

APPENDIX 1

1. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 1.1 The online resident consultation attracted a high level of interest, with 361 completed responses over the period 19 July to 10 September 2018. A further 231 responses were received on paper copies of the survey. Meetings were also held between elected representatives and parents of children attending the LADNs.
- 1.2 Alongside the consultation, other feedback has been received from groups of parents with children attending the LADNs and from Unison. See 1.23 below for details.

Analysis

- 1.3 A majority of respondents, 53% of those who expressed a view, were in favour of the proposal to close the three nurseries:

Do you agree with the proposal to close the council's three day care nurseries?

	Number of responses	% Excluding "don't know"
Yes	292	53.3
No	256	46.7
Don't know	44	
Total	592	

- 1.4 A marginally smaller number of respondents thought that there would be benefits from closing the nurseries. Overall, almost 52% of respondents thought there would be benefits:

Do you think there will be any benefit from the proposal to close the council's three day care nurseries?

	Number of responses	% Excluding "don't know"
Yes	277	51.7
No	259	48.3
Don't know	56	
Total	592	

- 1.5 A majority of respondents, 73%, including some of those who agreed with the proposal, thought that there were negative implications arising from it:

Do you think there will be any negative impact from the proposal to close the council's three day care nurseries?

	Number of responses		% Excluding "don't know"
Yes	385		72.6
No	145		27.4
Don't know	62		
Total	592		

- 1.6 Opinions about closing the nurseries were different based on respondents' use of services. 38 of the 50 respondents (76%) who say they currently use the LADNs were opposed to the proposal, with 11 current users in favour of closure. By contrast, 65% of those with no past or current experience of the LADNs were in favour of closure. As well as commenting on uncertainty over future provision for their child, LADN users report positive experiences of them as described in 1.23 below.
- 1.7 The consultation survey also asked respondents to express a preference between keeping the LADNs open and two other options: not increasing the number of other childcare places; or reducing the number of Children's Centres. It also asked them to prioritise the three types of service. These questions focus attention on the role of LADNs as part of the Early Years services mix and do not preclude other options for continued funding of the LADNs, as respondents had a free text box to make alternative suggestions for savings. Some respondents suggested funding and operational options in the free-text section of the survey, while others have criticised the questions themselves in their comments. Further criticism has been included in other contributions to the consultation, and is detailed in 1.23.
- 1.8 In total, only 26% of respondents who expressed a view thought that keeping the LADNs open would be a better option than increasing other childcare provision:

Do you think it would be better if the council's three day care nurseries stayed open but the number of childcare places were not increased in schools and childcare settings?

	Number of responses		% Excluding "don't know"
Yes	103		25.7
No	298		74.3
Don't know	191		
Total	592		

- 1.9 A smaller number, over 10%, thought it would be better to keep the LADNs open but reduce the number of Children's Centres:

Do you think it would be better if the council's three day care nurseries stayed open but the number of children's centres were reduced?

	Number of responses	% Excluding "don't know"
Yes	56	10.6
No	473	89.4
Don't know	63	
Total	592	

1.10 In summary, although respondents were not convinced of the benefits of closing the LADNs and were concerned about possible negative effects, the majority would not wish to preserve the LADNs if there were adverse impacts on other Early Years provision.

1.11 This is borne out by the priorities respondents gave the three services. Sustaining the number of Children's Centres was the highest priority for the majority of respondents. Fewer than 14% gave this their lowest priority. Increasing access to childcare had under 21% of responses giving it their highest priority. Keeping the LADNs open was the first priority of fewer than 22% of respondents, while 50% gave it their lowest priority:

	Priority - all respondents		
	Highest	Second	Lowest
	%	%	%
Keep nurseries open	21.2	22.6	50.0
Sustain Children's Centres	57.9	39.2	13.4
Increase childcare access	20.9	38.1	36.6

1.12 This indicates that respondents would prefer to have scarce resources allocated to the network of Children's Centres rather than to the two other Early Years options if they had to choose.

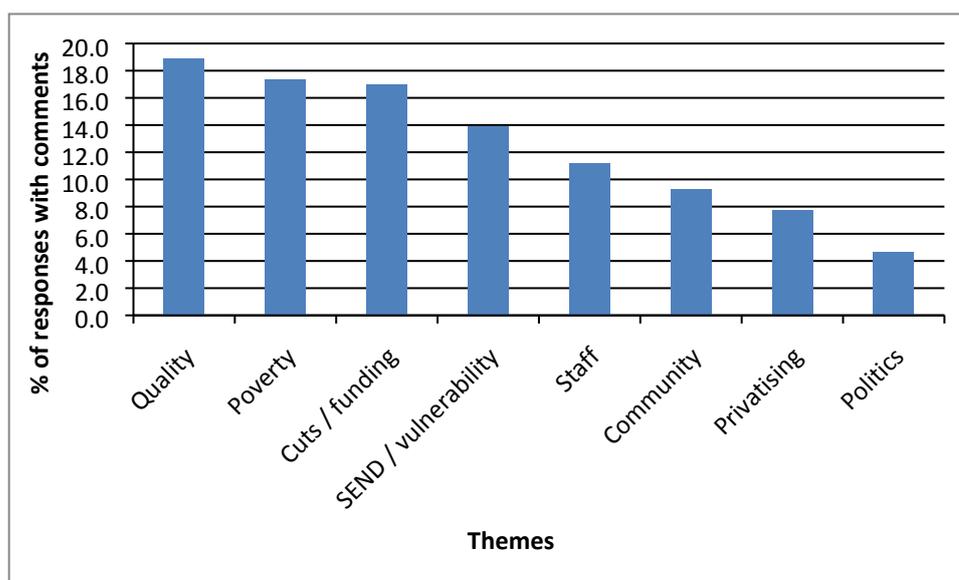
1.13 Significant numbers of respondents had current or previous experience of one or more of these services, and only 78 people (22%) had no experience of them:

	Current	Previous
	Number of responses	Number of responses
LADNs	50	68
Children's Centres	140	90
Other provision	51	105

Note: respondents may use more than one of these services, and may have both current and previous experience of them

Comments

1.14 Free-text comments were provided by 181 respondents. Unless they are separately noted in the following sections, the comments are shown in full at Appendix v. A range of themes emerged in the comments:



1.15 The theme of quality was raised in 49 responses, including 14 which were in favour of the closure proposal. Respondents in favour noted the standard of childcare available elsewhere:

- “There are excellent nurseries that provide outstanding services”
- “There are other quality nursery options in Tower Hamlets”

On the other hand, one of those opposed wrote:

- “... no comparison between the services and care provided by Overland staff and private ones ... we felt very secure in Overland ... pure heart and soul, empowering those who need it most”

1.16 Funding and cuts to services or budgets were mentioned by 44 respondents, 26 of whom were opposed to the closure proposal.

People agreeing with the proposal were concerned about the allocation of scarce funding:

- “I think a lot of money has been spent on these settings, unfortunately this means less funding available for other childcare provision ... Using this money in other areas will help a lot more children”
- “... it is imperative that there is a more equitable distribution of funds, so that more children in the LA can benefit”
- “Money that is obviously scarce should not go to ONLY three nurseries...”

In contrast, other respondents disapproved of cuts to funding and suggested other sources for funds or savings:

- “Children will be brought up without education and end up on the streets ... why cut off money from education when you can cut from other places?”
- “I disagree with cutting funding from education or childcare ... there have to be other parts of the budget where these £58m can come from”
- “I think the council needs to find additional funding or sponsorship to keep both nurseries and children's centres open”
- “Council tax should be increased, including unoccupied housing”
- “... very worried about the closure of LA daycare ... This is a cost cutting exercise with very long and expensive impact”

1.17 Poverty was a concern for 45 of the respondents. These comments included:

- “As a full-time working single parent, nurseries supported my intention to work”
- “Over half the children are living below the breadline poverty ... mothers need to work and provide for their families and so rely on childcare”
- “... depriving a already poor community of services that families and children need”
- “Children in our borough are already living in poverty ... how are you planning to take away vital services that provide stability and support to our vulnerable”

1.18 Twenty respondents mentioned the theme of privatisation or private service, although not all were critical. One response which did contrast public and private provision said:

- “... no comparison between private daycare which is a profit led business and LA daycare and nursery schools”

Two respondents suggested that the LADNs could be sold to private operators or commissioned from them, which is similar to the proposal consulted on in 2017.

1.19 36 respondents commented on the support, especially in early intervention, that LADNs and other Early Years services provide to vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.

1.20 There were 12 responses which included comments related to politics, including:

- “This is not why we voted for a Labour council and Mayor”
- “Fed up with the new Mayor and his team”

1.21 Taken together, the comments reflect a polarisation in views on the future of the LADNs. Those in favour of their closure seek a redistribution of funds to support more children, and note the availability of alternative high-quality childcare. The respondents wanting the LADNs to stay open are concerned

about the principle of cuts to Early Years provision and funding and how childcare can support children and their families out of poverty.

1.22 The consultation stimulated a range of responses however there is a clear majority supporting closure within the current context.

LADNs to close

- a. There is a majority in favour of closure
- b. Children's Centres have the highest priority in comparison to alternative childcare or LADNs which have the lowest priority and least favoured option.
- c. Respondents believe that funds can be distributed in a way which would support more children if LADNs were closed
- d. Childcare is available from other providers, which can transform the prospects of families and children living in deprivation.

LADNs to stay open

- a. Less than half of respondents think there would be benefits from closure, and almost two-thirds believe there would be negative impacts
- b. Support for the LADNs comes from people in protected minority groups which use them the most
- c. Respondents believe that new sources of LADN funding and alternative savings could be found
- d. Childcare can transform the prospects of families and children living in deprivation or with special needs

Other contributions

1.23 Alongside the consultation, contributions have been received from a number of sources:

- a. Paper petition, presented in a file by Unison plus further signatures attached to an email from the Save Our Nurseries Group. See Appendix i for the covering letter.

Petition statement:

We the undersigned note that:

- Tower Hamlets Council is undertaking a public consultation on whether to close, on a phased basis, the three remaining Local Authority Day Nurseries (LADNs) - John Smiths, Mary Sambrook and Overland Nurseries, including the specialist deaf unit.
- Despite a large waiting list, for months council managers have blocked new admissions and have been running down the nurseries by stealth resulting in inflated running costs. They are now trying to use this to justify closure.

We oppose closure of the LADNs and call on the Mayor and Tower Hamlets Council to keep this valuable and in-demand community resource open and under council control. We call on the council to undertake a comprehensive review on how the LADNs are being managed and to develop a plan to ensure their viability.

- b. Online petition organised by Unison, with the same statement as above and, from The Petition Site statistics, signed by 35,005 people (by 7am on 11 September) of whom 9,638 are in the UK.

- c. Letter from parents of children attending John Smith LADN, asking to keep the nurseries open – see Appendix ii.
- d. Email and letter from parents of children attending Overland LADN – see Appendix iii.
- e. Comments and questions from Cllr Andrew Wood (Conservative, Canary Wharf) included in the online survey:

There is not enough financial information on which to make a final decision.

Support Services £472k - what is this? Is there any 'profit component' i.e. income is higher than costs charged from centre (I know other LA who did make a profit on charges to schools

Do charges include any rent type charge and how much is this p.a.? Employee costs £1,088k = how many employees does this cover i.e. average cost. How does this compare as an average to nursery schools i.e. are the staff costs above average?

