact on the Highway Network

The junction analysis presented identifies that certain points on the network around the Orchard Centre already suffer from peak hour congestion, and that this will worsen in future years. This relates specifically to the Jubilee Way roundabout, and the signalised junction of Hitchcock Way / Station Road / Cow Lane, as well as the main junction into the development from Hitchcock Way.

The impact scenario identifies only minimal deterioration in this congestion as a result of the expanded Orchard Centre. However, as noted the trip generation estimates are considered to be unrealistically low and a more realistic scenario might identify a more significant impact.

Public Transport Team

The proposed closure of the bus link through the Orchard Centre, without provision of a satisfactory alternative, would cause significant negative impact to the local bus network, as a consequence the main bus service is likely to terminate at Didcot Station. This is some way from this retail area and may result in complaints from passengers and subsequent loss of patronage to the bus services and thus reduction in commercial viability.

The proposal to re-open Station Road to bus services is an acceptable initiative, which recognises the urgent need for local bus services to continue to bring very many bus users to the Orchard Centre. More work will be required on the detailed design of the Station Road proposal, and some thought must be given to traffic management arrangements, including limiting its use to registered scheduled local bus services.

There are major committed development plans for Didcot and the wider Science Vale area to grow significantly in the next two decades, which will result in much more movement in this

area, and which will result in significantly greater bus use, especially between the new residential areas, the centre of Didcot and the major employment areas. The Orchard Centre will be the major retail hub of this area, and it is essential that new residents can access it.

The future bus network will be commercially-driven. The County Council's policies promote the use of public transport to provide a choice of mode of transport to its residents as a means of reducing the impact of individual car transport on its congested road network. At the same time, the County Council's role is to ensure these bus services can be provided in a commercial self-sustaining manner, rather than through revenue support. This is achieved by ensuring that residential and commercial development is delivered in a manner which strengthens main bus routes, by ensuring that new residents can walk to logically-located bus stops and that main generators and attractors can be served without significant deviation or imposition of additional running time.

The following regular bus services currently use the bus link at the Orchard centre, with approximate daytime frequencies

- | | | |
|---------------|--|------------------------|
| • Route x1 | Oxford-Abingdon-Didcot-Harwell-Wantage | hourly each way |
| • Route x2 | Oxford-Abingdon-Didcot-Harwell-Wallingford | hourly each way |
| • Route x32 | Oxford-A34-Didcot-Harwell-Wantage | hourly each way |
| • Route 91 | Didcot Town Service (north) | hourly each way |
| • Route 92 | Didcot Town service (south) | hourly, north to south |
| • Route 94/95 | Didcot-Blewbury | hourly each way |
| • Route 98 | Didcot-Great Western Park | two per hour, one way |

Thus the current regular bus service pattern currently generates 13 buses per hour through the bus link

There are also a few less regular bus services using the bus link, including:

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| • Milton Park-Didcot shuttle (lunchtime only) | four per hour, one way | |
| • Route A1 | Didcot-Ardington | one journey per day |
| • Route 91 | Didcot-Long Wittenham | two journeys per day |

Even taking these irregular local bus services into account, there is currently a maximum of 18 buses passing through the bus link in the busiest hour in both directions added together.

LSTF funded bus service enhancement

Following a bidding process for Government funding to support new sustainable transport initiatives, an improved bus service will operate between Didcot Parkway station and Harwell campus from July 2015. This new improved bus service has received significant backing from the Local Enterprise Partnership, which regards it as a significant step towards its vision of a 'Science Transit' network of high-specification high-frequency public transport services around the Science Vale area. This new service will add two buses per hour in each direction through the bus link.

Future service levels

The committed Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire Local Plan housing allocations will result in additional bus services being provided to the centre of Didcot, whilst committed plans for significant additional employment in the Science Vale will also generate additional bus services – however most of these services will be cross-linked between residential and employment areas across the centre of Didcot, so providing an efficient network without the need for separate terminating services. Hence there will be a modest increase in the number of bus services over time. The predicted number of future bus services will be well within the

design capacity of a Station Road bus link incorporating a narrowed section where buses can proceed only in one direction at a time. The number of buses using Station Road will be significantly fewer than the number of buses using the Blackett Street shared space area in the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which has also has a narrowed section around the Monument, which is analogous to the proposed situation in Station Road.

