

## CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

**AGENDA ITEM**

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**3 NOVEMBER 2011**

**REPORT OF CORPORATE  
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

### **CABINET DECISION**

**Children and Young People - Lead Cabinet Member – Cllr Ann McCoy**

#### **TASK & FINISH REVIEW OF THE IMPACT OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT**

1. Summary

The Task and Finish review of the impact of the introduction of the Early Intervention Grant (“EIG”) began in March 2011. It is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year EIT review – being undertaken as part of the 3 year programme of reviews of all Council services. The aim of the review is to re-design and implement changes to all EIG related services which means that they can continue to operate effectively within the constraints of the 25% cut in annual funding which came into effect when the grant was introduced in April 2011. The review has been planned and delivered through 3 workstreams which cover all of the services funded by the EIG:

- Youth Services
- Other Early Intervention Services
- Early Years Services

This fourth and final report sets out the recommendations for redesigning the Early Years Services in the Borough. It follows earlier reports to Cabinet which dealt with the Youth and Other Early Intervention Services and which also sought Cabinet approval for each stage of the Early Years strand of the review:

- 17 March 2011 – set out the scope for the Early Years review
- 16 June 2011 – set out the underlying principles of the proposed new Early Years approach
- 4 July 2011 - set out the content of the public consultation prior which has now been completed.

This report recommends a new approach to Early Years operations which will deliver a more targeted, partnership-based service with a commitment to early intervention and support. The new approach will also deliver annual cost savings of approximately £2m.

The Children and Young People Select Committee received updates during the review and were presented with the final report for comment at their meeting on 26 October prior to consideration by Cabinet.

2. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that Cabinet support a new targeted and partnership based approach to the delivery of Early Years Services in the Borough.
2. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the procurement process to seek a partner to deliver Children’s Centre operations in the 4 target areas of the Borough and a provider to deliver Children’s Centre services in the 3 non-target areas of the Borough and delegate

authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care (in conjunction with the Lead Cabinet Member) to award contracts on completion of the procurement process.

3. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the transfer of Early Years services from Thornaby Family Centre to Riverbank and High Flyers Children's Centres.
4. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the start of the formal consultation with Unions and employees to support the redesigned Early Years Service on the basis set out in paragraphs 34 – 38 and delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care (in conjunction with the Lead Cabinet Member) to implement the new staffing structures on completion of the consultation.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

To produce efficiencies and improvements in the delivery of services to children, young people and families in order to address the reduction in funding from the PCT and the introduction of the EIG.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

**Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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2. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the procurement process to seek a partner to deliver Children’s Centre operations in the 4 target areas of the Borough and a provider to deliver Children’s Centre services in the 3 non-target areas of the Borough and delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Education and Social Care (in conjunction with the lead Cabinet Member) to award contracts on completion of the procurement process.
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## DETAIL

### Scope and progress to date

1. In December 2010 the government announced the creation of a new Early Intervention Grant (EIG) to replace 23 existing ring-fenced grants which were available to support services for children, young people and families. The key features of the new EIG grant are:

- The removal of the ring-fencing and greater local flexibility. The Government has made it clear that the most effective use of this money is for Local Authorities to determine. Subject to local decision making, the EIG can support a full range of services for children, young people and families. The guidance makes it clear that Local Authorities can use the new funding in support of a wide range of services for children, young people and families, and whilst it anticipates that this will include such things as:
  - Sure Start Children's Centres
  - free early education (nursery) places for disadvantaged two-year-olds
  - short breaks for disabled children
  - targeted support for vulnerable young people
  - targeted mental health in schools
  - targeted support for families with multiple problems.

it is very clear that ultimately it is for Local Authorities to determine what is appropriate locally.

