

APPENDIX 1

Community responses to the Consultation

Explanatory Note

This document sets out a summary of the comments and issues raised at the consultation stage on the draft “New Vision for Early Years Services including Children’s Centres in Peterborough”

1. Introduction

1.1 Peterborough City Council wishes to thank all those who took the time between November 2013 and January 2014 to complete the response form, to write to us with your thoughts, ideas and concerns and those who attended the public meetings to let us know their views on the proposals.

1.2 This annex highlights all those comments/suggestions submitted in response to the consultation. The responses include comments that have been emailed to the children's centre email address as well as comments that have been included in the questionnaire, in response to the final question "*Taking account of the context set out in the consultation paper, if you have any alternative proposals which you would like the council to consider please provide details*" It also includes comments from questionnaire where respondents have been asked for suggestions as to what centres could be re-designated to, as well as comments included in submitted petitions.

General Comments

We need to keep as many centres as possible, however the centres in areas of deprivation are essential. Families who find everyday a struggle will not travel to other centres and we need to focus on pre-school children at the centres, not spread too much into the whole community support system. Despite government initiatives to get young children into nursery at a very young age, research has shown children do best when they have a good early education at home first, and parents need in this.

Super centres should not just be as per suggested location. Without sounding 'snobby' these are undesirable areas and not local enough for access.

I would like to propose to keep all of the children's centres open for the following reasons:

- 1) Every child needs to be able to play with other children outside their home or a friends home - it prepares them for nursery and pre-school.
- 2) Young parents are vulnerable - they can become lonely and overwhelmed by the responsibility - to be able to have a chat, change of scenery and exchange views is vital to a persons wellbeing
- 3) I believe it's the councils responsibility to provide such good quality communal spaces for everyone to use.
- 4) If you look after your children, you look after your future.
- 5) Closing the centres will undo a lot of good work and progress that has been achieved over the past years since 2006 - how much money will it cost to re-establish them when funding increases again.

Pay the council people less and put that money into the children's centres. As not every parent drives (myself being one) and putting the super hubs where you propose means a lot of people are going to miss out on these services which isn't fair. And with myself being a parent to a child with a disability, public transport or taxis are not an option due to cost and the way my child reacts with these services.

It seems a shame that when the government is pledging funds for "Early Years" the early year's centres are being reduced in effectiveness. Where are the funds going?

Please do not take away our children's centres. They are such a valuable, special place giving so much support to families. I come every week and my son really enjoys it. We have come since our son was a baby and at this time I found it a huge help to have somewhere to come and meet new parents and develop our son's skills. Don't take this resource away.

Forgetting services 0 - 2 years: Attachment/Parenting - Peer support/expert support. - Higher risk of post natal depression for non high risk parents. - Childrens social care - more referrals

Children Centres are an advantage to the children and their learning. It also gives an opportunity for parents to meet other parents. It is a good build up for children and being able to organise and understand a nursery/pre-school setting and environment. Children's Centres should remain as they are and not be closed down.

I object to services being removed from any locality. Many vulnerable people can only access their local services "on foot". People who are isolated will become more vulnerable and local groups provide a "lifeline" for these people. Alternative proposals: Make a higher charge for group activities and provide a voucher scheme for those who cannot afford to pay.

I would like to register that the "timetable" re the "proposals" seems to be very hurried and unpublicised. There has been very little explanation of the economics of changing the "centres". There has not been detailed figures showing the cost of centres as they are and the costs of conversion. There only seems to be one proposal to be decided upon. If any other proposals are put forward then they can only be grounded on limited information. If the "cabinet" is deciding on 20th January and the consultation period ends on 8th January then there is very little time for a further public consultation. Is this a "done deal"?

Ravensthorpe - Create one super hub as it's close to another children's centre but keep the others as they are. Too many parents with children like myself on my own as a lone parent need the network and support of the Children's Centres and other parents like me who need to socialise or we would go mad at home day in and day out. Funding (?) two years old is fine if you have a job, not all people with a two year old have jobs. Also what about the under twos? I can't return to work because not enough childcare providers for babies!!!

Ravensthorpe has got 2 children's centres close to each other.

Would rather they stay the same, especially in the rural areas the babies/children will lose out if they shut/go private. Most of us cannot afford to travel to city centres and who will be the family support if this happens? Who's most in need? Those that 'are' in need don't tend to 'come forward' so will not attend these clinics/centres, so will be left out/forgotten. It's the Children's Centres who notice problems and alerts the system for help, generally. This will disappear leaving the average family much more vulnerable.

Would prefer the Centres to stay as they are as easy access for all problems. Also family play is a weekly thing my children enjoy coming to. If this closes access to other facilities are at a distance which will make things harder to attend especially for single parents if no access to a car.

Support services MUST continue to be easily available for all mothers in the Peterborough area. All are vulnerable, regardless of their income. The existing network of children's centres provides this currently - it's going to be incredibly difficult to set this all up again. Once it's gone, it'll be gone forever. Ease of access (many mothers will have had complications in childbirth which will make travelling across town difficult/impossible) is essential. Easy access to breastfeeding support is crucial in the early weeks, as is weaning support once the children reach six months of age. Removing children's centres and their services will lead to increased isolation and rates of post-natal depression in Peterborough mothers. In December 2010 I gave birth to my son, complications at the end of the pregnancy meant that he was born by caesarian section. This led to difficulties with establishing breastfeeding and much reduced mobility for me. My health visitor judged that I was at a high risk of developing post-natal depression, as I had very little social support with my and my husband's families living in the North West, i.e. 170 miles away. So, as an isolated new mum, in pain and immobile, it was a relief to discover that my nearest Children's Centre was based literally five minutes walk away in Stanground (where we lived at the time). I took advantage of every session and group available to me, obtaining huge amounts of help and support through the baby cafe, soothing my, at times fractious, baby with baby massage and meeting other new mums at the Brewster Babes session held at Brewster Avenue for people with children under six months. Although I found life with a newborn incredibly difficult, those groups and centres provided a lifeline for me at this point. Now I hear that Peterborough City Council plans to close most of the children's centres, replacing them with four "super hubs" for the most disadvantaged families. I dread to think how I would have coped during my maternity leave if Stanground and Brewster Avenue Children's Centres didn't exist. I do however; know that my mental health and the health of my child (as I would have had to stop breastfeeding without the support) would have been hugely affected. My immobility (you are unable to drive for at least six weeks following a C-section) means that the proposed hubs would be unreachable for me. I'm not "disadvantaged" in terms of my income (though anybody receiving Statutory Maternity Pay of £136 a week when they have bills to pay can hardly be described as well-off!) but putting any mother at an increased risk of post-natal depression and removing support networks could leave many parents in a severe state. Please, please reconsider this decision for the wellbeing of ALL children and mothers in the city

There should be somewhere to get advice on breastfeeding in a location close to where you live. Not all parents can drive and are less likely to travel to centres which are not local to them. Closing local centres will isolate parents especially first time mums. More should be done to enable mums to attend classes with their babies for example post natal exercise classes and advice on child care. There is no space to do this in the new hospital, so I was told when I needed such a class. Closing children's centres doesn't seem to be consistent with caring for parents of young children and babies. They provide a crucial service to all parents regardless of background.

It is my view that the proposed closures to children's centres should not happen. All across Peterborough there is a need for the levels of support that the children's centres provide. I recall Hampton before the children's centre was in existence and at the time I was a new parent who felt very much alone. I dreamed of the support that a children's centre could give. Our local centre provides a place for new and existing parents to meet, a place to seek support and a location for involved professionals to catch up with each other about children within their care. I use the centre as a child minder and bring my mindees there each week to meet other child minders and their mindees for learning and play opportunities. I have been able to discuss the care of a mindee with her health visitor while at the centre. It provides a local level of support for parents that will disappear if the Super Hubs are created. There is a level of need in our area as there are in all areas of Peterborough but removing the support from this area because another area has a greater need will in the end lead to an imbalance of support and will lead to a growth in the need of support in this area. Not everybody has cars to travel for groups. Please reconsider.

I wish to make the following points:

1. I disagree with the proposal to have services located in 4 super hubs and 3 outreach centres, which with the exception of Orton Hub and Bretton Outreach Centre are all located very near each other in the central and eastern areas of the city. It will be very difficult for families living outside these areas (many, if not most, reliant on public transport) to travel to services in these hubs and outreach centres, and very expensive for the local authority to provide transport for this purpose.
2. These proposals would deprive whole communities of the services currently provided by children's centres; many of these communities have very needy families who may not qualify as targeted families able to access the limited provision in the hubs and outreach centres; and even in apparently affluent communities such as Longthorpe and Netherton there may be families whose needs are camouflaged by their income, lifestyle or type of housing.
3. For the families who do qualify as 'targeted families' the services as proposed will in many cases be outside their local community; as a result they will lose the local contact currently provided in children's centres, they will be mixing with families from across the city with whom they have no other links, local communities will not be strengthened as a result of these proposals, rather the contrary. It will be difficult to encourage families to travel from a distance to one of the proposed super hubs or outreach centres, and therefore there will probably be low take-up and sporadic attendance.
4. The loss of universal services means that families using the services in the super hubs and outreach centres will be easily identified as vulnerable or troubled families, with the ensuing stigma that that might bring. At the moment, Family Support Workers can encourage parents who have poor parenting skills or problems dealing with their child's behaviour to come into groups where they can mix with and learn from more experienced parents, as well as getting advice from Early Years Workers. If the proposed superhubs and outreach centres are only going to deal with troubled families, there will be no good role models for these parents to copy, instead there will be a much more formal relationship with professionals; instead of an exchange of experiences and ideas between parents, as at present, there will be more instruction from professionals, which parents may resent, especially if they feel the professionals do not have personal experience of bringing up children.
5. The proposal to have different agencies working together is an excellent one, but this already happens in the existing Children's Centres and there is plenty of scope for it to expand. Health, adult education, Job Centre and housing are all represented on the Children's Centre Advisory Boards and Children's Centres would welcome more input and involvement from them. There is a very close relationship between health services and the Children's Centres which I fear will be damaged with the loss of local Children's Centre provision.
6. Children's Centre Family Support staff have very full caseloads; they receive a lot of referrals from Health Visitors and work closely with Social Workers and Early Years settings. They do a great deal of work with families where children are subject to CP or CIN, and work with untold numbers of families to prevent things reaching that stage. It's difficult to see, how even with a small increase in numbers (from 43 to 54 by 2015, I believe) Health Visitors could manage without the Children's Centre Family Support Workers, who know their local community and have the opportunity, not just to visit families in their homes but also to observe them within the Children's Centre.
7. Local Children's Centres provide a very cost-effective way of supporting troubled families. If you remove that local support network, and I stress the word 'local', in a few years time, the local authority will be paying for far more expensive intervention by social services - expensive not simply in purely financial terms, but even more importantly in terms of the damage to children's lives and families.
8. Peterborough has a rising birth rate and increasing numbers of migrant families settling here. Mention has been made of increased Government funding going into early years education, but this is for children aged 2 upwards. The number of 0-2 year olds is also increasing, but there is no provision for these children in the proposed structure, unless they belong to a targeted family. There are many parents in Peterborough who will not meet the criteria for targeted support, but who nevertheless need help and advice with parenting and the opportunity to meet other parents, not just

in a social setting (as might be provided by the frequently mentioned 'mums and tots' groups) but with the support of a friendly, impartial professional who can suggest ways in which parents can help their child's development. There are many isolated families in Peterborough who have limited, or no, command of English and Children's Centres provide an ideal way for parents and children to meet and mix with other families who do speak English, to learn English, to integrate into the community and form friendships. The value of this in terms of social cohesion cannot be overestimated and is particularly valuable for under 5s before they start school. 8. While I appreciate that there is a need to save money, I would suggest that more consideration is given to the alternative: raising income. Although funding for Children's Centres has not been ring-fenced, presumably the local authority could, if it wished, allocate more money from the income raised through Council Tax towards maintaining the present Children's Centre structure. I suggest that this would represent a saving in the long term, obviating the need for much more expensive intervention by social work and health professionals in the future. In short, money spent on maintaining Children's Centres today will save money tomorrow and also pay dividends in terms of happier, healthier, more integrated communities. Given Peterborough's poor reputation for safeguarding and educational standards, the local authority should be investing more, not less, in supporting families with under 5s, regardless of where the Government chooses to focus its funding. The proposals as outlined in the consultation paper are short-term measures which will need to be reversed in a few years time, at far greater cost to the local authority. From discussions I have had with other professionals on the ground, I have not come across anyone who thinks differently.

9. If the Council decides, despite widespread opposition in the community, to 're-designate' these six centres and change the way in which the remaining centres operate, then I would urge that consideration is given to staff in the superhubs providing regular services in the areas where there will no longer be any Children's Centre provision: Westwood and Ravensthorpe, West Town, Netherton, Longthorpe, Hampton, Stanground, Woodston, Eye and Thorney and the other villages within the Peterborough Unitary Authority area boundary. I would suggest that this takes the form of one or two days a week where groups are led by Early Years Practitioners, which all families can access and where parents can be helped to acquire good parenting skills, and parents and children can socialise; if space allows, health clinics and other community services could also be provided at the same time.

Since families are living further away from extended families and support, the children centres are of huge importance to people who feel isolated. The issue with closing the centres that are deemed 'not in deprived' areas, fails to acknowledge the usage and need for support for women who may not be deprived but use them as a lifeline. Building the super centres not only will people have to travel further to get to them, but the inability to deal with the number of women and families in the whole of Peterborough. Let alone the time, space, training, facilities etc, it would take to get them up and running quickly but with excellent standards. Losing the proposed children centres will leave a gaping hole where support is necessary and an increase in mental health issues will be the long term cost where savings are trying to be made in the short term. The proposal seems to focus purely from a monetary benefit point of view and seems to be ignoring the huge impact on parents and children's social, psychological and community benefit that the children centres provide.

I don't have an alternative proposal, the children's centres are it, which someone had proposed 10 years ago & actioned. Maybe I can propose a children's centre in 10 years time when the current proposals fail & supporting all community members is thought of as a good idea again

Community asset transfer? With the right support maybe the families could set it up themselves

I feel that the location of the 'super hubs' needs to be drastically re-designed. For families living anywhere west of Bourges Boulevard & North of the A605, there are no day to day, weekly or monthly services within easy access. Many of the families in these areas do not have access to personal transport so will face an untold amount of costs & hassle just to get to a 'super hub'. Although my family is not classified as in need, the Westwood & Ravensthorpe Childrens Centre has been a fountain of assistance both prior to the birth of our child & after it. It has helped my wife get out & socialise with other parents & my son to spend time with other children. Removing the access to this centre will drastically affect her lifestyle as well as my sons development

Keep all child centres open. This consultation is flawed and not consultation. At no point have you stated what my opinion is with regards should this centre close. This "consultation" presumes the centres will close and is biased as a result. This is flawed

Look at contracted services in the area and bring them into the centres & charge. Maintain the local centres and put effort into improving take-up rates by addressing the barriers that parents have to using the services. 1. Benefits of the services offered are not understood. 2. When choosing how to spend time with their children, other paid activities are trusted ahead of the free services of the centre. These higher cost services by contracted providers should be brought into the centres 3. There is an apprehension around joining in and fear of being preached too at a centre

If you wish to open up super hubs and out reach centre that's fine but my disagreement is that these centres wont be open to everyone . Why should children miss out on what. Is the only groups available. Around Peterborough. Because you have decided to label people . Only having these hubs open to families. On low income with attach a stigma. To the hubs . I understand some of the centres being closed and being used for pre schools due to a high demand for placement but once again make these hubs or centres open to all families. Please excuse the poor grammar on a smartphone

Leave the children centres alone and stop spending money on crap things like the water fountains in the city centre!!!!!!

I cannot afford to send my son to a nursery. I assume 2 year old funding is available for vulnerable people not for everybody

I use the children's centres to meet up with other mums and attend play groups and development groups with my 6 month old daughter. I fear that these changes will dramatically reduce the resources available to people like me. I understand the proposal and I don't disagree however it's unfair to only focus on providing services to the more deprived and those with special needs when new mums need support too. My concern is that creating superhubs in the most deprived areas will not provide a welcoming environment for newborns and toddlers. Although mums like me may not be high priority we do make up a huge proportion of the people that currently use the centers so where do we go?

Firstly, I am not convinced that the creation of Super Centre Hubs will save costs if taken into account the costs of creating them in the first place and the cost of running them. Also, by closing the local Centres you increase the journey time to the Hubs - increasing car journeys and excluding families with no means of getting there because they have no car or no money for the bus ticket. The Children's Centres provide a very important place for all families, and should be inclusive, for the following reasons: 1. Children who don't attend nursery or childminders have got a chance to play with other children outside their own home or a friend's else's home - it prepares them for nursery or school later on. 2.families from non-deprived backgrounds also need a place to go for advice and to meet other parents - it benefits the local community because we get to know each other and our children play together. 3. I can only speak for Walton, but there is a lack of good quality playgrounds in the area. Itter Park is ok, but Walton Park Playground is not nice, one swing is broken and there is not much equipment for the size of the park.

Firstly, all new parents / and parent of small children will face some of the same problems / obstacles. For e.g. Breastfeeding difficulties (of which there can be many), A risk of post natal depression, and everyday behaviour and health concerns of their child. THIS IS REGARDLESS OF THEIR CLASS OR FINANCIAL BACKGROUND/CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES!!! To remove the services currently provided for at local children's centres, and replace with "Superhubs" (I imagine a consultant was paid a large amount of money to come up with this concept), is hugely detrimental to our society and smacks of discrimination. Firstly, what will happen to the vast number of women who need support with breastfeeding but don't fall into the "vulnerable"/ Deprived "category? The NHS will not be able to cope with the influx of visitors to their own hospital based support groups. Peer supporters serve a great role, but there is a huge difference in having someone giving you information and sending you home or being able to sit with other feeding mothers, as they feed, in a welcoming environment with a professional present to advise where needed on a weekly basis. I can state that had it not been for the baby cafe service at my fantastic children's centre (Brewster Avenue) I would have switched to bottle before 3 months, instead I fed exclusively till 6 months, combined till 8 months and night fed till 19 months!!!! Secondly, How comfortable will someone feel accessing these superhubs knowing they are to be accessed only by those who fit the "deprived" status? You may as well stamp it on their foreheads. Never mind the fact that the targeted market would be likely to have problems reaching their superhub. Each community needs realistic access to a children's centre. Post Natal Depression can strike any women, again regardless of social class, financial standing...Having somewhere within the community to visit, to reach out to fellow new parents, share experiences, learn skills and to be able to talk freely about parenting concerns / coping ability without being judged or categorised can dilute the pressure that builds up, and I believe can actually serve as a prevention of post natal depression. And for women who do suffer with PND, as I did, the homely, welcoming and non judgmental feeling of a

children's centre and all it has to offer can be totally invaluable. Again without these resources, where do these women go, how do they cope? Brewster Avenue and Stanground children's centres have been campaigning / brainstorming ways to attract more vulnerable parties into the centres for some time now, you cannot force people to use the facilities if they are not interested. And if they do use the facilities, surely these individuals would benefit from having a broad range of society around them, positive role models, rather than centres utilised only by those from deprived areas /categories. Such a step to exclude other members of society from using the facilities will just create/ increase a class divide. The reality is these "superhubs" will be turning away people that want/need/will benefit from and are prepared to pay for their services, and will probably be unable to attract those that are targeted, or unable to keep them interested. Big expensive empty buildings ahead!! Surely a more sensible option is to keep the centres open to all, introduce universal fee's to sessions at each of the centres, and for health professionals to issue free membership cards/vouchers/ record card for those genuinely vulnerable/deprived, so they can access for free, discreetly, without it being public knowledge, allowing these people some dignity, and the positive benefit from accessing a facility used by all. Invest in our current centres, and the amazing people, paid and volunteers, who dedicate their time to providing invaluable support to our NHS/community/society as a whole. Speak to the people this relates to, the mums/dads/staff and NOT management consultants and executives!!

Please keep all centres open I feel that closing them would really have a negative impact on young children as it helps them to socialise at a young age, it also helps mums to make friends when otherwise may become isolated.

Maintaining the children's centres but charging parents fees for all or some activities. Consider only closing children's centres where under used, for example closing the least used 25%.

I feel the centre provide a much needed resource and meeting point for families. By just targeting specific families to receive help, then their will be a majority of families will not get the support the need. Also by taking away activities for some you will be making families become more introvert.

Keep the Childrens Centres open for all. They are vitally important for all families whether they be disadvantaged or not. Those who can afford it could pay more for sessions.

Younger children do not need much space. This decision has no meaning in terms of space saving.

To leave the children's centers alone to do the wonderful work they are already doing.

There doesn't appear to be a space for general comments in this consultation response so I am using this box but this is not a suggestion of an alternative proposal. I appreciate that the Council needs to save money and I can see that Central Government funding is entirely based on funding for vulnerable children. However, the children's centres provided me with an invaluable source of support and opportunities for play for my son when I was alone on maternity leave, when he was too young to go to nursery, and I was very vulnerable suffering from depression. I am looking to have a further child in the near future and the idea of doing this without the opportunity to take my children to a children's centre simply for their social development and support for me in terms of spending time with other parents and for the support that was provided by the staff makes the whole thing seem all the more daunting. I do not mind travelling to a super hub, and I do not mind paying for the time that I spend there, but I am very concerned that in the drive to ensure that the most vulnerable groups are catered for, those of us that are not generally vulnerable but are made so by the experience of child birth, and our children, will not have the support and assistance that the children's centres have previously provided so well.

Firstly the council should make available ALL the data on the children's centres. How can anyone have an opinion on their suggestions without having some data on which to base that opinion? The only opinion I have is that there is evidence of a lazy, inept, incapable council which having to face a very difficult decision has made no effort to look at serving those for whom it functions (one can hardly say 'works' since there is little or no evidence of any work being done on this). There is no evidence presented on current costs of running the current system never mind a breakdown of what constitutes those costs. Neither is there a projection of the costs going forward. When there should be a spreadsheet model of the service and all the costs of providing it, to not even be presented with basic costs shows just how incapable the council officers are to make any suggestion of what should be done. That councillors are not demanding that this be made available to all parties shows how incapable they are of making a decision on the issue.

To present a document which, with the lack of any clear evidence, randomly closes the centres, states "the alternative is to do nothing" only underlines the arrogant cavalier attitude of those producing the consultation paper, (Jim Royle would have quite adequately commented on the word "consultation"). Where is the full risk analysis which clearly shows all the risks in closing any child centre never mind most of them? Where is the breakdown of the required outcomes (objectives) of having a network of children's centres, the criteria against which the objectives were measured and what the yearly assessments were? Surely if they are to be closed there must be evidence that they are not working. Where is that evidence? Speaking personally the children's centres mean nothing to me, except like so many others I pay for them. If the council feels that it is a worthwhile move to close them then demonstrate it, conclusively, no attempt has been made to do this. If the service can be demonstrated as having value to the community, leave it or provide a number of viable alternatives for the community it currently serves. The council should have all the data on these centre's, it's what the IT we pay so much for is all about, if the council has not set objectives for them, monitored them, assessed them on a regular basis then it should be looking at reducing costs by culling it's management structure, they're not managing in a modern environment. Finally it's not up to the users to prove that they should be left open unless they have all the data collected on them and all the data of the city wide parameters within which a decision is to be made

My alternative proposal is that the proposed centres are not closed and no super-hubs created. The focus of help on designated deprived areas is wrong when it comes to babies and children. All parents can need the services currently provided by the children's centres regardless of their socio-economic position. something as simple as the opportunities to meet other carers makes a big difference psychologically for people who are alone with a child all day and there are no affordable private places in Peterborough.

All parents I have spoken with would gladly pay for these sessions etc and pay towards the upkeep of the centres and already agree that a voucher system be put in place for 'less fortunate' parents.

I think it is a disgrace to close the services of the children's centres. The reason that they are doing such a good job is that they are open to everyone. As soon as you single out the needy families they would not want to attend. The groups held at the centres for everyone are vital for babies. My child has attended little wrigglers and you can see in her what a fabulous opportunity it has been for her to socialise. She is kind and careful of the babies and that is because she has grown up attending this group. She has no other opportunities to socialise as we do not have any family. The baby group is vital for new mums it was sometimes the only opportunity to put my baby down and have a hot cup of coffee all week. Providing 15 hours of child care for three year olds is simply not enough for you to believe you have done anything to help children and families. If anything throwing children in a room at 3 and expecting them to get along when they have had little to no social interaction with other children would be damaging! This is what you are proposing to do by closing the centres. The groups the centres provide are invaluable for parents and children the private groups are simply too expensive to attend on a regular basis. By providing the centres for everyone to attend it makes it possible to help those needy families without singling them out or making them feel different. It was stated in prime ministers questions that more money is being provided for children's centres than before. So I wonder what the council have used the money for. It is a disgrace to even suggest closures what you should be doing is providing more!!

I moved to Peterborough from Cambridge shortly before falling pregnant with my son, I have friends and family in Cambridge and worked there so had no contacts in Peterborough without the children's centres I would have struggled and not made the friends I have. It is an invaluable resource without which you will isolate mums and families these are used not just by those on benefits and if a bigger contribution to groups above 50p to £1 is required to keep these valuable groups going then those who have more income I'm sure would contribute to keep this as I definitely would

Keep all centres open and open access to all. Prime Minister said Children's Centres in England have more funding...you have to keep these open and improve the services available. Don't socially isolate anyone. Keep them open!!!