What is the maximum weekly occupancy of the 3 nurseries?

Can you provide a do nothing financial option that is at maximum occupancy (with accompanying staff costs) since the number of pupils has been suppressed so we are not comparing like with like when we say the average cost is £15k per pupil

It is alleged that the students of the LADN are more likely to need help i.e. SEN than the average nursery. What is the breakdown of the pupil body compared to the average for TH. Are the LADN students different from the average or not.

Who owns the sites?

What is the value of the property/land if sold on open market?

Councillor Andrew Wood

When I asked similar questions in Cabinet Mayor Biggs said I should fill in the consultation response

- f. Statement from the Save Our Nurseries Campaign, used by seven respondents in the survey free-text comments – see Appendix iv.

Appendix i

Covering letter for petition



07 September 2018

Debbie Jones

Will Tuckley

Christine McInnes

Jon Graham

Democratic Services

Submission of Formal Petition to Tower Hamlets Council

Please find attached a formal petition with 2000+ signatures of Tower Hamlets residents and workers about the proposal to close the three remaining Local Authority Day Nurseries.

This petition should be considered as formal feedback in relation to the public consultation and included in the information received in response to:
https://forms.lowerhamlets.gov.uk/service/Day_Care_Nurseries_Consultation

The structurally manipulative design of the on-line consultation has caused concerns. Many found it divisive, flawed and leading, and as such reasonably refused to fill it out.

Please acknowledge receipt of our formal petition and confirm that it will be included as information received by the council in the public consultation.

Save Our Nurseries Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets UNISON

Appendix ii

Letter and comments from parents of children attending John Smith LADN:

3rd July 2018

RE: SAVE OUR NURSERIES: John Smith, Mary Sambrook and Overland

I write to you with great urgency, in regards to the above matter. After hearing the recent developments regarding the 3 nurseries I am shocked, appalled and deeply saddened to hear about their imminent closure.

As a mother and whose child attends John Smith I am urging you to think about the repercussions that it will have upon on the nursery, the young children who attends here and other nurseries, their families and the community itself. I am now frantically searching for an alternative when the worse should happen. The closure of these nursery will have an knock on effect on other aspects too. I fear for my own job as I will have to give up my work. I don't want to rely on the state to support me and my daughter, I am capable of working and would want to continue to do so. However, if the nursery is closed I will have no other option but to give my job, to care for my daughter full time. Mayor Biggs will be responsible for that, as he left me and other mothers alike with no other viable options.

These nurseries are a vital life line in our community, they have helped many families and continue to do so. They are a life line for me and for my daughter. I am a single mother who came to John Smith for help. When I was desperate and in need of help for someone to look after my child, so that I can go back to work, John Smith took me in and gave me hope to carry on. I am the sole earner for my daughter and knowing that she would be safe, happy and looked after put my mind at ease. The staff at John Smith are very supportive, they take pride in their work and this can be seen in my daughters developments. Frankly, I would have been lost without them. The staff who runs these nurseries are the unsung heroes of our community. They do so much for the parents and the kids and the least we can do is to support them in their hour of need. Saving the nurseries will not just be secure for today or for tomorrow it will be secured for many years to come and will play a huge part for the greater good.

These nurseries play such a pivotal part in our community, a community which is class as most deprived, where unemployment is high. These nurseries helps to prevent that. By keeping them open they help parents with their child care arrangements which then allows parents to get back into employment.

Anyone who has used these nurseries or in fact any other nurseries knows how beneficial it was for them and for their child. These nurseries assist with the child's developments in many ways, they focus on the childs needs and build up different strategies to help them. They maintain high level of commitment in their work, they always keep parent/ carers involved.

Back in 2014/ 2015 before the elections, Mr Biggs made promises to continue to fund our nurseries. In his Mayoral Manifesto in 2015 he made it clear the following: *"Everyone in Tower Hamlets has been let down by Lutfur Rahman,"*. Well I will say the same thing to Mayor Biggs, we are being let down by him, he is no different to his predecessor. Mayor Biggs made empty promises to win peoples vote and now that he has succeed he will do what he wishes. But you can help make a stop to that.

What I don't understand is that previously Mayor Biggs proposed to sell them off to other providers – and over 80% of respondents opposed this. Now the sell-off proposals appear to have been dropped in favour of outright closure, how did this happen? and so soon. Something doesn't sound right here. Someone needs to stand against him and request an independent body to come and look at things. Surely this does not seem right. What mayor Biggs is doing now contradicts his previous proposal. How does he go from trying to sell the nurseries to other providers to closing them outright?

United we stand divided we fall. Please stand with us to defeat Mayor Biggs. Please take a moment to think about our kids futures, the way we shape it today will have lasting impact in the years to come.

The late former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela said *"there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children."*

With that in mind please help us save our nurseries. Let your decision be a NO for closing and Yes to saving the nurseries.

Your co-operation is much appreciated.

Parent's of children attending John Smith Nursery

① John Smith has been an integral part to my child's development. It is an excellent, and professional institution which has empowered my daughter. ~~It is services~~ that John Smith offers is priceless, and I hope it continues.

② John Smith has helped me to stay in full-time employment as I was very anxious about childcare. The staff have been excellent in helping support my child's development and it gives me piece of mind to know that he is happy + well looked after whilst I am at work. The support I receive from them is exceptional.

③ The staff at John Smith have been very helpful and accommodating. They helped me and my daughter during our time in need. The nursery has helped my daughter's development. By doing so this allowed me to get back into work. The staff are very helpful, they are experienced and very good at what they do. The whole community benefit from having a nursery like this. My daughter has learnt so much and has developed really well.