- The guidance also makes it clear that Local Authorities will have a stronger role in commissioning services and should only be providing services themselves as a last resort.
- There is also an explicit expectation that resources will be targeted carefully to ensure that those children, young people and families who need it most receive extra support.
- The introduction of the EIG does not affect the statutory duties that Local Authorities are required to fulfill.
- The 2011/12 EIG for Stockton is £9.3million, this is £3.1million less than the grants which it replaces – a reduction in annual funding of 25%

2. In March 2011 an EIT review was established to review the impact of the introduction of the EIG, to date it has reviewed and implemented significant changes to the Youth Support Service and the other (non-Early Years) early intervention services. These strands of the review, which were approved by Cabinet in June and July 2011, have delivered new "fit for purpose" services which include a strong commitment to the early intervention approach. The recommendations have been implemented in full and are delivering annual savings of £2.5m. These savings reflect the need to address both the 25% cut in the EIG funding and also the need to drive out savings (as part of the EIT process) to address the general reduction in funding arising from the comprehensive spending review.

3. This report looks at the delivery of Early Years Services and covers the provision of a wide range of services to approx. 12,000 pre-school children in the Borough. The table below summarises the funding and number of employees included in the scope of the review:

	Annual Funding replaced by EIG	Other specific Annual Grant Funding	Annual DSG	Core SBC Annual Funding	<b>Total SBC Annual Funding under review</b>	<b>Total number of staff covered by the review</b>
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	<b>£'000</b>	
Early Years & Childcare Services	7,223	80	2,036	2,354	<b>11,692</b>	<b>303</b>

The scope of the review extends beyond the services directly funded by the EIG Grant (ie. The £7.2m in the first column in the table above). It has obviously not made sense to isolate the parts of programmes, employees or services that are specifically EIG funded to review them separately – decisions have been made to review grouped areas of work where EIG funding is an element of the Service. The total annual spend under review is therefore £11.7m. It should be noted that the scope of this strand of the review is wider than initially planned in March as it has been necessary to include a number of activities within the review in order to deliver the most effective structural arrangements for the new service. The detail of the proposed new structure is explained in paragraph 35.

4. The scope of the services reviewed include:

- A central team who ensure sufficiency of provision of early years services across the Borough. They support and ensure a high standard of provision in early years settings, oversee and administer the provision of the free 15 hour per week programme for 3 year olds and the free 2 year old pilot programme.
- A Children’s Centre Team who deliver a wide programme of activities for pre-school children through a network of 11 Surestart Children’s Centres across the Borough.
- The Educational Improvement Service (0-11 team) who ensure quality and challenge to all Early years provision in schools (including maintained nurseries); ensure and support quality in learning development to all settings in the borough and also provide qualified teachers and advisory teachers to support development of childcare staff and plan and deliver learning development programmes in Children's Centres.
- The proposal to integrate the Early Years Services into the Children’s, Schools and Complex Needs Service also required the inclusion in the review of the Complex and Additional Needs team, the schools place planning and schools admissions service, and the 14-19 commissioning team

### **Early Years proposals – underlying principles**

5. The detailed proposals set out below reflect the key principles which were agreed with Cabinet at the start of the public consultation process:

- To refocus the Early Years Service to target its delivery to those most in need. This approach would meet the DFE guidance “that Children’s Centres should be retained but focused much more effectively on those families who need them most”.
- To develop new ways of working which involve closer involvement of the local community and third sector. This approach meets the DFE guidance to Local

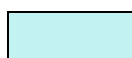
Authorities “to develop plans to increase voluntary and community sector involvement within Sure Start Children’s Centres“

- To protect the front-line service as far as possible by stream-lining the central support team and creating the most efficient and effective team possible

## **Targeting**

6. It is proposed that the Early Years service is targeted to provide support to areas of most need. The service will continue to be available throughout the Borough but it will be concentrated to support families with the greatest needs. The Government guidance on provision of Children’s Centres, issued by the Department for Education suggests that “Local Authorities should be guided by demographic factors both geographically and socio-economically” when planning services. The proposed approach to targeting is based on a range of measures of poverty, educational development and health. Using this data, we have divided the Borough into 7 geographical areas and have identified 4 as target areas and 3 as non-target areas. A summary of the information used to identify the areas is provided in the table below:

Area	Number of Children Aged 0-4	2010 IMD data Overall Score (within % most deprived nationally)	No of children eligible for free school meals (School Census Spring 2011)	Foundation Stage Profile (at age 5) %	Fully Breast Feeding (6-8wks) (%)	No. of children who received their 2nd MMR (%)
Central East	2,010	16.6	1,301	48.7	17.0	73.4
Central South	1,785	23.2	866	55.1	10.1	77.1
Central West	1,727	19.7	980	53.2	11.5	97.6
Eastern	1,572	26.4	878	54	21.4	91.7
Northern	1,451	70.8	230	71.4	25.0	93
Southern	2,450	86.9	245	75.2	32.6	83.2
Western	1,145	74.8	221	72.4	33.6	75.7