With reference to the proposals to close every children's centre in Peterborough to all except deprived families, my personal concerns are that we have many people in Hampton who are not deprived, but have no family to turn to for support, because we are such a new area, still building our social infrastructure.

Also, with only "officially deprived" families able to access such services, I fear a stigma may become attached to them, leading to many being too proud to attend the centres despite needing them.

I recall a number of years ago, as a first time mother, I was advised I could access a Sure Start centre. I was very young, married, and renting a council house, but I did not consider myself as being the most deprived member of society! I was far too proud to attend the centre, which is a shame, because I would have benefited from it, I'm sure. Opening these centres up to everyone removed the stigma, making the centres truly accessible to all. You are proposing to undo that good work, but there must be a way to keep them open despite the council no longer having money ring-fenced for these centres.

For starters, you could consider if there is flex in any other area of the budget.

Secondly, you could also consider if centres could request discretionary higher session fees from those who are able. I think you'll find a lot of people would rather find a little extra to keep a service open than lose it altogether.

I saw it reported in the Peterborough Telegraph that a proposal has been made to close some Childrens Centres. Whilst I don't think, for a moment, that this is actually going to happen, as people will protest and those proposing it will back down, as usual, I would like to point out that not everyone is against the idea. All attempts to rein in public spending will impact on Users, who will complain loudly, and this is no different. Go ahead and close them. Public bodies are still spending FAR too much.

You don't need to live in a deprived area/state to need children's centres. People in the deprived areas are the ones that do not seem to use these centres. The Tunnel opened over the summer holidays, Free activities for children for people living in Orton. I went nearly every time, and I did not see hardly any of these deprived parents attend.

As a full time mummy I am gutted my baby's will have their special local fun filled educational playgroup ripped from them. I've heard as I'm not involved with social services or on benefits I won't be able to trek to the hubs if I wanted to. It is the working class tax payers that suffer yet again. My group has just started a fee and I would pay more if it kept it open. Love how you have put a price on children's social and education. We use the money saved to buy a cinema for them sit on their arses and get obese on sweets n coke instead. Why don't you increase fees. Couple of quid per session and get donations from holding fates\car boots\discos etc.

I feel that the centres are not the primary problem. Though there is scope for improvement in layout to make the buildings more welcoming. The issue is lack of use and not charging commercially for delivery to end users.

The services are underused because of several reasons. These issues need to be addressed 1st, not the buildings. I believe the centres have a big perception problem and also many parents don't rate the benefits of the services..... a marketing issue.

I believe there is scope to increase fees charged and to bring in other revenues by providing a venue to private children's service providers and activities.

Issues to put effort and money behind:

1. Benefits of the services offered are not understood.
2. When choosing how to spend time with their children, other paid activities are trusted ahead of the free services of the centre. These higher cost services by contracted providers should be brought into the centres.
3. There is an apprehension around joining in and fear of being preached too at a centre. Help is needed here.

It is easier for parents to do nothing than to actively strive to join in with these activities. If inconvenience is increased to many by moving services further away, less parents will be motivated to join in and the chances for progress on any of the 3 points is reduced.

Improvements to the local services is a better option to help support this region's parents and very young.

It is in the 1st 3 years of a child's life that 90% of the child's brain is formed, so the majority of behaviour, character and intelligence tendency is set for life in this stage. We need to help families bring up social, confident, emotionally mature, creative individuals for the benefit of all our futures.

I am glad there is a review, but please look at the services from the end user perspective. Centralised services or targeted locations can only be step backwards. The centres are helping to keep communities alive allowing experiences and connections vital for a child's life in the local area. The value of the centres is as much as community hubs helping

with social cohesion than as just service centres for the young.

A suggestion is to work with other interested parties (such as NCT and MumsNet) to evaluate services offered and to put money, skill and time behind promotion of these services. Efforts to provide profitable services and combine functions with other venues at the local level should be priority over cost saving and centralisation. If there is an opportunity to improve the buildings, a more welcoming environment should be considered.

I want children centre to go as like this. I would appreciate if you bring more programmes for everyone to access. Please do not close children centre.

People who cannot drive will not be able to get to 'super centres' easily especially as they will have going children. The centres you are on about closing are some of the best and friendliest in the area.

I would be grateful if you would consider the current proposals by Peterborough City Council to redesignate the children's centres. Whilst accepting that in times of austerity budgets needs to be carefully considered; the educational role of structured support systems for parents of young children can only benefit all of the population in the future. I welcome your thoughts on these proposals.
(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara)

Keep same

I think should stay as they are we need them for development of our children and mixing within the community many new mums would feel isolated , that could lead to a lot more problems and expense ! Also look closer to home rather than waste precious money on developments that aren't needed ie: water fountains that never work, Borges Boulevard !!! SAVE OUR CHILDRENS CENTRES PLEASE "!!!!!! Over the years they have helped lots of people and built up friendship with the members of staff they always there when needed for whatever reason big or small they there to help so what would we do without them????

Don't close the centres

Continue to utilize the centres and offer further services to those in most need, expand the available services to include a 'Super-hub' service at every centre to ensure PCC is giving the community what it needs, not what PCC thinks it needs to financially 'fit in' with its budget cuts. Fund this by cutting the external priorities which the council leader thinks is important to bring in additional 'tourists' to the city (such as fountains) as we are the paying customers spend this money on us, not tourists whilst there's a recession. We have in part paid for this service, not to fund the repair and mistakes of the city council.

I am writing to you with regards to current proposals to close 6 of our city's fantastic children's centres. Around the mayhem of daily life I have written from the heart. I apologise for any grammatical errors, but I implore you to take the time to read my words. These are my feelings on the matter

All new parents/and parents of small children will face some of the same problems/obstacles. For example, breastfeeding difficulties (of which there can be many), a risk of post natal depression, and everyday behaviour and health concerns of their child. THIS IS REGARDLESS OF THEIR CLASS OR FINANCIAL BACKGROUND/CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES. To remove the services currently provided for at local children's centres, and replace with "superhubs" (I imagine a consultant was paid a large amount of money to come up with this concept), is hugely detrimental to our society and smacks discrimination.

What will happen to the vast number of women who need support with breastfeeding but don't fall into the vulnerable/deprived category? The NHS will not be able to cope with the influx of visitors to their own hospital based support groups. Whilst peer supporters serve a great role, there is a huge difference between having someone giving you information and sending you home and being able to sit with other feeding mothers, as they feed, in a welcoming environment with a professional present to advise where needed n a weekly basis. I can state that had it not been for the baby café service at my fantastic children's centre (Brewster Avenue) I would have reluctantly switched t bottle

before 3 months. Instead I fed exclusively till 6 months, combined until 8 months and night fed till 19 months! (It was caring support I required, not a £200 cash incentive as currently being proposed!)

How comfortable will someone feel accessing these superhubs knowing they are to be accessed only by those who fit the deprived status? You may as well stamp it on their foreheads. Never mind the fact that the targeted market would be likely to have problems reaching their superhub. Each community needs realistic access to a children's centre.

Post natal depression can strike any women, again regardless of social class, financial standing, relationship status ... Having somewhere within the community to visit, to reach out to fellow new parents, share experiences, learn skills and to be able to talk freely about parenting concerns/ coping ability without being judged or categorized can dilute the pressure that builds up, and I believe can actually serve as a prevention of post natal depression. For women who do suffer with PND, as I did, the homely, welcoming and non judgmental environment of a children's centre and all it has to offer can be totally invaluable. Again without these resources, where will these women go, how will they cope?

Studies have shown how the first three years of a child's life sees incredible growth in all areas of a child's development, and mental and social stimulation is a critical factor. Children's centres provide experiences that cannot be found elsewhere. Not everyone can afford to put their children into a private nursery. My husband and I have made many personal sacrifices to enable me to be a stay at home mum to our little boy, as we have strong family values, and I would not have it any other way than to be 100% there for my child during these important years. There are a lot of obstacles already for a family wholesome old fashioned values like ourselves, take these centres away from us, and our children will suffer.

Brewster and Stanground children's centres have been campaigning / brainstorming ways to attract more vulnerable parties into the centres for some time now, you cannot force people to use the facilities if they are not interested. For the targeted individuals that do use the facilities, surely they would benefit for having a broad range of society around them, positive role models, rather than centres utilized only by those from deprived areas/categories. Such a step to exclude other members of society from using the facilities will just create/increase a class divide.

The reality is these "superhubs" will be turning away people that want / need / will benefit from and are prepared to pay for their services, and will probably be unable to attract those that are targeted, or unable to keep them interested. Big, expensive empty buildings ahead!!!

Surely a more sensible option is to keep the centres open to all, introduce universal fees to sessions at each of the centres, and for the health professionals to issues free membership cards/vouchers/record card for those genuinely vulnerable/deprived, so they can access for free, discretely, without it being public knowledge, allowing these people some dignity and the positive benefits from accessing a facility used by all.

Invest in our current centres, and the amazing people, paid and volunteers, who dedicate their time to providing invaluable support to our NHS/community/society as a whole. Speak to the people this relates to, the mums/dads/staff and NOT management consultants and executives!

Most importantly the future is our children. Investment in our children should not be compromised. If they are compromised, our society is compromised. We should be giving our children every chance in life. Cost cutting must come from elsewhere. We have heard Peterborough City Council state that "important decisions must be made". Well, a Council that decides that the cosmetic appearance of our pavements, and gimmicky/ineffectual fountains are more important than the welfare of our people, particularly our children Well, they should be removed from a position of power. Who are they representing? Certainly not the public. If the closures go ahead, it will prove that private agendas and corruption is what drives such decisions.

Thank you for reading. You will appreciate just how passionately I feel about this matter as do so many others. Though I imagine you may only have had as small number of direct emails on this matter, there are people doing their bit to make their voices heard, via social media, petitioning, local radio and plain old supporting their children's centre (which are overbooked most days, that has got to say something!) I beg you to listen. These individuals campaigning genuinely have our children's interests at heart as well as the big picture of our society, no private agendas here.

(forwarded from Shailesh Vara,)

Focus should be on all children not just children from selected homes as all families need support. Why not charge for groups (with funding for those that need it)

Over the past four years we have seen more and more families become aware of where their local centre is and more and more families access their health checks and support, such as debt management, family support and job seeks advice within their local children's centre. I strongly feel that having this within their local school grounds and within walking distance hugely benefits local parents also greatly reduces isolation and missed health appointments. I feel to remove this local support will leave a huge gap for the local community of the parents and carers who will have very little if any local community facilities available. As a professional I believe the health promotion groups that the centre provides greatly helps to reduce isolation, postnatal depression and health problems such as obesity and tooth decay. I feel to remove the local children's centres is a huge step backwards and very short sighted.

Families in the area need this centre to remain as it is for social and parental support. Not only immigrants need help! British people are struggling too! There is no support for middle class families. Come on UK!!!

I am a working mum and I have taken my days off so that I can use the childrens centre. I feel I'm being discriminated against as a working mum I feel the new centre on for non-working people and are here to help them families when we already have a place to go for housing/jobs, the childrens centres are here to come to do work shodp i.e baby play, messy play, baby massage, saferdads, it's about the children not how to get benefits your taking away from the children and giving more money to people who sit on their arse all day in council houses with no job when there are people who use these centres.

I would like you to keep the centres open and not close all the centres to create super centre hubs. The centre has helped me a lot with having a place to go.

I would not reduce the number of centres so drastically - and double the number of super-hubs. I would ensure that all new parents/carers have access to these new super-hubs. I think it is very short-sighted to restrict the carers that can attend. It is so important for the well-being of birth parents & babies.

We already engage parents in aspects of their children's learning and it would help us to improve and increase our relationship

I feel it is important to continue with smaller local children's centres across Peterborough. Centres in local area are more easily accessed by the community.

If super centre hubs will be combine all the service under one roof I would prefer parenting support &,midwifry/ health visiting not included. So that their service can remain on current childrens centre to continue the efficient services. Besides services provided at childrens centre, there also playing an important role for all the parents who living nearby. Because childrens centre will also organise playgroup for all the parents to join and share experiences. Baby and toddlers are spending quality time there.

The services which have in the past been provided by c/s will not be provided by the reformed work for if it is to deliver the wcp. The difficulty with superhubs is travelling, maybe service would be better located at a more local level say in GP surgeries, libraries, churches, centralising service and accessibility to many in need. Maintaining outreach centres would be more expensive than the line of exisiting spaces. What about a mobile trailer (like library service) why can't we use school halls and playgrounds. Do young people want services placed with childrens services. How will decisions be made about the aims and objectives of the centres. Might we be going back to the family centre model which was tried and tested?

Why can't you leave the centres as they are. If something isn't broke they why mend it? Your staff do an incredible job and my grandchildren thoroughly enjoy going to these centre. Why should the deprived only get these serivces, my grandchildren need somewhere to go and enjoy and be stimulated. I only hope you leave them as they are else what will they have!

The children's centre at the moment works well as they are; they support families and young people with services. Changing them to super hubs will disadvantage people who cannot drive to the centres. I myself use the centre; both my husband and I work full and part time. We use Caverstede children's centre to help build both my daughters social skills and to integrate with children and families who they may not come across within their life path. My eldest daughter had no language until 11 months ago and attending these settings such as rhyme time and tots helped develop her signing in order to communicate with us a family. My daughter now attends Caverstede nursery and the progression from the groups to nursery has been nothing but wonderful. Each morning someone from the children's centre leads story time; reading a book every day for the week; giving topics such as Eid, fireworks and starting school and the chance for the children to have repetition. Story time has helped both my children concentrate and question what happens in a book; taking away the children centre will take away this skill they have both developed since September. My youngest daughter attends the children centres still; she loves rhyme time and the songs and rhymes she now has and can sing is amazing. I sing at home with her but having a group where we can sing together is an important part of our morning and her development. Working part time; my mother has my children three times a week; taking away this service means that we are taking away a part of their day; where would they go now and get the service, attention and care from the staff at the children's centre which they receive now. My husband takes my daughters every two weeks to Dad's club and loves the hour and half he has in sole charge of the children; the chance for father and daughter time. He and they come home happy full of stories they have done and people they have met. I fully appreciate the fact that the council has to cut funding in certain places; but to cut funding on a service which affects the children of our future seems absolutely outrageous. Parents need services close by to them where they can attend groups, be supported and in some cases have respite. Having super hubs will not work; these are spread out over the city and will be over crowded (if they work) or not used because the staff do not have the time to spend quality time with the parents as they do at Caverstede now and I'm sure in others settings.

Whilst I understand the need for budget cuts and streamlining I feel that this is short sighted on the part of the council. The LA have only just come out of a category with regards to Children's services and by effectively removing the first line of support then a whole wave of issues are going to appear in the near future. The systems will be overloaded again and we shall return to a reactionary situation. The centre at Wittering is well used and the rural communities are at risk of being cut off completely as the impression the plan gives is that if you are not in the centre of the city then there is no provision. Public transport from the rural areas is poor at best. With council spending on vanity projects seemingly on the increase it is shortsighted to lose the support that people receive especially those families. I also strongly feel that the council are putting at risk their previously good relationship with the armed forces by removing one of the few resources for support that you offer as a council. When discussing this I am often told by council employees that the RAF should pay for things. It is not the partners and children of service personnel who are employed by the RAF but they are the ones who will potentially lose any support that the council currently offer

Where I accept that cost saving measures need to be met by the local authority, I feel this is going to be to the detriment of the less deprived children's centre! I understand the need for centres within the deprived areas of the city, however these areas continue to be deprived, with limited improvement even though large funds are allocated to these areas over many years. In addition I am aware that the Housing have moved deprived families into our village into private landlord rents under the terms of a "better move" but have failed these families by removing them from their local support network, limiting their accessibility to central services as they such as employment and health. This is going to be further made difficult for these families once the children's centre is re-designated! I therefore feel the Local authority is setting these families up to fail. We have further been limited for activity access for our children due to the playgroup being moved to a daycare service therefore making group session 5hr instead of 3hrs. The children's centre at Wittering is a hub of activity, which provides a central point for providing support, advice and activities for its community. Especially when the families in our community are often moved about and have limited or no extended family support.

As a service Health Visiting has depended on the work of the children's centres in the provision of a multi agency approach to delivering the healthy child programme (HCP). Whilst we recognise Ofsted does not monitor the children's centres on delivering a universal service, in many areas this is a level of need that has been provided for. We are fully appreciative that the impact of deprivation needs to be considered when targeting services, however Post Natal Depression, Domestic Violence and Parental Mental Health occur in all social classes. Equally they are all impactful and detrimental to the health and development of children. Children's centres have been providing support to this group

and to remove this layer could be detrimental in the communities they have come to serve, and we envisage the result could be an increase in families becoming 'troubled'. This concept is supported by the 2013 cross party manifesto 'The 1001 Critical Days' where the crucial period during conception to age two is recognised and Childrens Centres are placed in Tier 1 to provide Universal support to every parent. This document can be found at www.aimh.org.uk/articles/20131013. It is true that Health Visiting has had an increase in staff numbers due to 'Call to Action'. However the service was poorly staffed for years and in reality the number of HV's in post is still below the recommended ratio for the diverse population of the city. Furthermore health policy (in the delivery the HCP) demands a multi agency approach and building strong partnership relationships is crucial. We propose in particular Brewster Ave & Ravensthorpe should be reconsidered to remain as CCs for this reason.

If money can be ring fenced for trees and fountains, then why can't our local authority ring fence money for the preventative model of children centres? Is children's social care going to be better staffed to pick up the families who would have benefitted under the prevention model? It may be important for the City to look nice with trees and fountains, however people are not going to want to come to our City if the rates of families who are disadvantaged increase and the associated problems of mental health problems, poverty, social unrest and crime also increase. It has been suggested that the community sets up groups like they did years ago, ie: mums and tots and playgroups facilitated by local mums. However our world has now moved on, we expect people to be CRB checked who work with children, hold a professional qualification relating to play and child development, and these groups need to be held somewhere which has health, safety and security requirements and standards in place. I feel that groups led by local mums could therefore be a backward step. My alternative proposal would be to continue to invest in childrens centres. So much money has been invested in them with staff training. Staffing could be reviewed and appropriate qualifications of staff reviewed. Access to interpreting services also needs to be improved as this is a huge area of lack at present. It may be that local business and organisations may want to sponsor some of the childrens centres so links to local business and organisations be strengthened. This could include the large supermarkets who make large profits. It is in their interest that long term these organisations operate in a city with families who are fit and motivated to work.

DO NOT CLOSE ANY CHILDREN'S CENTRES!

If the changes go forward, I suggest that the super hubs are made open access, everyone should be able to attend groups.

Provide an unbiased consultation giving the option of upholding the status quo. Have more options as to what other savings can be made in other areas. Publish the statistics on which the decision was made to close the childrens centre to close. Consider the impact this might have on local primary schools.

I don't have any proposals. It is completely unfair that people are making decisions that affect families without a complete understanding of what these centres do for the communities. I for one would have struggled without Hampton children's centre.

I feel you really need to listen to what the parents are saying, these places are lifesavers for new mums and without them there would be a lot of lonely mums who could be struggling along. I found the baby café amazing and without it would not have continued with breastfeeding, The groups are fantastic and give so much support. Without these centres you are leaving a lot of parents with no support!!!!

It is not viable for me to travel to the super hubs that have been proposed as they are too far away and mainly in areas that I do not wish to go to. The local children's centre has given us the opportunity to meet children that live locally to us and therefore make new friends that my children can grow up with. This has been very important for social skills as we have no other children in the family or friends children locally that my children would have interacted with otherwise. I also have a concern that the super hubs will be far too busy so we will not be able to gain access to many groups on a regular basic as we have been able to.

If families are left unsupported the need for later intervention will be costly and less effective. Intergenerational poverty will not be addressed across the social gradient if you redesignate the centres for preschool . There is not the community capacity to run groups not provided for by professional competent trained staff.

I believe that the existing framework of Children's Centres should stay as they are. To close centres and then create a super hub, will alienate parents who will be forced to travel from their current centre location in order to visit the new hub centres. The majority of parents, myself included, find it convenient to be able to walk with their children to their local centre and to be able to let their children interact with local children, whilst parents themselves are able to make connections with other local parents. To close the majority of centres, and then to label the hubs as centres where additional needs are required, will mean that a lot of children will miss out on those important pre-school development with other children, parents will miss out on being able to chat and discuss children's development in informal situations. My 2 children have benefitted greatly from being able to go to their local centre with me. They benefit from being able to start to interact with other children before they start pre-school. By being able to talk to Children's Centre staff and other parents, I have been able to pick up parenting tips, reassure myself and my wife about child development milestones and be able to just have a bit of time sharing the whole parenting experience with others in a similar experience. I do agree with some people who say that without the Children's Centre, and the fact that they can share their parenting experiences, they would spiral into depression. It can be a very lonely experience bringing up children in today's insular society, and it can be very difficult to go and specifically seek help and advice. With the way the Children's Centres work, this help and advice can be accessed very easily, and very informally, without any feeling of stigma. To take away these centres would be a great shame indeed for all existing and future parents of Peterborough.

Could it be considered that rather than closing centres (as the super hubs are not easily accessible for people living in a number of areas) could the centres planned for closure be instead used as satellite centres, with resource and planning based in the superhub, which should lead to cost savings and standardisation whilst retaining the accessibility which parents need?

Leave the children's centres where they are and expand the range of services they offer. Access to these services locally is vital to many people, just because the area they live in isn't as deprived as others shouldn't mean those people and their children suffer. Not everyone has a car to travel the distances required to the so called "supercentres", why should a mum from Hampton, Orton Longueville, Woodston or Orton Wistow struggle with a buggy and a newborn to get to Orton Goldhay, when the mum's in Orton Goldhay won't have to. You must find a way to keep all the centres open and make Peterborough a great place to have children and raise your family. We don't want a Baby P in Peterborough or another Amina Agboola.

I have set out that I do not have an opinion on the super hubs and the outreach centres simply because I don't agree with the proposals in any form. There is no need for blanket closure of all these centres without giving people/communities/organisations time to forge alternative plans which can be submitted to cabinet for consideration. This consultation was done at the most ridiculous time, December! Of course people aren't going to have the time to do the necessary! There needs to be a major extension of consultation time, in fact there needs to be a suspension of the current consultation whilst alternatives are invited for presentation to cabinet. I realise that the outcome may be that some centres do have to close but to keep only 7 or 8 is ludicrous given the amount spent on these centres in new build costs and the like. Just because we didn't have these services once upon a time doesn't mean they are not valid in this day and age. I want to see each centre properly assessed regarding running costs and possibilities of non-profit organisations taking them on as asset transfers - each and every one, not a blanket decision. I hope common sense will prevail.

I believe the centres should stay as they are. I am concerned that the centres will be aimed at only those unemployed, in crisis etc when in fact all families need support. I am employed and have a good salary with no problems in my life, I would not be someone targeted by the new structure of the children's centres. However without the support of children's centres early in my daughter's life I would have easily given up breastfeeding and developed postnatal depression. there would be no other support for people like myself to access.

The centres should remain open for all. People from all backgrounds need help at some point. New mothers can feel very isolated regardless of their background. Closing these centres isolates people further causing a rise in post natal depression and potentially worse. These centres are a necessary part of early years support for both children and their parents that they will not get anywhere else.

The council must prioritise access to services for children from all backgrounds on order to avoid stigmatising those who do access the services and potentially, as a result, turning off those who need the services the most. The council needs to be more creative in determining what services are free and which are charged and for which parent groups to make the most of the social benefits of children's centre's. Children's centre's are not just about child health and play opportunities, they are about creating a social structure for children and new parents where they can meet with people who are going through the same situations as they are. It could be argued that by removing the opportunity to meet with other parents there will be a greater burden on other services.

Although services are situated in more deprived areas to ensure easy access for those more in need, services should be equally open to families from other areas who might choose to travel to them

I had a head injury in 2006 and as the years passed I became a recluse, scared of people. I became in contact with a brain injury charity who gave me confidence to talk to others like me but still found it difficult to make friends. When I found out I was pregnant I was scared that I didn't want my child to end up like me and was finally convinced to attend my local children's centre. I felt safe instantly. No one asked what I had done to myself which is the usual question then they find an excuse to leave me as it seems too much to handle. The two employees asked each week if they can make my life easier by putting a chair in the room to help me to get to the floor gradually. Etc, I found friends who I know will be life long friends. These things cannot be a service delivered by anyone else as they are so subtle in their approach and have time to listen. I have learnt to cook with my child. Something I'm not allowed to do at home as I'm unsafe. The employee again asked questions about how she can help and ensured I was safe at all times. I have attended money management courses as I have no concept of money let alone managing it. My confidence has grown so much and my son is a wonderful little boy and a lot is down to my local centre but more importantly the people in the centre taking time to get to know each one of us and identifying needs and issues that maybe we were not really aware of but knew something was wrong for eg.

Keep the existing children's centres as they are

Look into finances again. Where can money be saved on useless projects such as fountains which don't work, solar farm that needs aborting etc and properly fund all present childcare facilities.

Using deprivation as the key definition for targeted services is too narrow a focus. It also goes against the recommendations following the Munro Review into Child Protection. Services run by the current children centres offer early support/intervention to parents and their children thus preventing the need for those families to access more specialist/targeted intervention. The courses on offer have helped me bond with my baby and meet other parents for advice/support. Without these services new parents will struggle to find the support they need thus instances of post natal depression and anxiety will likely increase. The parents that the consultation is trying to target require more of a holistic approach such as the current services on offer.