Travel Plans Team

Transport Assessment paragraph 2.16 states 'Cycle parking is accommodated on sheffield stands and hoops which are located at several points around the existing Orchard Centre. This includes adjacent to Sainsbury's, to the north of the amphitheatre, adjacent to retail units along Broadway and in the service yard for staff. There are 74 existing cycle parking spaces in total and these have been observed on a site visit as under-occupied across the day'. However OCC officers observe current cycle parking is often full, particularly at key locations such as by Sainsbury's. Under used cycle parking can often be explained by poor choice of location. With the existing Orchard Centre design, cycle parking located on the edges of the development is under used because that it is not where cyclists want to park. Ensuring that cycle parking is correctly located and visible encourages its use and cycling in general.

Current access to cycle parking via cycle paths such as the ones located next to Sainsbury's is poorly thought out.

The Framework Travel Plan (FTP) submitted with this application states that the FTP focuses on staff trips rather than customer trips, the latter of which would form the majority of trips to/from the development. That is exactly why the FTP needs to focus on both. The largest part of travel to and from the site will be made up of customer trips.

A failure to tackle trips generated by customers leads to problems around key shopping destinations. A good local example of what can go wrong would be Bicester Village.

The Orchard Centre is a major trip generator attracting visitors from Didcot and much further afield. This already has a knock on effect on the levels of traffic on local roads. Further expansion is likely to exacerbate this situation and it seems reasonable to expect the developer to implement measures through the Framework Travel Plan which will mitigate this.

The idea of the FTP is to demonstrate to future site occupiers the level of commitment that is required to support and encourage sustainable travel to and from the site. A strong framework travel plan is essential.

It may not be possible to restrict the number of car trips to and from the site on any given day but reasonable estimates of the likely level of car trips must be given to quantify the impact of this expansion on the surrounding road network.

As it stands the submitted framework travel plan will do little to encourage and support sustainable travel to and from the site by customers. It will need to be strengthened to be effective. This could potentially help to offset the demand for car parking facilities at the site which will increase as the centre expands.

Five year targets will be required for staff and customer who are visiting the site. These annual targets will work towards a reduction in the number of SOV trips to and from the site. Measures which actively promote, support and encourage sustainable travel by customers will be included in the framework travel plan. All eventual site occupiers will have a duty to encourage sustainable travel both amongst their own staff and by their customers.

The permeability of the site is the key to supporting and encouraging travel by other modes and concerns are already being raised about the permeability of the site for walkers and cyclists.

Traffic Safety Team

The following comments are focussed on the Station Road proposed element of the application:

It is not clear whether the current 'access-only' restriction on the trafficked section will be retained; further clarification on this is required. From a road safety perspective a traffic mirror at the northern bend is not acceptable.

Further clarification is required as to how loading will be achieved in the pedestrianised section which is planned to be used by buses. Confirmation on how the 'no-vehicles' section will be enforced is required to assess if this is acceptable.

It appears that there is a proposal to ban cyclists from the southern section of Station Road. Further clarification is required to explain the thinking behind this. As this area of Station Rd will become mixed use, cyclist should be able to be facilitated safely. Where Station Rd joins Broadway there is insufficient space and width to accommodate the bus stop and buses passing, further work is required to show how this can be accommodated safely.

Whilst there are new cycle parking facilities shown on the north side of Sainsbury's, there should be more around the site as a whole and this development should be a trigger to significantly improve cycle links throughout Didcot. Confirmation on where staff at the existing and proposed retail units will park is required.

Road Agreements Team

The Station Road proposal changes the current arrangement and creates an environment with potential heightened hazards to pedestrians. The space constraints proposed offer very limited scope for error in bus tracking, particularly at the interface with Broadway, greater tolerances should be designed within the proposal. Much thought must be given to the safety engineering of the space between Station Road and Broadway. The route must be appropriately designed and planned. Squeezing in the bus link between existing planters and trees at the southern end of Station Rd is not acceptable.

Specific observations are listed below starting from the north end of Station Road.

1. Junction with Hitchcock Way is capable of accepting all bus movements and the carriageway width of 10m is carried through to a point approximately opposite Enterprise Vehicle Hire. At this Point the carriageway narrows to 6.5m.
2. Carriageway through curve at Northern end of Station Road is 6.5m. Subject to provision of tracking drawings and assurance that 15m coaches will not use this link, then OCC would expect that two buses would be able to pass each other with care.
3. The proximity of the end of the on-street parking section may compromise bus passing movements and OCC would recommend extending the existing double yellow parking restriction on the west side of the carriageway by a further 5m to improve visibility and space available for buses to get in correct lane before entering curve.
4. Station Road between curve at north end and White Leys Close:
 - a. Kerb to kerb carriageway here is 7.3m. Approx. running carriageway between parked cars and east kerb line is 5.5m. 5.5m is insufficient for two buses to safely pass and this dimension does not allow for poorly parked cars.