 = target area

7. The map in **Appendix 1** identifies the areas which have been identified based on these criteria.
8. Views on the target areas and the criteria used for defining need were sought during the public consultation<sup>1</sup> and it is clear that there is generally strong support for the principle of targeting and for the criteria used to identify need.
- 66% of people who completed the consultation questionnaire supported the principle of targeting
  - 64% of people who completed the consultation questionnaire agreed that the criteria used to define the areas were reasonable.
  - The discussions at partnership, employee and public drop-in sessions also supported these findings.
9. During consultation a specific concern was raised by a number of respondents about the boundary of the Western and Central Western areas. It was felt that the boundary (as set out in the consultation document) had been drawn in such a way as to cut through the heart of a natural community and also to exclude an area of need from the Central Western target area. This concern has been addressed in the final proposals and the map included in **Appendix 1**

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the consultation report is attached as Appendix 4

shows that the boundary has been moved to reflect the comments received during the consultation.

10. The Children’s Centre operations will then be targeted to reflect these areas of need. There will be 2 centres in each of the 4 target areas and 1 centre in the Northern and Western areas and 2 centres in the Southern area.

11. In the 4 target areas it is proposed that the Council will continue to operate:

- Footsteps Children’s Centre – Eastern Area
- Sunrise Children’s Centre - Central East Area
- Redhill (and Ragworth) Children’s Centre - Central West Area
- High Flyers Children’s Centre

The Council will also seek a partner to operate another local partnership centre in each of the 4 target areas, the centres at Riverbank, Star (and Newtown Resources Centre), New Life and Frederick Natrass will be made available through the procurement process as potential sites for these local partnership centres.

12. This distribution of Centres is in line with the DfE guidelines to provide a Children’s Centre for around 800 children in more deprived areas and around 1,200 children in more affluent areas. It is clear that the DfE guidance is only a guideline and it is clear that “Local Authorities are free to determine the best arrangements taking account of local communities and needs”.

13. The adoption of this approach means that the proposal to transfer Children’s Centre operations from the Thornaby Family Centre (“TFC”) to the centres at High Flyers and Riverbank will be implemented. The need in the Central South area can be met from 2 Centres. This proposal will generate direct savings and will allow the focus of staff time to ensure full and vibrant operations in the other 2 centres in Thornaby with fuller use of buildings rather than spreading services over 3 sites. The maps in **Appendix 2** shows usage of TFC over the last year and the home location of users of the Centre. The first map shows the home base of users from around the Borough and the second map a more detailed analysis of the location of the users from within the Central South area – this shows that the maximum additional distance to High Flyers and Riverbank is 1 mile and in many cases these centres are actually closer than TFC.

14. It is also clear that there is capacity in High Flyers and Riverbank to accommodate the services currently offered from TFC. The table below shows usage over the last year:

Purpose of visit to Thornaby Family Centre	Number of visits to TFC 12mths to Sep 2011
Midwife Appointment	185
Health Visitor Appointment	792
Stay and Play	899
Creche	34
Dad’s Group	9
Baby Massage	20
Weaning course	38
Food & Cooking course	47
Parent’s Forum	6
Tiny Teeth – Dental programme	76
Contact visits	9
Special Event	15
To enrol	11
<b>Total number of children under 5</b>	<b>2,141</b>