I agree there may need to be centres that can provide support for those in need but what I completely disagree with is taking the normal childrens groups away. As a mother of 4 and them being very young I use Honeyhill Centre on a daily basis to take my children to the play sessions. Not only are they interacting with other children and experiencing things we don't have at home. I too have made friends and have a place to go to meet other people. The staff are absolutely brilliant and will help and support us in anyway they can. It is somewhere to go to get some relief and out of the house. I'm worried that if this isn't an option anymore to parents of pre-school children that not only will our children fall behind in development and basic skills but also the parents can become depressed from sitting at home on a daily basis and could become agitated with constantly being home with just their children and not seeing anybody else. There is know where else to take our children and get together as a community without taking our kids to expensive places to play. Which in most peoples situations this will be a case of money. Not everybody can drive to these places and not everybody will be able to afford to take their children on a daily basis. I really think the long term effects of these proposals could be quite devastating for all it concerns for the future. As a member of Honeyhills parents action groups we together have organised discos, Christmas Fayres, activities during half term and table top sales. They also do trips to different places we wouldn't be able to visit otherwise and have made great memories taking our kids out for the day. The fact that the children are now going to be denied any of this in the future is disgusting. And cuts should not be taken from the children who are going to be our future. If anything I think this should be an area that is focused on more to help pre-schoolers as ready as they can be for school and to give them the best start in life.

I would like the council to reconsider and scrap plans to de-register ANY of the centre. I have waited 20 years to have children, now have my second on the way - both of us have to work, pay our taxes and moved to Hampton because the facilities that we needed for our childrens future was on our doorstep not the run down hole from where we had to move away from in Orton. Hampton was heralded as a world class development one of the leaders in Europe with all facilities at fingertips. These developments are an insult scrap the proposals and actually think about providing the foundations for young children in our local society not in our neighbors.

Keep the centres going they provide support for parents in easy to reach locations

Creating increased support for those families in the most deprived areas is a good idea and the super hubs seem to be in the right areas, however this should not be at the expense of the rest of the children centres. Baby cafes run at children centres for example are an invaluable support for every breast feeding mother whether they are classed as a deprived family or not, Breast feeding is hard and the health visiting team can only go so far to help new mums. New mums need other mums that are going through the same situation at the same time. If super hubs have to be created can the remaining children centres not still provide invaluable services such as baby café's. Or even charge more for the services that are provided. Why are we looking to give money to mothers as an incentive to breastfeed for 6 weeks when it is the support is what is valued the most. Effectively this proposal is not considering a large majority of the under 5's of Peterborough just because they don't come from a deprived family. Post natal depression can happen to any women, and limiting the places that people can feel welcomed to attend to share their problems will surely increased the level of vulnerable mothers left undetected. Can the remaining children centre remain open on a reduced scale, maybe sharing with the local schools rather than complete redeployment, for example, Brewster avenue, being the place I attended most, could have more before school and after school facilities at the children centres but baby cafe's and under age 1 groups still run during the school hours. (In my experience the first year is the hardest with breast feeding, weaning and sleeping issues being just a few issues that every child and mother goes through)

Increase Council revenue and Find Budget savings elsewhere within the council services

I feel that it is important that Children's Centres are not taken away altogether in some of these areas. Whether there is the greatest level or need, or not, these areas still need to be able to access support provided. North, West and Rural is a very wide area and therefore people may not be able to access the main hub, or some of the outreach areas. I would like to see the existing Children's centres used as outreach centres if it is impossible to keep them as children's centres.

Childrens centres are so needed to help parents with all sorts of issues. developmental problems, sleeping problems post natal depression etc. A familiar safe and friendly environment will allow needy families to be found and to access services. Children with developmental needs won't be lost until they reach pre-school or school age and early intervention can take place once these families have been identified at a place such as a childrens centre. Please keep as many open as possible, they are a god send to parents.

These childrens centres should not be closed. They are valuable to local families, they are on our doorsteps. If you close these centres down, and as you say focus on the most disadvantaged, how do you think the disadvantaged in the area's that will close will travel to get there? My opinion after talking to other mums is that they won't go at all. This will isolate the vulnerable families even more and this could have disastrous consequences. NONE of the centres should close. The super hubs and outreach centres should be open access to ALL under 5's and parent/child sessions should not be cancelled. I attend these sessions, and they help both experienced and new mums alike to develop personally and helps develop their babies learning. The sessions are most important to all families with children under school age, I cannot stress that enough

The children's centres are a lifeline to all classes of parents. Parenting is not governed by social class but need. Any parent can suffer depression, any parent can struggle bringing up children, any mother could struggle with things like breast feeding and general well bring if herself and her children...why are these services being stopped for these parents. Also studies have shown that a child's brain development from 1-3 has the biggest impact on their lives. Waiting till 3 to get their first taste of learning at pre-school is too late!!! The sessions at these centres are invaluable to children...these are NOT playgroups (playgroups in the area are merely coffee mornings to mothers as I normally see

the children playing in different rooms or not being watched at all) the sessions are designed to bond with the children by getting down and actually playing and listening with them. Also to social interaction between children and not forgetting parent getting support they need and bring able to meet other mums and create a social network for themselves. Rather than sit at home trying to cope!!!

I want to see these centres remain as they are - delivering valuable early years services to the communities they serve

The children service must be equal for all, not only for deprived. The aim to have all children feel equal and not single out by "category". They must mix with others and the non-deprived must mixed with the less lucky at a young age (children do not make that difference with little friends). The service must be local and not a "super center" where only some will in practice have access. This is a bad strategy for the families

Keep it as it is. It works why fix it!!!

I think all centres should remain open

I know that these centres will be open for vulnerable people in future. but every new parent is vulnerable. I was suffering from postnatal depression to an extent and going to these children's centre helped me to be calm and be a confident mother. I could see a drastic change in my sons physical and social development.

School receptions or preschools as an alternative use.

I don't think they should be re-designated at all

I really worry about what this will mean to families - when my children were younger I was unable to travel to a children's centre and know many other families in the same situation. The children's centres are essential to detecting signs of disabilities and those in need of parenting support the idea of isolating these families is truly shocking. If they are to be re designated then the council needs to be supporting the development of old fashioned mother and toddler groups at the very least and trying to promote support around not only those perceived as the most vulnerable areas as to many children and families will slip through the net if they cannot access proper and timely support

0-5 setting to provide a hub for the civilian and the exposed military personnel. Wittering is remote and lacks services, many of the people there do not have transport and the bus links mean journeys to services are extremely difficult given that many have a child in full time education. The high level of mobility in the military means the shock of arriving in a new setting, and attempting to reconfigure, whilst often being effectively a single parent, makes settling in extremely difficult, the village is sterile. The change in the type of military personnel, and the increased civilian audience, is likely to lead to a drastic change in circumstances at the setting which may lead to as yet unknown and increased pressures being placed on the council. Data trails to date may prove to be misguided. I am a civilian user of the school, and chose to go outside catchment to use the school given it has an excellent reputation. I think that the schools tested ability to roll out a highly effective education should be extended to pre-school and have the support of the council, via funding or otherwise.

They should remain as children centres. Local children's centres should remain in order to support all sectors of the community not just the deprived. As always money ends up going to central Peterborough, rural communities are ignored & regarded as unimportant.

Centres should be kept as they are. How can you spend such a huge amount of money on 'Cathedral Square fountains' and then say you have to make savings on the Sure Start fronts. It's incredible and beggars belief. Justify this????? By the way some of the 'most at need parents and children' happen to be those with a mortgage and one parent working! Are you aware of that fact? This group on the whole has less support and disposable income than many of the claimants. I look with interest the solution as my protest will to work as hard as possible to vote those responsible out. I have the time and motivation to do so.

I do not believe the re-organisation is in the best interests of the people of Peterborough. I strongly oppose the proposed changes and would be extremely disappointed if they are approved. Setting up these hubs creates huge voids in areas where services are removed from. Centralising the services will simply mean more people will not have access to the services due to the stress added by the re-location. I strongly believe this re-organisation will fail the people Peterborough and I urge the decision makers to re-think

I agree that schools may need space for teaching, however I strongly believe that health services, ie: clinic, groups, activities should still remain. However some of the above centres are so small, I have worked from most of the above, I do not feel it would be practice to use the centres for health, social support and education. Universal services need to stay in communities such as health clinics where families can access skilled family support workers, groups and activities. It is important to target the most needy groups, however all families benefit from social integration, a bit like putting social housing next to private housing. All social and educational backgrounds can learn from each other. Putting targeted support in hubs will mean that many of the needy families will be unable to access them due to lack of transport. It was originally felt that these centres needed to be in 'pram pushing distance' of families. Targeted can put some families off, as they feel 'targeted', whereas if families access the facilities and services from all backgrounds people may feel less 'tainted' as needy. The consultation document does not appear to state what staffing ratios of family support workers that there will be to operate effectively.

I believe that baby cafes need to be kept locally within the childrens centres as they are. Baby cafes are there specifically to offer breastfeeding support to mothers. New mothers who need to access the service need to be able to access something local to them. In the early days of parenthood it's hard enough for new mums to get ready to leave the house without having to go to find a service out of their local area. Since I have been facilitating the baby cafe at Stanground we have supported many mothers who have become regular users and breastfeed for longer than they hoped for. This has long term health benefits for the mother and the child which is not to be underestimated as part of the short term desire to save money.

Not interested in opinions contrary to your own? I will not vote for the Conservatives again if this proposal goes through.

It is important that I still have local access to children's activities that provide the opportunity for my children to socialise and play in groups as there are too few other options allowing us access elsewhere and it is an essential part of my children's growth and development preparing them for school.

They need to remain accessible for families and non stigmatising equitable services for all. Stigmatising those in need may make engagement poorer as families feel noticed for needing services. It will dilute information sharing and safeguarding knowledge. All children in these areas are deserving of input in early years services. Closure will contravene governmental policy to make access to services equitable for all families close to home. Children are a protected designation in statute and should be enshrined within the public health system for optimum opportunity and best service delivery. How can health be supported if the budget is not fought for by social care? Where is the joined up approach if the public health service frameworks across all services?

I don't think that the centres should be changed in any way. They provide an invaluable service to children and families. Not only for those who are living in poverty but for every sector of society. When I was a first time mum I used centres every single day. It helped improve and solidify my parenting skills. It stopped me feeling depressed and I received a lot of advice and support. I am concerned if the centres close people like myself will not be able to access these services which will impact on parents and then the children.

I strongly disagree with the reallocation of any childrens centre to another use. If a childrens centre is going to be central to the community it must be placed within the community in which it serves, ie, pram pushing distance. I have use childrens centres previously and found them invaluable.

I don't believe the use of the centres should be re designated.

I disagree with any closures or cuts or re-design in current provision for any Children's centres in Peterborough. For Me Children's Centres are a priority which should not have any cuts in service to save Council money when there are other things that the council could look at to reduce spending and also increase revenue without picking on children as a soft target!

Based on the factual and statistical evidence regarding the population growth forecast for Peterborough in the next ten years of a 10% increase (office of Nat Stat 13) and the evidence that for a city the size and demographic of Peterborough as compared with comparable sites we are placed second in the country for the level of 'children in need' the cuts and design of the proposed suggestions do not lead to a logical plan for the safeguarding and well-being for the families of Peterborough. Furthermore the statements you made at the beginning of the consultation were not qualified or substantiated with factual evidence. In particular the fact that the Family Nurse Partnership is functioning in Peterborough is a welcome addition to resources but it not a universal service and can only be offered to a relative small number of families .The fact that the number of Health visitors has increased is only because the service has been running well below capacity for several years and the full time equivalents will only be fulfilling the 2011 projections for health needs in the city. Furthermore in the Central area, one of the most deprived in the city and has already had a marked decrease in the facilities provided by the Council due to the closure of the Veranda Centre. Little or no consideration was given to the health and social needs of the community and there was no consultation regarding where the families would be able to access the HV service, as a last minute stop gap a Child health clinic is run from the Gladstone school. Peterborough scores highly in the deprivation scales compared to England www.healthprofiles.info 2013. Finally as a HV service we are very dedicated to helping the People of Peterborough whatever ethnic/ social background but we will need the physical building to be able to do this and with the closure of the centres and the increasing cost to GPs we will not have the opportunity to deliver the HV implementation plan

I would like to see these centres used as outreach centres to enable families to access support locally.

Spalding, Bourne, Eye. Disappointed to hear of closures - excellent facilities
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Suggestion to limit the opening hours to eg: 10-12 and 2-4 and turn down heating as less drastic ways to save money without affecting the service. Used Caverstede, Fulbridge, Raventhorpe, Werrington + Eye. Excellent facilities and support, we have been able to meet other parent and create a strong network of mums who help each other and can discuss difficulties etc and socialise, without the starting point of mtg in the centres and professional input this would not have been possible. I feel that only providing the service for deprived families will create a stigma about the centres and will discourage use from everyone. Without the service mothers will be more isolated and vulnerable to post natal depression etc and will not benefit from the positive start they have now. Think the centres in rural are just as important and crucial for families who find it difficult to get out and travel and would help build strong communities for the future and properly socialised children.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

My little boy and I have been using these childrens centre since he was 6 weeks old, he is now 28 months. Without them I would have felt very isolated in the early weeks/months. The councils idea of them being shut down is unbelievable, it is to save money but surely cuts could be made elsewhere? These centres provide a lifeline for them and their children, allowing the children to play, interact and learn new things. They should not close down!
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

These centres are fantastic for first time parents from all backgrounds. By pushing these services back to our GP's will cause more strain on our NHS doctors. I find it unbelievable that these centres may close.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The centres are fantastic for young children, they teach the children independence from a young age, they are able to socialise and develop. Without use of these centres there is nowhere available for children to learn through play.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I have been using the childrens centre for the last year. My son has learnt a lot from the centre in terms of development. Centre played a very important role for him to socialise and the first few months it was really helpful for me to meet other mums and access the breast feeding nurse.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

As a mother of 4 children, aged 4 and under I depend on the childrens centres for support and fun activities for the kids. I'd be devastated if we lost this space.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Surestart centre in Eye and Paston Peterborough. These centres have benefitted me when I needed advice for me and my children to socialise with other children. My family have found the centre so helpful for our children welfare and giving me chance to meet other mums!
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The childrens centre is a great community resource. It enable new parent to meet other and socialise. I used the Whittlesey centre when my children were younger and enjoyed all the groups and facilities. It is vital to the village as a base for young families.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Surestart centre in Eye and Paston Peterborough is really needed in this area for the support and the welfare of mothers and darers, lots of playgroups are closing in the area and I would feel isolated and lonely without it. The ladies who run it are just wonderful, a lifeline.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Surestart centres are a vital source of interaction for both children and new mums. Having baby groups accessible in rural areas helps to prevent isolation for new mums especially, encourages mums and babies/young children to get out of the house and to socialise with other mums. It helps build confidence and social skills for parents and children, having them in environments similar to that of school can only benefit the children long term to prepare them for their first years in school. To close these centre woul only cause isolation and reduce social interaction skills
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

It is an absolute disgrace to even think about closing the childrens centres. Without the childrens centres so many families especially mums will be isolated and the babies left without developing social skills. Not everyone has family and friends around them with children to play with. The baby group for me was essential and sometime the only time I saw other people. There will be no promises for this without the centre.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Eye , Werrington, Fulbridge. I have attended a number of childrens centres and found them a lifeline when I was a new mum with a newborn. They provide an important meeting point and source of information for people from all backgrounds and walks of life. Closing centres is likely to result in new mums feeling isolated and losing vital social support networks, especially in rural areas.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I can't speak highly enough of SureStart childrens centres. As a first time mum they have saved me! Made me feel normal, introduced me to other mums. I attended Eye, Thorney, Werrington and Paston centrs for sessions including a first time mums group, baby yoga, baby massage, messy okay, little explorers, baby sign language. They have been invaluable to me. I practically lived there for the first two years of my son's life. I always recommend them to my friend but think they have always been under provided by health professional and most people don't understand what services they offer or who thy are for.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I am deeply troubled by your proposal to close selected children's centers in Peterborough,

I am 31 and a first time mum, I had trouble with breast feeding and confidence and laked the ability to talk to others, the children's centre was so important to myself and daughter as she will not go to nursery or school till later, it gave her the opportunity to mix and learn and develop with other children.

These centers are vital to all who use them and will in the future. To say they will be only for deprived family's is also wrong I'm not on Benefits or have a low wage but like all I have bills and a mortgage to pay for I cannot afford private nursery or group costs !! but I would not be able to use your centers.

Myself and many others use Stanground centre and Brewsters Avenue this is one of the best run centers I have ever attended.

I hate to be so blunt but you spend a lot of money on providing pretty things in the town the fountains the new block paving to the high street etc.

I really do feel that you should review you policy suggestions thoroughly and talk to parents and famous that use these centers and to people who will be directly affected !!!

We have recently received an email from XXX in regards to the campaign against Saving Children's Centres across Peterborough. We would like to express our interest in supporting this campaign.

I feel that the centres are not the primary problem. Though there is scope for improvement in layout to make the buildings more welcoming. The issue is lack of use and not charging commercially for delivery to end users.

The services are underused because of several reasons. These issues need to be addressed 1st, not the buildings. I believe the centres have a big perception problem and also many parents don't rate the benefits of the services..... a marketing issue.

I believe there is scope to increase fees charged and to bring in other revenues by providing a venue to private children's service providers and activities.

Issues to put effort and money behind:

1. Benefits of the services offered are not understood.
2. When choosing how to spend time with their children, other paid activities are trusted ahead of the free services of the centre. These higher cost services by contracted providers should be brought into the centres.
3. There is an apprehension around joining in and fear of being preached too at a centre. Help is needed here.

It is easier for parents to do nothing than to actively strive to join in with these activities. If inconvenience is increased to many by moving services further away, less parents will be motivated to join in and the chances for progress on any of the 3 points is reduced.

Improvements to the local services is a better option to help support this region's parents and very young.

It is in the 1st 3 years of a child's life that 90% of the child's brain is formed, so the majority of behaviour, character and intelligence tendency is set for life in this stage. We need to help families bring up social, confident, emotionally mature, creative individuals for the benefit of all our futures.

I am glad there is a review, but please look at the services from the end user perspective. Centralised services or targeted locations can only be step backwards. The centres are helping to keep communities alive allowing experiences and connections vital for a child's life in the local area. The value of the centres is as much as community hubs helping with social cohesion than as just service centres for the young.

A suggestion is to work with other interested parties (such as NCT and MumsNet) to evaluate services offered and to put money, skill and time behind promotion of these services. Efforts to provide profitable services and combine functions with other venues at the local level should be priority over cost saving and centralisation.

If there is an opportunity to improve the buildings, a more welcoming environment should be considered.

I just totally fail to understand why people, not aimed at you, can't see that as soon as you offer 'business' data on the web you have to commit to ensuring that it's always fully up to date and relevant to the target audience otherwise it's totally useless.ve quite enjoyed these past few weeks gathering information on children's centres, from government websites, which are meticulously up to date to the nth degree and take some assimilating, to facebook pages of sad political rhetoric. (I read all sites with paragraph 1 in mind at all times). Until this all kicked off I didn't know such support existed, having taken time to read around it I'm inclined to think that more should be done. Not necessarily in more money but a much tighter management of them as a 'market product' to get as much benefit out of each pound spent

as possible. It seems a shame to be talking of shutting them down. If the council talk of growing Peterborough by immigration, national as well as international, then almost by definition those people will be young, pre-family people who will, as they live their life in Peterborough, start to have families without the support of the families they have moved away from; just the sort of people who will need Children's Centres. If you then add on top the councils commitment to be an environmental city those centres should be within walking distance not a car ride or two bus journeys away. Whilst I can understand the council's need to balance its budget I do feel that there has to be a better solution than striking £1.2m from the budget in this area and then trying to shoehorn the service into the new budget. There is much real passion, once you've sifted out the political opportunists, for the centres but that enthusiasm is not matched with a professional ability in management, nor should one expect it to be, to carry the centres forward. Having said that those people do have experience as customers of the service and as such a unique expertise in the experience provided. Having generated, all be it not in the best of circumstances, such passion it would seem a great waste by the council not to harness that enthusiasm to come up with a solution which not only addresses the council's budget balancing but also maintains the benefit provided to communities. There must be a way that the expertise of council officers and that of Childrens Centre users can be brought together to develop such a solution

I have got a 6 months old baby and he is my first baby. When I was pregnant I had high blood pressure which made me to go see the midwife more often than the usual. The midwives facilities at the children's centre helped me so much. So do the baby clinics and the breastfeeding cafés. The health visitors are so helpful and friendly. It is wonderful to know that we can count with our local children centre being in a walking distance from my house, not depending on public transport as I do not drive. Also, getting buses in Hampton with pushchairs is such a nightmare. They are normally full and the drivers are not allowed to let you in if there are more than 3 pushchairs. There was a time I had to wait under the rain and in the cold with my baby for over 50 minutes because two buses that came had all the pushchairs and wheel chair places taken. But this is not the point, the point is: ending our local children centre and making all the mothers from Hampton to go to somewhere else will cause a lot of frustration, as many of us do not drive and depend of public transport or on husbands to take us to places. Also the children centre have been a blessing for so many mothers who had pos-partun depression and some other problems and issues. Our children need this children centre. This is so important for them, to help them to socialise and also help first time mothers. I hope that the right decision will be made, and may God touch your hearts and make you see how important this place is for the local parents and children. Thank you for your time.

It appears from feedback that the council are looking for reasons as to why these centres should stay open. We feel that the council already has this information and are a bit confused as to why we are being asked to provide this! (It would have been very beneficial if the Councillors actually took time to visit the centres and see firsthand at what actually goes on in these centres, rather than read about closing them from an agenda! Can I give you some info to clarify a few things being discussed regarding why the centres should stay open and the difference they are making. As a member of the advisory board for my children's centre I am we'll aware of the good these centres do for people. Some of the councillors have also said they need more info about why the centres should stay open other than the fact that parents will miss the groups. Most councillors seem to be under a false impression that these are just 'playgroups' that mothers go to to play. And indeed that a parent led playgroup alternative would suffice. There are plenty of theses playgroups around!! But this is NOT what our centres provide!! These are sessions designed around learning, through play, music, sensory and other key areas. We need to ensure that the pivotal early foundation years before they even get to school are being met. There is a robust monitoring and accountability process in place for all centres, reporting directly to the city council. The city council have lots of information on the difference the centres are making (such as supporting to reduce post natal depression, increasing breastfeeding, reducing child obesity, narrowing the attainment gap of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, raising literacy and numeracy levels, reducing smoking, helping parents to get a job or into further training). It's unfair that the council are asking parents to provide this information. They wont have this. Whilst they will see that the groups are beneficial they won't have all the information to hand. Here are some examples of how the city council already collects information on the impact of children's centres. 1. Children's Centres have to report to the city council every 3 months with stats on the total number of children registering with the children's centres and accessing them, parents and children from targeted groups including children on the child protection register, children with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, teenage parents, workless families and lone parents that they engage with. They also have to report on the positive impact and difference they are making to target groups through case studies, evaluation reports and long term tracking processes. 2. The centres write a SEF (self evaluation form) on centres. These are scrutinised by the City Council, Ofsted and the centres governance (advisory board). These summarise the difference they are making and in particular to those from target groups. 3. Centres have termly quality visits (mini inspections) from the Peterborough City Council's early year's team. The purpose of these is

to act as a critical friend for the centres - checking that groups and services are working well and they are having a positive impact. It's frustrating that the city council are asking for positive impact when they have this information already! The target set by PCC is to register at least 75% within 3 months of being born. At Brewster around 90% of all children 0-5 years living in the area are registered with the centre and about 80 per cent in Stanground. I cannot say enough about the gap of learning deprivation that you will create for our children, and indeed, future children if these centres were to close

I am writing re my concern about the closure of Children's Centres. I understand the budget restraints facing PCC; but I do think this is something that needs to be looked at in greater detail before final decision is made. I would rather see money being spent on the young that various vanity led schemes in the City.

As my local MP in Peterborough, you will, no doubt be well aware of the issues that surround the closure of the services of 6 of our local Children's centre (Stanground, Hampton, Brewster Avenue, Werrington, the East Rural Centre and the Westwood Ravensthorpe Centre). If the plans are approved this will mean that the valuable service that these currently provide will cease and become inaccessible to all children and parents in these areas.

To give you an insight into why these are important to me. As a first time mother I was pointed in direction of children's centres for support in breastfeeding and learning to cope this new thing called 'motherhood'!! I didn't realise at the time that I was suffering from post natal depression and as weeping every day as I felt like I was failing my child. I was certainly not going to tell a home visitor or GP about my feeling of helplessness for fear of being branded incapable... or worse still, social workers taking my child away. Although I realise they would not do this, at the time, I really didn't know what they were capable of, as many mothers are!!

The children's centre was a godsend. A lifeline, a welcome and supportive environment full of people who did not judge me, offered me solutions, experience from trained staff, friendship with other mothers to name a few. I am just one mother who has had these issues and I have spoken to others who have been in similar situations an even worse.

Currently we do not seem to be getting through to our own councillors in the Peterborough City Council, who seem to be more interesting in funding frivolous spending in Peterborough which include; fountains that do not work and cost tens of thousands to maintain and are never on, solar farm projects that will not bring much to the area or profit and just announced are plans to create and change Peterborough's station area (this is a £4 million project to include planting 30 100ft (30m) London plane tree along the widened central reservation and creating two 33ft (10m) wide pedestrian crossing between the Crescent Bridge roundabout and Bright Street for pedestrians and cyclists. This I find very offensive, in that they are cutting budgets for children's centres and are favouring the prettying up an area over the welfare of the public (especially as it is the public's tax money they are dipping into!!). They are currently arguing that they do not want the city centre being used as a rat run then contradict themselves with putting anew Waitrose store there (yup...maybe they expect people to walk there and home with a trolley full of supermarket shopping!!...and not use cars!!!)

