



INVESTORS
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TOWER HAMLETS

Your Borough Your Voice

Savings Consultation



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Introduction

The Your Borough Your Voice consultation campaign sought to encourage feedback and comments from residents on the savings proposals related to the Council budget for 2015/16 and to gauge their priorities for the development of the wider Community Plan. 451 surveys were completed as part of the consultation by 166 individual respondents. Many proposals received both positive comments as well as identifying concerns about particular impacts. This paper provides a briefing on all the comments received and the service responses to the issues raised.

The aims of the consultation were to seek comments and views on the draft savings proposals, views on the perceived impact of the proposals, identify the groups that could be affected by the proposals and any potential risks or benefits of the proposals. Equality impact assessments have been undertaken for all savings proposals that have gone to public consultation to ensure that due regard is given to the possible impact on groups with protected characteristics. The findings of the public consultation have been used to inform the development of the equality impact assessments.

The consultation on the savings proposal ran from 10 September 2014 until 19 October 2014 and used a range of methods including web-based opportunities, awareness raising events in the community, face to face discussions with service user groups and consultation with specific interest groups. Following requests from residents Cabinet agreed to extend the consultation by two weeks to allow more opportunities for residents to give their views and to undertake specific consultation with groups who wanted more detailed discussion of the issues. A summary of the key methods of consultation are set out below.

- Services held discussions with service user groups where an equality impact assessment highlighted that a group(s) with protected characteristics may be affected by the proposed changes. Where this was the case the consultation feedback includes the service user group consultation outcomes as well.
- Online: Each savings proposal was published on a dedicated web page: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/yourborough. This allowed residents to see the scope and impact that the savings proposals could have.
- Raising awareness of the consultation through East End Life, the Council's website and meetings with local groups or forums, attendance at local events and leafleting and stalls at market locations throughout the Borough.
- Survey and qualitative workshops: The consultation will continue with an independent, statistically significant survey of residents and a series of more in depth workshops with sample groups of residents. Findings are expected within the timeframe of the 2015/16 budget.

This paper provides a summary of the key issues raised in responses received online and from consultation with user groups. Many proposals received both positive comments as well as identifying concerns about particular impacts. Inevitably, residents

are more likely to take the time to respond to the consultation where they have concerns so the responses cannot be taken as representative of the range of views within the local community.

Residents' feedback has been used to inform the Council's understanding of potential impacts from the savings proposals and shape the way forward.

To date:

- The proposal to mainstream social work support for the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service has been withdrawn
- The proposal to close four local authority nurseries has been withdrawn
- The proposal to extend controlled parking zone has been withdrawn to enable further consultation
- Proposals regarding the Muslim and African Families service have been reviewed and amended
- Proposals for the reconfiguration of Children's centres have been amended
- The proposal to review day services for older people has been deferred
- The proposal relating to Public Health Drug Service Commissioning has been reviewed and will be subject to further impact analysis.

In addition, where feedback indicated that there would be an adverse impact on any particular equality group as a result of the proposal, mitigating action has been proposed to address the impact.

The council will continue its consultation on budget and savings proposals as ongoing public funding cuts mean that difficult choices need to be made about service priorities.

Summary of responses

Efficiency Review of Community Mental Health Services

Online Consultation Responses

9 comments were received on this proposal.

Most users expressed concerns and a lack of clarity about the potential impact from the proposal. Two of the respondents felt that there was potential to improve services through the proposal.

Positive comments included:

Efficiency and using funds productively is important
Better to have everything under one service

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Some users may receive less service
Is there a danger in a 'one size fits all' approach
This may create delays in assessment
May increase isolation and loneliness

Views about alternatives included:

More money is needed for mental health

Service response:

There was uncertainty about what the proposals actually meant for service users and a worry that future redesigning of Mental Health Services will impact the most vulnerable service users. This has been addressed within the EA in regards to service users with a disability; with the proposal allowing for an integrated approach to providing support to those who are particularly vulnerable.

Reconfiguration of homecare services

Online Consultation Responses

8 comments were received on this proposal.

Most respondents expressed concern about the impact of the proposal on the quality and continuity of care

Positive comments included:

Support for the concept of this proposal

Concerns about particular impacts included:

It may lead to a decline in the quality and continuity of care as in-house provision is of a better quality than from private providers

Danger of providing care on the cheap

Council may be exploited by private sector providers looking to maximise profit

Isolated and vulnerable groups may suffer

There is not a very good choice of external providers

Views about alternatives included:

There is a value in maintaining an in-house service to increase diversity of provision and enable a comparator with the private sector

Service User Consultation Findings

Most users expressed concerns about the budget savings proposal. Some comments indicated that people felt there would be a decline in the quality of home care overall if the in-house service is closed, which would cost the Council more in the long-term. One person felt that the proposal would result in poor employment opportunities for a mainly female workforce.