These services will be scheduled into the other centres in Central South

15. Views on the proposal to transfer services from TFC were sought in the consultation. 52% of people did not agree with the proposal. The most common reason given was that local people need the Centre, other reasons given were that the centre was well used and provided a good service. The most common reason cited by respondents who supported the closure was that there were 2 other centres in Thornaby.
16. It is proposed that the transfer of services to High Flyers and Riverbank is implemented as the services can be accommodated in the other 2 centres and the distance to the other 2 centres is not too great.
17. Physically locating the Children's Centres in areas of most need does not, in itself, ensure that the service will be effectively targeted. Locating the centres in the "right" places is clearly an important aspect of good targeting but unless additional safeguards are put in place to ensure that services are actually used by (or at least available for) the families who live in these areas then the impact is severely compromised.
18. Various options for achieving effective targeting were considered and explored in the consultation. These options range between the extremes of a strict "catchment area" approach (where only residents of the target area are allowed to use the Children's Centres in that area) to open access arrangements at the other extreme where families may visit any centre in the Borough with complete reliance being placed on the geographical location of the centre to support effective targeting.
19. The review of current usage information of centres suggests that the physical location of a centre is not an effective tool in itself for targeting need. The table in **Appendix 3** illustrates the fact that there is currently a great deal of travel around the Borough to use Children's Centres.
20. The detail of how targeting should operate in practice was explored during the consultation and a wide range of views were received. Whilst there was broad support for the principle of targeting and the criteria used, there was no consensus on how this should be achieved in practice and in fact there was a common thread of opinion which opposed:
  - Post-code lotteries
  - Being told where to go
  - Lack of flexibility/choice
21. On balance it is proposed that a system is implemented that reflects the general and strong support for targeting but also addresses the many concerns raised about restriction on choice and the concerns that there are pockets of need across the Borough which do not fit within the identified target areas. It is proposed that each Centre is given a operating profile to support it's targeting aims. For example the centres in the target areas will be required to retain a % of their operating time for families in the target area – these sessions will be "closed" sessions used for specific targeted activities with local or vulnerable groups. Centres will be performance managed to ensure that they meet specific targets for local and targeted use of the centre. Beyond these targets the centre may operate "open" sessions which will be available to anyone. It is proposed that the actual percentage guidelines are set in consultation with each Centre's parent advisory board – this will ensure local involvement in the process.
22. Another important factor which impacts upon the effective targeting of services is the ability of Centres to charge for their services. It is proposed that the principle of targeting services to those most in need is further supported by the adoption of a policy which allows for charging for services in centres but which differentiates between target and non-target areas. Centres in non target areas will be allowed greater freedom to charge for services whilst restrictions will be placed on charging in target areas. The detail of levels will be set in consultation with local parent advisory boards within broad parameters.



23. This charging proposal reflects the comments received during the consultation. The views on charging were finely balanced with 49% disagreeing, 44% agreeing, 7% no response. The main themes in the discussions were that if charging were introduced it should be reasonable and fairly applied across the Borough.
24. The review team believe that these targeting proposals fairly balance the demands for fairness, flexibility, and targeting and address (as far as possible within the stated aim of designing a targeted service) the issues raised in the consultation.

### **Partnership working**

25. The second key principle of the new approach to delivering Early Years is to increase partnership working. The partnership approach is proposed as a means of generating cost savings and as the optimal delivery method.
26. A local partnership model is proposed where local voluntary organisations, charities, schools, parents groups and private organisations are contracted to work with us to play a major role in running a Children's Centre in each of the 4 target areas. The aim is to make the most of local knowledge, experience and enthusiasm to offer the Children's Centre Service right at the heart of the communities they serve. The Council would need to maintain a close relationship with any organisation for sharing of information and support but there would be room for a variety of different partnership models to be developed to meet particular circumstances. All Children's Centres, however they are delivered, will remain registered and inspected by Ofsted. This approach is proposed because:
- There is a real benefit to sharing our space to get a better reach into the communities we serve. Often local community groups and other organisations are already working with the very same people we'd like to use the Children's Centres.
  - There is capacity in some of the buildings we use to share this space to the benefit of local communities. Buildings used as a base for Children's Centre activities during the day could be used for other community based or leisure activities in the evening. The buildings themselves can be of value to community and voluntary sector organisations – organisations may want to consider asset transfers. This sharing of space could also be considered alongside complementary profit-making operations, the business value generated can be used to offset the costs of the Children Centre operation and deliver value for money.
  - We have expertise and experience in delivering high performing Children's Centres -all of our Centres which have been inspected by Ofsted have been given a "good" rating. All Children's Centres, however they are delivered in the future, will remain registered and inspected by Ofsted. Whilst our direct input may be reduced in the new model as new organisations and groups take on more delivery we think we can still bring our experience to the local delivery partnerships and help build an even better service. It may be that over time we are able to step back even more as others gain experience and capacity – we would review this again in the future.
  - This approach is in line with national guidance which encourages local involvement in delivery.
27. The other key partnership which is crucial to the continued delivery of good Children's Centres is with Health colleagues. The Centres currently host a range of midwifery, health visiting and audiology services. It is proposed that this health partnership is sustained as it is valued greatly by the users of the centre and offers a model of shared delivery which can be built on with other organisations. The new model will retain a clear commitment to providing a supportive and collaborative relationship with our health partners and to offering a seamless service to users. The likely future health requirements have been built into the plans for the centres.