It's pretty clear that our councillors have already done the deal, and are going out to consultation with the public, with the view to 'ticking the box' as a legal requirement. The public are well aware of, as the consultation meetings currently taking place are the same scripted replies.

They do not however take into account the work that these centres do. They have argued that they are not closing the centres...the building will still be there...this is brick and mortar to use...what we want is our service kept. Many will argue that these are playgroups?? These are not playgroups and getting this through to these councillors is a job and a half. Playgroups are coffee mornings for mothers with a mass of toys thrown about a room with no structure to learning and no staff there able to support you and explain issues in learning, development etc, in your child. These sessions are all designed around specific key learning points for your child. You are encouraged to play with your child and learn through play together and bond with your child. This along with all the clinics they run, baby café's, breastfeeding clinics, parenting courses, job courses, money courses. All aimed at making you a better parent. It's also a place where people who are in danger can be picked up...before they fall under the radar!! (if our services stop there, then they will be pushed back to GP's and health visitors...this is neither here nor there...as all they are achieving is bringing it finally level with the rest of the country...and not actually increasing it.

If you are not aware of what children's centres do for parents, children, communities, we would love to invite you to view some of these places and view for yourself the work that goes in on these centres. I hope you can find the time to visit

the location during one of these busy periods to see for yourself just how serious the problem will be if these centres services were to close can, subsequently, lobby some of your fellow members of parliament to support our cause. We have already collected over 1700 petitions and have presented some of these already to the council. However, they have made it clear that even with the public outcry, there is nothing that they are really intending to do. We are getting the same (almost recorded voice now) of 'we have some difficult decisions ahead of us!! And 'we are listening to the public in these consultations and listening to what you have to say'.

I note that you are in record saying that this is a 'local issue'. However there are many many people out there who beg to differ in this. Several other cities have overturn the proposals due to overwhelming criticism and public support (Oxfordshire and Dudley are two). If we close these centres, what next?? This is the future of our generation that we are messing up!!

I would be very interested in hearing from you with regards to your views on this matter and what you might be able to do about it. *(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara)*

Is there anything we can do as parents that use the children's centres to try to save them? A petition maybe? Myself and a lot of my mummy friends use them at least 3 times a week. We are all very sad to hear of the closures. My husband works and we have a mortgage on our house and find ourselves worse off than families on benefits. After paying bills we have £80 a week to feed and clothe our family. Using the children's centres benefits my children and is somewhere that we can afford to go and go socialise. *(Forwarded from Stewart Jackson)*

The early years of children's lives are very important in terms of their development, and the activities offered by the Children's Centres have tangible effects on the children that use the facilities. Amongst the many benefits is the fact that very shy children can often be 'brought out of their shells' and encouraged to interact socially with their peers which would not be the case without these centres.

Moreover, with Peterborough having a much higher birth rate than its immediate neighbours and a predicted rise in birth rates to 3,500 per year by 2021 if trends continue, removing such a large proportion of the centres will mean that many new parents will be unable to access these services which will ultimately be to the detriment of the children concerned.

I appreciate that the council's aim of focusing its services on the most deprived areas of the city. However, that is not to say that there is not a need for the centres in other places right across the area. To reduce the number of centres from 15 to 4 does not properly acknowledge the importance of the centres in these other locations.

Whilst there are clear arguments in favour of the centres as far as children are concerned, there is also a strong argument for the wellbeing of the parents who use the centres. Post-natal depression is a condition which is not often spoken of and is more prevalent than many realize. Consequently, the positive effect that these centres bring to the adults who use them is often overlooked, but they are a real benefit due to the opportunities for parents to socialize which would not be the case if there was reduced provision. Finally, there is an argument to be made related to the fluid diverse population that Peterborough has, both in terms of people moving to the city from other parts of the UK as well as from abroad. It should be noted that the centres act as a friendly hub for many mothers and fathers who have no family in the local area, or the UK as a larger entity. The centres therefore serve a positive purpose in terms of social cohesion.

Whilst I appreciate the very difficult economic circumstances under which the Council is operating, I am not convinced that service cutbacks should be targeted at a vulnerable and rapidly expanding sector of our community.

In relation to 'Super Centre Hubs' having a wider reach area than the existing children's centres and being the focus of activity in relation to working with at least 65% of most vulnerable families in that extended reach area as defined by Ofsted, we are concerned that to date insufficient detailed modelling of the resources required to achieve that increase (i.e. staff, volunteers, partner agency activity) has been undertaken, given the current strain on limited resources. Whilst counting the engagement of other partners with vulnerable families in wider reach areas as part of their reach profile for Ofsted will go some way towards addressing the gap we consider that the level of staffing attached to both the proposed 'Super Centre Hubs' will need to be increased beyond what they currently have as current standalone centres.

It is important we raise this now ahead of any changes in order that expectations and performance targets can be set at a realistic level for future years. Ultimately, we consider that only either a reduction from the current 8 centres down to 4 sites or additional outreach posts attached to the 'Super Centre Hubs' will be able to deliver 'Good' Ofsted judged

provision, which is important to children and families, public confidence, and the reputation of both Peterborough and ourselves.

The re-designation of children's centres in some areas of Peterborough will have an impact on those communities where there is less relative deprivation and fewer families in need according to the statistics relied on, however we believe that contemporary PCC data and trends in relation to CAF, CIN, CPP should also be considered alongside the IDACI ranking for SOA's. This view is formed on the basis of publically available statistics about the Peterborough population indicating that: child poverty, teenage pregnancy, CIN, CPP (new and all), LAC, and the EYFS attainment gap are all worse than national averages, and that an 11% population growth is predicted between 2011 and 2021.

It is encouraging to see how PCC have already considered how the likely impacts could be mitigated (e.g. ongoing health service, parent-led activities, school run services). In relation to the Head teachers / governing bodies that have expressed an interest in running '*children's centre like services*' the workforce skills required for that delivery, and the potential for any current staff placed at risk of redundancy due to centre re-designation to be TUPE transferred to schools, both need careful and further consideration.

(...)

(...)

We look forward to further discussions about the public consultation feedback themes, the recommendations being made to Cabinet, and together to finding a way for us to work through the implications of a significant budget reduction decision whilst keeping the needs of the most vulnerable children in Peterborough communities at the centre of future provision planning.

1. We understand that Peterborough City Council PCC needs to save money in the present economic climate and wants to focus services on areas of greatest need – to “enable every child to get a healthy safe start in life” and “to ensure support for parents”

We are encouraged to hear from Cllr Sheila Scott at the 26 November public consultation meeting in Fletton that the Council has free choice of where to make savings.

We know that the school population in Peterborough is rising, so we see the logic of closing children's centres where they are adjacent to schools to free-up space for the new classrooms we need.

2. Problems with evidence provided in the consultation document:

Bottom-up focus on areas of greatest deprivation based on income of households with children but:

Not a logical overview – superhubs created from the bottom up do *not* form a logical set across Peterborough e.g. 3 out of 4 are fairly close together in NE/central of the city.

Not joined up with transport strategy e.g. buses withdrawn between Paston & Bretton in the 2013 cuts.

Not user-friendly – why visit (let alone travel) when there will be a social stigma & you might feel “preached at” since the only users of a superhub would be “deprived “ families?

Not learning from Surestart – originally targeted at “deprived” areas, didn't build momentum until universal access given, which also meant vulnerable people on whatever level of income could be identified early for extra support (e.g. postnatal depression)

Not facilitating community cohesion – if only the “deprived” / needy can access superhubs then reduce scope for mutual support and role modeling across “mixed” groups of users.

Not future proof e.g. no provision in Hampton where there's planned growth of social housing (by definition for people with low incomes) and other areas remote for superhubs.

No evidence provided to support the change from several distributed “local” Children's centres to a few Superhubs or

for providing other services at Superhubs e.g. improving employability.

3. Bigger picture: what is child deprivation & how can we reduce it?

It's *not* just about household income – in 2013 the Children's Society concluded that the aspects of their Good Childhood Index which are most influential are: Choice/autonomy & family relationships as well as money/possessions. The Children's Society & nef (the new economics foundation) found that children & families can improve well-being by connecting, being active, keep learning, taking notice & creativity/imagination/play. Local Children's Centres address many of these.

Libraries obviously directly address learning, creativity etc & provide a drop-in supportive space for families, but Peterborough opening hours were reduced in 2013 (Sunday opening finished years ago).

How to reduce health/other inequalities for "deprived" children: the NCT has well-established evidence for the medical & social risks of *not* breastfeeding. Mothers tell us they have relied on practical & emotional support from Baby cafes/Children's Centres to get breast feeding established...and to keep going.

Outreach from Children's centres is targeted to support vulnerable families who have specific challenges, improving the lives of the children involved e.g. engaging with initial Child Protection Conferences for children under 5; supporting parents suffering domestic abuse; facilitating parenting courses & workshops; joined up support for teenage parents.

Children's centres provide universally accessible groups (messy play etc), which give children space to play, provide advice for parents, offer opportunities for role modelling, facilitate social contact & promote community cohesion.

4. What are greatest needs of Peterborough parents (now & in future)?

Parents tell us they need "somewhere we can drop in anytime" – this is different from a babies/toddlers/playgroup (because they are only at set times) and different from things we organize ourselves (because we sometimes want expert/practitioner advice/support/reassurance for ourselves & about our children's development).

Anecdotal evidence relates to children's wellbeing factors, for example; Free, open to all Children's centres/drop-ins have helped diffuse tensions for new parents & provide opportunities for role modeling play etc with families going through more stable phases.

Children's centre services have caught us early when falling into family difficulties & avoided situations becoming serious.

Children's centre services have prevented post natal depression developing, or enable us to find professional support for PND sooner.

From our experience at Peterborough NCT, parents are increasingly under more pressure to return to work after maternity/paternity leave, so less able to volunteer to help other new parents as their babies grow, so then voluntary sector cannot step in if PCC pulls out of local communities by closing Children's centres.

Many new Peterborough parents are remote from their own parents/extended families and we lack wider community cohesion so local support, facilitated by practitioners (Health/Social care/NCT breastfeeding Councillors/whoever) is crucial to individual new families & helps facilitate integrated local communities.

5. Alternative Proposals/Ideas:

Allow continued universal access to Children's centres, mindful that Peterborough people explicitly said at Consultation that they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax (when they're not on Maternity leave!)

Re-consider the geographical spread of the children's centres across Peterborough, looking at other drop-in services such as libraries & Health Professional clinics (GP's, midwives, Health Visitors) in each area from a user access perspective.

Only close Children's centres where there are adequate other drop in services & where the Children's centre accommodation is needed for the attached school to grow.

Use some of the savings (via Vivacity) to re-instate and if possible extend library opening hours & increase staffing to enhance local provision of safe & supportive places for families at least on every weekday.

Consider relocating staff (e.g. health Visitors, midwives) & activities (e.g. breastfeeding support) from any Children's centres which do close to other local venues, spread widely across Peterborough.

Don't move services currently at venues other than Children's centres (e.g. employment advice) into Superhubs – these may actually be more accessible where there are currently provided centrally, given bus services, etc.

(Forwarded from Peterborough NCT)

My name is xxxx, I have got a 6 months old baby and he is my first baby. When I was pregnant I had high blood pressure which made me to go see the midwife more often than the usual.

The midwives facilities at the children's centre helped me so much.

So do the baby clinics and the breastfeeding cafés. The health visitors are so helpful and friendly.

It is wonderful to know that we can count with our local children centre being in a walking distance from my house, not depending on public transport as I do not drive.

Also, getting buses in Hampton with pushchairs is such a nightmare. They are normally full and the drivers are not allowed to let you in if there are more than 3 pushchairs.

There was a time I had to wait under the rain and in the cold with my baby for over 50 minutes because two buses that came had all the pushchairs and wheel chair places taken.

But this is not the point, the point is: ending our local children centre and making all the mothers from Hampton to go to somewhere else will cause a lot of frustration, as many of us do not drive and depend of public transport or on husbands to take us to places. Also the children centre have been a blessing for so many mothers who had pos-partum depression and some other problems and issues.

Our children need this children centre. This is so important for them, to help them to socialise and also help first time mothers.

I hope that the right decision will be made, and may God touch your hearts and make you see how important this place is for the local parents and children.

It appears from feedback that the council are looking for reasons as to why these centres should stay open. We feel that the council already has this information and are a bit confused as to why we are being asked to provide this! (It would have been very beneficial if the Councillors actually took time to visit the centres and see first hand at what actually goes on in these centres, rather than read about closing them from an agenda!

Can I give you some info to clarify a few things being discussed regarding why the centres should stay open and the difference they are making. As a member of the advisory board for my children's centre I am well aware of the good these centres do for people.

Some of the councillors have also said they need more info about why the centres should stay open other than the fact that parents will miss the groups. Most councillors seem to be under a false impression that these are just 'playgroups' that mothers go to to play. And indeed that a parent led playgroup alternative would suffice. There are plenty of these playgroups around!! But this is NOT what our centres provide!! These are sessions designed around learning, through play, music, sensory and other key areas. We need to ensure that the pivotal early foundation years before they even get to school are being met.

There is a robust monitoring and accountability process in place for all centres, reporting directly to the city council. The city council have lots of information on the difference the centres are making (such as supporting to reduce post natal depression, increasing breastfeeding, reducing child obesity, narrowing the attainment gap of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, raising literacy and numeracy levels, reducing smoking, helping parents to get a job or into further training). It's unfair that the council are asking parents to provide this information. They won't have this. Whilst they will see that the groups are beneficial they won't have all the information to hand.

Here are some examples of how the city council already collects information on the impact of children's centres

1. Children's Centres have to report to the city council every 3 months with stats on the total number of children registering with the children's centres and accessing them, parents and children from targeted groups including children on the child protection register, children with disabilities, minority ethnic groups, teenage parents, workless families and lone parents that they engage with. They also have to report on the positive impact and difference they are making to target groups through case studies, evaluation reports and long term tracking processes.

2. The centres write a SEF (self evaluation form) on centres. These are scrutinised by the City Council, Ofsted and the centres governance (advisory board). These summarise the difference they are making and in particular to those from

target groups.

3. Centres have termly quality visits (mini inspections) from the Peterborough City Council's early year's team. The purpose of these is to act as a critical friend for the centres - checking that groups and services are working well and they are having a positive impact.

It's frustrating that the city council are asking for positive impact when they have this information already!

The target set by PCC is to register at least 75% within 3 months of being born. At Brewster around 90% of all children 0-5 years living in the area are registered with the centre and about 80 per cent in Stanground.

I cannot say enough about the gap of learning deprivation that you will create for our children, and indeed, future children if these centres were to close.

When defending the proposals, PCC's reps have stated that these services and additional services will be provided at the four Super Hubs. However this will alienate a large percentage of the targeted market as it will not be logistically viable to access these hubs for many. To reach the required percentage, it is essential that there is a facility within each community, as there is now.

In addition to this, many people will be refused access to these hubs as they will not fit the "vulnerable/deprived" status. Though anyone, regardless of class/financial/relationship status can become vulnerable. What will happen to these individuals? Where will they go to receive the support of professional and support under one roof? These people are being discriminated against and will slip through the system.

Please can you all take time to think about the community issues and welfare of families rather than prettying up a town to coax investors to our city!! We all know investors won't invest in a city that doesn't put their communities and welfare of its people first!!

I'd also like to know where each of you stand in this proposal!! If you are free to vote or are being party whipped!!

I am writing you to let you know how shocked I am that you are considering closing several children centres in Orton and Hampton!! These centres were such a big help for me throughout all three of my children's baby years, I met so many mums there that are up to date some of my best friends!!! The kids have a bond as well that nobody can take away from them, the staff there are amazing and generally these centres are just essential for any mum, especially with your first baby. I am 38 now and happily married but thinking of how important the centres must be to younger mums or single mums, or mums with problems at home, makes me write you today!!

Please reconsider!!!

I used the centres lots when my two children were born from ante natal classes to breast feeding ,health visitor appt , messy play, baby massage, thebabycafe , feeding advice and the toy library , we did the summer clubs and trips I made friends 7 years ago I would not and could not be without. Some brill staff some excellent it was a lifeline when on mat leave, working and made redundant, then working again. Did not like it when policy made me leave a club after child's age of 3 due to cuts, still continued with second child, please don't shut the centres. I don't know what I would have done without them in the early middle and later days or how I would have the diverse network of friends I now have.

Please see below the response from the Family Nurse Partnership Board (FNP) in respect of the Formal Consultation:

The FNP Board understands the need to reduce costs and the pressure that this can cause Local Authorities. From a service user point of view and with our young teenage parent clients in mind, we are concerned about the closure of many Children Centres in the city. Presently our clients find it difficult to access community resources including Children Centres due to the stigma of being young parents and the anxiety this can cause and we work hard to promote their integration into the community. Considering the challenges our clients have with accessing the centres near to their homes, it seems an impossible task to get them to access the super centre hubs that may be several bus stops away or a significant walk. Many of our FNP clients express the need to access services in the town centre and we have held client forums in the centre for these reasons with great success. Only a small walk or entering an unknown area, can be enough to stop a young parent accessing a centre. Even the centres in the surrounding areas are too far for them to walk and they are not utilised by this client group effectively. It would be hugely beneficial to our clients and many other young parents if there was a centre offering activities in the town centre. Young people see the town centre as the hub of their day to day life and a central location within this area would be a very positive step.

The closure of the Children's Centres will have a significant impact on young, vulnerable parents who need to integrate and find support in their area. It will mean that these parents may become socially isolated and increase the vulnerability of both them and their baby/child.

My response is within the one submitted from the FNP Advisory Board, however, I would just like to emphasise what we know works for vulnerable teenage parents-

If there is not a CC within their locality, & close, they are most unlikely to walk through a CC door, therefore outreach would be key which has proven to be very successful in the past to 'walk' them into the centre for the first couple of sessions.

Also to reinstate a designated lead Health Visitor who specialises in teenage parents postnatal for those not picked up by FNP this model was a huge success in the past & a huge gap is left to this day.

I have completed the survey about children's centres in Peterborough. I am very alarmed about the options presented in this consultation, there are no alternatives set out for myself or others to consider. I understand that rather than the open access service that these children's centres have provided for many years that the service will change to referral and targeted work only. With outreach services. This is not good as many families will not know how to access the support that they need. Also by changing it to targeted support only you lose out on the peer support of families meeting each other at open access and providing self support help also. Children's wellbeing will suffer by these changes at a time when so many other financial and social pressures are being put on families. I am extremely concerned also that there will be closures to some of the children's centres in Peterborough which will reduce use and access, expecting families to commute across Peterborough especially when transport has been cut is not feasible. Also there are local community issues that only a local children's centre could possibly have expertise on, this would be lost. To sum up, I urge Peterborough City Council cabinet to withdraw its proposals to reduce Children's centre services across Peterborough.

I would be most grateful if the cabinet member for Children's Services Sheila Scott & The Service director could respond on the points that I have raised?

In addition, there is little evidence that the most deprived families actually want these super hubs and more importantly will actually use them. My experience of using the children's centres, is that currently a wide mix of families from all backgrounds use the services and benefit from them and this should continue. I live in Etton and do not have a children's centre on my doorstep, yet I am willing to travel to use the one on Brewster Avenue and in Eye because my daughter and I both get a lot of benefit from their services.

Under your new proposal, I would not be eligible to use the children's centres, yet my husband and I pay our council tax and my daughter has the same needs as any other child in the city. This proposal discriminatory and is effectively segregating deprived families from everyone else. Surely this is setting a very poor example to our children about the importance of an integrated society and is potentially hindering the development of this city's children by removing services they benefit from. The provision of early years' education through the children's centres is essential and should continue to be funded by the council for all children and not only those who are considered by the council as being "deprived".

If the council need to make cuts to their children's centre budgets, why not look at closing some of the less well used centres, wherever they may be located in the city and maintain the centres which are well used - no matter where they are located and continue to allow all families to access them.

I currently attend Brewster Avenue on a weekly basis and the centre is always well attended by a wide mix of parents from all backgrounds and across the city. Therefore to close it would be a serious error and leave all the parents who use the centre, with no access to groups where their children can interact with other children and develop early skills. How can this be right? Very few parents can afford to pay for private classes or groups and yet most would be excluded from using the super hubs, so where are these parents and children meant to go? I have attended a number of your consultations and it is clear that you do not have an answer to this question, which frankly isn't good enough. You cannot propose closing down centres, which are well used like Brewster Avenue, without providing an alternative for these parents.

If funding is a problem, why not ask those families who are not on benefits for example, to make a payment for attending the children's centres. As long as this was an affordable amount, I think most parents would be willing to pay

rather than lose the service altogether. Surely at least it would be worth surveying centre attendees about this.

One of the points in your proposal document, is that there are more health visitors being brought into Peterborough, as a new mum I have seen my health visitor a total of 3 times in 6 months – all of which were in the first 8 weeks, therefore if I was suffering any problems it is extremely unlikely that these would have been picked up in a couple of brief meetings. I know for a fact that many of my mum friends have had a similar amount of interaction with their health visitors. The health visitors are already stretched to capacity and to expect them to take on more work as a result of closing children centres is unrealistic and will just result in families falling through the gaps.

By removing this resource from the majority of parents in this city you will end up with more postnatal depression, as mums use the centres to get out of the house and interact with other mums. The importance of mum's being able to do this cannot be underestimated, especially for those who live in the rural areas of Peterborough, which may not have other local parent groups available to them. An increase in postnatal depression, will result in more costs for the NHS and an increased burden on our already stretched healthcare system in Peterborough and potentially put further strain on family services further down the line.

I understand that the council has had to cut its budget this year but these cuts need to be made in areas where there is money being wasted, and not in those areas which will affect our children and their futures. I sincerely hope the council will reconsider this proposal and at the very least not exclude hard working families from children centres, just because they don't fit into your "deprived" category. If Peterborough wants to continue growing and attracting families who will aid the city and help it prosper, it is essential that it has good facilities for families and currently the children centres help to provide this.

General Principals: The notion of Super Centre Hubs

Barnardo's is broadly in favour of the principle of working towards Super Centre Hubs. Our experience of delivery of services indicates that this model of working can introduce significant benefits, such as;

- Cost effectiveness – structuring resources in such a way may increase and maximise the potential of the workforce.
- Equality of approach – Ensuring that a standardised approach to delivery is in place will bring equality, avoiding the post-code element to services available.
- Community Engagement – service delivery in this way may draw communities together, encouraging parents and volunteers to be increasingly active in services and service delivery.

However, there are some points to raise relating to the following areas;

- Reach for each centre – this needs to be achievable and realistic, being rationalised against the new Ofsted Framework, in which a percentage of engagement against reach targets is required. The risk could be that in setting reach targets at very high and unachievable levels, centres will be set up to fail against Ofsted inspection standards. This could reflect badly on the local authority and on providers.
- By our calculation, the reach figures set out in the consultation document, in particular Gladstone and East, are significantly higher than can be catered for in a hub and spoke model if reach figures were to be achieved.
- Multi-Disciplinary Model – The model as described in paragraph 3.2.3, in which a multi disciplinary team is brought together to provide a "one stop shop", is unlikely to be achievable as a result of the size of the centres available, the complexity of IT systems and processes and the length of time required to broker such relationships. While we aspire to this vision, we cannot see that this is realistically achievable in the timescales set out in this proposal. Discussions with partners are needed at a high level to ensure full partner engagement *and* contribution, including financial contribution.
- Targeted working – The delivery of targeted services are dependent upon effective communication and information sharing protocols. To make this model work would require a review of protocols and systems to ensure that the flow of information is robust across agencies, guaranteeing that service users do not fall through the gaps or become overlooked. Therefore, providers will need to have guarantees that we are supplied with data about the most vulnerable and most at need in our catchment areas, as we will be judged on our performance in this area.
- Gaps in geographical provision – This model proposes a significant reduction of centre locations. We would recommend that the proposal includes some recommendations for a peripatetic or mobile style service that could offer a range of services in a variety of temporary or spot purchased venues across the city, such as the extension of the Parents Utd approach.
- Ofsted Compliance – We recognise that this is a changing landscape for centres, but we must ensure that all re-designations are compliant with Ofsted requirements and hold true to the intended purpose of Children's

Centres as this is how we will be measured.

Service Delivery:

Barnardo's is excited at the opportunity to review and revise service delivery into new, creative and potentially more effective methods. We welcome this opportunity to work with key partner agencies whose focus is children and families.

We would encourage commissioners to extend the ambitious aims of this proposal to ensure that each area fully reflects the community needs, becoming the epicentre and the lifeblood for the young families in those locations. This could be achieved by working to engage more meaningfully with families and service users, resulting in centres being a natural part of the early lives of families, providing them with services they need in a way that is accessible and available.

However, this again puts pressure on the need for a fully integrated multi-agency approach to service delivery, requiring a fully signed up agency participation approach.

Location of Super Centres:

We recognise that there is a natural alliance between the centres identified in the document, in particular First Steps and Fulbridge where the relationships are established and robust.

However, the level of need and the reach numbers in the Gladstone area, on paper at least, would indicate that this location warrants it's own Super Centre. We do recognise the complexity of community engagement and service user take-up in this location and are not objecting to an overhaul of service delivery in this area, and would actively promote a re-location from the Iqbal centre as we consider this to be a potential block to service user engagement.