Two main messages have come out from the consultation:

- i) People want to keep their current care worker and do not want them to change. Several people mentioned having a good relationship with their care worker based on friendship and trust. People mentioned it taking a long time to establish a relationship with a new care worker, especially if the person needing care is frail or non-verbal.
- ii) People do not want a new care worker from an agency. Several people mentioned that agency care workers are “not so caring”, that they often arrive late and do not stay for their allocated amount of time, that staff can have a poor grasp of English and that they don’t always carry out allocated tasks. There is a high staff turnover in agencies.

Service response:

It is likely that this proposal will help strengthen contract monitoring between the Council and Commissioned providers as providers will be expected to demonstrate and evidence that the provision will be in compliance with quality standards. Our existing contracts with home care providers offer a wide range of provision from over 20 providers, including small local providers who are able to provide services that are

sensitive to a range of cultural needs. A proportion of the savings (£200k) will be used to improve quality assurance and capacity to support the development of commissioned providers in order to mitigate the concern that quality would deteriorate. There will be a handover period to support service users to transition to a different provider. Service users will also have the option to take a cash personal budget to recruit their own personal assistant, and will be supported to make these decisions. Alternative employment and support for home care workers will be provided.

Re-configure Children's Homes

Online Consultation Responses

45 comments were received on this proposal.

A key concern across a number of the responses was that closing the children's home may lead to a decrease in quality of care for children. There was support for closing the children's home if better quality alternative services could be provided closer to the family of the children. There were also concerns that this change in service provision could pose safeguarding risks to the children.

Positive comments included:

Children being placed with families is better and more inclusive than in homes
This will free up costs to provide better care for children
There is value in streamlining provision
It is good to free up expensive buildings – how will these be used?
Support for the proposal as long as children's care not affected

Concerns about particular impacts included:

It may increase out of borough placements for vulnerable children – with the potential loss of extended family connections and support
Less availability of care in a crisis or for urgent need
Disruption to existing residents of homes
Putting money before children's needs
May reduce provision for children with specific needs

Views about alternatives included:

The Council to consider alternative uses rather than closure

Service User Consultation Findings

The key points from the consultation meetings were:

- The overall view from all residents was that they were happy in their placement and did not want to move. They did not have strong views about the plan to close one of the children's homes, as long as it was not the one they lived in. They liked the area and the house.
- All of the residents had care plans which would likely lead to them leaving the children's homes before any potential closure, they were all very keen that they did not leave before any plan came to fruition.
- They felt that it took a while to adapt and settle in a new environment and that it would be very difficult to do this prior to moving on to the next stage of their care plan.

Service response:

The main area of concern that was raised via the website was that family members would have to travel further to maintain contact with the young person. Currently, there are only 6 young people resident in the children's homes. This has been the case for some time due to a number of factors; therefore the most significant change would be

the consolidation of all of these young people onto one site. A number of factors are taken into account when identifying the most appropriate placement including how the young person would maintain contact with their family and there is no reason to expect that this would change.

The feedback from the residents of the children's homes was fairly limited. They had no major concerns in respect to the proposal to close down one of the homes, although all expressed a desire to remain in their current placement. The recommendation of the EA is that once the final decision is taken as to which home to keep open, any new residents should only be placed there. Due to the ages and care plans of the current residents it is very unlikely that any will have to move from one home to the other.

Changes to Travel Support Service

Online Consultation Responses

11 comments were received on this proposal.

There was a balance of responses in support of the proposal and concerns raised about potential risks for the council to consider if it was to implement this saving.

Positive comments included:

Independence increased
Reduced costs in terms of vehicles
Will save money and be more efficient

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Potential to reduce independence if people unable to travel
Employment for drivers reduced
Transfers burdens to families and carers
Negative attention for vulnerable people on public transport

Service response:

Travel Training works to increase people's confidence on public transport and enables people to be able to cope with safety risks. Service users have suggested Travel Training as a way of addressing safety concerns on public transport. Higher visibility of adults with a disability on public transport should also promote community cohesion and discourage discrimination against people with disabilities. It should also be noted that for some service users the traditional transport of mini bus and taxi is the most appropriate mode of transport and this will be provided. If people are able to travel independently, they are likely to be less dependent on unpaid carers to get travel support overall.

Joint use of Careers Service

Online Consultation Responses

5 comments were received on this proposal.

Respondents raised issues about the accessibility of the Hub's location and whether the Hub's proposed variety of services offered independently could be integrated with other services.