- b. Footway to east side along this section is approx. 2.8m wide. The 2.8m wide footway is in OCC ownership so the carriageway could be widened to 6.5m over this length and the footway/cycleway narrowed to 1.8m. This would then allow the complete length of Station Road to be made 6.5m wide and thus allow buses to safely pass with care. Making this amendment to the carriageway width over this section would also mean that the correct un-staggered alignment will be achieved over the entire length of the eastern kerb line to Station Road

5. Station Road.

- a. Thought could be given to semi-formalizing parking along Station Road, perhaps with a series of build outs. This would help with ensuring tidier parking. It could also be considered that parking could be alternated to utilize both sides of the carriageway. This would slow vehicles down and make the space less sterile and uniform.

6. Pedestrianised priority section.

- a. Visibility for buses approaching from the north and looking through to Broadway is acceptable, although over the distance proposed and with the steep gradient, it will be difficult to tell accurately if the opposing bus has entered the priority zone or not. Also, if a signalised junction is proposed on Broadway end, the bus waiting at the top may be tempted to move into the priority zone too quickly, in order that it clears the junction for any vehicles behind it.
- b. Buses waiting to move into the priority zone from the south will be partially un-sighted by both existing trees and planter boxes. This fact is exacerbated by a steep down gradient. It needs to be demonstrated that the give-way arrangement can be operated safely.
- c. How is east-west pedestrian movement to be controlled at interface with Broadway? This is an open movement area at present and consideration regarding how pedestrian safety can be accommodated with an all movement junction and bus stop all attempting to operate in the same space as a free flow pedestrian area must be demonstrated.
- d. The proposed bus stop at the Broadway end presents a hazard to pedestrians as both they and bus drivers will be un-sighted when pedestrians are attempting to pass the stationary bus.
- e. Tracking plots at Broadway end are far too tight and allow absolutely no room for error and thus do not make provision for accommodating pedestrians if they are also moving through the tracking zone at the same time. Attempting to squeeze the link in whilst retaining existing trees and street furniture is compromising further an already un-safe design proposal. More space and additional thought is required at this very busy interface.

OCC believes that Station Road could potentially be made to work if comments made are taken into account and concerns addressed. There will be challenges in ensuring buses moving through a pedestrianised area do so safely and sympathetically to the environment, but through good design and appropriate behaviour by bus drivers it is believed this can be achieved.

Officer's Name: Chris Nichols

Officer's Title: Transport Development Control

Date: 07 May 2015

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.

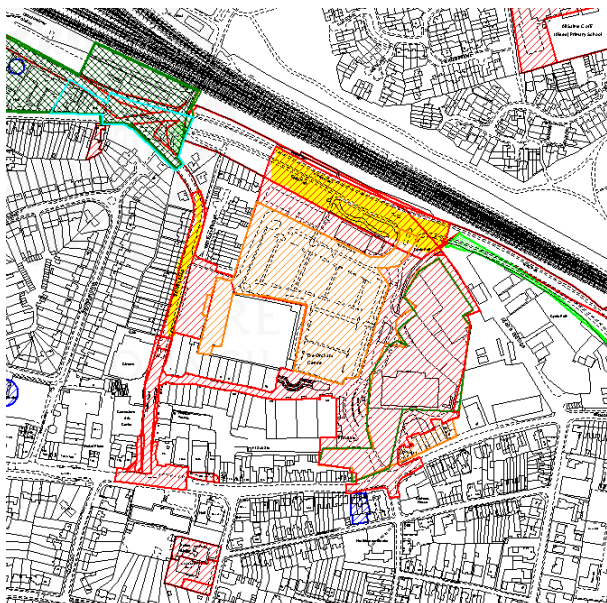
Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Property

Recommendation:

No objection subject to conditions

Key issues:



The areas highlighted in yellow, on the above plan, are owned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and may impact on the development proposals and access to the development site. Discussions will be required with the county council.