A reduction of output areas is required in the Gladstone area and we consider the alliance and relationship with Gladstone Primary School to be a natural and logical progression of our work which would serve to integrate us effectively and re-establish firm links with the community. Separate proposals can be prepared at your request to expand and explain our vision of service delivery in the Gladstone area.

We support the recommendation for the development of a Super Centres in both Orton and Paston as these appear, on our understanding of service delivery and centre size and location, to be ideally suited for delivery.

South Locality

I would urge you not to close so many children's centres south of the city. The whole of the south will have to go to Orton, unfair? Where will the dads groups go? Stanground dads group on a Saturday is amazing, please don't shut it down

Stanground and Hampton are important and not accounted for in proposals. Stanground is isolated on public transport and Hampton will see rising PND etc without services for children

I, honestly, urge you not to close all the centres south of the city. Admittedly, I would not be in your deprived target audience (I am married, educated, professional), I can honestly say that I would have been very stuck when I first became a Mum 3 years ago. I went to baby massage and met 3 people who became my life line. It sound dramatic but they honestly are my best friends. We met up at least once a week and still see each other all the time. I also want to say that it is not just the Mum's who are affected. My husband has real confidence issues but I 'forced' him to go to Saturdads to socialise with our son. xxxxx, xxxxx and xxxxxx really made him feel welcome and it upsets me to think that this group would close. I do understand that cuts need to be made but only proposing one children's centre South of the city is madness. No one goes to Orton! Keep either Stanground or Brewster. Please.

I can not begin to say how devastated my husband and I are at the news of our two local children centres (Stanground and Brewster Ave) closures.

I have a One Year old daughter and my second baby will be due next year. During the last year and a half I have

accessed both Stanground and Brewster Ave Children's Centres. The support that the centres gave my family during the months before birth and after are immense.

Both centres are well attended and offer a range of sessions from newborn and beyond. It baffles me why these centres are being closed and therefore the children and parents who access these are left without opportunities to mix with similar parents. In some cases the sessions were a means of getting out and discussing issues with parents and staff who could give advice and strategies to cope. Without this support and often a lifeline for some I fear health visitors, midwives and such like will have more demands upon their case loads.

I for one will be disappointed that the support from the centres will not be there for my second child.

I truly hope some of these centres can be saved.

I am emailing as I feel very strongly that the council are making the wrong choices when trying to save money. I moved to this city just before giving birth to my son and knew no one here. I realise that the children's centres are supposed to be for deprived families which we are not but actually they are used by all sorts of mums and dads. Through the local centres I have made some wonderful friends and having this resource makes me feel less alone as a new mum. I am writing to you as I am hoping you can understand what a valuable resource is about to be lost. Being able to attend a children's centre means groups which help your child's development, being able to meet and talk to other parents and being able to see a health visitor. I am facing losing 3 of my 4 closest children's centres (Stanground, Brewster Avenue and Hampton) which leaves me facing long lonely days without the activities to attend at these centres. The remaining centre is a hall (the Italian centre in Fletton) which does not run any activities apart from weigh ins that I am aware of.

These centres help bring the communities in this area together which with so many social issues in this city I would have thought you would want to help integration not stop it. I hope that the council is able to understand that this would be a catastrophic move to make.

Please do not close the Brewster Avenue and Stanground children's centre. This is the place we have a good time with kids and also helps us to grow with community.

I'm contacting you to ask for your support regarding fighting the proposed closures of children's centres in Peterborough and surrounding environs. It might help if I can let you know a little about why I feel so strongly about this issue.

In December 2010 I gave birth to my son, complications at the end of the pregnancy meant that he was born caesarian section. This led to difficulties with establishing breastfeeding and much reduced mobility for me. My health visitor judged that I was at high risk of developing post natal depression, as I had very little social support with my and my husband's families living in the North West ie: 170 miles away. So, as an isolated mum, in pain and immobile, it was a relief to discover that my nearest children's centre was based literally five minutes away in Stanground (where we lived at the time). I took advantage of every session and group available to me, obtaining huge amounts of help and support through the baby café, soothing my at time fractious baby with baby massage and meeting other new mums at the Brewster Babes session held at Brewster Avenue for people with children under 6 months.

Although I found life with a newborn incredibly difficult, those groups and centres provided a lifeline for me at this point. Now I hear that Peterborough City Council plans to close most of the children's centres, replacing them with four "super hubs" for the most disadvantaged families. I dread to think how I would have coped during my maternity leave if Stanground and Brewster Avenue Children's Centres didn't exist. I do know however that my mental health and the health of my child (as I would have had to stop breastfeeding without the support) would have been hugely affected. My immobility (you are unable to drive for at least six weeks following a c-section) means that the proposed hubs would have been unreachable for me. I'm not disadvantaged in terms of income (though anybody receiving Statutory Maternity Pay of £136 a week when they have bills to pay can hardly be described as well off) but putting any mother at an increased risk of post natal depression and removing support networks could leave many parents in a severe state.
(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara,)

My family have used Stanground children's centre since my son was 6 months old and he is now 3 and we use it a few days a week. Brewster too. We are devastated that it should close. Orton is too far for us to go and obviously will be too busy and full due to all the other closures. My son and I have learnt so much from attending these classes/activities. As a new mum the centres have helped me adjust to being a new mum and given me confidence in meeting new people. If you have to close centres then cut down the amount you are proposing. Why should the deprived areas have their centres still and not us, this isn't fair. We don't even mind paying a small charge for activities. My son will be so upset if he can't attend his little groups anymore these are our life. PLEASE LISTEN TO THE PUBLIC WHO USE THESE CENTRES WE KNOW WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT. YOU JUST CAN'T THINK IT WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO CLOSE THEM.

I just wanted to give my thoughts on the closures.

I use Orton, if this is turned into a super hub the way I understand it is that I will still lose the centre as I know it. I have two children a 6 year old and a 2 year old. After having my 2 year old I really struggled, after being advised to go to my doctors by my health visitor I was told I had depression and would be placed on a 3 month waiting list for counselling. 3 months?! My health visitor then got me involved with a time for you session at the centre and also encouraged me to go to groups. This service has been invaluable for me and my son. Without it I really don't know what I would have done. They gave me back the chance to enjoy time with my baby. I didn't need the counselling by the time I reached the top of the waiting list. The centre makes you feel included in your local community, gives your children structured opportunities to mix with larger groups of children which most wouldn't get the chance to otherwise. I have gained lots of useful advice from health visitors etc at the centre and met many people whom my son now socialises with regularly. It provides opportunities for my 6 year old too as I sign up for many of the half term activities much of which I wouldn't be able to afford otherwise. We are not a family that would be classed as deprived or especially needy, my partner has a full time managerial job, we own our own house and a car. But it doesn't mean we have any spare income after bills to enable us to pay for other groups for my children like swimming or anything of any cost on a weekly basis which many ask for, it doesn't mean that because we have them things I was exempt from feeling depressed and low after having my youngest son.

Like myself when you have been working and then have to give up your job as you can no longer afford child care for two children most of the friends and social network you would have also all have jobs therefore during the day at home with children can be very lonely and not only does the parent suffer from that but that has a knock on effect to the children. This is where the childrens centre is vital, you don't need to be deprived to feel in need of help and this is what the childrens centre offers whatever your background, everyone is welcome. Closing and turning them into super hubs would leave so many people cut off, lonely and know where to turn. Lots of children would have little if any social interaction with other children before the free funding at the age of 3 if it wasn't for these centres. What impact would that have?!

Do I need to forward this anywhere else?

Please let me know if there is anything else I can do.

I am writing to ask you to re-consider the closure of Children's Centres across Peterborough.

I am expecting my first babies (twins) in January and planned to make extensive use of the services on offer at Brewster Ave, Stanground and Hampton Children's Centres. It is important for new mums to be able to access services such as mother and baby groups, breastfeeding support and parenting classes locally i.e. within walking distance of home. This is particularly important if you have multiples as getting out of the house can be a serious challenge. Having to drive to a super-hub to access services in no way replaces the value of having them within walking distance of home. I feel very disappointed that I potentially won't be able to access children's services locally or be able to meet parents local to me once the Centres are closed.

Do you have any plans to offer specific services for parents of multiples at the new super-hubs? Currently there are twins groups at Brewster Ave, Hampton and Stanground – will these groups be able to meet in the new centre? This is particularly important to me as it is a daunting prospect being a first time mum with multiples and I am counting on the support and friendship of other people going through the same thing. How will I meet other twin mums and dads if all my local Children's Centres are closing?

Please don't close these centres. The services they offer are invaluable – I don't think you can put a price on the

support and reassurance they offer to new mums and dads.

I am writing with regards of the closure of the Brewster Avenue and Stanground Children centre in Peterborough. They are an invaluable community resource, which provides information on behaviour, healthy living and nurturing. I have been using these centres since the birth of my first baby in 2010 and found that their support with breast feeding and other matters are invaluable. I found myself in the middle of a supportive community, making valuable friendships and links with other centres

However despite reassurances, just two years ago, that Peterborough City council saw them as 'vital for many families' XXXX 2010, they are now under imminent threat of closure, there in spite of Ofsted's report into the failure of our education system in the Peterborough area. The closure of these centres can only make the issue worse. It is a resource that prepares children for preschool and reception for all parents. Not just those who can afford private nurseries

The parents of these centres feel underwhelmed by the consultations held by the council as merely a box ticking exercise. I write to you in anticipation of support from our MP

(forwarded form Shailesh Vara)

Bretton Children's Centre

Family support. The one major thing we use Bretton Children's Centre for! I have severe depression and also trust issues. xxxxx, xxxxx, xxxxxx and xxxx are the support staff I totally trust. The majority of people are close with them, have built trust and support relationships with them, and we are comfortable with them dealing with our problems and speaking on our behalf. If you take them away then people will suffer because they will not feel comfortable with 'strangers' and will not approach them so will suffer in silence. They have taken years with some of us to build relationships and if you take them and family support away families will suffer. Imagine not having any family or friends to support you or fight your corner, imagine having nobody and problems with debt, Bailiffs and everyone baying for you. Imagine having nobody to help you with desperate situations like that, or having no food and not knowing where to turn - I imagine you cannot imagine because it is likely just imagination to you - to me that is my reality. This family support and the mentioned staff have helped my family, saved my sanity, helped me when I had nowhere to turn and nobody who cared. Take it all away people and families will suffer a great deal, especially in cases like mine where I have had no food. We ate due to them, my problems have been helped due to them, when nobody cared I was cuddled and supported by them. Close and it's a huge mistake!

You are storing up a shed load of trouble by moving services further and further afield. Families will not travel. Why was Bretton not given a fair crack of the whip? Other evening sessions were 6pm - 8pm, Bretton was allocated 4pm - 6pm, right on the school run and evening meal time, hence no one could attend.

It has been recognised that North Bretton is in a deprived area and is only going to become an outreach centre as it is small. Next door there is a Community Centre which is empty most days of the week and can be used in conjunction with the present building. Although I understand the pressures the City Council are under to make savings they do have a choice of where the axe is to fall. Bretton is a special case and the Council should think about provision of facilities in the area in the broadest sense before acting on this proposal. If the partial closure goes ahead Bretton will be left with not only no Secondary/Academy and sports centre but also no Children's Centre. Any Centres that remain in Peterborough will not be easily accessible to Bretton families and therefore their children's development will be disadvantaged. The existing Centre is in an area where many families are financially challenged and this centre provides a chance for the children of these families to get a better start in life than they might otherwise not enjoy. The Children's Centre provides not just a safe and happy environment but one where learning starts for children and in many cases their parents. As stated before Bretton's children and their families are already disadvantaged due to the lack of facilities that that are enjoyed by other townships simply because we have no Secondary School or sports centre. To lose the Children's Centre would be a blow to many of our constituents and will have a long term effect on the wellbeing of the population of Bretton as a whole.

At Bretton Community Pre School we currently provide places for 52 children aged from 2 and a half - 5 years from 8:45 - 3pm during term time. We have served the community for over 20 years and have been based at the children's centre since it opened in 2006. Our proposal is - Use the children's centre family room for a 2 years old group 8:45 - 3pm

Monday - Friday in term time and Move administration office to the main entrance. Additional 2 year places - We understand the need for more 2 year old places in north Bretton and in June 2013 we submitted a capital funding bid for 2 year olds by expanding our setting but unfortunately were unsuccessful. With the additional room, we believe we will be able to accommodate 20 children per session on the square footage ratio for 2 year olds. We currently have an ongoing waiting list of 32 children and we feel places would be filled quickly for 2 year olds in this community. Of the 32 children on our waiting list 24 children will turn 2 years by Easter 2014. If we advertise spaces the number would easily increase as the demand is so high. We work closely with parents and have a good partnership with them. We promote healthy eating in our policies and encourage parents to work with us to provide healthy snacks and lunch. We also have good partnerships with Watergall primary school liaising with the foundation stage teachers promoting strong transition links and they support us with the children's learning and development. We are committed to preparing children and getting them ready for school. We feel that to have children from 2 years old will improve the ability to do this in this community. During our recent Ofsted inspection we achieved outstanding in all areas. Our vision is provide quality child care service to the local community but we support our families so much more and would like to be able to reach out to more families. Administration Office - The reason for the move would be; To ensure the centre continues to be a welcoming and friendly place by having the reception manned to deal with any visitors; Ensure building security; Manager and staff would be able to view activity in outside play area so they are more connected to the preschool setting; Natural light would improve facilities for office staff. Other considerations - The preschool needs to expand in order to ensure long-term sustainability. Additional children in receipt of 2 year funding will generate more income to reinvest into the service we provide. The preschool offers valuable service to the community and we do need a commitment of long-term security for our service. We are not clear who would be responsible for the overall running of the centre and any additional costs the Preschool would be required to meet. In order to increase security for the preschool and to provide the other services with their own designated area we would suggest that the entrance for the health and midwife teams is changed by providing an enclosed path way around the Children centre's small garden (please refer to enclosed photos). This is our initial proposal to take place from April, however we believe there are other options available to maximise space and accomodate more children in the long-term, which we would be happy to discuss. The above proposal is our preferred option although we are happy to discuss alternative ideas, including using other rom with the centre and making changes to maximise their use which could involve structural work. The preschool does have some funds available to contribute towards changes, although we require reassurance as to the long-term security of the children's centre and our position here. This would be a factor with our commitment. We are a reflective Pre-school and we are flexible in our and open to other discussions.

I can only access Bretton Children Centre in the future as I no longer have a car and find it hard to get on public transport with disability's ... Bretton children centre should not be closed it's a huge help in the local community.

Although I understand the pressures the City Council are under to make savings they do have a choice as to where the axe is to fall. I believe Bretton to be special case and that the Council should think about provision of facilities in the broadest sense before acting on these proposals. If partial closure goes ahead Bretton will be left with not only no Secondary School/Academy and Sports Centre but also no Children's Centre. Any centres that remain will not be easily accessible to Bretton families and therefore their children's development will be disadvantaged. The existing Centre is in an area where many families are financially challenged and this centre in many cases provides the only chance for the children of these families to get a reasonable start in life. The Children's Centre provides not just a safe and happy environment but one where learning starts for children and in many cases for their parents too. If as proposed the existing Centre becomes an out-reach centre there will certainly be less personal contact which in turn will make it more difficult to build relationships with harder to reach families. This important work will become less effective. It is not just on behalf of these families I write because as previously stated, generally, Bretton's children and their families are already disadvantaged due to lack of facilities that are enjoyed by other townships simply because we have no Secondary School or sports centre. To lose the Children's Centre would be a blow to many of my constituents and will have a long term effect on the wellbeing of the population of Bretton as a whole. For the reasons stated above I believe Bretton's Children's Centre should be maintained as a "hub" and at the core of the City's ambitions for early learning and that the existing proposals should be amended to reflect this.

The impression is that workers will no longer be based in Bretton but come across to run sessions. The out-reach centre will be operated at a distance. There will be nobody on the ground in Bretton to make the personal contact to aid in the building up of the necessary relationship to provide help.

As an outreach base it can only be accessed on a by-appointment arrangement for specific group work or individual targeted programmes. The centre will lose the flexibility of drawing people in for a drop-in session as at the existing children's centres.

Being less accessible on a casual basis the harder to reach families will be less likely to avail themselves of the services as less able to deal with the more formal process to access them.

This will make access less likely as contact will be more impersonal by phone or email. What is on offer is less likely to be taken up by the harder to reach families. Using centres for the locality rather than the area the services will be more remote and less familiar.

The budget cuts will have a disproportionate effect. The effectiveness service will be reduced more than the budget is cut by.

The document stresses there is more money available to spend on services from the government but there seems to be a reduction of service to spend this money on.

Bretton needs a super centre hub or the existing children's centre. With Westwood having large numbers of client children and that having its centre re-designated both here and Bretton are depending on a centre across the city.

Brewster Avenue

Although I understand that money needs to be saved, and that some children centres are undervalued, I am considerably concerned with the proposal to redesignate the Brewster childrens centre.

My reasons are as follows. Firstly, having being pregnant whilst living in Fletton, it was really helpful to be able to attend midwife appointments at the Stanground or Brewsters centres, especially as a working mother. In addition, I often went for weigh-ins at the Brewster centre as I moved to Sugar way and it was the most convenient place to walk to. If the proposal went ahead, the closest centre would be Orton, which is well beyond a reasonable walk away. Secondly, whilst on maternity leave I attended breastfeeding clinic and baby groups. Especially with such events not happening at many venues in the area, the loss of these activities would be massive to the area. Finally, my oldest child attends Brewster infant's school, and the breakfast and afternoon club are located in the childrens centre. Without this provision it would be impossible for me to work. I would be concerned about where and if this provision would continue as the site and facilities are perfect.

The purpose of writing you an email is regarding the current proposal of closing down Brewster and other childrens centres. I want to mention here the importance of children's centres in the life of young mothers like me. For me Brewster is a lifeline, my guide, my only way of socialising, my child's first learning step and much, much more that I can't describe in words literally, all I can say is that we can do whatever 's possible to save these centres. You can put charges on it up to £5 or £10 and those who are willing to be a part of it will surely pay. I think that you will also get to know how important these children centres are for us.

Secondly, I personally would love to work in any dpt. Voluntarily to give my input, it could be a management work or administration I would love to serve.

But please don't close these centres as they are integral part of our lives. I hope u will consider

I am very distressed to learn of the proposed closure of Brewster Avenue Children's Centre and would like to very strongly request that the closure does not go ahead. I am a first time mother of a baby boy. My son is happy and healthy, I have a supportive husband and am employed by a company with a maternity policy so am luckier than a lots of mums in the area I live in. Having said that, we don't have a car, or any family in Peterborough so being able to put my baby in the pram and walk to Brewster Avenue has been a life saver for me as a new parent. It takes a village to raise a child, but we don't live in close-knit communities anymore. We are very much on our own, so once the early

visits by health care professionals have been and gone, being a new Mum at home can be very lonely and isolating. Having small local children's centres where we can drop in, get help, get support and find a new community without having to travel great distances is so important. In my case, I was keen to give our son the best start in life by breastfeeding him, but although it's a natural thing to do, it didn't come naturally to me at all. In the very early days it was such a struggle, I went almost every day to Brewster Avenue for breastfeeding support and the assurance that one day it would get easier. My son is now 9 months old, I am still breastfeeding him and I know there is absolutely no way in the world that would be the case had it not been for the Brewster Avenue Health Visitors, peer support Mums and staff. It took a long time for me to feel confident enough to go further from home with my baby, to tackle public transport and to breastfeed him when we were out and about. In any case, the buses are so often full to capacity, you frequently have to wait for two or three to go past before you can get your pram on board. My son was born in the middle of winter - it snowed for the first 6 weeks of his life and if we'd had to get to Thorpe Road walk-in centre or Orton Children's Centre to see the Health Visitors we just wouldn't have gone. New mums are so vulnerable in the early days. We desperately need a place that is easy to get to, where we feel safe, where we know and trust staff in order to confide in them no matter what our situation or problem. Whatever our financial circumstances, we all need support at one time or another, and having to get a bus and travel half way across the city hoping someone is available to help us isn't making services accessible to those who need them. There's not a person in the UK who doesn't know times are tight financially and the council has a difficult task ahead to balance its finances. Babies and young children don't have a voice, or a vote, or money to pay rates but they are one of our communities greatest assets. If we don't help parents to the very best for them now, the cost of fixing the problems later on will be far greater than the immediate cost-cutting measures. By closing our local children's centre it feels as though the council is abandoning us at a time in our lives when we badly need their support - please don't do it.

I would like the council to consider keeping open those children's centres which are well attended and provide a wide variety of groups. Health advice and parenting advice for example Brewster Avenue. If the super centres do go ahead I would like them to be accessible to all families, as all families with new babies/young children need support. Limiting access to these super centres creates a stigma for those who are 'deprived' enough to require support. If the super centres do go ahead they need to be located in places that are easily accessible by public transport. If I was to attend Orton (which would be my local centre) I would need to get 2 buses. I can currently walk to Brewster Avenue or Stanground in 10-15 minutes. If the children's centres are to shut the council needs to look at providing access to churches, community centres for CPFT staff to continue facilitating ready access to health services.

I would strongly recommend not to close Brewster Avenue children centre also other children centres. I'm strongly disagreeing with the new proposal which has been made.

It would be such a shame if provision for local access to groups would no longer be available. A lot of work has been put into parents accessing groups and children's centres. Valuable friendships are made, children experience toys and activities that they may not have at home - improving development. If this goes to hubs, personally I do not think they will get used to their full potential.

I don't have any alternative proposal, however would like to point out that this centre & the twins group run here is essential for those with multiples who struggle with additional support. Super-hubs is not a good idea and smaller local groups are far more valuable for children & parents. I strongly oppose this suggestion!

Please help save the Peterborough's children's centres.

I have twin 18 month old boys and without the centres I do not know what I would have done when they were born. I have no local support and the Brewster Avenue provided me with fantastic support – and activities for the boys. The boys still attend the centre with their Daddy – for the learning activities. I understand that savings have to be made – but these centres offer a lifeline to many families. If you take them away there will be nowhere for some parents to go – regardless of costs – there will be nowhere to go.

I would like to give you my views on the proposed restructuring of the Children's Centres in Peterborough.

I was living in Fair View Court supported housing scheme when I became pregnant with my daughter (now aged 4) and was identified as suffering from post natal depression within 2 weeks of giving birth. I was admitted with my daughter to a special mother and baby unit in Welwyn Garden City. I stayed there for 3 months until I was well enough to return home.

Once home I was referred to Brewster Avenue Children's Centre - just a few minutes walk from my flat - so popular was the centre that all groups were over subscribed - but I was happy to settle for attending a cooking group and joined baby playtime when I could get a space.

I may have had excellent support from my GP, social worker and health visitor but it was going to the Children's Centre that I believe made the biggest difference in my recovery from PND. Without being able to access the services at Brewster, I believe I would have been a greater burden on the mental health team.

When my daughter was 2 we moved house after a family break up - we started attending Stanground Children's Centre, and here the support we previously felt at Brewster Avenue, continued to help me and my daughter, without intervention required from other agencies. I also truly believe my daughter was better prepared for preschool and school after accessing the programme at Stanground Children's Centre.

Under the new proposals, I believe I am right in thinking we would not have had these centres to turn to. Even if I could have been referred to a superhub, my post natal depression meant I felt unable to get on a bus or travel far with my daughter - and living in Woodston/Fletton means I would have been further isolated and at greater risk.

I hope I have given you evidence enough, to reconsider your plans to cut off my area of the city from their wonderful Children's Centres. I believe my problems would have been more difficult and enduring, had I not been able to access them.

I feel as a new mum it is important to share my opinion and gratitude to the Sure Start Children's Centre at Brewster Avenue.

Although my little xxxx, who turns 2 months tomorrow, was born on his due date, due to complications he was born extremely small. The first time I took him out, no less than 3 women at Hampton told me off for having my small baby out so soon.

This massively knocked my confidence and as a result I stopped taking him out, unless it was to the Thursday morning clinic at Brewster Ave. Speaking with the health visitors on hand massively helped me reinstate my confidence in taking xxxx out. Just having somewhere to go where you can be at ease with your new baby is priceless.

I attend the clinic every Thursday without fail as I have found the weekly weigh in's to monitor his progression are superb. He is coming along amazingly and it is down to that support network.

They have helped me adjust his feeding to deal with colic and also alerted me to a minor health issue which I was able to obtain prescription drugs for same day. This would've gone unnoticed without them.

Now xxxx and I are fully recovered after our somewhat difficult entrance into the world of mother and baby, I fully intend to make many more visits to Brewster Ave and attend the baby cafe on a Monday and the Friday afternoon sessions.

I don't think anyone can appreciate the fantastic work these centres do and how much support they provide us mums. I certainly wouldn't have the confidence as a Mum that I do now without their weekly encouragement.

Please let me know what more I can do to support these centres.

I want to mention here the importance of childrens centres in the life of young mothers like me. I am sure you must be aware of it but I still want to mention how beneficial these childrens centres are for us. For me Brewster is a lifeline, my guide, my only way of socializing, my child's first learning step and much much more that I can't describe in words literally, I have seen her growing mentally & in every way all because of these amazing Childrens centres. My child cannot stay at home for 3 to 4 years, that would surely affect her mental growth. All I can say is that we can do whatever's possible to save these childrens centres. You can put charges on it, up to £5 or £10 & those who are willing to be part of it will surely pay. I think that you will also get to know how important these childrens centres are for us. They are just priceless. I will be more than happy to pay for such a fruitful cause.

I can also give my voluntary services in any debt, if required, I am able to do it. But please don't close these centres as they are an integral part of our lives. I hope you will consider.