Positive comments included:

Streamlining services around user needs

Concerns about particular impacts included:

May reduce accessibility

Could see a reduction in quality of service

Service response:

This feedback has been considered, and staff will still work peripatetically in schools, colleges and community venues across the borough to ensure local access. The potential location of the hub, in Bow Road, is easily accessible by tube, DLR and various bus routes. Additionally by offering an integrated service from the HUB provides the opportunity for clients to benefit from a seamless Careers Guidance ,employability support (cv support, interview preparation etc.) and job placing service as well as a focus for employers to source potential recruits.

Review of non-statutory independent reviewing functions

Online Consultation Responses

16 comments were received on this proposal.

The majority of respondents raised concerns about capacity of staff to carry out reviews as outlined in the proposal.

Positive comments included:

Acceptable as long as there is monitoring and training of staff

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Lack of objective and independent view of cases

Danger of less experience

More paperwork for frontline staff

Cases may be allowed to drift

Service response

There was a concern expressed that cases would no longer be reviewed. This is a genuine fear as there has been a previous pilot which was unsuccessful. The EA acknowledges this issue; however the proposal as outlined in the Business Case recommends that this function is absorbed within the social work teams rather than being discontinued. The EA recommends that the LA seek independent assurance as to the robust nature of these reviews from external agencies as well as our own internal audit function.

The EA recommends that a Senior Manager be appointed to oversee this process and ensure that the reviews are taking place in a timely and effective manner. The EA also recommends that a review take place three months after implementation to ensure that the change has not had an adverse impact on the number of Child Protection Plans. The proposal also suggests that a Child in Need Panel is convened to provide additional oversight to more difficult cases.

Another concern that was expressed via the feedback was a lack of independent oversight of Child In Need cases. The EA recommends a peer review system whereby the meetings are chaired by a manager from a team other than the one where the case is held.

Mainstreaming Family Services

Online Consultation Responses

6 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

Efficiencies in mainstreaming provision – proposal supported
Will increase skills of mainstream staff

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Possible impact on child protection in certain faith groups
Levels of abuse are higher in Muslim and black families therefore need specialist provision
May reduce valuable partnership work with faith groups

Views about alternatives included:

Could the service be reduced rather than completely cut?

Service response:

Following feedback from residents, the nature of the proposal has changed: The original proposal was to mainstream the whole of the Muslim and African Families Service. It is now proposed that the strategic and outreach functions of the service be offered at cost to outside agencies to generate income that would enable the service to continue (albeit with a focus that reaches beyond Tower Hamlets). A full analysis can be carried out to ensure that the core needs of Tower Hamlets can be met. For example, if there is a need for a focus on a particular topic in Tower Hamlets, this can be carried out whilst also being offered to outside agencies.

Training can be provided to the mainstream Children's Social Care team to further develop staff understanding of issues facing the Muslim and African communities in Tower Hamlets.

Income generation and efficiencies in the early years' service

Online Consultation Responses

3 comments were received on this proposal.

Concerns about particular impacts included:

People may be unwilling or unable to pay

It may reduce quality of service

Service response:

The proposed charging structure is an extension to the current charging policy. Courses are already charged for. The service seeks to charge at a reasonable price which currently stands at £35 a day for private, voluntary and independent nurseries. The rate is set based on research on current market rates to ensure that it is competitively priced. Services will be promoted by emphasising the quality of provision, the uptake will be closely monitored, and the pricing structure kept under review.

Integration of Accommodation Based Floating Support

Online Consultation Responses

1 comment was received on this proposal which requested further detail on the proposal itself.

Service response:

There was no feedback on this proposal from the online consultation however an Equality Analyses has been undertaken on this proposal using existing evidence. From this basis it is envisaged that the incorporation of the Accommodation Based Floating Support into another service will not impact adversely on the service users or the provision of support provided to them when in crisis. As this proposal does not seek to withdraw or decommission the existing service, but incorporate the Accommodation Based Floating Support service into another Mental Health service, we will not see a significant shift in the way support is delivered to users of the service. Under the proposed changes, service users will still receive the same level of support and hours they currently receive at a time that is convenient to them. The new service will be provided by Look Ahead Care and Support therefore service users will not experience a change of provider. They may, however, experience a change in support worker although they will still be given a choice of keyworkers from which to choose. From the Equality Analyses no adverse impacted was identified for any specific target group.

Review of Day Services for Older People

Online Consultation Responses

5 comments were received on this proposal.