④ The nursery (John Smith) has been an extremely important part of my life & my daughter's. I am a working mum & without the support of John Smith Nursery I would have never been able to work. Nursery helped my child gain confidence & help & work towards transition to school. It is appalling that the nursery is to close down.

⑤ John Smith has been a very big help to us. It has provided my son with help in development for Nursery. and support for us would not be able to go without this place.

⑥ Jon Smith has been an important part of my child's development. The staff here are all amazing and an excellent support system. This nursery is excellent and we would never want it to shut down. It will be very upsetting, firstly for the children, who have an opportunity to do well at a pre school and secondly for us parents who love this nursery and feel content learning our kids!!!

⑦ This nursery has supported my grandson and I have seen a great improvement in his behaviour & his emotional needs. He has come from a somewhat dysfunctional family and I have taken the task to looking after him. The nursery has been an extension to the family and with their help I know he will continue to grow emotionally equip through his learning education.

Note: the end of this comment did not appear on the scanned copy of the document

Appendix iii

Email and letter from parents of children attending Overland LADN.

Note: examples of parents' experience have been anonymised so that children cannot be identified from this published document.

On Thu, 6 Sep 2018, 15:12 Parent of child at Overland wrote:

Dear Debbie Jones, Christine McInnes, and Will Tuckley,

We would like you to consider the below as a response to the public consultation about the day nurseries which closes on Monday. (Day Care Nurseries Consultation July 2018.

See https://forms.towerhamlets.gov.uk/service/Day_Care_Nurseries_Consultation)

We have first hand experience of the work they do for the youngest children in our borough and urge you to undertake a comprehensive review of how they are being managed and work to develop a plan to ensure their viability.

We found the public consultation online to be very divisive and leading and did not want to fill it out.

Please confirm receipt of the email below as a response to the Public Consultation.

Thank you in advance,

Parents of Children at Overland Nursery

On Thu, 6 Sep 2018, 14:21 Parent of child at Overland wrote:
Thursday 6 September 2018

Dear Mayor John Biggs and Councillor Danny Hassell,

We are writing to you because you did not attend the Save Our Nurseries and Unison meeting on Tuesday night as expected, and so you have not heard from the parents of children with additional needs about our experience of the three Day Nurseries, Overland, John Smith and Mary Sambrook, and the state of the alternative provision in the borough.

You have said that the excellent Nursery Schools of our borough can provide for all the vulnerable and disabled children, and that no children will fall through the cracks. This is not true. Vulnerable and disabled children are already on the waiting list for Overland, John Smith and Mary Sambrook, and admissions have been stopped while the future of the nurseries are up in the air. This is such a waste, it must have raised the cost of the day nurseries over this time, and means very young children are already missing out on early intervention, education and care. You cannot be complacent about cutting 102 specialist, affordable and quality day nursery places in a borough with so much child poverty.

We are lucky to have some Outstanding Nursery Schools in Tower Hamlets, and these do important work and should also be protected and fought for! However we have called the 11 listed on your Local Offer, and only 2 of these Nursery Schools take on children from the age of 2 (Old Church Nursery School, Stepney, which has places, and Children's House, Bow, which has a waiting list). All the rest only take children only from the age of 3 years old.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth. **Overland, John Smith and Mary Sambrook Day Nurseries operate year-round childcare from 8–5:30 for children from 6 months.**

If you close our Day Nurseries, the youngest vulnerable and disabled children will be abandoned to the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) Day Nursery sector, which sadly is inconsistent and unreliable. The Good quality PVI Day nurseries are struggling under increasing London rents, and due to

the new 30 hours childcare scheme. In Tower Hamlets 5 private sector nurseries have fallen off the Tower Hamlets Local Offer since last year, of these 4 were Ofsted rated Good. Private Day nurseries will also often not take on 'complicated users' like the children with SEN who use these nurseries. PVI Day Nurseries may accept government vouchers, but they often have registration and other 'top up' charges. One day nursery in Spitalfields charges parents £23,000 a year!

You have told us that specialist services will be developed at Children's House to replace the hearing unit at Overland, but it is not clear when these will be ready. What about the children that are already waiting for services now?

We are also concerned that further cuts to schools mean that any promised new services at nursery schools will not actually emerge.

Currently only the head teacher at Children's House can sign. At Overland all the staff can sign. The staff of Overland, Mary Sambrook and John Smith are trained in medical procedures like nasal tube feeding, sign language and catheterisation. Early intervention and diagnosis is so important, if children with learning SEN miss out on support at the early stage this delays their learning well into later years. Children will not reach their full potential.

As you did not come to hear us, we would like you to read some of our own personal stories, to explain why quality nursery provision and Early Years Foundation Stage before the age of 2 is so important. We would also like you to consider this email as a response to your public consultation.

The staff at Overland went out of their way to put in place special practices to help C_ (who struggles with focus and emotional regulation) which less well trained staff would not have done. Because of this he has flourished at the nursery. Whilst I've been told that provisions are made for children with special needs, I feel that children like C_ who do not meet a diagnosis at this age, would be left with no option but private care, where in my experience staff are rarely adequately trained to deal with needs like his.

A_

I only wish M_ had started at Overland as soon as I went back to work. M_ went to two settings, a private nursery, and then a childminder, before a place came up Overland (there was a 6 month wait). M_'s first nursery was charity run one, but it was mostly run by bank – temporary – staff. I would hand him over to a stranger and pick him up from a stranger. He was five months old. Then when I changed to a child minder they did not have the skills to help M_. I was once sent a video of him being upset - the childminder asking me what she should do.