Caverstede Children's Centre

I look after my 2 grandchildren who are 3yrs old and 22 months for 9 hours a day 3 days a week. The thought of there not being a Children's Centre at Caverstede Nursery School fills me with dread without this service I would be struggling. I think the " Super Hubs "proposal is not going to be of any benefit to me because they are being targeted at "vulnerable families". I would like to know how the committee defines vulnerable?

Also what has happened to the policy " Every Child Matters? And why is money an issue when David Cameron is saying there is money available for Children's Centres. If Children's Centres are closed then the 2 years of early intervention is taken away. There is research to support this. I would like to add if the Children's Centre at Caverstede stays open only to "vulnerable" families then I have to say that my grandchildren are then being discriminated against. Families of all backgrounds attend this centre and it is beneficial to all. Families who are having problems can come and chat to other parents / carers and maybe forget their problems and hopefully feel normal for a while or ask for help from experienced staff. Im not sure families in the local area will be able to attend a 'Super Hub out of area' because quite often money and transport can also be an issue.

I sent an email to PeterboroughChildren'sCentre.org.uk who said I would receive a reply within 48 hrs but that has not happened. Please could you consider replying to me, hopefully with the reply I would like to hear and that Children's Centres will stay open.

(forwarded by Stewart Jackson)

Save our Children's Centre Childminding group (Caverstede) - Being a childminder for many years has been very rewarding but at times can be quiet isolated. The children centre plays a very big part in our community and for us childminders will be a great loss to us. It has enabled us to: - Meet other child minders and their children; provided the children with a very happy and structured play session each week; gave children confidence to make positive relationships with other practitioners and their peers; for individual children to join larger groups, to learn, share , take turns and also prepare for school; have had support and advice from talented practitioners on certain issues i.e. behaviour management, language problems, family breakdowns and extra support for vulnerable 2 year olds; to work as a team and provide children's learning and their achievements in all areas of development; share ideas and also borrow resources i.e. books and multi cultural toys for children whose English is their second language; encourage healthy eating and growing vegetables in their vegetable garden and try new foods i.e. 'Chinese new year and most important to gain social skills; please keep our children's centre open, we don't want to go back to being isolated!

Our children are said to be the future but what future will they be facing if they do not receive the social and other skills needed when starting school. My daughter was extremely shy when we first attended Caverstede, I've seen her grow so much in such a short space of time!

We seem to be losing a valuable asset to "Early Years" children's experience. In our 3 years attending Caverstede's "groups" we have seen the benefits to children and families, the improvement in self esteem and confidence in parents that are struggling in coping. We appreciate the professionalism of the staff as they offer support

I feel the centres have done a fantastic job. Caverstede has had outstanding many times. Surely this should come into account for something. I agree the vulnerable children need help however let's not leave behind the other children

The children's centre at the moment works well as they are; they support families and young people with services. Changing them to super hubs will disadvantage people who cannot drive to the centres. I myself use the centre; both my husband and I work full time. We use Caverstede Children's Centre to help build both my daughters social skills and to help integrate with children and families who they may not come across within their life path. My eldest daughter had no language until 11 months ago and attending these settings such as rhyme time and tots helped develop her signing in order to communicate with us as a family. My daughter now attends Caverstede nursery and the progression from the groups to nursery has been nothing but wonderful. Each morning someone from the children's centres leads story time; reading a book every day for the week; giving topics such as Eid, fireworks and starting school and the chance for

the children to have repetition. Story time has helped both my children concentrate and question what happens in a book; taking away the children's centre will take away this skill they have both developed since September. My youngest daughter attends the children's centres still; she loves rhyme time and the songs and rhymes she now has and can sing is amazing. I sing at home with her but having a group where we can sing together is an important part of our morning and her development. Working part time; my mother has my children three times a week; taking away this service means that we are taking away a part of their day; where would they go now and get the service, attention and care from the staff at the children's centre which they receive now. My husband takes my daughters every two weeks to Dad's club and loves the hour and a half he has sole charge of the children; the chance for father and daughter time. He and they come home happy full of stories they have done and people they have met. I fully appreciate the fact that the council has to cut funding in certain places; but to cut funding on a service which affects the children of our future seems absolutely outrageous. Parents need services close by to them where they can attend groups, be supported and in some cases have respite. Having super hubs will not work; these are spread out over the city and will be overcrowded (if they work) or not used because staff do not have the time with parents as they do at Caverstede now and I'm sure in other settings.

I am writing to you as I am very concerned about the Council's proposals to close Caverstede Children's Centre. I take my daughter to several groups there and find it to be an extremely valuable resource. They have been judged to be Outstanding by Ofsted so it seems ridiculous to me that the service will no longer be available.

The team who work there are excellent and have a very high level of expertise. It would be a real shame if they could no longer work together carrying out the role that they do so well.

The Centre is very important to the community in which I live. When I was a new mother with my first child I did not know other Mums in the area and I do not have family in Peterborough. However, I met many people through going to groups with my baby and the staff were friendly and offered valuable support. The Centre is important for getting people together and creating relationships with people who live near each other.

Centres like Caverstede are really important for mothers who may be suffering from Post Natal Depression as they allow the mother to socialize with other parents and talk to staff. I did not have depression myself but I did feel isolated being at home alone all day with my baby and the Centre helped me to get out of the house and meet others in a similar situation to me. It was essential to my well being. I didn't have to walk too far to get to a friendly environment and my baby was able to experience a new place and interact with other babies and adults. I fear that if the Centre was no longer there other new mums would suffer, and this in turn would be detrimental to their children.

The proposal to have a central "hub" Children's Centre in Paston for the Northern area of Peterborough is not suitable. Firstly, it would be too far for many to travel. Not everyone drives as this is expensive, buses are also costly and often difficult for parents with pushchairs to use. I do not feel that the staff at Paston are as good as that of Caverstede. I have used the Paston Centre occasionally in the past and did not feel it to be as welcoming as Caverstede or to have as skilled staff.

Also, I have read that it is proposed that only the most deprived families will be able to have access to the sessions of the new Centre. This would mean that there would be no resources available for families such as mine. We are not financially disadvantaged, my husband works full time. However, I have chosen to be a Stay at Home Mum so we have little spare money to pay for more expensive children's activities that may be available elsewhere.

Caverstede is so important for children's learning and development. My children have learnt a great deal from attending the Tots groups and the singing group called Rhyme Time. They have learnt to play nicely with other children and have had great experiences there. I feel so privileged to have attended groups with them and it has been important in developing my relationships with my children. I have learnt good parenting techniques and discovered new ideas about how to take part in shared activities with my children when at home which I would not have otherwise thought of if I had not been to their excellent groups.

It seems so unfair that such a valuable resource will be denied to families such as mine. I believe it is important for all types of families to attend activities together. Segregating 'deprived' families will mean that the proposed hub will be stigmatized and I believe that this would mean that it would not be used by the families that it's targeting. If the Centre is used by all kinds of families together it means that role modelling can take place and less skilled parents can learn from others.

In conclusion, I feel that the proposed changes are extremely misguided and short sighted. So many families will be disadvantaged by the changes and I believe that there will be many more children with problems in the future through taking away the Children's Centre and the essential service that it provides.

(Forwarded from Stewart Jackson)

I am very concerned and upset about the news that my local Childrens Centre is to close. I live in Walton and go to Caverstede Childrens Centre regularly with my daughter and I also did when my eldest daughter (who is now at school) was young. I have attended the Baby groups and Tots groups and the wonderful singing group called Rhyme Time. They are all excellent groups and are run by brilliant, friendly staff. The staff are so important as they make such an effort to get to know you and your child and the groups have helped both the social and intellectual development of my children.

I do not drive so find it difficult to travel to groups that are further away, the walk is just too long, especially in bad weather. Taking a bus would make the whole trip far too expensive and time consuming and I find it difficult to travel by bus with a buggy. It is so handy having a well run group just round the corner from me. It was so important when my first daughter was a baby as I didn't know any other mums and felt isolated being at home all day with my baby. It was invaluable for me to just be able to pop round the corner to a group at my Childrens Centre and see the friendly faces of other parents and the helpful staff and chat to them. It was essential for my well being. Not to mention it being great for my baby to socialize with other children and use the group's resources. I learnt a great deal through the Centre about different ways to entertain my baby and support her learning.

Caverstede also hold groups and activities during the school holidays which is very useful as a lot of other groups do not take place out of term time. It can be difficult to find affordable ways to entertain your children during the holiday periods. I would really miss this facility if the Centre was to close.

I am not financially disadvantaged, but I am a stay at home mum and do not have much spare money to pay for more expensive, privately run groups. I wouldn't find it easy to get to them anyway. I feel like I am losing out on a really important resource just because I do not live in a deprived area.

I know that they are many other parents who share my views. A huge amount of families will really miss out if the Childrens Centres were to be decommissioned.

As I am unable to attend the lunch time meeting at Caverstede Centre on November 29th I would like you to accept my points and opinions via this email.

- 1 How do you define vulnerability?
- 2 Vulnerable can be deprived families as well as children who have additional needs.
- 3 Children with additional needs are often only picked up if families are aware of difficulties.
- 4 Children Centres can identify these needs and support families and initiate early intervention with agencies.
- 5 If there are no Children Centres then children will not be picked up before they attend nursery therefore, the 2 years of early intervention is automatically taken away.
- 6 So much research has been done about hands on early intervention.... not just Health Visitors calling round parents houses for a quick chat handing out leaflets.
- 7 Not all Parents are able to travel to the planned Super Hubs and quite often prefer to stay in their own catchment area.
- 8 Has anyone thought how the parents who need the local Centres will finance the travel to the Super Hubs quite often money is a big issue for some parents.

Parents who are feeling vulnerable come to the Children's Centre Like Caverstede because there they can mix with a variety of people and feel accepted, they come to chat and have a coffee to forget about their own troubles for a while... they don't always want to be with people who have similar problems...when they need support and comfort the CC Staff who are highly trained and skilled practitoners and there.

I am a Grandparent looking after 2 children age 3 years and 22 months I have these children 9 hours a day 3 days a week.. Caverstede Children's Centre has been lifeline to me. If this facility is taken away from us then we will struggle.

Caverstede Children's Centre has been awarded outstanding again by ofsted...surely that speaks volumes.

I heard David Cameron on TV saying Children's Centre should not close. In light of his statement could someone please tell me why Caverstede Children's centre is highlighted for closure.

1) We are concerned about the possible change of use to the Cavestede Centre. We feel that it would have a negative impact on the Shooting Stars Pre-School in Paston which in close proximity. Unless Cavestede only increase the SEN places which is what they are supposed to specialise in. We feel that this would result in wasting the funding that was only recently provided to help setup the Shooting Stars Pre-School by the local authority. 2) We have similar concerns regarding Westwood Centre at Highlees. The changes proposed could have a detrimental effect on the Nursery and the Pre-School at Brigstock Court in Ravensthorpe. Again this would be a waste of the funding that has only just been used at one of these settings. 3) With regards to the centre in Hampton we would like to know if it will to continue as a children's Centre? If not then we would like to have the opportunity to run this as a Pre-School. We are aware of a serious shortage of places in this particular area and would be very interested in setting up something in this area. We can consider either leasing the premises or even buying outright.

The council have invested a lot of money in our setting and if Caverstede were to have an increase in places this would have a direct impact on us. The council investment would go to waste and the amount of children enrolled would drop if their places were to increase then we feel that it is only the SEN places that should be increased.

Keep the most popular nurseries such as Caverstede, take into consideration all aspects: people travel from all over Peterborough to attend groups here because of its brilliant service, reputation and staff. If you feel the need to "discontinue" some nurseries, it should be those that do not have a high volume of people attending, these could become the super hubs or outreach and redesignated". There is a great need for services and baby groups and play day needed for the ever growing population!

I am writing to express my views on your plans to close down the current nursery settings and use them for other things. I completely disagree with this decision, even though I do understand you need to save money.

I am a single parent of an eighteen month old daughter who has come on leaps and bounds having started Caverstede. When we first attended she was so shy she did not leave my side nor speak yet when at home she is the most chatty little girl! Centres like Caverstede and many others are a credit to the community and really help all people in all sorts of situations. I live in Bretton and undertake a 45minute walk every Monday just so my daughter can attend group. I know I am not the only parent that travels a distance in which to attend a centre.

I believe such groups help a child gain so much knowledge and understanding and other skills which are vital in their development given their most crucial learning years is birth - 3years. You agree children are our future but what future will they have if they are taught that children from a "deprived" area and those with special needs are not allowed to mix together with those more fortunate children. I feel you make society as it is today racist and put labels on people which is morally wrong.

If you believe we should all work together and accept people and have equality you should allow us all to be treated equally. Bretton is classed as a "deprived" area but I chose to want more than what Bretton has to offer for my child because I want what is best for her. If some parents in areas that you are planning to spend ridiculous amounts of money on, only to be wasted as the services will not be used, then that is their decision. No matter how much money you spend you cannot force anyone to do something they do not want to do.

I think you need to assess your spending in other areas. As I say I am struggling living where I am yet there are no properties nor help for me and I do all I can but it goes unrecognised as are many other parents and families.

Please take into consideration what I have said and I hope eventually you realise the plans you proposed for the "future of our children" is a shambles.

East Rural Children's Centre (Eye and Thorney)

Within Eye the Leeds hall and Manor Farm Community Centre may have capacity to host some of these services currently provided within the current Children's centres, should the transfer of Pre-school and After school be linked to the school However, I have no information as to if this is a viable option

Work with local communities to ensure facilities are used FULLY in Eye & Thorney instead of part time. Parent Committee run & funded groups could run in addition to current sessions.

The centre in Eye is invaluable. The care club premises were demolished to facilitate this new building on the basis the club would have a home. To put the costs of this into the club and ultimately the parents is not acceptable or affordable. As a single parent in prior years I would have not managed without this provision. Eye is the biggest village in this consultation and need this centre

Whilst in principle I can see that extra resources/services should be provided at the areas in need, this should not be at the expense of others, such as Eye, where the proposal is to withdraw services completely, leaving a building being used by school clubs and pre school only. Dads Club was an invaluable tool for meeting other dads and interacting with the community. My wife has used similar classes and found them extremely useful. Please do not withdraw all services from Eye

Eye is a village close to Peterborough but is set in the rural area. There are many young families here that use the Children's Centre on a regular if not daily basis. Asking/expecting them to travel out of the village to access such service is unfair and unreasonable and may not be able to. Not all have their own transport, can afford bus fares - the proposals could mean changing buses. Many have more than one child which is extremely hard to use public transport when necessary but not easy when the family is under depression in the first place. This "consultation" was rushed out in early December not giving families and people much time to consider the implications. A consultation, widely publicised, in each of the Centres would have been a much more meaningful consultation. Yet again the areas and people that are most affected get more or less ignored. Eye Parish Council totally oppose the closure of the Children's Centre in Eye.

PCC keep Eye Childrens Centre Open as it is with Full support and maintenance of the building with a central booking officer coordinating community, and other professional services and building maintenance Issues and cleaning

The principle of the East Rural Centre becoming linked to the School has benefits to the villages it could provide additional capacity for pre-school places within the village, similar to that of the school intake/PAN. Additionally, there could then be a closer link and integration between the Pre-school and Reception classes and greater support within the EYFS curriculum. The provision of the after-school club would also continue to be able to use school facilities and possibly expand The only objection I would have on the Children's centre being utilised by the school was if the buildings were for any school expansion, without catering for the increase in pre-school provision, elsewhere within the school grounds I am also aware that other services are also currently provided within the Childrens Centre, however, I have no insight on the provision or facilities provided within the current Children's centre plans and how these services would be provided if the school did become responsible for the buildings, and where else these services could be provided within the village. The concept of the super hubs sounds a reasonable proposal for an urban city area. However, as Eye is a rural area with poor public transport links into the city, additional thoughts and provisions would need to be considered to support these services, so that the people likely to need these services can actually get to the services

When I had my first child 11 years ago there was NO support in the village, having had an emergency C section I was unable to drive for 3 months. I was therefore stuck in the village. Having NO support in the village was one of the main factors in me suffering with Post Natal Depression. With my second child I had to drive to a centre far away to get the support I needed - luckily I was able to drive the second time. I would have LOVED to have had a Children's Centre in the village of Eye when I needed it. Whilst it is unlikely that I will need to use this aspect in the future I strongly believe that this facility is MORE essential in rural locations than in the main body of Peterborough. Both my children attended the Eye Pre-school, both in the current building and in the pre-existing mobile. To remove this service would be a travesty and would affect children's abilities to transfer to 'big school'. To expect / hope/ presume that the Primary school can take responsibility is, quite frankly, demonstrates arrogance and a lack of knowledge. Both my children attend the Eye Care Club, we were pleased when the cold mobile was replaced with an appropriate building. I believe that this change left the Eye Care club manager financially out of pocket. To suddenly remove the building /support for this service is despicable and disgusting. Do you really want my children loitering on the street before and after school? And again why should Eye School take responsibility? Lastly you need to look at the building and the outstanding issues with drains etc, that need fixing. Where you could make savings is by reducing the office staff - this seems to have too many people in doing very little. Salaries are a big percentage of running costs - so a saving could be made here. You could reduce these to just a manager / caretaker, and allow the other groups to continue.

I am most concerned that having given up the building we jointly owned with the Pre School on the School site to occupy the Children's Centre we are now at risk of losing occupancy in the Children's Centre and would like assurances that the agreement put in place when we gave up the building we owned for demolition will continue in the revised plans The Children Centre provides many facilities for families and Eye School has a large level of deprivation as per the Education Officers definition, Eye has had significant growth in the last 4 years and the new families, many of which are in social housing need the support currently being provided Having to travel to super hubs will put Eye Villagers at a disadvantage and I have concerns as to whether full equality appraisals of this approach for this Rural Village Residents getting to Parnwell Centre would have a long distance to walk with their Children and or have to get a bus and then again walk some distance from either Garden Park or Sainsbury. Parents need to meet within the Community and get peer support from other parents rather than have out reach workers just visit them in their homes Eye Doctors is already full and has no room to accommodate any of the support professionals e.g. midwives etc.

I have used the centre in Eye for two of my children both who have really enjoyed coming to the groups provided. It has helped me to meet other parent from and around the village
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I have used the children centre in Thorney and Eye. There is nowhere else near where we live which my 1 year old can go. With both me and my wife working. Plus I work for the local fire station as a retained firefighter. It's difficult to get time off to travel further than it is. My son really enjoyed the play groups. The services there centre provides is essential to his well-being
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

As a new mum and knowing no one in the area with young children, Thorney and Eye Childrens Centre has been a real life line. Without somewhere to meet other mums and babies I really wouldn't have coped. It saved me from feeling isolated and made me feel totally supported. There is no where esle nearby that could have provided this support. Please DO NOT close such a valuable resource.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

After having my son, I found myself with depression, something I never thought I would go through. Having being recommended to go to these groups at Eye and Thorne, it helped me as a young mum to talk to other mums and get through a very difficult time. I found this absolutley invaluable to my wellbeing and formed new friend ships. The information I recieved from the staff was also a godsend. Xxxxx, my son, has learned an amazing amount of social skills and has formed new friends that he will keep for a long time. These centres have supported us both and feel deeply saddened that the proposal closure is threatened. We need somewhere to help our children grow, learn and develop. Please do not close these fantastic centres.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I am worried about the centre closing as parents like myself would really suffer. The centre supported me when I found out my son was disablede at five months and luckily as I was already going there the staff supported me through the lengthy genetic testing and period of not knowing what was wrong. I now bring my son and his disability equipment (standing frame) and feel confident to do so as I have built networks thurgh the centre. The staff give extra support to my son and chart his progress which is invaluable.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

It really concerns me that the East Rural children's centre may close. I still feel like a relatively new resident in the rural community after living here for 5 years. I knew no one when we first moved and had our little girl. The children centre was the only local service I could turn to. Coming to various sessions has meant that we didn't feel isolated, that I was able to seek advice on parenting from friendly knowledgeable staff. I was also able to meet other parents and the friendships formed at different groups has given me a support network. And the groups have enabled my little girl to socialise with other children and build her social skills, as she would otherwise be with adults all the time. The play sessions at the children's centre have also been fantastic at giving me ideas for sensory developmental play. We have used many of the ideas we have taken part in the sessions at home, meaning my daughters play is more structured and beneficial to her. In the early days I feel I could have become easily depressed ... that the contact at the centre and they continue to support me as she grows and changes.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

This centre has been invaluable to me, as a mother of 2 boys I have no family here for support so have made many friends through the centre. I feel if this centre closes not only will my children suffer but I will to. I also live walking distance, so I walk to these groups which is good for mine and my childrens health and the environment, if this centre was to close I would have no choice but to drive to other centres, therefore impacting on our health and the environment. PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE THIS CENTRE!
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Please do not close this centre!! I live in an isolated area and have two children living at home (the eldest is now grown up) one of which is on the autistic spectrum. I myself suffered with severe post natal depression after the birth of my middle child. The centre provides both myself and my children a place to go and socialise, make new firendships and the staff are always on hand to offer valuable support. Too many facilities for children are closing (there is nothing nearby). This is a vital resource - KEEP IT!!

(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The centre has helped my child to learn to share and socialise with other children. I am intending to use the groups with my new baby too. It has given me the opportunity to meet other local parents, which I wouldn't have met otherwise.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

As a first time new mum I use the centre every week. Fairly new to the area and I didn't know any other parent with young children so the centre has proved a good way to make new friends. My daughter gets a chance to meet other babies and play with new toys. If the centre closes we will feel isolated within the village with no means to meet up with others.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

As a mum of 2 young boys, with no family within 150 miles, the childrens centres at Eye and Thorney have been invaluable to me. Not being local to Peterborough attending the groups has meant that I have been able to build a network of support and friendships for both me and my boys. However much I have benefitted from the childrens centre is nothing compared to how much they have benefitted my boys. They have provided them with weekly opportunities to integrate, socialise and experience new things all whihc are vital skills for when they reach school. Without these centre my boys would not get to experience this until attending nursery a 3! Which in my opinion is far too long and misses the opportunity for early learning.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I am a mum of 2 children, 3 yrs and the other 6 months. I am fairly new to the area with no family or friends nearby. I find the children's centres are essential as they provide a reason to leave the house, to socialise with other and the children thoroughly enjoy the interaction with other children. The playgroups and the singing groups help to support and promote babies development and social skills. Without the centre the children would not get these stimulating experiences and I would feel very isolated and alone.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Thorney children centre is a much needed community resource - especially so in the rural setting. I have attended a number if sessions which have been an excellent way to socialise and learn for both parent and child. For many people this is an invaluable centre providing support which must not be lost.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The children's centre is a valuable asset to the village of Thorney. It would be a real shame if we lost the use of the sure start centre. Many families rely on it heavily. Please reconsider this proposal.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I think the centre is a really good place to meet other local mums, especially in a rural area like Thorney. My little girl loved going there and mxing with other children. It would be a real shame and a big loss to the community if it closed.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I have been to the Thorney children's centre in the past and found it particularly beneficial when my first child was born. Valuable for meeting new people.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I have attended several different sessions during the past 3 years with my 3 children and enjoyed them all. The staff are very friendly and I have Made many friends who I see outside of the sessions as well. The centre is invaluable to new mums wanting to meet other mums and share ideas and support each other.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The sure start centre in Eye was so helpful to me when I first had my youngest child. I didn't know anyone locally and it was the only way I net local mums and felt I became part of the community. Taking this facility away will make mums feel more isolated when they need the support most especially those who don't drive and would struggle to get to the remaining centres.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Surestart centre in Eye is a really good place to interact with other mums and children and is so affordable. My daughter is very anxious around new people and place and bringing her to groups has really helped her confidence.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I don't think the councilors' have fully understood the massive benefits that the children's centre provide. The children's centres (Eye, Werrington, Honeyhill) have provided me with the opportunity to get out with my children and avoid isolation. Please consider that parents in the less deprived areas of Peterborough suffer from isolation and post natal depression and really need the centres. Please don't close them.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

My son was 6 week old when we moved just outside the village of Thorney. I knew no one I was very grateful for the support offered at the children's centre for both myself as a new mum and for my son to learn to play and socialise with other children. My concern is that families in these areas are isolated anyway by public transport into Peterborough and unlikely to attend sessions at the more central centres as they do not drive (and those considered 'deprived' are less likely to have their own transport. Thorney especially has very few facilities and is suffering from the loss of its post office. Will this improve isolation? PLEASE RECONSIDER THIS PROPOSAL to benefit all members of the community - who would be willing to work together with the council to make use of the centre's btw.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

I had my 2nd child last year and whilst 6 years ago I was isolated not knowing anyone this time it's been so much better. I know like-minded people who come to this children's centre at Eye and are open to meet, let new people in a welcoming manner. Facilities are great and safe for my child. It's affordable, staff are helpful. Please don't close it, we would be much worse off
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Eye and Thorney - East Rural Centres. Over the last 2 1/2 years my wife and children have used the centres every week attending various groups provided. This has created a strong social group and has allowed the children to mix and play, developing social learning skills in a safe environment with their mum. It creates a strong community feel for the group and is an extremely important weekly event for all that use them
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Eye Childrens centre is a great place for children and parents, without it many children/parents would have nowhere to go to socialise, play and ask for help. The staff are always so helpful, friendly and knowledgeable. As Eye is a village that has grown so much I think it be a crying shame to lose such a fantastic place. Also for those who can't drive it's a lifeline for anyone in the village.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

Eye: to attend a specific group. I live in a different area and mainly used the childrens centre for immediate attended support (inc. drop in health visitor support/breastfeeding support) so helpful for me to have the drop in option in particular.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

The center should continue as it is at the moment. As it is more convenient for the parents of the school children. I would not want my child traveling around on a mini bus when the school is next to the centre. There are enough traffic issues in Eye village without making any more.
(submitted by parents as part of a petition, 8th January 2014)

We are responding in respect of the Children's Centre located at the Duke of Bedford School in Thorney and a use that we would recommend it being given. Thorney Parish was visited last year by a lady representative who kindly explained the situation regarding the proposals about Children's Centres throughout Peterborough.