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Vulnerable older people will suffer

Views about alternatives included:

Support older people rather than young people – reduce spending on Free School Meals

Service User Consultation Findings

The key points from the consultation meeting were:

- Attendees did not want Mayfield House to close. Many said they were not interested in other choices and some said they would not go anywhere else.
- Attendees value Mayfield House due to their close-knit friendship groups, the fact that the service is dedicated to the Somali community, the location, the food, the staff and because it is a Council-owned service.
- Attendees recognise that reductions in funding are a reality and are willing to look at some changes within the service – but they do not want the service to close.
- There is a feeling that there is a bigger demand for Mayfield House, as some people reported people trying to attend Mayfield House and being refused. Customers do not understand why.
- There was an implicit and explicit message that because customers are elderly and a lot have been coming to Mayfield House for a long time, that change would be particularly difficult.
- The culture in other communities is different and the Somali customers will not be able to mix.

Service response:

People have raised concerns with the proposal to make changes to Mayfield House, particularly in relation to language, food and friendship groups.

Service users will be provided with access to staff or interpreters who speak Somali. Staff can also signpost to advocacy services as appropriate.

Strategic Commissioning Service will look at staffing structures in each Day Centre and to consider reflecting the customers as per ethnicity and language.

One of the Somali Luncheon clubs is willing to provide Somalian food for Mayfield House customers. Additionally, Strategic Commissioning Service will consider training the cook at Sonali Gardens where there is an internal cook available.

“FACS eligible” customers could still attend the same Day Centre to maintain their friendship. Customers should also be given the opportunity to visit other Day Centres to look at the facilities. If required, Mayfield House FACS eligible customers could have

their own room and then slowly integrate into the bigger group once they feel comfortable.

As a result of the feedback received, this proposal has been deferred so that more work can be done to identify suitable alternative provision to Mayfield House.

Consolidation of Learning Disability Service

Online Consultation Responses

9 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

This is positive if savings used to support service users

Concerns about particular impacts included:

NHS services already overloaded

This will endanger vulnerable people – how can we guarantee they won't suffer?

Service User Consultation findings

- Of the 13 people who left comments, one person felt the proposal was a good thing (but did not expand on this point). Others were more ambiguous – for example stating they needed more information before they were able to comment. Others were unhappy with the budget savings proposal.
- The comments received are that people don't want this proposal to result in less support to vulnerable adults, or a lower quality support to vulnerable adults.
- Some comments related to the NHS, and state concerns that health services will not be able to “fill the gaps” if social care services are reduced. This could lead to a negative impact on staff, unpaid carers and to care arrangements breaking down.

Service response:

The Council will ensure that the needs of service users will continue to be met based on the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligibility criteria. If service users are receiving care that they are no longer eligible for, their support packages will be adapted. However, there will be reviews of service users' needs to ensure the provision is in line with the eligibility criteria. The review process will ensure that service users are engaged in discussion about any changes to their care package. We will identify other preventative support for service users if they do not meet FACS eligibility.

Reduce Duplication in Leaving Care Service

Online Consultation Responses

7 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

Streamlining services supported

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Impact on unaccompanied asylum seekers and vulnerable young people

Loss of specialisms and qualified social worker support

Those leaving care may end up homeless or vulnerable if not properly supported

Service User Consultation Findings

The key points from the consultation meeting were:

- Attendees wanted both the Personal Assistant (PA) and Social Worker to support them through living independently.
- Attendees were concerned that they will not be able to see Social Workers quick enough due to workload, if there was not a PA. They were concerned about the frequency of the contacts.
- Attendees were concerned that from 16-17.5 years of age, they are at a critical age where they are finding themselves and need the most support, therefore, if the support is not readily available, young people's problems will be neglected and eventually they will "explode".
- Young People felt they had better rapport with PA's and there were key practical tasks that PA's worked with young people that Social Workers will not have the time to do. For example, DIY sessions or teaching Money Management skills. This means there is a gap in the service provision provided by PA's. Consequently, this could mean problems with housing eviction, poverty, criminal activities and debt problems.
- Attendees felt that the incentives that they get help them to become motivated and get an education and go into employment. If these incentives were taken away, young people in care will not have any motivation to progress in life.

Service response:

There is likely to be an additional workload for the social workers within the Looked After Service, however the young people affected will have always been open cases to this service. These young people will still remain open to Children's Social Care and will be subject to the same review processes as before. There should therefore be no additional risk that these young people will become NEET, homeless or additionally vulnerable.

There is currently a social worker on duty during office hours and there is no plan for this to change. The role of the duty social worker is to provide support where possible, but it will also often be the case that the allocated social worker is the more appropriate person to deal with enquiries and as such a message will be passed on.