28. The consultation exercise demonstrated that there is strong support for the proposal to seek a partner to operate in the 4 target areas – 67% of respondents agreed with the proposal. There was a clear preference in the qualitative responses to local, non-profit making organisations as potential partners. This aim will be reflected in the procurement process.
29. It is proposed to seek a partner with a proven track record to operate 1 of the 2 centres in each of the 4 target areas. The procurement process will begin in early December and will run in parallel with the staffing consultations on the new structures.
30. Proposals will be sought to operate a Centre in each of the 4 target areas and whilst these may be from any location, we will make the current Children's Centres at Frederick Nattrass, Star & Newtown Resources Centre, New Life and Riverbank available to bidders to consider as possible bases for their bids. In some cases there is scope for other services to be provided from these buildings alongside the Children Centre operations eg. there is significant scope at Frederick Nattrass and Riverbank for a commercial Childcare provision to be operated alongside the Children's Centre– the current nursery space in both buildings is vacant. Additional uses would not be restricted to children's services and it would be a stated aim of the procurement process to seek savings in Children's Centre delivery costs by freeing up the buildings to be used for other purposes as well.
31. In addition it is the conclusion of this service review that some of the Children's Centre buildings may have value for asset transfer purposes and potential bidders may wish to pursue full transfer of the buildings alongside bidding for Children's Centre operations.
32. The areas highlighted on the map as North, West and South have not been defined as target areas and therefore a different delivery model is proposed. It is proposed that contracts would be placed to operate 2 centres in the South and 1 each in the West and North. The Children's Centres could be delivered from anywhere in the 3 areas and could be delivered by a community Group, a group of parents, a school or a private company. Organisations who currently have a base in the area which they think would make a good location for a Children's Centre could consider proposing this, however the current Children's Centres at Layfield School, Barleyfields School, Beckfields Community Centre, & Elm Tree Community Centre are potentially available for ongoing use as Children's Centres and could be considered as potential sites for a base in these areas.
33. It is the conclusion of the review that the current Children's Centre may be considered for potential asset transfers and bidders may wish to pursue full transfer of the buildings alongside bidding for Children's Centre operations.
34. Support was expressed in the consultation for the proposal to contract out services in the North, South and West – 61% of respondents agreed with the proposal – the most common reason cited was that this approach was acceptable if this was the only way to retain centres.
35. The intention is to run a procurement process, beginning in early December 2011 which will seek bids to run the 4 local partnership centres in the target areas and the 4 non target centres in the North, West and South. The process will be structured around a competitive tendering process with a short-listing based on outline business cases prepared in response to a specification for each centre. The specification will detail operational requirements as well as details about available assets and potential TUPE considerations. The intention would be to short list bids early in 2012 and to make appointments by April 2012 with transition to new operations between April and June 2012.

### **Effective and stream-lined structures**

36. The proposals outlined above to deliver an effective front-line targeted service with strong partnerships must be underpinned by a streamlined and efficient central support service.
37. To achieve this it is proposed to bring the management of Early Years services together in one place – in the Children's Schools and Complex Needs Service. There are real benefits to be

gained from bringing all staff involved in Early Years services together in one service. Whilst it is recognised that the current teams already work closely – it is hoped that the joint working will be further strengthened by bringing the teams together.