Before he started at Overland nursery, he was just saying one word. He would play alone and not interact much with other children – these are things that led the child minder to label him 'not normal'. As soon as M_ started at

Overland we started speech therapy. We had regular meetings with the SENCO and the Overland staff followed the speech therapist's suggestions making sure everything was being done to help his speech.

M_ was included in sessions run by the teachers of the hearing unit, and here he learned skills like listening and taking turns. M_'s key worker T_ bonded with him very quickly, was kind and attentive. She realised that he loves numbers and they help calm him when he is upset. So she would use a scale to read numbers with him to calm him down after I dropped him off in the morning. The staff all understand that he doesn't like to be comforted physically, and that the best thing to do is to just stay with him and read or do numbers. This really calms him down. T_ also laminated numbers and invented a game for him that he loves to this day.

This February, we received a definitive diagnosis of autism for M_. The staff were supportive and understanding. Since M_ started at the nursery, his speech has progressed tremendously, he is much more confident, he plays with other children and has 3 best friends. We bumped into M_'s old speech therapist a few weeks ago (she is now based at Overland Children's Centre) and she was amazed at M_'s quick progress. Likewise when I recently took M_ to bucket therapy at Mile End Hospital they were surprised at how comfortable he was with the therapy. He was able to sit and engage and gain more from it. This is because the nursery has already started this with him at an earlier age. We need more nurseries like Overland in the borough. The staff catch early signs of issues. Early intervention is key and M_ has been lucky enough to get the right support at the right time.

N_

My daughter has complex needs, she is deaf and wears cochlear implants, she has delayed milestones which require support from physiotherapists, and she was born with a cleft lip, which after repair requires ongoing feed specialist support. Before Overland I was running between hospitals and specialists and trying to research on support available. At Overland, she has received complete and coherent help under one roof. All specialists contact the nursery and visit if needed. Staff from St Thomas visited the nursery and were very impressed and happy with the work that is being done with my daughter. She has truly flourished since she started going to the nursery.

M_

So many children will miss out if you close these day nurseries. Do not give up on them now.

Please tell your officers to look into ways to keep these nurseries open.

Yours sincerely

21 Parents of Children at Overland Nursery (names provided)

Appendix iv

Statement from the Save Our Nurseries campaign:

*It is not the public's job to come up with suggestions! Why have senior managers at the Council not put together a proposal for a more financially viable way of running these nurseries? What are they being paid for?

* The cost of running these nurseries looks like it has been inflated. I have heard that the nurseries have not been run at capacity and there are over 100 children on the waiting list. It is shameful that the council has left these children without access to Early Years Education and care.

* Waiting to attend a nursery setting until they are older, means younger children with hearing and speech difficulties will lose out on specialist care and diagnosis that could really help them communicate with their parents.

*These day nurseries are special and should be treated as such. The staff are trained in medical procedures like nasal tube feeding, sign language and catheterisation. The nurseries operate year-round childcare from 8am-5:30 for children from 6 months. They have an excellent reputation of working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in child protection cases and helping children learn English as a second language, vital in Tower Hamlets with our large Bangladeshi community. I think this is money well spent. We have 53% child poverty in the borough. Many other day nurseries in Tower Hamlets have already had to raise their fees. These nurseries ensure stable, secure, affordable provision for the most vulnerable children. The nurseries might cost the council to run, but isn't it worth it? They serve to provide early intervention for the best outcomes for vulnerable children.

* It is not actually financially viable to close our public day nurseries! It costs more in the long term if children arrive at primary school without early years education. The Children's commissioner blames a lack of support for our most vulnerable families in early years leading to the rocketing and unsustainable costs of putting children in care.

* You say that disabled children can go to Children's House Maintained Nursery School. Nursery schools are great. However they are not suitable for working parents, because they do not provide year-round childcare from 8 - 5:30 for children from 6 months. Do you expect parents of disabled children to give up work?

* You have asked me to choose between a number of vital services, when I have heard from councillors that this is a false choice. It looks very corrupt to produce such a leading consultation for residents.

Appendix v

Other comments from online survey

- 1 This is not why we voted for a Labour council and Mayor!!! Yes funding is reduced but there must be other options! It would greatly help if the council dropped it's ridiculous opposition to residential parking in new developments the income this would generate would surely be beneficial
- 2
 - 1.I think that early years education, especially provision for special needs and vulnerable children, as is provided by these three day care nurseries is fundamental to improving life chances for ALL children in the borough.
 2. It is surely not the public's job to come up with suggestions. Why have senior managers at the council not put together a more financially viable way of running these nurseries.
 - 3.It appears that this Labour administration by closing these nurseries will have abnegated its responsibility to subscribe to equal opportunities.
 - 4.As a life-long supporter of the Labour Party and suscriber to Labour values I find this unwillingness and inability to come up with an alternative plan disgraceful.
- 3 Central government has another 30m coming to help expand the offer of nursery schools in disadvantaged areas so this should help relieve their strain.

The day nurseries are special and should be treated as such. The staff are trained in medical procedures like nasal tube feeding, sign language and catherization. They operate year-round childcare from 8â€“5:30 for children from 6mths. The have an excellent reputation of working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in child protection cases and children with whom English is not spoken at home.

They will be more expensive to run due to the ratios but the ratios are important for children with complex needs and they serve to provide early intervention for the best outcomes for vulnerable children. The term after a child turns 2 could mean some children will lose out on specialist care and diagnosis that could really help them communicate with their parents.

Many private nurseries in Tower Hamlets have already had to raise their fees. These nurseries ensure stable, secure, affordable provision for the most vulnerable children. It is not financially viable to close our public day nurseries as it will only cost the borough more later as the children who could receive this care become marginalised and families in need of the service will be put under more strain. The Childrenâ€™s commissioner blames a lack of support for our most vulnerable families in early years leading to the rocketing and unsustainable costs of putting children in care. The saddest outcome for many.