The EA recommends that the support be provided by the social worker, who will remain the young person's key worker until they turn 18. Personal Advisors from the Leaving Care Service will be allocated from 17 and a half years, allowing for a 6 month period of dual working. This is the practice in most other local authorities and is in line with statutory duties. The Leaving Care Service currently provides support and training to young people in relation to Employment and Training, Budgeting and Accommodation amongst other areas. This support would still be available to all young people who would previously been able to access this. This would be provided either by the current allocated social worker, or via specialist training and support offered by the Leaving Care Service. Social Workers with the Looked After Service will need additional guidance and training to ensure that they are fully able to provide this to young people and are aware of how to support young people to access the more specialist provision within the LCS.

Review of Local Authority Day Nurseries

Online Consultation Responses

18 comments were received on this proposal.

There was a common concern that this proposal would disproportionately impact low income or deprived children. In addition, this proposal has given rise to an online petition calling on the Council to save public nurseries which has to date received 400 signatures.

Positive comments included:

Supported if cheaper and same quality of care

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Lower quality of care in private sector

Evidence of better outcomes for deprived and vulnerable children in LA run nurseries rather than private or voluntary sector

Need for more support for parenting not less

Impact on nursery staff

Impact on SEN children

This is a short sighted saving as this service saves people money

This will be unsettling for children

Will disproportionately impact women

Private sector nurseries are better quality and value

Will negatively impact deaf people

People who work rely on this service

Views about alternatives included:

Children under 3 should be with their parents not in nursery

Ideas for improving efficiency and raising revenue included: Having fee paying places (subsidised for vulnerable families), voluntary contribution on trips and events and introduction of 10% fee on school meals or drop meal costs all together. Find Volunteers to work in nurseries to cut costs. This could also be parents volunteering. Cut down on travel services (to be provided to the most critical) and outdoor material things. Offer full days to parents if they are offering to pay. Host charity fundraising events to raise money.

Service User Consultation Findings

The key points from the consultation meetings were:

Several parents raised concerns about the standard of private voluntary and independent run nurseries and the amount and level of attention their children will receive.

Parents felt that they would have to give up full-time employment to look for private voluntary and independent nurseries and fall into the “unemployment trap”. Also cost of childcare will be expensive.

Overland Day nursery caters really well for deaf children – the nursery staff and the building has been invested in to cater for deaf children including staff who can use sign language and are experts in managing children with clinical conditions such as sickle cell.

Future development of children with special needs (e.g. deaf children) is dependent on these nurseries. Private voluntary and independent nurseries cannot cater for them. 46 out of 62 survey respondents would like to keep all 4 nurseries open and find different ways of achieving savings by including fee paying places.

It would have great impact to a parent who will no longer be able to attend college and drop her other child off to school. Unemployment will increase and people's future disrupted. Consequently, financially struggle.

No deaf resources would be available 4 days per week. The language staff are trained, very supportive and informative. Without this, children will be in a vulnerable position in the future.

Private nurseries will not cater for children with special needs and will demand higher payment and may not be affordable.

Language development and education /learning for some children will be delayed. Additionally, emotional, physical, social and mental development will be impacted for the child, making them less confident and unhappy.

Parents would want extended support in the case of closure, to help them identify new nursery provision and cover the cost if required.

Service response:

Having considered the consultation feedback, we are no longer proceeding with this proposal

Reconfiguration of Children's Centre Services

Online Consultation Responses

18 comments were received on this proposal.

A common concern across a number of responses was that this would reduce access for some parents and children. There was also a common concern that this will disproportionately impact vulnerable and poorer families.

Positive comments included:

- Able to help more children for same cost
- Better access to services
- Reduce costs on buildings
- Makes better use of space

Concerns about particular impacts included:

- Put more strain on services
- Services will be less accessible and less local
- Will be harder to reach families experiencing problems
- Families that live further away from new provision may find it hard to attend play sessions

Views about alternatives included:

- Children's centres should be more streamlined and more targeted – this won't save enough
- More consultation with residents
- Reduce the amount of staff and not venues

Service User Consultation Findings

Children's Centres were almost universally seen in a positive light and the proposals were almost universally seen as a negative thing. The service is highly valued with over 206 people completed the service user consultation questionnaire. 180 people attended seven consultation events.

Priority services included physical play session, speech and language services, music sessions, educational psychology and ESOL.

Negative impact on parental engagement and ability of parents to stay employed particularly those that depend on the crèche facility. The centres are also a key way of engaging young parents who do not have any other specialist provision. The speech and language services are highly valued with only NHS provision as the other alternative and which could be much more daunting for young service users.

Reduction in some services and stopping the less priority / non essential services was suggested.