- There are greater synergies between the current services in CSCN and the Early Years services than in CYOPS. The Early Years service is vital in ensuring that families and all pre-school children are offered the best start in life. Child development, in the broadest sense will be supported so that all children reach school age ready to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.
- The Field, Allen and Tickell reviews all identify the Foundation Years (from 0 – 5yrs) as a priority and recognise that they require the same status as the later years in childhood. The vision of the review team is that Stockton will adopt a 0-18yr model for childhood development and learning and that the Foundation Years will be identified within this in the same way as school phases.
- A seamless transition from the “Early Years” phase into the “School” phase can best be achieved in CSCN.
- Young Children would be better served were there stronger links between Early Years and the Complex and Additional Needs team, optimising the interface that already exists with Health.

38. At the same time it is proposed that some of the work of the Home Visiting teams who currently operate within the Children’s Centre structure will be transferred out of the Early Years Service into the Children’s and Young People’s Operational Service. The home visiting service already works closely with the Children’s Social Care Service and carries out vital early intervention, preventative work with families. It is the view of the review team that these aspects of the work can be better co-ordinated, and delivered as part of the targeted social care.

39. EIT reviews of School Effectiveness and Children’s Social Care have just begun and the effect of these changes will be further considered in these 2 reviews.

40. These outline structural arrangements have been reviewed with and are supported by the Children and Young People’s Select Committee.

41. The review has looked in detail at the work of 303 employees covered by the review and has proposed a new structure based on the general principles outlined above. It is proposed that formal consultation will begin with employees and unions on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and that new structures will be communicated to staff then. Consultation has been taking place with Union representatives throughout the review on a fortnightly basis. This consultation will be maintained throughout the formal phase of the discussions.

42. The proposals do lead to a net reduction in posts. The approach to achieving this reduction will be (as in earlier reviews) to maximise voluntary redundancy requests and as far as possible to avoid compulsory redundancies. It is likely that a number of posts in partner centres will require TUPE transfers. Consultation on this issue will begin once the procurement process is complete

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

43. The primary aim of the review was to address the £3.1m (25%) reduction in the EIG funding. The inclusion of other associated areas also brought with it the obligation to seek all possible efficiencies as part of the EIT programme to review services. To date the Youth and Other EIG strands have delivered combined savings of £2.5m per annum. The Early Years proposals in the report generate approximately £2m (A final figure cannot be confirmed until after completion of the procurement exercise). The total savings from the review of approximately £4.5m cover the 25% reduction in EIG funding and a stream-lining of associated non EIG funded services. Quarterly monitoring of the implementation of the review will take place at the Children and Young People’s Select Committee.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

44. The legal service have provided advice on the legal considerations associated with the public consultation process, the potential TUPE transfer of employees in the partner centres, the formal employee and union consultation process, and the procurement process. There are no issues arising from these processes.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

45. Assessed in the low-medium category that is managed by everyday controls.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

46. The review supports Children and Young People Improvement priorities.

## EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

47. An Equalities Impact Assessment on the Other and Integrated Youth Support Service proposals was presented to Cabinet on 16 June 2011. An Equality Impact Assessment on these proposals is attached as **Appendix 5 (to follow)**.

## CORPORATE PARENTING

48. No issues arise from this report.

## CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD COUNCILLORS

49. Extensive consultation activity has been undertaken as part of the process of formulating these proposals a full report on all consultation activity is included as **Appendix 4**.

50. The Children and Young People Select Committee received updates at key stages for independent challenge and were presented with the final report for comment at their meeting on 26 October prior to consideration by Cabinet. In addition Members of the Select Committee had an opportunity to visit the centres.