Thorney is currently under review by the City Council in respect of the assets they hold in the village. One aspect of this review has been the suggestion that the Community Centre/Library in Church Street are closed and re-located in the rear part of the Bedford Hall which is being re-furbished by the City Council. This suggestion is currently 'on hold' while the City Council take a broader overview. In the meantime the matter of the Children's Centre in the village has been raised.

The main user of the Community Centre in Church Street is Thorney Pre-School. They occupy the building from 9am to 3pm each week day during term time. Neither they nor the Parish Council have any objections in principle to their being relocated in refurbished accommodation at the rear of the Bedford Hall. However, both Pre-School and the Parish Council have a much preferred solution which is that they are relocated in the Children's Centre at the village school.

Pre-School is an extremely well-used, well-liked and essential service in the village and it would seem to be most sensible for it to be located in the Children's Centre with its immediate and close relationship with the school. We believe Pre-School merits the best accommodation that can be provided for it in the village and as a recently constructed and contemporary building the Children's Centre would seem ideal as the most appropriate accommodation. The Community Centre in Church Street and the Bedford Hall are both buildings dating from the mid 1800's which, it seems, do not necessarily provide the most suitable accommodation for Pre-School facilities in the eyes of OFSTED. We are also concerned that there may not be sufficient space to properly accommodate both the Library and Pre-School in the rear of the Bedford Hall. The current plans indicate that there may not be sufficient storage and support space for either of these uses. Coupled with this the fact that some residential expansion of the village is anticipated in the not too distant future and this will probably bring an increase in the number of young children needing places at Pre-School.

Many parents in the village have children at both Pre-School and the School so a common location for both of these facilities on the school site would also make sense.

Our very strong recommendation would be that Pre-School is given your full consideration as a full-time user of the Children's Centre. We would be pleased to meet with you and discuss this with all other interested parties at your earliest convenience.

Gladstone

I support the proposal

I support the proposal , it will benefit our community

I agree with the proposal. This will help our community

I support the proposal. I would use the children's centre s it will have resources that will help me and my family.

I fully support the proposal. We have already a good link/relationship with our families and the local community, having a outreach children's centre alongside our new primary school will be an excellent location as parents will be able to use the site

Support proposal

I agree with the proposal and would like Gladstone Centre to be the Outreach Centre.

I would like the Gladstone Centre to be the Outreach Centre for this community.

Gladstone area would benefit the children of a hub as the need is there and required. With the influx of community growing it is much needed. It would provide jobs for local people. An easy to reach centre for community. The importance of a hub at Gladstone is paramount as it begins the next step into childrens education and learning, it provides to support children and families who need it the most. The Gladstone hub would provide services such as housing, health education and employment advice.

In my opinion the community need Gladstone children centre. More services are better. In the past I attended all

services. My kids grew up there. I had a very good midwife to offer advice about child. Super staff helping young mums. Children play groups were best.

I agree with the proposal for the Gladstone locality.

I fully support a proposal the Gladstone locality. Developing children's centre services at the Gladstone primary school site will be an enormous benefit to the community to the children and families.

Proposal for Gladstone locality is needed. It has a central location and is an area of need. It is at the heart of the big Islamic Community. It is an area where many of Peterborough's ethnic communities are represented.

The children and families in the Gladstone area really need these services.

Children and families will benefit greatly from these services located with the community. Ease of access and families know the school

Proposal for the Gladstone area is needed. The majority of the city's diverse communities are based in this area. Children and families in this area would benefit greatly.

I support the proposal for the Gladstone local area developing service further for all in the local area on the Gladstone Primary school site.

I fully support the provision of Children Centre Service site. The school has built up a positive working relationship with families and the local community. Service delivery from the school site makes a lot of sense economically. We will have new car parking facilities on the Gladstone Park Site (Bourges Boulevard) - 2 minute walk to the Gladstone site where we plan to base services.

Hampton Children's Centre

Orton and Hampton are already twinned therefore cuts at Hampton will naturally affect Orton. Parents need professionals to run sessions, the parents cannot run these sessions themselves. Where sessions are run by parents they will not reach those who really need them.

Review the provisions for 0-2 years in Hampton as if the Children's Centre closes there will be nothing where Early Years practitioners are available to give advice and support to parents

Your assessment of "deprived" is flawed. No area has 100% or 0% deprivation. All parents need support regardless of income level. All children benefit from socialisation opportunities. Children's' centres should be retained in areas where there is a high proportion of parents who don't have family close by. The proposal claims Hampton has 0% deprivation, yet PCC's Childcare Services in Peterborough April 2012 Annual Review [<http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/ChildrenAndFamilies-EarlyYearsAndChildcare-InformationForParentsAndFamilies-ChildcareSufficiencyAssessments-CSAAssessmentBook2012v3.pdf>] states on page 30 that 21% of children in the Hampton area are dependent on workless benefits, and are shown under the "Deprivation" heading. It also states that the proportion of these children has almost doubled in two years. I propose that you retain the use of children's centres for all parents. Ideally all, but at least keep some for everyone's use. If only "officially deprived" families are able to access such services, I fear a stigma may become attached to them, leading to many being too proud to attend the centres despite needing them. I know from personal experience that this was the case when Sure Start centres were first set up. I am aware that the government has not reduced the funding it provides for early years provision but, because it is no longer ring-fenced, it appears you wish to cut services here in order to meet shortfalls elsewhere in the budget. This is not acceptable. Cut council allowances (I understand they've recently been voted to increase); turn the fountains off until budgets/economy are in a better place; publish the detail of council finances so we can provide further suggestions with the benefit of full information.

Hampton is the largest estate in Europe. The community is fairly new comparing to other communities. The social root is not as strong, most of the residents don't have extended family live in the same area. There are a lot of children under 2; lots of new parents, young parents; single parents. Children's Centre is vital to them. There must be provision for new parents and children under 2.

The decision to close Hampton would have a negative impact on families living in Hampton and this proposal would lead to families not having the support that they currently rely at the moment.

Children's Centres play an essential part in helping to ensure children, families, and communities get the best start in life. The Hampton Children's Centre has access to a whole range of professionals including health visitors, community midwives, family support workers and early year's practitioners. They work closely with families identifying their needs so that the advice and support is specific to each individual family and are the first contact with children and their families in terms of reducing of raising safeguarding children from harm (child protection).

The Hampton Children's Centre currently offer a great range of activities and support for families to enjoy which could include:

- Information and support to find childcare
- Support for children with additional needs
- Drop in sessions for information advice and support etc breastfeeding support
- Healthy lifestyle sessions
- Antenatal and post-natal support
- Young Parents groups including both Mum's and Dad's groups
- Stay and play sessions
- Training, back to work activities and job clubs
- Parenting support
- Information and "sign posting" for debt advice

The Hampton Children's Centre does a lot of preventative work with families to prevent situations moving higher into social care with Children's Services at Peterborough City Council. By removing this vital service that the community relies now will lead to less positive outcomes for children within the local community. We believe that this proposed closure is the wrong decision for the children of Hampton and with OFSTED rating Children's Services as "Inadequate" at Peterborough City Council earlier this year of 2013. OFSTED stated that there are "inadequate" standards in place in terms of safeguarding measures in place to protect children at risk of abuse or neglect within the local authority of Peterborough. This assessment by OFSTED makes the proposal of closing Hampton Children's Centre confusing and wrong based on present current economic climate where more families are struggling to get by and are finding their household incomes considerably reduced which is leading to more families finding themselves in debt and will also this proposal could potentially lead to children having less positive outcomes in terms of their health and wellbeing, child development etc and potentially leading to less intervention being identified for the families who require support and advice.

I hope after reading this that you will chose to support our campaign in "Save the Hampton Children's Centre (Peterborough)" and there are many ways you can do this, by signing our petition, writing to your local MP, writing to Children's Services at Peterborough City Council (email: childrenscentres@peterborough.gov.uk) or joining our facebook group page "Save the Hampton Children's Centre (Peterborough)".

Hampton Children's Centre provides local families with many vital services and support. The network of support we have received has been a key part in mine and my daughter's lives. She has developed so many skills by attending the groups, especially social skills, she would not have been able to develop had it not been for the Children's Centre. Without Hampton Children's Centre, my daughter would not be the child she is today and the 3 of us (me, my partner and daughter) would not have met so many lovely families who we hope will be lifelong friends. As a stay at home mum, I feel that the Children's Centre is an essential of both our lives, from my point of view to access communication with other adults and for my daughter to interact with other children. As I would like to pursue a career in Childcare, I feel that the courses that have been offered to me have been very beneficial for my future career. I am also in the process of applying to be a Volunteer at Hampton Children's Centre as I want to give back some of my time to somewhere that has essentially been a lifesaver for me and hope to help other people feel the same way I do about the centre. Discussions about children's development, sleep pattern, eating habits and knowing other parents are experiencing the same thing makes it a whole lot easier, relieving and reassuring as a first time parent.

Unless people have actually accessed the Hampton Children's Centre, they do not know and understand what it does.

Maybe the people that are proposing the closure should actually come and visit the centre and talk to the parents who use it on a regular basis and what it means to them. Literally a lifeline too many and a lifesaver to me so that's why I want to volunteer. The services it provides from antenatal right up to starting primary school are crucial in an ever expanding Hampton. Most of the new houses being built are either bought by families who will need access to services provided by the Children's Centre or couples that will potentially have children in the future.

Just because Hampton is a less deprived area of Peterborough, does not mean we do not need the services of a Children's Centre in our area, WE DO NEED IT. Everyone needs support with being a parent, no matter what your household income is or where you live. We are a low income household living in Hampton and there are a diverse range of families and families with different needs. If people putting these proposals together did their research first they would see that there are single parents, young parents, low income families, people in receipt of benefits just like any other area of Peterborough. There is a Childminding Group and the Little Miracles Group that access the centre. The Hampton Children's Centre provides support for everyone involved in Early Years Care within Hampton. The Hampton Childminders need a facility that is in Hampton, the facility already exists; please do not take it away. I also know a lot of the mums do not have access to a car during the day or cannot drive so getting anywhere else is time consuming and costly. The Hampton Children's Centre is a vital point of contact for new people in the area. They can meet parents who live locally to them. We need a provision for Early Years Care before pre-school. By closing the Hampton Centre and the proposals that have been set out it seems that children below the age of pre-school don't matter.

Expectant Mums would like to know they will get the same support for their unborn child that they did with their other child/children. We currently access the Centre 3 times a week, maybe more depending on the activities provided and I would like to know and have the reassurance that in the future that when I have a second child that I will be able to access the same services locally to me and NOT IN ORTON, as I have done with my daughter.

Anyone can see on my daughter's face that she loves going to the groups at the Hampton Children's Centre. She has gained so much confidence at just 17 months by going to the groups and meeting other children. As she does not attend nursery, all the groups she has been to and continues to go to have been a very beneficial experience.

Has anyone actually stopped to think what impact the closure of Hampton Children's Centre will have on the lives of the families in Hampton Hargate and Hampton Vale? Has anyone stopped to think about how the lack of these services would impact on an ever expanding Hampton? Has anyone putting these proposals together actually experienced the services that Hampton Children's Centre provides?

WE NEED OUR CHILDREN'S CENTRE IN HAMPTON.

I live on Hampton with 2 children under 18 months, the centre is my lifeline. I'm a non driver & this is the only place my kids get to play & I get done adult chat.

I moved here from the north so I have no other support here as all my family are still up there. I was recently diagnosed with post natal depression so the centre will be even life important to me now.

I'm not sure what will happen to my family if you close, I will have no support & no lifeline. Just because I don't live in a 'deprived' area doesn't mean me & my family are any less needy.

Just to add more to my previous email, networking with other mummies helped me to cope with my postnatal depression, also I have no family around here so meeting other mummy friends really helped.

I recently discovered my baby has cow's milk allergy. It was only by talking to other mummies in Hampton and health visitors at Hampton Children's Centre that I found out my baby has rash and diarrhea is because of cows milk allergy. She had it for 3 months and doctors told me it was teething or infection. Once she had diarrhea for over 20 days; 6 to 7 poos a day! I had never thought about cow's milk allergy and trusted doctor's advice. Had I not talked to mummies in Hampton and Health visitors at Hampton I wouldn't know! Now she is on soya milk and Neocate. She has been fine since we stopped cow's milk. I am very grateful to have this opportunity to socialise with other mummies, get professional help from health visitors.

Please do not close Hampton Children's Centre!

As my local MP, please fight to keep Peterborough Children's Centre open. I live in Hampton which is rapidly increasing in size. The proposal to close Hampton's Sure Start Centre does not make sense. The building was purpose built only a couple of years ago and is well used by 0 -5 year olds and their parents.

The proposal claims that there is 0% deprivation in Hampton, and yet PCC, April 2012 Childcare Services in Peterborough, annual report shows on page 30 that child deprivation is 21% in Hampton; far higher than the 0% quoted in these proposals. That is, 21% of children dependent on workless benefits, which the report says almost doubled in two years.

I am concerned that the options considered are either as recommended or "do nothing". This is not a considered, professional response as there are many ways of saving money that do not include closing all but four centres. Even those four super hubs which remain will not be open to families unless they are labeled "in most need". For the amount of money that will be saved, this will have a disproportionate negative impact on parents and children aged 5 years and under.

Under the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, arrangements made by an English Local Authority under section 3 (2) must, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children's centres to meet local need. (2) "local need" is the need of parents, prospective parents and young children in the authority's area". This makes it clear that PCC have a duty to provide children's centres for ALL local parents, prospective parents and young children, not just those "in most need". I am unsure what legislation PCC is using that takes precedent over the 2009 Act.

I am writing to you as a concerned constituent in regards to the proposals made by Peterborough City Council to close Children's Centres across the city, including in Hampton.

I am concerned that these proposals have not been properly costed nor considered fully against alternative proposals. I also note the recent comments by the Prime Minister, made at Prime Minister's Questions on November 20th 2013, that funding for the children's centres was being increased by the government, and questions why the stated cutbacks are required in light of these comments. In light of the fact that these comments were made both to the House of Parliament and to the nation I was wondering if the Prime Minister was aware of the situation in Peterborough and if so how these comments square with the actions of Peterborough City Council.

I, as do many other, feel that the services these centres provide are vital for the communities that are situated in and I eagerly await your reply on this issue.

(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara)

I am writing to you this morning on behalf of the families in Hampton to seek your support about the decision of Peterborough City Council's Children's Services Cabinet member and Conservative Party Local Councillor Sheila Scott's (Orton with Hamptons) proposal to close 6 children's centres within the city of Peterborough, of which one is located in your area of Hampton.

Proposed Children's Centres to close:

Hampton
Werrington
Brewster Avenue
Stanground
East Rural
Westwood and Ravensthorpe

The decision to close Hampton would have a negative impact on families living in Hampton and this proposal would lead to families not having the support that they currently rely at the moment.

Children's Centres play an essential part in helping to ensure that children, families and communities get the best start in life. The Hampton Children's Centre has access to a whole range of professionals including health visitors, community midwives, family support workers and early year's practitioners. They work closely with families identifying

their needs so that the advice and support is specific to each individual family and are the first contact with children and families in terms of reducing or raising safeguarding children from harm (child protection).

The Hampton Children's centre currently offers a range of activities and support for families to enjoy which could include:

- Information and support to find childcare
- Support for children with additional needs
- Drop in sessions for information, advice and support etc
- Healthy lifestyle sessions
- Ante natal and post natal support
- Young parents groups, including both mums and dads groups
- Stay and play sessions
- Training, back to work activities and job clubs

Hampton has an ever growing population and is currently being expanded at present and with Hampton Lees and the Great Haddon development approved where is support going to come from? Most families living in Hampton are young families with young children aged 0 – 5 years and are from outside of Peterborough originally and have no extended family to support them and are therefore isolated and at risk of having no support network with the local community.

That is why Hampton Children's Centre needs to stay and it does a lot of preventative work with families to prevent situations moving higher into social care with Children's Services at Peterborough City Council. By removing this vital service that the community relies now will lead to less positive outcomes for children within the local community. We believe that this proposed closure is the wrong decision for the children of Hampton and with OFSTED rating Children's Services an Inadequate at Peterborough City Council earlier this year of 2013. OFSTED stated that there are "inadequate" standards in place in terms of safeguarding measures in place to protect children at risk of abuse or neglect within the local authority of Peterborough. This assessment by OFSTED makes the proposal of closing Hampton Children's Centre confusing and wrong based on present current economic climate where more families are struggling to get by and are finding their household incomes considerably reduced which is leading to more families finding themselves in debt and will also this proposal could potentially lead to children having less positive outcomes in terms of their health and well being, child development etc and potentially leading to less intervention being identified for the families who require support and advice.

I have a young family myself and Hampton Children's Centre has provided vital support for me and my wife with children. I hope after reading this that you will chose to support our campaign in "Save the Hampton Children's Centre (Peterborough)" and reconsider the decision to close this vital community facility and service.

(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara)

I am originally from India but I now live in Hampton, Peterborough. My husband and I have a 17 month old daughter. We moved to Peterborough from London when our daughter was only 8 weeks old. We don't have any family in Britain and the children's centre in Hampton was my anchor, especially during my daughter's first year. It gave me access to other new mums and I could share my experiences with them. The children's centre offers a number of facilities like baby café where mums can meet and talk to each other and also to a health visitor about their everyday issues and concerns. The children's centre also organizes sessions like baby massage classes and nursery rhyme sessions which provide much needed activities for babies and toddlers. Hampton is a new community with lots of young families and the children's centres is at the heart of it. It brings families from all walks of life together, and gives everyone the opportunity to mingle and make new friends.

Imagine my shock when I learned recently that Peterborough City Council is planning to close down many children's centres in Peterborough including the one in Hampton. I truly believe that shutting down this children's centre will be a big loss to the Hampton community. It will be very sad if other new mums don't get the same support and help that I did. As our MP, I request you to help us save the Hampton Children's Centre.

Parents in Peterborough have collected hundreds of signatures in support of keeping the Hampton and other Peterborough children's centres open.

(Forwarded from Shailesh Vara.)

Hampton needs more flexible preschool places as there is not enough

I am writing to ask you not to close Hampton Children's Centre. There are so many babies and children here in Hampton. Children's Centre has become part of my baby's life. She enjoys the activities there immensely. It really helped her development. I get the chance to network with other mummies. The reason why I live in Hampton is because there is a children's centre! I would be utterly disappointed and upset if it closes. It will put my baby and other babies at disadvantage. I can't understand why it was proposed to close. Why? Why Hampton? It is a massive estate and there are so many children here!
Please take my comments into consideration and don't close Hampton Children's Centre. Thanks

We had the opportunity to be present at the cabinet meeting held on 18th November in which Peterborough Children's Centres future was discussed. We, mums at Hampton are very emotional about the potential closure of Hampton Children's Centre. We understand the council are under a lot of pressure due to budget restraint, a proposal like this is not easy.

We appreciate that you have done the research but there are a lot elements about deprivation. Social depreciation is one of them. Hampton has the fastest, rapid rising population in the whole of Peterborough. The houses may look nice and new, so is the community! There is a lot of deprivation hidden behind the doors. Not all the people in Hampton own their houses or flats. The community bond is not as strong as other long established communities. So many people who are new in this community, their families aren't nearby to support them. We have a mum said she would never have managed to breastfeed had it not been the advice and support she received from the staff in Hampton Children's Centre and mums in Hampton. She said money cannot buy this! We have a lot of single parents in Hampton. We have a lot of young parents with little social roots. We have so many new parents who suffer from postnatal depression and Hampton Children's Centre is their lifeline!

There are so many young children at Hampton so many that at times it is impossible to even get an appointment at the local GP when the children are ill as the surgery just can't fit them in. The parents have to take them to walk-in centres! There are so many parents whose children can't even fit in their 13 months old jabs and it was delayed to 15 months! We have so many children under 2 in Hampton. This age is critical stem period for the children. If we have support for the parents, we will have the good parents and good children and good future.

A mum in Hampton said they just bought a house in Hampton because there is a children's centre! We have a lot of people who do not own a car so they cannot drive to the other centres; they are not in good health to take public transport or walk that far to another children's centre. With the severe winter weather, it becomes even more difficult for some parents and children. The number for these people is not "ZERO"!

Hampton Children's Centre provides the opportunity for parents to meet each other, support each other. It is part of the neighbourhood hub. It is vital for the parents in Hampton; taking it away is losing sight of the parent element.

We really appreciate that you have decided to carry out public consultation. As one of the centres potentially to be closed, we are surprised the public consultation is not carried out in Hampton. We are writing to request a public consultation in Hampton area.

I understand most of you have never visited Hampton Children's Centre. We would also like to invite you to our activities. Please come to Songbirds on the following dates:

25 November 2013 11am

2 December 2013 11am

Address: Hampton Children's Centre, Hargate Way, Hampton, Hampton Hargate, Peterborough, PE7 8BZ

It would be our honour if you can join us. Thank you very much for taking the time to read this email. We look forward to your response.

I would like to say that I oppose the closure of the Hampton Children's Centre. My career has been spent working with children under the age of five and their families and cannot stress enough how important it is to provide support, encouragement and advice to new parents, especially those without nearby family support. Hampton is full of relocated families and is known to have a high rate of depression, which has an impact on child development and family life. It is well known that money invested in early years saves money in the longer term.

I am shocked to learn that the city council is proposing to shut down the children's centre in Hampton, Peterborough.

I first moved to Hampton when I was a new mum with a six week old baby. We have no family in Britain and the Children's centre was my anchor. It was the place I could go with my little baby, where I could breastfeed without being started at, where I could meet other new mums and share my experiences. The mum sessions there were invaluable

and so were the many activities like the baby massage sessions. I truly believe that shutting down this children's centre will be a big loss to the Hampton community. It will be very sad if other new mums don't get the same support and help that I did. Hampton is a very family oriented community and the children centre is at the heart of it. It brings together families and gives everyone an opportunity to mingle and make new friends. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at the Hampton Children Centre who contributes to the great experience I always have when I visit.

I am a resident of Hampton and speak as a parent and ex-employee of children's centres in Peterborough. I used the Orton's children's centres and also Hampton more recently when my children were babies and under school age. The support that these centres provides was invaluable to me. Breast feeding advice, feeding and weaning advice, nutritional advice and also general support and companionship via people in met at these centres was something that I am very grateful for. I also worked as an ESOL tutor at Bretton children's centre. The centre was always busy and the group that I ran supported many adults and young people who had English as a second language. The group closed when Spurgeons took over, leaving many disappointed people including myself. The group was a fantastic way for people to meet others and gain confidence with their spoken and written English many of whom would have been very isolated without that experience. I for one, see it as a travesty that such services are being potentially withdrawn from the local community. I'm sure many parents and non-English speakers who use the centres would agree that the closing of children's centres would be a terrible loss to the community.

I am writing to express my opposition to the closing of vital children's centres across the city. My wife and I have a 1 year old daughter and I cannot thank the staff at Hampton Children's Centre enough for the help and support given from our very first appointment with the midwife. Both Kay and Sue are extremely knowledgeable and have such a great manner you know you can ask them anything. Being first time parents the antenatal classes gave us vital information in a group size small enough for us to feel comfortable asking questions. Closing centres like this will deprive many people of essential support. My wife felt so alone after giving birth to our daughter and suffered with Post Natal Depression, meeting other mums that were sharing similar experiences and being able to attend groups such as songbirds was not only a nice way for both my wife and daughter to socialise, but vital in my wife's recovery from PND. Closing smaller, local centres and replacing them with so called supercentres, will not benefit anyone. Some people will not be able to travel to these places and groups will become so big the intimate friendly atmosphere will disappear, this will discourage some from attending, those people most likely being the people that need the support the most. Children will miss health check-ups as it's too hard to get them to appointments, struggling parents won't be detected early enough and ultimately you are placing children in harm's way. Do you really want the next Baby P to be in Peterborough? In this age of digital friendships and a loss of community spirit, a children's centre is one place that new mums can rely on support, feel a part of something, make new friends and enjoy some adult company whilst allowing trained professionals to support, evaluate and ensure that both parents and children get the care and attention they need. If it's a cost issue then add £1 to the council tax, that would make a difference, it seems that you don't want to raise the council tax to cover all of the costs you need to in case you become unpopular and lose your seat. Remind yourselves why you wanted to be a part of the council in the first place, I'm sure it was to ensure a vibrant, supportive city with great community spirit and to help create a city people were proud to live in. If a child in Peterborough suffers or dies on your watch as a result of these cuts, just imagine how you'll feel for the rest of your lives, knowing you were partly responsible. Once again, I urge you to reconsider withdrawing such vital local services.

Please can I ask that you reconsider options around closing the local children's centre here in Hampton. It's a vital part of the community, allowing mothers, toddlers and children to meet and socialise in a comfortable and local facility, it's a great little unit which I am sure we could look to exploit further to further reach out to the Hampton community.