Ideas for raising money included hiring out space to other organisations. Several parents suggested that Children's Centres could develop a larger bank of volunteers who could help run services and crèche facilities.

Suggestions were to make savings by stopping East End Life, reducing spending in the Mayor's office, cutting "red tape", stopping providing free school meals to all, and raising Council Tax.

Third Sector Feedback:

The proposed closure of Little Oaks will result in no physical Children's Centre presence in this part of the borough where there are high levels of child poverty.

It is important that Mowlem Children's Centre continues to commission services based in St Hilda's Community Centre (delivered with Toyhouse) as it provides physical play, a large indoor space and outside space that many families do not have at home. Staff are skilled at contacting and engaging with families who most need support. Families are unlikely to travel to alternative Children's Centres as they are relatively far away. Reducing services could result in a rise or deterioration in problems (e.g. obesity) that will cost more to address in the long-term.

Service response:

This proposal has been reviewed in the light of feedback received and as a result we are only now proceeding with the element relating to public health funding for children's centres. There will be no reduction in the expenditure budget for the service, and changes to buildings and services will not be going ahead.

Reconfigure Mental Health Day Opportunities

Online Consultation Responses

7 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

No risk as long as current recipients still get the support they need

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Risks of costs elsewhere if needs not met

Not enough information to assess

What will be the impact on recovery based outcomes?

Service User Consultation findings

Views of Pritchard's Road service users:

- The main messages from service users at Pritchard's Road were that the service already works well and is highly valued, so does not need to change. It helps promote recovery and helps keep people out of hospital. People feel safe there and there is a sense of family and belonging.
- Service users at Pritchard's Road feel that they already access services in the community as much as they want to.
- Service users at Pritchard's Road felt they could not meaningfully comment on the proposal to bring new resources into the service without knowing what those resources could be.
- There are some indications that service users at Pritchard's Road feel the service in its current form is under threat.

Views of services users who use Working Well Trust services (Sew and Support and Design and Print groups):

- Generally, the people who use these services interpreted the proposal as closing down their services and/or re-locating them to Pritchard's Road. This was perceived negatively by everyone attending the meetings.
- Working Well Trust service users feel that the services work well and so shouldn't be changed. People get culturally-specific support at the Sew and Support service.
- Working Well Trust service users do not want to re-locate to Pritchard's Road. People may relapse if the services move and they are unable or unwilling to attend. Some people reported that the budget savings proposal was making them feel anxious.
- The Design and Print group feel that a move to Pritchard's Road would mean a loss of their current shop-front, which gives them business and encourages the community and service users to interact with one another.
- Working Well Trust service users asked that the savings be made from elsewhere. Suggestions were to close down Pritchard's Road.

Views of other mental health service users:

- A community hub approach at Pritchards Road or dispersed smaller centres providing the services could help to improve service provision.
- Existing services should be monitored more effectively to ensure they are doing what we pay them to do. The workforce should include service users and organisations should consult with service users meaningfully.
- Any reduction in service would mean less opportunity for social interaction and skill development. Service users often have strong relationships with staff, and change can result in staff leaving. However, there was also a suggestion to develop the skills of mainstream services in mental health – e.g. leisure centres being better equipped to meet people’s needs in this area.

Service response:

Pritchard’s Road Day Centre will not be closed down; it will still be available for current users who value the service. However the service will be changed to ensure it remains economically viable. In doing so this will provide an excellent opportunity to reshape services to ensure a degree of choice, to demand more of the services commissioned, and to be able to engage with the largest percentage of the borough who have been affected by mental health illnesses. The aim would be to re-position PRDC as a place to offer access to a wealth of opportunities not just within the Centre but also in the community. All current service users will be reviewed with mental health professionals (care co-coordinators) and will be involved in the decision making process to determine suitable options for the future.

As a result of the feedback received we will no longer be proceeding with the decommissioning of services currently provided by the Working Well Trust.

Mainstream Social Work support for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Online Consultation Findings

26 comments were received on this proposal.

Much of the feedback highlights that the CAMHS provide a quality and valuable service that positively impacts service users. There is an underlying concern that this proposal will negatively impact the quality of existing services. There was a common concern of more wide ranging impacts of this proposal whereby not just the service users will be impacted but also parents, carers and those waiting for referrals.