Officer's Name: Oliver Spratley

Officer's Title: Corporate Landlord Officer

Date: 30 March 2015

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Ecology

Comments:

The District Council should be seeking the advice of their in-house ecologist who can advise them on this application.

In addition, the following guidance document on Biodiversity & Planning in Oxfordshire combines planning policy with information about wildlife sites, habitats and species to help identify where biodiversity should be protected. The guidance also gives advice on opportunities for enhancing biodiversity:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/planning-and-biodiversity>

Officer's Name: Tamsin Atley

Officer's Title: Ecologist Planner

Date: 13 April 2015

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

LOCAL MEMBER VIEWS

Cllr: Stewart Lilly; Patrick Greene; Nick Hards

Division: Hendreds & Harwell; Didcot East & Hagbourne; Didcot West

Comments:

The following County Councillors collectively object to Hammerson's application as below. All have had representations from their communities they serve as to the loss of easy access to the retail area. If it proceeds people will be modifying their loyalty to Newbury, Abingdon & Oxford.

Cllr. Stewart Lilly, Cllr. Patrick Greene, Cllr Nick Hards.
Oxfordshire County Councillors

Date: 25 May 2015

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL-2

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.(as amended by drawings received 25June 2015)

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Purpose of document

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's view on the proposal.

This report contains officer advice in the form of a strategic localities response and technical team response(s). Where local member have responded these have been attached by OCCs Major Planning Applications Team (planningconsultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL-2

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.(as amended by drawings received 25June 2015)

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Strategic Comments

Comments:

- **Object for the reason given below**
 - **Impact on road network from lack of parking, is deemed unacceptable**

Comments:

These comments are given in response to the amended and updated information submitted and should be read in conjunction with the response to the original application dated 22nd May 2015.

The County Council had previous objections on the grounds of:

1. Inability to fully assess the impact of the development proposals
2. Lack of detail to demonstrate proposed re-provision of bus link and associated stops can be successfully and satisfactorily delivered.

Taking these in turn:

1) Inability to fully assess the impact of the development proposals

The County Council is still concerned over the level of car parking proposed to serve the development, even with the updated transport assessment. This has the potential to create on street parking issues and impact on the shopping centres on-going vitality and attractiveness. The further evidence presented has not allayed concerns over the potential overflow of parking onto the surrounding road network and the impact on junctions in the immediate vicinity. Therefore our objection around this issue still remains.

It is also worth noting that, whilst the development cannot be expected to mitigate the future growth of Didcot, the planning authority needs to be mindful that Didcot will be expanding significantly over the coming years and that growth will look towards Didcot as the main service provider. Additional parking will be required within the town centre to accommodate this growth and the District's (both South and Vale) need a plan to accommodate this increase in demand. Hammerson's have said that they are not against the idea of accommodating some of this growth on their site – if funded by other development around Didcot.

Part of the development proposal is to 'stop-up' land on Hitchcock Way (west of the petrol filling station); this is an area of public highway as well being in the ownership of the County Council. Hitchcock Way is likely to see an increase in the number of trips in future years as Didcot expands. OCC may require this road to have changes made to it to aid with capacity improvements, such as widening. Given that the Council still has concerns about the impact parking will have on the surrounding road network and the fact we may want to implement an improvement scheme along this section of Hitchcock Way in the future; we will not agree to the stopping up of the highway (or selling of OCC land) at this time. If Hammerson's (and the planning authority) are willing to accept that increased parking is required on this site, then we would be happy to discuss the option of a lease of the land to be used for car parking facilities (including decking).

2) Lack of detail to demonstrate proposed re-provision of bus link and associated stops can be successfully and satisfactorily delivered.

Following our previous comments further work has been undertaken to ensure that the Station Rd route can be acceptable to the Highway Authority. OCC accepts the updated plans submitted and happy to say the following are acceptable:

- the widening of Station Rd at the northern curve;
- the widening of Station Rd north of White Leys Close;
- the changes to the bus stops to allow buses to pass each other;
- the moving north of the southbound bus stop;
- the changes made to the road signs; and
- inclusion of a signalised junction with the Broadway.

The council **removes its objection** to the Station Rd scheme and accepts this as a suitable alternative to the High Street bus link. As per our original response the planned changes to Station Road need to be delivered and operational before we would allow the Highway to be stopped up.

Whilst the County Council is appreciative that further work between officers, the developer and District Council has taken place, there are still outstanding issues that mean our objection cannot fully be overcome. We are broadly supportive of this development and believe there is an acceptable solution (increasing car parking capacity) that would remove our objection to this development, and would welcome continued working with the developer and District Council to achieve this.