I have been a resident of Hampton since 2004 and I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed closure of the Hampton children's centre. This centre has been invaluable to my wife and baby daughter as I work in London and I am away from the family home for around 12-14 hours a day. This centre not only offers support to my wife and daughter it also provides me with piece of mind that mums and babies can get together in a secure environment and share experiences and support each other. In particular my wife really found the centre a great support when she was starting to breast feed and overcoming challenges associated with this. Please can you reflect on this decision as it has a real benefit to the Families of Hampton and helps form a society with identity purpose and values where people can support each other.

I am a mum in Hampton, originally from Northampton. When I first moved to Peterborough to be with my then partner,

now husband, I did not know or meet anyone. However since my daughter has been born I have met some great friends thanks to Hamptons children's centre. When my daughter was first born trying to breast feed her was horrific and I was ready to give up after a couple of days. I called the helpline which were very helpful but I still couldn't do it. However I remember meeting another mum at the children's centre when I was pregnant and waiting for my appointment with the midwife who told me not to give up breast feeding until I had visited the baby cafe. With this in mind I waited for the day of the baby cafe while struggling on breast feeding. As soon as I walked in the door I burst in to tears and begged for help. The health visitor was brilliant, sat me down and helped me find my way. I would never have been able to do this from a helpline or videos as we are all different shapes and sizes and I needed to be guided in person. I could not get myself to Peterborough hospital for support as I could not drive from having a c-section. Therefore being able to walk to HCC was invaluable. No amount of money/hand out by the government would have made me carry on through the pain and anguish of breast feeding, it was the initial and ongoing support of the HV in the HCC that I was able to breast feed for six months.

Up until my daughter was a year old I went to the centre three times a week. This has supported me being a new mum by helping me stay relatively sane, sharing my burdens with other mums and the HV's and realising I'm not the only one going through it. Visiting the centre has socialised my daughter where she is now a confident girl with a great aptitude for play and learning. We have grown together with the support of the children's centre.

My opinion is that it is a huge mistake if ANY of the children's centres were closed as we all need help and support with our children whatever the family background.

This is to say that I support the action to keep open the Hampton Children's Centre in Peterborough, there is a significant residential population in Hampton (and growing), with a large number of young families. I feel the area most definitely would benefit from a Children's Centre locally. Please reconsider any decision to close it or at the very least look carefully at the impact this closure would have to the large number of families in the area with young children.

I had a very stressful Christmas due to a poorly baby, but I had the support from Hampton mums. Chatting to them has made me feel much better. We met through Hampton Children's Centre and we have become very good friends since. Peterborough City Council has proposed to close Hampton Children's Centre (HCC) and 5 other children's centre. If HCC were closed it would have a very negative impact on families living in Hampton and this proposal would lead to families not having the support that they currently rely on at the moment. This has been like a dark cloud for me and many parents during the festive season we wish 2014 will bring some light to this matter. I am writing to ask your help and support in saving HCC as our MP. I know you are a good MP, but I can think you can do better in supporting us. Hampton has the fastest rising population in the region on the biggest estate in Europe. There are so many children under 5 in Hampton, and this age is critical stem period for them. If we have support for the parents, we will have the good parents and good children which will lead to a good future. There are young parents with little social roots, single parent, parents with multiple children... The houses may look nice and new, so is the community! The community bond is not as strong as other long established communities. There is a lot of social deprivation hidden behind the door. So many people are new in this community; their families aren't nearby to support them. There are some new parent who suffered from postnatal depression said HCC is their lifeline! There are mums who would have never managed breastfeeding without the support of the health visitors and other mums that they found at the children's centre. All these are things that money can't buy. HCC offers a wide range of services; play sessions for babies and children, health visitors, baby health clinic, breastfeeding support, ante-natal classes, baby massage classes, cooking lessons, early language development. It also provides the much needed opportunity for parents to meet each other and support each other. It is vital for the parents and children in Hampton. HCC is part of the neighbourhood hub, taking it away is losing sight of the parent element.

We, Hampton parents, attended the Cabinet Meeting at the Town Hall on 18th November where councillors have agreed to go ahead with public consultation. We were interviewed by Peterborough Telegraph and we spoke out for our children's centre. We invited Hampton Cllr Sheila Scott, Cabinet Member for Children's Service, to meet Hampton Parents on 2nd November. We strongly expressed our views on HCC. We have been attending public consultation meetings, scrutiny committee meetings. We have an e-petition, paper petition, Facebook groups and we have been emailing everywhere to express our views. We have organised BBC radio interview and BBC Look East interview. We have gathered over 1250 petition signatures to save Peterborough's children's centres and there are more we haven't handed in yet. We had a march in town centre on 20th December which was filmed by BBC Look East. We are doing everything we can think of to save HCC and 5 other Peterborough's children's centres.

We understand the council are under a lot of pressure due to budget restraint, a proposal like this is not easy. There are so many young children at Hampton so many that at times it is impossible to even get an appointment at the local GP when the children are ill as the surgery just can't fit them in. The parents have to take them to walk-in centres! There are so many parents whose children can't even fit their 13 months old jabs and it was delayed to 15 months! We have

so many children under in Hampton. This age is critical stem period for the children. I have heard a lot and witnessed some anti-social behaviour by some teenagers in Hampton in the last few years I have lived here. I am very concerned. If we have support for the parents, we will have good parents and good children and a good future. A mum in Hampton said they just bought a house in Hampton because there is a children's centre! We have a lot of people who don't own a car so they cannot drive to the other centres; they are not in good health to take public transport or walk that far to another children's centre. With the severe winter weather, it becomes even more difficult for some parents and children. HCC provides the opportunity for parents to meet each other, support each other. It is part of the neighbourhood hub. It is vital for the parent in Hampton; taking it away is losing sight of the parent element. What will you do, as our MP to help us? I am wondering if you have visited HCC before. If you haven't, we, Hampton parents would like to invite you to our activities. Please let me know which date you will be free in January 2014. The address is: Hampton Children's Centre, Hargate Way, Hampton, Hampton Hargate, Peterborough, PE7 8BZ. It would be our honour if you can meet us. I have also attached some photos of my baby which were taken at the children's centre and some photos of Hampton mums.

Please, please keep the children's centre open. A children's centre was a lifeline to me when I had my baby. They offer invaluable services which make a difference to many new parents, not just to those who are perceived to need the services most.

I really don't think that the Hampton Sure Start Centre should be changed, it is used so much and an asset for an area where there is not many other children's services/activities.

I am a regular attendee of Hampton's children's centre and my son and I have massively benefitted from attending here, I am a stay at home mum and if it had not been for the centre he and I would not have the network of friends and support that we do. We would be lost without it.

Honeyhill (Paston) Children's Centre

On the 14th February 2011, myself and my husband took on care of our grandson who was 14 months old. Without the help and support of the staff at Honeyhill Children's Centre, my grandson would not be the happy, content child he is now. Our youngest child was 17 when we took our grandson in at the request of Social Services. The staff at Honeyhill rallied around to get us clothing, bedding and even a pushchair as he came to us with practically Nothing!! Social Services could not help us financially due to No funds, so the help and support from Honeyhill meant we were able to provide our grandson with much needed clothing, etc, that myself and my husband could not afford. When my grandson was 2 yrs old we were told by the Social Services to attend as many groups as we possibly could so our grandson was interacting with other children and adults before he went into pre-school in Jan 2013 so he wasn't "like a rabbit in headlights" when he started pre-school. Honeyhill Centre gave us much needed support, we also met other parents who passed on advice, our grandson was able to play in a safe environment with other children, without this kind of service I don't think we would have coped and our grandson could have ended up in the care system instead of with birth relations.

I am a resident of Paston and attend Honeyhill Children's Centre, I have 3 children aged 5, 2 and 4 months. I am the chair of the Parents Action Group, we have a fantastic group of parents, who very pro active, in fund raising, so we can have trips, parties etc. We are all very worried about Honeyhill becoming a "super hub".

My understanding of the "superhub" is that universal services will stop and there will be no open access, unless you are a targeted family? My children, although not in a targeted family have all benefited from attending our childrens centre, in fact even myself and my husband have.

My middle child, is nearly 3 and will be eligible for a funded preschool place in April, our 2 preschools are full! Where do I take her if Honeyhill closes? What social interaction will she get? If Honeyhill stays open, there's a stay and play session for her most days.

Honeyhill offers a wide range of activities:
Jumping beans

Baby group
Humming bee's
Sticky bee's
Messy play
Cooking group
Saturdad's

As well as a wonderful library, adult learning, baby clinic, children's drama and an adult drama group. Cross Keys Homes, Midwife, job centre and food bank are based here too.

I am disappointed that these proposals are even being considered, sure start centres in Peterborough are so important. The proof is all around in the children who attend the centres, I have seen how my own children have blossomed and thrived.

Orton Children's Centre

I just wanted to give my thoughts on the closures.

I use Orton, if this is turned into a super hub the way I understand it is that I will still lose the centre as I know it. I have two children a 6 year old and a 2 year old. After having my 2 year old I really struggled, after being advised to go to my doctors by my health visitor I was told I had depression and would be placed on a 3 month waiting list for counseling. 3 months?! My health visitor then got me involved with a time for you session at the centre and also encouraged me to go to groups. This service has been invaluable for me and my son. Without it I really don't know what I would have done. They gave me back the chance to enjoy time with my baby. I didn't need the counselling by the time I reached the top of the waiting list. The centre makes you feel included in your local community, gives your children structured opportunities to mix with larger groups of children which most wouldn't get the chance to otherwise. I have gained lots of useful advice from health visitors etc at the centre and met many people whom my son now socialises with regularly. It provides opportunities for my 6 year old too as I sign up for many of the half term activities much of which I wouldn't be able to afford otherwise. We are not a family that would be classed as deprived or especially needy, my partner has a full time managerial job, we own our own house and a car. But it doesn't mean we have any spare income after bills to enable us to pay for other groups for my children like swimming or anything of any cost on a weekly basis which many ask for, it doesn't mean that because we have them things I was exempt from feeling depressed and low after having my youngest son.

Like myself when you have been working and then have to give up your job as you can no longer afford child care for two children most of the friends and social network you would have also all have jobs therefore during the day at home with children can be very lonely and not only does the parent suffer from that but that has a knock on effect to the children. This is where the children's centre is vital, you don't have to be deprived to feel in need of help and this is what the children's centre offers whatever your background, everyone is welcome. Closing and turning them into super hubs would leave so many people cut off, lonely and no where to turn. Lots of children would have little if any social interaction with other children before the free funding at the age of 3 if it wasn't for these centres. What impact would that have?!

Stanground Children's Centre

I am a Health Visitor based at Stanground GP surgery and I do not believe that Stanground will remain an area of low need. With the new Cardea estate opening the level of families with complex social needs in this area has greatly increased and indeed social workers are already asking what services are available in this area for clients and apart from the children's centre there is nothing. A large proportion of social housing families on the Cardea estate do not drive and many of them won't be able to afford the bus fares to Orton or want to travel that far for support. I think the

distance you are asking people to travel from Stanground via the bus routes with very young children is unreasonable. Currently in the Stanground area the children's centre is the only place to offer young families support and although quoted in the proposal document Health Visitor numbers have increased in Peterborough they have not increased here in Stanground. We are actually working below recommended staffing figures and we Health visitors at Stanground surgery actually work for Cambridgeshire Community Services not CPFT. What I am concerned about is once you take the children's centre away from Stanground there is going to be nowhere for parents with young children to get guidance, there is also a lack of suitable venues in the area for groups to be run from with the equipment and surrounding that young children need.

When I read that 6 children's centres in Peterborough were closing, including Stanground (which is walking distance from me) I was devastated and to read that the remaining centres are only for families in greatest need made me so upset. When I had my little one I felt isolated as all my friends worked, Stanground children's centre enabled me to meet mums with children of a similar age who lived close to me., if it hadn't been for the centre I don't know what I would have done. My household only has one car which my partner takes to work which means that I can only go to things that I can walk to so if Stanground children's centre closes I will become more isolated again as I cannot afford to pay to take my little one to groups and I can't afford to pay for the bus to go to these things. On top of all this my little one has come on leaps and bounds because of Stanground children's centre. My little one is nearly 2 and since she was 5 months I have taken her weekly to the centre, now I have gone back to work I still take her to learning through play and messy play on a weekly basis if there is space, the staff at the centre are amazing and I feel that their input and support is very valuable to me and other mums/dads. At the beginning of the summer my little one wouldn't go on grass, play with sand or experiment with textures, after playing outside at learning through play and messy play I was amazed that she gradually did all 3 things and now loves sand and walks on the grass without any problem. Without the children's centre this would have taken a lot longer to achieve especially as part of overcoming these things was watching other children and learning by watching them. Now I am watching her becoming more interactive with the other children, she needs to be around other children to learn to share and interact with them as I want her to be able to do this before preschool. When I am at work my little one goes to her grandparents as I cannot afford to send her to nursery or a childminders and I also feel it is important for her to spend time with her grandparents and without the children's centre her interaction with other children will be greatly reduced and the thought of this really upsets me as I want the best for my child and the children's centre helps me achieve this. Before I knew about the closures I was considering having another baby but on reading about the closures I don't know if I want to feel isolated again, the friends I made when my little one was born have returned to work so I will not get the support I need as I get this from Stanground children's centre and by meeting other mums with children of a similar age through the various groups they run.

I hope that parent's opinions are taken notice of and that the emails that are sent to this address will be read and I hope it makes a difference. The children's centres are a lifeline to so many mums and this is not dictated to by class. All children are important not just the ones that are classed as being from a deprived one.

Werrington Children's Centre

I am so unhappy of the proposed closing of Werrington children's centre, My daughter and I have attend the centre for 2 years, we have been supported by the staff regarding money matters, help with my daughter. My daughter has lots of friends at the play group. The groups have kept me going as a single mum. I do not have the money to travel to the OTHER groups. I have suffered from depression and over the last year from the support of the staff and groups have felt well enough to come off my tablets ... we attend groups every day at Werrington. I am now wondering what is going to happen to me next year when we do not have these classes to attend !! Its not just a children's centre it is part of my life gives me a reason to get up and get dressed every day! Three ladies from the PASTON area attend the Werrington centre as PASTON in there words IS NOT NICE... I attend lots of groups before I decided WERRINGTON was the best one. PLEASE RECONSIDER!!!!

It would be deeply detrimental to Peterborough to close or re-designate any of the Children centres. I relied heavily upon the support given by Werrington Children's centre when my baby was born and dread to think what will happen in the future if that support is no longer there. I do not come from a "deprived" situation and would therefore not be eligible for help from the new proposed centres, but even if I was it would be very unlikely I would be able to use them due to

transport issues around Peterborough.

Westwood and Ravensthorpe Children's Centre

As a business we are concerned that if the children's centre based at Highlees Primary Schools used to accommodate more 2 year old childcare spaces, that there will be a saturation of pre-school provision and not enough children in the area to take up these places, placing the existing 5 pre-school provisions under threat of losing business

Wittering Children's Centre

At Wittering we need our children's centre. With lots of forces families the centre offers a lot of support to families and babies. Some families would not be able to get to a centre outside of the village when their husbands are away.

It is my submission that if the Covenant does not step in to support the military personnel there is going to be a media storm. The categorisation of "deprivation" does not get any worse than the stress these families are under as a result of the commitment of military personnel to the cause and just because the wives and some husbands cope, or do not seek help (sometimes because they are not embedded in the community as they move around so much), does not mean that the council can write them off. Further Wittering suffers from a lack of longevity as a result of the population mobility, accordingly the school finds it difficult to attract support of the right calibre that is in for the long haul. The idea that a voluntary run organisation can thrive in the setting is misguided. Basically Wittering presents unique problems, That cannot and should not be treated in the same pool as the rest of the candidates for closure. I think there is a legal issue too, the withdrawal of funding is effective closure, and the commitment to provide support in basically taking a chance on finding further funding is an untried format and therefore does not get round the issue.

Wittering children's centre provides an invaluable service for the village of Wittering and many surrounding villages. It's is not purely providing for service children but also many civilian families. As a non service parent I completely value this service. I have also witnessed first hand the life line it offers mothers and young children of service families. These families put their lives on the line for our country and other vulnerable communities. Those left at home not only live under the threat that their loved one may not return but if they do what emotional state they will be in. To hear that these families are not considered vulnerable and the services provided by the centre not valued is completely shocking

Whilst I understand the need for budget cuts and streamlining I feel that this is short sighted on the part of the council. The LA have only just come out of a category with regards to Children's services and by effectively removing the first line of support then a whole wave of issues are going to appear in the near future. The systems will be overloaded again and we shall return to a reactionary situation. The centre at Wittering is well used and the rural communities are at risk of being cut off completely as the impression the plan gives is that if you are not in the centre of the city then there is no provision. Public transport from the rural areas is poor at best. With council spending on vanity projects seemingly on the increase it is shortsighted to lose the support that people receive especially those families. I also strongly feel that the council are putting at risk their previously good relationship with the armed forces by removing one of the few resources for support that you offer as a council. When discussing this I am often told by council employees that the RAF should pay for things. It is not the partners and children of service personnel who are employed by the RAF but they are the ones who will potentially lose any support that the council currently offer.

Am I correct in saying if this proposal goes ahead, Wittering will no longer be a children's centre!! I use this centre on a weekly basis at least twice a week sometimes more. I cannot tell you how important it is to have this service close to home. I have only lived here a few weeks and don't know anybody so going to the centre gives me a chance to meet people that live near me so I can build friendships with people here. It's massively important for my 19month old daughter who gets to interact with other children to help prepare her for school. She is an only child and can be very shy so taking her somewhere like this helps for her to be around other children. I fully understand the times we are facing financially...we are all feeling this! Surely there is a better way to provide this for everyone. Understandably we are not the most deprived but it doesn't mean we don't need this service here. If I had another baby I would have to get

myself to one of these super hubs. any mother will know that when you have just had a baby you cant get around very easily due to physical pain for the first few weeks, so what would happen in Wittering how would we get to a super hub! You would have to spend more money sending health visitors to each household to have their babies weighed and checked, surely this will be more expensive. I did not live in this area when I had my baby but where I did live had a childrens centre in walking distance from my house, surely everyone deserves that. The children centre was a massive support for me as its not easy having a baby, especially your first. New mothers in Wittering need that support in Wittering not somewhere miles away where they cant get to so easily. I would be very sad to see the centre change and to not offer what it does now. It will be a very sad day for everyone who uses it and for any RAF families moving here in the future would make life very hard for them.

Where I accept that cost saving measures need to met by the local authority, I feel this is going to be to the detriment of the less deprived children's centre! I understand the need for centres within the deprived areas of the city, however these areas continue to be deprived, with limited improvement even though large funds are allocated to these areas over many years. In addition I am aware that the Housing have moved deprived families into our village into private landlord rents under the terms of a "better move" but have failed these families by removing them from their local support network, limiting their accessibility to central services as they such as employment and health. This is going to be further made difficulty for these families once the children's centre is re-designated! I therefore feel the Local authority is setting these families up to fail. We have further been limited for activity access for our children due to the playgroup been moved to a daycare service therefore making group session 5hr instead of 3hrs. The children's centre at Wittering is a hub of activity, which provides a central point for providing support, advice and activities for its community. Especially when the families in our community are often moved about and have limited or no extended family support.

I believe Wittering children's centre should remain open as this is an isolated village and benefits greatly by having this facility. Many military families (including myself) live here and use the service provided. It provides a good support network for these families who move here having no family or friends nearby. It seems as though the hard working people will be punished and the money from their taxes given to others that probably haven't even worked in this country.

I would like the Wittering children's centre to stay where it is. It is a VITAL amenity for our village, which accommodates many vulnerable, lonely families. Many of whom would not be easily be able to travel to an alternative centre, particularly if they cannot drive, do not have a car, cannot afford public transport, have other young children to take along on public transport as well as a new baby. Our transient lifestyle (RAF) means we move frequently, are away from friends and family and are often alone with husbands away at WAR. This centre provides a great deal of warmth, comfort and support that helps fill the void and feeling of being completely isolated and alone.

I think it is entirely unjust that Wittering is not seen as an area 'in need' and would wholly question the councils criteria to assess 'neediness' Yes, Wittering is largely made up of people who actually cgo out to work and pay their own way in society (this doesn't imply wealth however!) but our needs here in the village are very unique & different. There is always going to be a large number of females (& sometimes males) in Wittering who are left alone & isolated due to partners being deployed with the military, and this in itself is a 'needs' that needs addressing within the village. The re-designation of funds to areas which on the surface seem to be places of higher immigration and can only lead us to question the fairness of this whole process. We put into the pot, why shouldn't we get a fair share of it?!!!

Above and beyond the context of the consultation paper, the Government has made a commitment to support military families through the covenant. The parameters of your assessment failed to take this into account or the special circumstances this engenders: i.e. many young (?) families move here without extended family to help or provide support, some mums can't drive and public transport to/from Wittering is limited. With husbands often absent for long (6 month) periods this is extremely isolating and lonely at such a critical time, leaving mothers vulnerable and alone except

for the support services provided by the brilliantly run, welcoming Wittering Childrens Centre. To close it would be to retract an invaluable lifeline to so many isolated lonely new mothers who may not have the opportunities provided by central city living (as in Peterborough). Please re-evaluate your criteria for making this important decision based on real lives not just statistical data!

I am a childminder based in Wittering. We have a childminders group at the childrens centre that I can take my minded children to every week, it's a good environment for the childminders & we have even had Peterborough councils staff come to go through training we may need in these sessions, the children are safe & have EYFS planned activities to do in a CRB controlled environment that all of my children's parents are happy with. If Wittering children centre closes or even loses some funding, where could I go with several children, it is not safe for me to get on a bus with 3 young children to go to one of your 'deprived areas' I would NEVER use one of your super centres, they are in what I consider 'rough' areas and upon risk assessing it, the negatives would more than outweigh the positives from going to such a place. I have 2 points I want to make about you closing the children's centre at Wittering, the 1st one is above, the 2nd one is to follow now & when you read it I would ask that rather than brushing over what I have wrote to actually think about what I am about t tell you & imagine if you were in my situation please. Nobody asked me to fall in love with a service man, but I did, I met my husband & he was in the Royal Air Force, it can be very tough at times but I married him and we have 3 beautiful healthy children, we have lived in 7 different houses in 10 years (3 of them being in Wittering) My husband often has to go 'out of area' for months & months at a time, the words out of area seem so trivial, but the reality is that my husband travels to a warzone, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, my husband has been away several times now and if I could even make you understand a tiny bit of what that is like then maybe you could put yourself in my shoes . My husband spends a few weeks getting his kit ready to go away, we wait impatiently for an actual date so that we can spend the last few days as a family before he goes away, the night he goes away all his bags are in the living room & I've been sobbing on & off all day, the children don't fully understand how long he is going for or the dangers that he is going into, we put the children to bed & I cry again, knowing that this is the last time he is going to do this for 6 months (imagine half a year ago a moment in your life then you can imagine what he will miss) He goes upstairs to get in his dessert uniform & kisses our sleeping children, he comes back downstairs his eyes full of tears but holds it in for my sake, I explode into tears on the floor as I don't want him to go, I don't know for sure if when he walks through that door he will ever come back, it's the most horrible time in the world, I close the door & cry & cry. I still have to be strong the next morning when the kids wake up, I tell them remember daddy isn't here he is in Afghanistan but he loves you very much, I take tons of pics & email them to him & then I wait, normally around 3 days and then I get a short email or a quick 1 min phone call to say he is safe & i cry again, the kids ask why mummy is crying & when is daddy coming home, it's only been a week, they have no concept of time. I am NOT a single parent, I am a wife of a hero! As I am not a single parent looking after my 3 children all of a sudden alone, in an area where my friends & family do not live is beyond hard. My home town with my friends & family is over a 3 hour drive away. My 2 older ones are in the infant school at Wittering so I cannot go home to my friends & family for 6months for support as I cannot take them out of school, this is my life, not only am I living away from my friends & family I am all of a sudden a 'single' parent & on top of that worrying that my husband is safe & if he is being shot at, under a mortar attack or being bombed. Now I want you to put yourself in my situation & ask yourself do you really not think that my three children {living away from family & friends & not fully understanding why daddy has gone away to Afganistan, the place on the news where ladies cry as coffins & flags come from an airplane into a black car} are 'deprived'?????? I use our children's centre every single day when my husband is away, they have activities planned & my youngest loves attending, it also takes my mind off watching the news & waiting for my 1 weekly phone call, if I get upset at the children's centre there is always someone there who has been or is going through the same & without this support I do not know what I would do. Every day my little girl gets to play, do craft & lots of nice happy things in a safe environment. You class deprived areas go on poverty, ethnic, harm to children, How can you say that Wittering is not deprived based on that at least 2/3 of Wittering is RAF. I am 38yrs old, I can battle on & look after my children, but the support is nice. I have whoever seen younger (late teens) parents who are literally not long left school & away from all family & friends & their husbands, without this VITAL Support how long before harm may come to their children, you might say never but do you really want to leave those young vulnerable parents with no support & take a bet on their children's lives? Some of these young parents do not cope well. After you have read my comments please do not gloss over my words & say you have taken it all into account, please do not insult me. Thank you for taking your time to read this & I hope that it will have some bearing on your decision on not to close or takeaway all funding for the children's centre

Wittering Childrens Centre provides support and information to the local community which is populated primarily by Military families. The centre is a constant, providing regular sessions and stability in otherwise changeable lives for children and parents. The social aspect for both children and parent cannot be ignored as well as the fact that the A1 separates Wittering from other local areas and many people in the local area cannot drive. I strongly believe that the

community would suffer as a result of the children's centre being re designated and the need is just as great in Wittering as deprived areas.

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