Positive comments included:

The proposal is acceptable as long as clients' needs are taken into account

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Reduction in support for children with mental health needs - If thresholds are raised for mental health support, it may lead to young people being turned away

Reduction in quality of support available

May cost more later in terms of adult costs, crime, unemployment if early support to young people is not available

Services are already stretched to the maximum

Schools and Pupil Referral Units will have to manage the impact of a reduced CAMHS service

Could negatively impact on people's wellbeing and put people's lives at risk

Could lead to people not getting the correct treatment

Views about alternatives included:

None provided

Service user Consultation Feedback

The key points from the consultation meeting (Parent's Group) were:

- Parents felt that the waiting times will be longer, which in some cases can be detrimental to a child's well-being
- Parents were worried about their child losing a relationships based on trust and the impact of this on the rest of the family.
- Parents felt that a child/young person will have fewer people to talk to.
- That the service will suffer as thresholds would be pushed up further and may cause further problems in the future.
- The flexibility of service to respond to needs would be lost and advice would be replaced by leaflets and booklets, which parents did not think would be beneficial.
- People valued the service provided, which have been life-changing and kept families together.

The key points from the Young People's (YP) Group were:

- YP felt that less staff would mean less appointments, consequently less support, which would not be in their best interest. Minor issues would develop into major issues with less support.
- YP said they would worry about young people needing a service in the future if the proposal went ahead
- YP spoke about the relationships they had built up with their worker and how difficult it had been to build up trust. They would be worried about having to do this all over again with someone new.
- YP spoke about improved relationships with parents (especially mothers) as a result of CAMHS worker support

Service response:

Having considered the consultation feedback, we are no longer proceeding with this proposal

Mainstreaming early diagnosis

Online Consultation Responses

1 comment was received on this proposal which requested further detail on the proposal itself.

Service response:

There was no feedback on this proposal from the online consultation however an Equality Analyses has been undertaken on this proposal using existing evidence. The proposed savings derive from the end of a one year pilot programme during which additional funding is provided to the eight GP Networks to deliver additional work on the early diagnosis of cancer. This was a one year pilot that aimed to improve the process for inviting and tracking patients at risk of cancer. After the one year the process will be mainstreamed into the cancer early diagnosis contracts with GPs. Older people and ethnic minority elders particularly benefit from the service but the lessons from the pilot will improve targeting of those groups and be mainstreamed and therefore negative impacts will be minimal. As benefits are mainstreamed we do not anticipate significant negative impacts. The main primary care cancer screening service will continue and not be affected.

Mainstreaming 'healthy communities' projects

Online Consultation Responses

8 comments were received for this proposal.

Most users expressed concern that this proposal would have a negative impact, although there were no common statements or themes. This could be explained by the fact that this proposal is composed of a number of different projects.

Positive comments included:

Would be a positive saving if the saved money is reinvested in to services for the community

Concerns about particular impacts included:

It would be a shame if projects had to end. It will mean time, trust, energy invested in projects will be wasted. Relationships formed may be hindered. Also lack of trust from the community.

It will reduce the opportunity for local people to engage in healthy activities and also reduce the positive impact on the environment

This will negatively impact people who live with little or no outside space

Service response:

It is not the Council's intention to reduce the commitment to supporting community gardening but there is already a strong movement for this in the borough and many of the borough's housing bodies already support this with their own resources. The Community Gardening project has been funded by the Council as a 15 month pilot and has been intended to provide seed funding for more growing sites to be established across the borough which it has delivered. We intend to continue funding this in 2015-16 but with a reduced level of funding. It is anticipated that any impacts from the reduction in community gardening programme can be offset by an increase in funding from other external sources such as the housing associations that are supportive of this activity on their land.

The proposal has also been changed since the original saving proposal to remove the proposed reduction to the Can Do programme. This reduces the equalities impact.

Reconfiguration of sexual health services

Online Consultation Responses

34 comments were received on this proposal.

There was a common concern that patients would be unwilling to visit pharmacies or GPs, if they could not go to a specialist sexual health clinic and as such would not get the care they need. There was a common theme in responses stating that specific equality groups will be impacted by this: sex workers, gay men and young people. It was stated many times that the above would lead to increase in STIs and unplanned pregnancies.

Positive comments included:

Appropriate to shift responsibility to primary care services
Save money

Concerns about particular impacts included:

GPs and pharmacists do not have necessary skills and expertise

GPs and pharmacists already too stretched

Will reduce uptake or provision as patients will be deterred from seeking services from their GP and consequent knock on increase in sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies

Reduction in specialisms impact on research and training

Reduces patient choice and confidentiality

Particular impact on young adults, teenagers, gender and sexual minorities and sex workers

This will lead to longer waiting times and this will impact diagnosis and treatment

Views about alternatives included:

Make non UK nationals pay for services

Service response:

GUM and tier 3 services are and will remain open access and free at the point of delivery. This proposal aims to provide more options for accessing appropriate treatment in community settings, and more investment in preventative work, to reduce demand in the tier 3 services. This will be achieved by providing training and support to GPs and Pharmacists as well as commissioning community based sexual health clinics. The concerns raised in the consultation are well understood, and we are confident that the proposal will enable us to expand the range of provision available to all patients, reducing costs whilst improving access to services.