Officer's Name: Jason Sherwood

Officer's Title: Locality manager

Date: 09 July 2015

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL-2

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.(as amended by drawings received 25June 2015)

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Transport

Recommendation

Objection

Key issues

- Previous comments in OCCs response dated 22nd May 2015 apply but are modified here.
- OCC has objected to this proposal on Transport grounds in its response to South Oxfordshire dated 22nd May 2015.
- This revised application includes a Supplementary Transport Assessment (STA) which addresses OCCs comments.
- The STA presents a trip generation uplift scenario of 28.9% which is accepted by OCC.
- This uplift scenario demonstrates a significant traffic impact, but one which cannot be argued as severe.
- Car parking provision is still considered inadequate.
- The Framework Travel Plan is still considered inadequate.
- There are still some traffic safety issues to be resolved.
- Insufficient drainage information has been supplied(to be dealt with via. conditions)

Legal agreement required to secure

All previous legal agreement requirements set out in OCCs response of 22nd May 2015 apply except the amended requirement below.

Amended Requirement

Bus shelters to be procured through arrangement and agreement with Didcot Town Council, including a written agreement about future on-going maintenance. The Town Council may wish to procure these shelters through its existing advertising shelter contract with Clear Channel Limited. The Premium Route bus stop pole/flag/information case units and electronic displays, and on-going maintenance thereof, would be procured through County Council call-off contracts, so section 106 contributions of £14,000 would be required.

Conditions

All previous conditions set out in OCCs response of 22nd May 2015 apply.

Informatives

All previous Informatives set out in OCCs response of 22nd May 2015 apply.

Detailed comments

All previous detailed comments set out in OCCs response of 22nd May 2015 apply, except as modified here.

Transport Strategy Team

OCC officers and Vectos have had a number of meetings between the original submission of the planning application and this updated submission, and officers are grateful for the additional work undertaken.

OCC note the inclusion of the additional stopping up west of the petrol filling station within the plans. This plan should also be submitted to the County Council's land and highway records team to be consulted upon more broadly, as per the process for the original application, to ensure due process is followed.

Given that the Council still has concerns about the impact parking will have on the surrounding road network (see detailed Transport Development Control comments) and the fact it may want to do an improvement scheme along this section of Hitchcock Way in the future, OCC we will not agree to the stopping up of the highway or to the selling of OCC land at this time. If the developer is willing to accept that increased parking capacity is required on this site then OCC would be prepared to discuss the option of a long term lease of the land to be used for car parking facilities including decking.

The drawings submitted and additional work done for the Station Rd bus link are able to be signed off as acceptable.

OCC notes that the developer recognises and accepts, as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the STA, that the changes required to Station Rd to make it acceptable for use as the bus link are needed to be implemented and operational before the High Street bus link can be stopped up. This will be signed off by the OCC Road Agreements Team.

Transport Development Control

Trip Generation

The STA asserts that *"It is considered that the methodology applied to estimate the increase in traffic associated with the planning application provides the most realistic estimate of traffic attraction."* OCC still disputes this assertion for the reasons set out in its response of 22nd May 2015.

Notwithstanding this the developer submitted a Technical Note to OCC on 8th June which presents an alternative methodology for estimating trip generation. The methodology involves updating a widely accepted approach to estimating the increase in trip generation associated with shopping centre expansion with new data. The methodology in question is the use of the "Parker Graph" which has been used for a number of shopping centre expansions throughout the UK (Traffic Characteristics of Major Retail Developments. Richard Parker, 1985). OCC welcomes this approach and considers it far more appropriate.

The alternative methodology presents an uplift in trip generation at the Orchard Centre of either 21.1% or 28.9% depending on whether a single shopping centre site is included in the database or excluded from it. OCCs response to this approach made it clear that it saw no reason for the exclusion of the single shopping centre site in question and that therefore the higher uplift of 29.8% should apply.

The STA then goes on to present junction capacity analysis and parking accumulation analysis based on the following uplift scenarios: 12%, 16%, 21.1% and 28.9%. OCC disputes the applicability of the 12%, 16% and 21.1% uplifts for reasons stated in its previous response and this response. The 28.9% uplift is accepted as representing a reasonable increase in trip generation that will result from the development proposals.