On the following page you are asking us to prioritise without giving us the info required to do so. How many childrenâ€™s centres would need to close? How many childcare places do you intend to create? Would they serve children from the age of 6mths year-round from 8â€“5:30pm? Would they be available for our most vulnerable? Could you guarantee that they are as low cost as the local authority day nurseries? I would like to have not answered as it is impossible to do so without having all of the information but then my response would not have counted. I feel coerced into giving a response that I do not wish to make.

Highest priority: Keep the three day care nurseries open
Second priority: Sustain the 12 childrenâ€™s centres and six delivery sites
Lowest priority: Increase access to childcare across the borough

4 Create new income streams to supplement the poor government budget.
There is huge wealth within Tower Hamlets, particularly amongst the businesses based in Canary Wharf. These businesses have HUGE CSR budgets and a responsibility to the local community (where many of their staff live). Ask these companies for commitment to fund the day care nurseries for the next 5 years.
Early years provision is so important to child development. Child poverty in Tower Hamlets is the highest in the country. We need more support for early year development, not less. Our son goes to Bow Nursery (supported by Barnardos) but we were on the waiting list for Overland. Overland is the environment (inc the fantastic staff) you wish every child could grow up in and is superior to any other nursery provision I have seen in Tower Hamlets. We should be looking to open more council run nurseries with top quality early years care and development, not less. I don't believe in the government cuts, but given they are happening I think the council should be looking at more creative ways to raise funds to support the poorest in our community.

5 I am particularly concerned about plans to close the Overland nursery, which provides specific services for deaf and hard of hearing children. The fact that this nursery brings together children and parents who are encountering similar experiences and can find support and friendship is incredibly important. Closing the facility removes this, even if services are maintained "off site".

6 I am the parent of a deaf child and my daughter briefly attended Overlands nursery about 7 years ago. The on site support from teachers of the deaf is fantastic. However the rules on hours under which the nursery operated at the time (offering either 4 short morning sessions or 4 short afternoon sessions a week) were completely inflexible and incompatible with me doing even part time work. I proposed swapping 2 of my morning sessions with a parent who was only offered afternoons so we could both have 2 longer days of cover. I also offered to pay for additional hours to allow my daughter to attend at least 2 full days. Both were rejected and I ended up taking my daughter out after a term and sending her to a local private nursery. Tower Hamlets council funded a specialist teaching assistant for her and she did very well in the setting, benefitting from interacting with hearing peers and a language-rich environment whilst getting specialist support. But it isn't a cost-effective model for the council to take on bespoke 1-1 support for all deaf children.

I think the best balance is one that gives parents some flexibility and choice over the childcare setting for their deaf child - to fit around any work commitments and so that a very small child is not spending several hours a day in transport which I felt was detrimental for my daughter. And also enables the council to provide cost-effective early support for deaf children. I applaud Tower Hamlets Council for the support they give deaf children in the early years and it has been instrumental in ensuring that my daughter now attends a mainstream school rather than a specialist setting. It has benefitted her development and saved the council money. It is critically important that early support for deaf children continues.

The important part about the Overlands setting is the specialist staff, not the physical location. If the council come up with a way to use the skills and time of those specialist staff to support deaf children in other settings (and probably a small number of other settings for efficiency) then I would be content with the proposal.

7 I believe that the three day nurseries are a costly provision and do not provide value for money. Children would receive a better education with better outcomes in a Nursery School or Nursery Class in a Primary school for a fraction of the cost

- 8** I have a child with various health issues and the continuous support from John Smith has proven to be essential in the management and development of my child. I am due to return back to work in September and finding an alternative day care who will take on my child with the health issues has been difficult. John Smith is the only place that has vast experience and confidence in caring for a child with health issues. As a single mother with no family support network, John Smith day nursery is like a life line. Its given working mothers with children an opportunity to lay foundations for our childrens future. Save the centre and secure our childrens future.
- 9** I think it would be better to close the nurseries as in TH's we know there are excellent nurseries that provide outstanding services to the children. These settings are also ideal for the child's transition into mainstream education as it provides a similar setting which children feel at ease with.

Day care nurseries are expensive to run and in my opinion are more for targeted children whereas other nurseries offer a more universal service which is also more cost effective and cheaper to run.

In reference to closing Children's Centres. CC's provide a holistic service that is targeted, universal and most importantly working with vulnerable families that could slip through the net and be missed. Also CC's provide additional support to families working with other professionals and services.

Studies, research and evidence shows us that Early Intervention is so important in guiding children and families which will result in good outcomes as children grown older and this will include a reduction in health issues, crime, employment opportunities, reduction in DV and social issues.

Through feedback from parents and through direct work that we do, we see the changes and benefits CC's are doing and making and this will only improve and become more robust as we develop and continue our good work

- 10** I think that the quality and experience of staff in the TH day care nurseries is invaluable and especially so to vulnerable children, it is hard to see how you will be able to provide such high quality care with the new arrangements but I can see that this is an equitable to cut costs
- 11** If they can't be taken over by other providers because staff would have a right to be TUPE'd over on their Council salaries and this is too expensive, can't they close but then the three nursery premises be let to new voluntary sector providers so that there will still at least be nurseries on those sites (even if they have to be fee paying because the funding's gone)? We really need nursery places in TH, arguably more than children's centres that provide far less intensive services to more children. Ideally the free/low-cost, subsidised nurseries for children in need could continue, especially as it is clear that if Council-run nurseries close, we'll never get them back. But if the funding is gone, then at least the Council should help there to be fee-paying voluntary sector-run nurseries on the sites. Could it not offer the sites as affordable, suitable premises and try to attract voluntary sector providers? The consultation information doesn't make clear why this wouldn't be possible.