Recovery of court costs

Online Consultation Responses

8 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

Good idea
Will motivate better time management and budgeting

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Charge may fall on those unable to pay
Increases debt levels for those already in debt

Views about alternatives included:

Only introduce for those who have failed to respond to at least 3 reminders

Service response:

The responses were generally supportive of the proposal, but suggested caution over the potential impact for low income families and vulnerable residents. There is clear guidance on dealing with vulnerability in the Council's Corporate Debt Recovery Policy and there is always opportunity to negotiate with the taxpayer on the level of costs charged, where it can be demonstrated that it would be unreasonable to charge the full level of costs.

The consultation also raised the potential of changing the enforcement process. The collection of Council Tax, however, is governed by a statutory process by which all local authorities must operate. There is very limited scope to make any changes without legislative amendments.

European Social Fund match funding payments

Online Consultation Responses

4 comments were received on this proposal.

Positive comments included:

Savings welcome

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Unclear why reduce funding on something that generates income through matched funding – short-sighted?

Third sector will struggle to replace this source of income

Many organisations may shut down

Service response:

The proposed savings represents a very small percentage of the council's overall grant funding which is awarded to provide employment support to local residents. This area of support remains an extremely high priority for the council and significant levels of grant will continue to be available for this work.

The current ESF Community Grants programme is ending and this provides an opportunity for savings from part of a budget that is no longer committed. We will continue to target match funding opportunities in the future with the remaining budget.

Mainstream recycling education

Online Consultation Responses

17 comments were received on this proposal.

A number of responses highlighted that this proposal would increase recycling rates.

Positive comments included:

Better than cutting back on recycling

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Education is important

Lack of detail in proposal

Views about alternatives included:

More promotion of recycling with businesses and property management companies needed

Service response:

- The recycling and disposal rate will continue to be closely monitored.
- The service will target the available resources to maintain and improve the recycling rate.
- The service will continue working with businesses and encouraging them to promote recycling.
- The service will explore a possibility of working with property management companies to increase recycling.
- ESCW to encourage recycling education to be mainstreamed in to school curriculums.

Extension of controlled parking zone

Online Consultation Findings

28 comments were received on this proposal.

There was a mixed response to this proposal with many respondents feeling that it would discourage visitors coming in to the borough (thus restricting family and friends being able to visit, and custom for local businesses) and other respondents feeling that this would have a positive impact (by making it easier to park and reducing congestion).

Positive comments included:

Excellent idea – enables parking for local residents close to their homes

Local residents often unable to park due to visitors to the area

Increases road safety

Reduced pollution

Replicates Olympic parking controls – much better for residents during that period

Easier parking for residents

Concerns about particular impacts included:

Annoying for evening visitors

Increases illegal parking in private parking areas

Local businesses and tourism will lose out

Hire or business car users are penalised by current arrangements

Visits to hospitals and elderly relatives made more difficult/expensive

Money raised will not be used for local residents

What is the projected revenue?

Will impact non residents

Views about alternatives included:

Service response:

This proposal has been withdrawn to enable further consultation.

Introduce residual waste limits for multi-occupational properties

Online Consultation Responses

31 comments were received on this proposal.

There was a general consensus that this would promote recycling. However, many respondents highlighted that there may be an increase of charges to tenants.

Positive comments included:

People will be more conscious about levels of waste they produce – people will recycle more

Passing greater responsibilities to landlords is right

Concerns about particular impacts included:

It will be difficult to implement in practice – some people produce more waste than others

Rents will increase as a result

Residents may just dump/fly-tip

Lead to higher rents

Responsible tenants will end up paying for all – undermines motivation

Views about alternatives included:

Need to ensure proper facilities for block residents

Service response:

- Work with and support Registered Providers (RP) and managing agents to achieve the objectives. RP's are responsible for recycling bins being made available in the estates. The Council will encourage them to providing the facilities for residents.
- Continue monitoring the amount of residual waste, recycling, fly tipping and complaints
- Consult the stakeholders, including RP's and managing agents, about this proposal.
- Communication campaign for recycling and waste reduction.
- Continue working to maximise the food recycling and composting opportunities, although the borough's high number of high-rise housing buildings (80%) makes food recycling and composting a challenge.
- Continue working with businesses, including supermarkets, to reduce waste. The Council will work with supermarkets for them to take the environmental responsibilities, including reducing the amount of waste plastic bags.