Under the 28.9% uplift scenario a number of junctions surrounding the proposed development site show significant deterioration in performance. However, in these cases it is noted that the junctions in question are either:

- substantially under-performing already in the without development scenario; or,
- the deterioration does not push the junction through a critical threshold of 85%; or,
- the deterioration happens on a Saturday when efficient junction performance is less important.

In all cases, whilst the deterioration is undesirable, OCC does not feel that it could argue that the impact is severe under NPPF guidelines. For these reasons OCC does not feel that it can object to the development on grounds of traffic impact.

Car Parking

The STA presents car park occupancy levels for the 12%, 16%, 21.1% and 28.9% uplift scenarios. OCCs previous response has already noted that the 12% and 16% would be likely to generate queues into the car park. Under the 28.9% uplift scenario car park occupancy exceeds 100% and queues into the car park from Hitchcock Way would be longer. Under all scenarios it is considered that the level of parking provision for the development is inadequate.

Public Transport Team

The operation of the bus link would work better if the length of the narrow section of Station Road could be reduced thus increasing the length of the two-way section of the bus link leading northwards from Broadway. This would result in the southbound bus-stop being moved slightly further north, which would assist with the operation of the traffic signals, which would ideally be triggered for buses once these vehicles have departed from the bus stop. A trigger-point at the bus stop would result in inefficient operation of the traffic signals, given the variability of dwell time at the stop at different times of day. The constraints of the public realm and retail activity on the east side of Station Road are understood. However, there is little active frontage on the western side of Station Road to the south of the entrance to Cornerstone so an opportunity may exist to redesign this short section of shared-space roadway.

Some buses need to turn left from Station Road to the east, into the section of Broadway leading to the Jubilee roundabout. Whilst this bus manoeuvre is performed relatively infrequently currently, in the future buses to/from Wallingford (current route x2) and future buses to North East Didcot will take this route. This manoeuvre will avoid any requirement for buses to turn right at the northern end of Station Road into Hitchcock Way. The left turn from Station Road into Broadway should therefore be tracked.

Travel Plans Team

The Framework Travel Plan (FTP) has been updated in the light of comments from OCCs Travel Plans Team site out in its previous response. However the updates do not go far enough and the FTP will still require further substantial updating. The developer should review OCCs travel plan guidance, and could contact the Travel Plans Team for further advice.

Traffic Safety Team

It is noted that the developer has tried to answer all points raised in OCCs previous response under this heading, and there are clearly some improvements.

The following comment in the supplementary TA is noted *“CCTV enforcement could be provided to enforce the ‘no-vehicles’ section. However, it is anticipated that prohibited vehicles are less likely to travel on the bus route through the pedestrianised zone, than they are through the existing bus link. This is because the existing bus link is a dedicated road whilst the new link will be a slower route through an area of shared surface with pedestrians. Hence, it will not be an attractive rat-run for prohibited vehicles. Finally, it should be remembered that the new bus route along Station Road replaces the existing bus link along High Street, which will no longer need to be enforced”*.

However, OCC is still not convinced that without some positive enforcement it will be faced with on-going complaints about non-PSVs going (a) through the pedestrianised area which is very busy during shopping hours and (b) down a residential street. Comparing it with the existing High Street bus gate is not fair as (a) that is heavily traffic-calmed and (b) there are no frontages, nor any real pedestrian activity.

Therefore a targeted operation and monitoring is recommended.

Road Agreements Team

All points raised by the Road Agreements Team have been satisfactorily dealt with in principle. Design and implementation will be controlled in detail under a Section 278 Agreement.

Drainage (Lead Local Flood Authority & Highway Authority)

The applicant needs to state what their detailed design is. The Flood Risk Assessment only mentions preliminary design ideas and not what is being put forward. It is understood that they will be using the attenuation measures mentioned. The outline is acceptable, the applicant has shown that there is sufficient space on site to accommodate a drainage strategy using attenuation. However for full applications OCC would expect further information. Without this OCC cannot adequately comment on the application and the following objections should be applied.

Rate Increasing but no demonstrated way of mitigating this

In the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) a planning condition is required to reflect the following comments:

The applicant has not demonstrated that the increase in runoff rate arising from the site can be fully mitigated for all events up to and including the 1 in 100 chance in any year critical storm event, including an appropriate allowance for climate change. Consequently runoff rates will increase, leading to increasing flood risk elsewhere. This is contrary to Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The applicant needs to provide the existing surface water discharge rates for the 1 in 1, 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 (plus climate change) events and the proposed rates for the 1 in 1, 1 in 30, 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event. The proposed rates should be no greater than the existing. To mitigate for climate change the proposed 1 in 100 +CC discharge rates must be no greater than the existing 1 in 100 runoff rates. If not, flood risk increases under climate change.