12 It is impossible to answer this leading consultation and whoever designed it should be ashamed of themselves.

If you can find 3 million for architecture fees for your new offices, the 540K from the Schools forum can be found. Shame on you for asking the public!

You have experts, you've certainly spent enough on expensive consultants over the years! Maybe try investing in front line staff instead of paying council officers over 100K? The 2nd highest pay rises of all boroughs in London in 2016 (even the Tory ones!)

Whatever the cost per child, the point is that we are subsidizing those who need it most, in order to prepare children with complex needs for school, to help get parents back to work or keep parents in work.

It is clear that good quality nurseries and experienced child minders are struggling to afford to survive in the current environment. Many private nurseries in Tower Hamlets have already had to raise their fees. This means there will be fewer places and those that remain will be less affordable.

These nurseries ensure stable, secure, affordable provision for the most vulnerable children. It is not financially viable to close them as it will only cost the borough more later as the children who could receive this care become marginalised and families in need of the service will be put under more strain.

The Children's commissioner blames a lack of support for our most vulnerable families in early years leading to the rocketing and unsustainable costs of putting children in care. The saddest outcome for many.

There is a clear case by a nobel prize winner that indicates our best investment is Early Years in places of deprivation. We are now at 53.4% child poverty and the council is negligent if it pursues this course of action.

On the following page you are asking us to prioritise without giving us the information required to do so.

How many children's centers would need to close?

How many childcare places do you intend to create? How much would they cost? Would they serve children from the age of 6mths year round from 8-5:30pm and would they be available for our most vulnerable.

Could you guarantee that they are as low cost as the local authority day nurseries?

13 It seems such a shame to shut nurseries that are providing excellent levels of care in the local area. I've been to a number of nurseries and Overland is far superior to any in the area. What is unique is the mix of fee paying children, those with additional needs and vulnerable children.

- Consider merging 2 nurseries

- In addition to the deaf unit, Overland has helped children with additional needs in ways that other nurseries couldn't compete. For example children with ASD are helped by having access to staff members who use signing and they have access the sensory room and other rooms for quite work. I work as an OT for children in Newham where a number of schools there have extra SEN funding. This provides inclusive education.

It seems to me that this model could be a viable option to keep the nursery open. It is well equipped as a site for additional children with SEN.

- Overland has lost much money in the last year as children on the waiting list have been stopped from starting.

- As a fee paying parent it seems outrageous that the fees have not been increased since suggestions were made last year, despite efforts of staff to do so!
This is another way of making it financially viable, as is paying per day rather than per hour.

- Hiring out the space on weekends or using the childrens centre for paid for sessions to increase revenue.

The staff are very well trained and work very well together. It would be awful to lose this core team who have years and years of experience of providing excellent childcare between them. My son has thrived at Overland and I, amongst others would be so sad to see it go.

14 It's terrible that the choices are one or the other ie nurseries OR child centres. Both should remain open and the fact that the forms have this as an option is both leading and unfair. Especially for those whose first language is not English and can easily read this "option" the wrong way thus choosing an incorrect option.

These nurseries provide a vital care for truly in need children. This need is not provided by other services/care centres at a cost that is affordable for those families that most need it.

The teachers at these nurseries are specialist and needed within their community.

The argument that it costs more to care for each child vs children in other schools is absurd because of course it will cost more to care for kids with special needs. That makes sense. These kids need more services. More specialist workers etc. You can't provide sub par care for children that need (and are currently receiving) the proper care they need.

As a labour council, that campaigned, to keep these spaces open during the election, the council should not only be keeping these spaces open. More importantly, they should campaign to open more spaces like this. It's appalling that this consultation is taking place. It's horrible that some places have already shut down and it's my hope that these vital spaces remain open.

- 15** Questions 5 and 6 above are extremely unfair as they do not allow me to make any response that represents my view. They are classic and rather shocking examples of leading questions designed to gather data that supports the survey author's intended argument. I have had to answer "Don't Know", although I do know, to both questions.

I understand the Council has to face "difficult choices" but this is no reason to prevent people from expressing their genuine views.

Part 2 is equally leading and has no option for 'don't know' or 'other', so I have filled it in a suitably meaningless way (choosing the same option for every question) simply so that I had the right to submit the survey.

I refer the authors of this "consultation" to points A and B of this government guidance on consultations, especially point B "Do not ask questions about issues on which you already have a final view."

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/691383/Consultation_Principles__1_.pdf

- 16** Research carried out in 2014 by Frances Campbell and her team strongly suggest that high-quality early childhood programs have been shown to have substantial benefits in reducing crime, raising earnings, and promoting education. Tower Hamlets goal is to reduce mental health illness in young children, teenager and youth to sustain good quality adulthood. By taking the early prevention measures away such as nurseries and children centre impact on child development. If the nurseries had to be closed due to funds issues then good alternative measures should be in place to provide continuity of good early years provision for children and families.
- 17** Start recruiting staff paid at market rates, charge parents on a sliding scale, provide more flexible options, especially complementing school run nurseries which are shut and do not cater for working parents.
- 18** The children in our borough are already living in poverty. How are you planning to take away vital services? Services that provide stability and support to our vulnerable.
- 19** The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth. Overland, John Smith and Mary Sambrook Day Nurseries operate year-round childcare from 8:30 for children from 6 months.
Currently only the head teacher at Children's House can sign. At Overland all the staff can sign. The staff of Overland, Mary Sambrook and John Smith are trained in medical procedures like nasal tube feeding, sign language and catheterisation. Early intervention and diagnosis is so important, if children with learning SEN miss out on support at the early stage this delays their learning well into later years. Children will not reach their full potential.
Children's Centres are a proud achievement of Labour in government that we need to build on, not pit against other equally vital Early Years educational facilities. Education is about protecting families and young parents, as well as preparing children for schooling.
- 20** The nurseries are vital services especially for the most vulnerable children. Part of this group are disabled children who cannot access regular childcare. Current 'special nursery' provision does not support parents to work because the operating hours are too short. Why should parents of disabled children be discriminated against? Especially in light of benefit changes which push parents into work away from their children, parents of disabled children will not be able to work, be considered to be 'shirking' and out of pocket as a result. Ultimately, this will negatively affect the children. Often parents are not able to access full benefits. Disability Allowances are not always available, for example if a child is deaf, and does not need a carer, but other nurseries won't take these children. This leaves the parents stuck.