System not appropriately sized (SUDS features not sized or lack of calculations to demonstrate this)

In the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) a planning condition is required to reflect the following comments:

The applicant has not demonstrated that the proposed SUDS features are appropriately sized to manage surface water flood risk onsite for all storm events up to and including the 1 in 100 chance in any year critical storm event, including an appropriate allowance for climate change. Consequently the attenuation will not be able to cope with increased volumes, leading to increasing flood risk elsewhere. This is contrary to Paragraph 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Microdrainage calculations must be provided to demonstrate that the drainage system can be sized to contain the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding and that any flooding in the 1 in 100 year plus climate change storm event can be safely contained on site. The FRA states the drainage system has been designed to attenuate for 20% reduction in current discharge rates, however microdrainage network calculations have not been provided to confirm that flooding either will not occur/or can be managed on site. Without this we cannot confirm that the drainage system has been appropriately sized. Please provide these calculation results (preferably in electronic format).

Conditions

Drainage condition 1:

Development shall not begin until a surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on sustainable drainage principles and an assessment of the hydrological and hydro-geological context of the development, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the occupation of any building.

Drainage Condition 2:

Development shall not begin until an acceptable and detailed Flood Risk Assessment is submitted and approved by the planning authority. FRA must demonstrate mitigation for all storm events up to 1 in 100 year plus 20% climate change and also demonstrate zero net increase in discharge rate from the proposed development(over existuig). FRA must demonstrate in detail proposals for SUDS features and that same can accommodate storm event noted previously in this condition. Detailed drainage design calculations must be provided and approved by the planning authority in advance of development commencing on site. All mitigation methods shall be fully implemented prior to occupation.

Officer's Name: Chris Nichols

Officer's Title: Transport Development Control

Date: 07 July 2015

District: South Oxfordshire

Application no: P15/S0433/FUL-2

Proposal: Demolition of existing buildings and construction of 1 and 2 storey buildings comprising retail units (Use Class A1), flexible retail units (Use classes A1/A3), restaurants (Use Class A3), a gym (Use Class D2); replacement public toilets; new public realm; improvements to existing public realm; new landscaping; realignment of drainage channel and alterations to access comprising amendments to the existing parking layout; additional car, motorcycle and cycle parking; new servicing area; new and amended access from the highway (including relocated bus route and closure of the High Street to allow redevelopment for retail use) and altered/new pedestrian access.(as amended by drawings received 25June 2015)

Location: Orchard Shopping Centre Didcot OX11 7LL

Ecology

Recommendation:

Comment

Key issues:

The District Council should be seeking the advice of their in-house ecologist who can advise them on this application.

In addition, the following guidance document on Biodiversity & Planning in Oxfordshire combines planning policy with information about wildlife sites, habitats and species to help identify where biodiversity should be protected. The guidance also gives advice on opportunities for enhancing biodiversity:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/planning-and-biodiversity>

Legal agreement required to secure:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Conditions:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Informatives:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Detailed comments:

N/A - For the District Council to comment

Officer's Name: Tamsin Atley

Officer's Title: Ecologist Planner

Date: 07 July 2015

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**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Date: 18 April 2015

Our ref: PF/BH/MG

Your ref:

**Environment & Economy
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford OX1 1NE**

**Sue Scane
Director for Environment &
Economy**

Ms Jenny Wilson

By Email

Skatersnats@hotmail.co.uk

Dear Ms Wilson

Thank you for your petition regarding the Orchard Centre Planning Application. This has been forwarded to me as the Director with responsibility for this area and also to Cllr David Nimmo Smith, who is the portfolio holder. This response is sent on behalf of us both and the content of which is duly noted.

The county council is currently reviewing the Planning Application for the Orchard Centre expansion and we will reflect, as appropriate, on concerns raised when preparing our response. The county council has expressed the requirement to retain a bus route with associated stops through the Orchard Centre, but has not been explicit how this should be achieved. The opening of Station Road, as a solution to accomplish this, is being promoted by the developers, not the county council, although we may conclude it is acceptable from our perspective.

Yours sincerely

Bev Hindle
Deputy Director – Strategy and Infrastructure Planning

Direct line: 01865 815113

Email: bev.hindle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk



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Date: 27 May 2015

Our ref: NJB/CRO/706/10.11.189

Your Ref:

**Highway Records
Speedwell House
Speedwell Street
Oxford
OX1 1NE**

Vectos
Network Building
97 Tottenham Court Rd
London W1T 4TP

**Sue Scane
Director for Environment &
Economy**

For the attention of **Emma Grayson**

Dear Ms Grayson

**Didcot: Orchard Centre Extension, bus link - Proposed stopping up of Public Highway
S.247 Town & Country Planning Act – Oxfordshire County Council Response**

Oxfordshire County Council is responding to this stopping up order whilst also responding to the Planning Application P15/S0433/FUL submitted to South Oxfordshire District Council for the Orchard Centre Phase 2a development. The two responses are aligned.

Oxfordshire County Council objects to the stopping up order.

The bus link which is subject of the stopping up request is still required by the County Council and forms an important part of the transport network. It provides both local access to the shopping centre and is a key part of the strategic bus route for Science Vale.

The applicant has shown an alternative (via Station Rd) that, in principle, is on a suitable alignment; however the current application does not fully demonstrate how this will be satisfactorily delivered. Further work is required to convince the County Council that this alternative link can be successfully delivered.

In order to remove the objection the applicant needs to demonstrate a suitable alternative provision of the bus link and bus stops which supports the priority destinations of Didcot station, Orchard Centre and the Broadway. This link must be delivered, operational and signed off by the County Council prior to agreement of the stopping up of the current High Street bus link.

Additional area of Stopping Up:

We have established that there is an area of public highway (within OCC ownership) that has been omitted from this application. It is noted that on drawing 110350/SK/58 Revision B that an additional section of highway would be required if the plans remain as they are. The land to the west of the petrol filling station is shown on the plan to extend to the north for additional car parking. This area of land has public highway status but has not been included in this consultation.

Yours sincerely

Nick Blacow
Senior Highways Procedures Officer
Highway Records

Direct line: 01865 815667
Email: nick.blacow@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

| |
|------------------|
| Division(s): N/A |
|------------------|

CABINET – 23 FEBRUARY 2016

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 15 March 2016

- **Senior Management Review**

To provide feedback on the report recommendations of the senior management review and to seek approval for the next steps.

Cabinet, Leader
2016/017
- **Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue - 365 Alive Vision - 2016-2022 - March 2016**

To seek approval of the final strategic vision for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue.

Cabinet, Deputy
Leader
2015/103
- **Care Home Fees 2016**

To agree target banding rates effective from April 2016.

Cabinet, Adult
Social Care
2015/101

Deputy Leader, 7 March 2016

- **Sign Off for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's Participation in the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP)**

Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) require Fire & Rescue Services to sign up to the ESMCP by 25 March 2016 - the report seeks approval to participate in the programme.

Deputy Leader,
2016/022

Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families, 21 March 2016

- **Expansion of Drayton Primary School**

Whether to formally support the decision of the Governing Body of Drayton Primary School on its proposal to expand the school to 1 form entry from September 2017.

Cabinet Member
for Children,
Education &
Families,
2015/125

Cabinet Member for Environment, 17 March 2016

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highways Policy Changes To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/004 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of Asset Policies (Drainage and Structures) To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/005 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ South East Perimeter Road, Bicester - Conclusion of Options Assessment Work A decision on the preferred route for the SE Perimeter Road in Bicester, to be safeguarded through the Cherwell Local Plan Part 2 process. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/011 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Parking Restrictions - Various, Cholsey To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2015/076 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Parking Restrictions - Long Furlong, Abingdon To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2015/079 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Puffin Crossing (Revised Location) - A417 Stanford in the Vale To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2014/186 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Puffin Crossing - Broad Gap, Bodicote To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2015/034 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Parking Restrictions - Green Ridges, Headington To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/007 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Toucan Crossing - Park Road, Faringdon To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/008 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed 20mph Zone - Swinbrook Road Area, Carterton To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/009 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Waiting Restrictions, Blackbird Leys To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/012 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harwell Link Road - Chilton Area - Proposed Traffic Improvements To seek approval of the proposals. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/006 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Pegasus Crossing - Chilton Area To consider, if necessary, responses for a consultation on proposals for a modified crossing. | Cabinet Member for Environment, 2016/015 |