- 21** The nurseries themselves have offered suggestions for keeping them open. These include a number of options which I would support including: fees based on a means tested scale, longer opening hours, summer holiday opening for older children. However, this is not the public's job. The council should be putting forward a robust proposal for keeping the nurseries open which the politicians elected to represent us should support - I am so disappointed that the Councillors and Tower Hamlets mayor have supported keeping the nurseries open in the past and then tried to privatise them. When faced with opposition to the privatisation they conveniently paused the process during the local elections, once elected they tried to close the nurseries by stealth. This appears to be very corrupt behaviour.

I think this consultation is flawed and skewed in favour of closing the nurseries. It should not be necessary to choose between the children's centres and the nurseries.

Additionally the statistics which have been promulgated in the Consultation meetings are misleading (e.g. manipulation of statistics, head of children's services not knowing the cost of childcare and other basic details, consistent use of the statement that the closure will only affect 22 children despite the Council deliberately running the nurseries into the ground by not allowing them to take on new staff and not allowing them to operate a waiting list). There are families (right now) that are desperate for a place and have been blocked by the Council. This has a massive negative effect on families.

One of the other things that the council officers have suggested is that disabled and deaf children can go to Children's House. This setting suits some families but are not suitable for working parents, because they are term time only and school hours - which doesn't work for most working parents.

When I was looking for a nursery for my child I looked at all the local nurseries. Most of them were completely unaffordable. None of them had the ethnic, socio-economic and ability mix that there is at Overland. This diversity is essential for long term social cohesion in Tower Hamlets and it does not exist in any other setting for this age group in the borough. You have a responsibility to nurture it and not shut it down.

- 22** There are much better options (both in human terms and in financial terms) for providing support to vulnerable children and their parents/ caregivers than the rather old style strategy of "rescuing" the children from less than optimal parents
- 23** There is no comparison between private daycare which is a profit led business and LA daycare and nursery school settings. I work as a HV and am very worried about the closure of LA daycare and restrictions on nursery places for children-the level of training and support staff have in these settings is reflected in the enhanced outcomes they achieve for children and families. This is a cost cutting exercise with very long and expensive impact.
- 24** There needs to be one service that can provide holistically. Schools do not allow nursery children to attend breakfast club. If the government want parents to work then they need to set up the right environment where parents can send their children.

- 25** This consultation is a farce, the Council should be proposing a full list of options which have been scoped and appraised to the public in order for constituents to make an informed choice. It is not the public's job to come up with suggestions! Why have senior managers at the Council not put together a proposal for a more financially viable way of running these nurseries? What are they being paid for?

The cost of running these nurseries looks like it has been inflated. I have heard that the nurseries have not been run at capacity and there are over 100 children on the waiting list. It is shameful that the council has left these children without access to Early Years Education and care.

Waiting to attend a nursery setting until they are older, means younger children with hearing and speech difficulties will lose out on specialist care and diagnosis that could really help them communicate with their parents.

These day nurseries are special and should be treated as such. The staff are trained in medical procedures like nasal tube feeding, sign language and catheterisation. The nurseries operate year-round childcare from 8am-5:30 for children from 6 months. They have an excellent reputation of working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in child protection cases and helping children learn English as a second language, vital in Tower Hamlets with our large Bangladeshi community. I think this is money well spent.

We have 53% child poverty in the borough. Many other day nurseries in Tower Hamlets have already had to raise their fees. These nurseries ensure stable, secure, affordable provision for the most vulnerable children. The nurseries might cost the council to run, but isn't it worth it? They serve to provide early intervention for the best outcomes for vulnerable children.

It is not actually financially viable to close our public day nurseries! It costs more in the long term if children arrive at primary school without early years education. The Children's commissioner blames a lack of support for our most vulnerable families in early years leading to the rocketing and unsustainable costs of putting children in care.

You say that disabled children can go to Children's House Maintained Nursery School. Nursery schools are great. However they are not suitable for working parents, because they do not provide year-round childcare from 8am-5:30 for children from 6 months. Do you expect parents of disabled children to give up work?

You have asked me to choose between a number of vital services, when I have heard from councillors that this is a false choice. It looks very corrupt to produce such a leading consultation for residents.

- 26** Three day care nurseries will help children with their development especially for those parents who can not travel far like me due to health issues.

Having easy and a walking distance access helps enable me to bring my child to the centre to learn

- 27** We have 53% child poverty in the borough. Many other day nurseries in Tower Hamlets have already had to raise their fees. These nurseries ensure stable, secure, affordable provision for the most vulnerable children. The nurseries might cost the council to run, but isn't it worth it? They serve to provide early intervention for the best outcomes for vulnerable children!

- 28** Where do we send our two year olds

- 29** With Early Intervention there will be less costs to be made at a later age for a child. Early prevention reduces the costs for a child's adult life.

Children's centres are able to capture and support those who may not be attending a nurse setting and are vulnerable to fall through the net if left without any Early Intervention from Children's Centres.

There have been much research done to prove this.