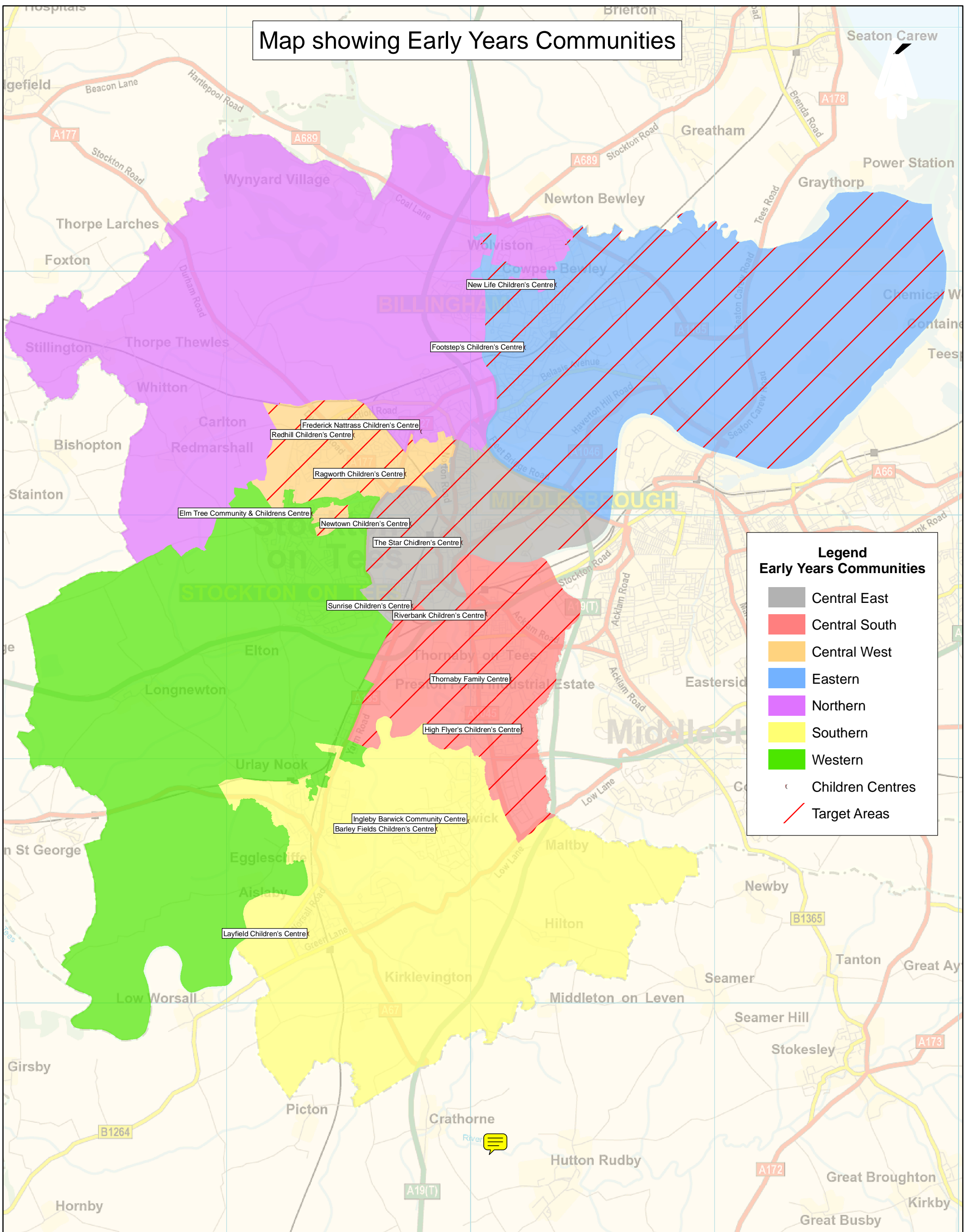
51. The Select Committee supported the recommendations for redesigning Early Years Services in the borough, which will deliver a more targeted partnership-based service with the commitment to early intervention and support, following discussion around the key issues set out below:

- the extent to which the Council had to abide by the DfE guidelines regarding the number of children centres by population;
- the process of setting “reasonable” charges;
- a recognition that targeted families in affluent areas would not be able to access “closed” sessions in other areas. However, it was noted that there may be some flexibility where capacity existed;
- any partner organisation would need to be subject to robust checks as part of the procurement process;
- there should be a distinction between staff working in the Home Visiting Team (who will transfer into the Children and Young People Operational Service) and social workers.

**Contact Officer: Beccy Brown, EIT Programme Manager**

**Telephone No. 01642 524309 Email Address: [beccy.brown@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:beccy.brown@stockton.gov.uk)**

# Map showing Early Years Communities



**Legend**  
**Early Years Communities**

- Central East
- Central South
- Central West
- Eastern
- Northern
- Southern
- Western
- Children Centres
- Target Areas



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Resources**  
Corporate Director: J.Danks  
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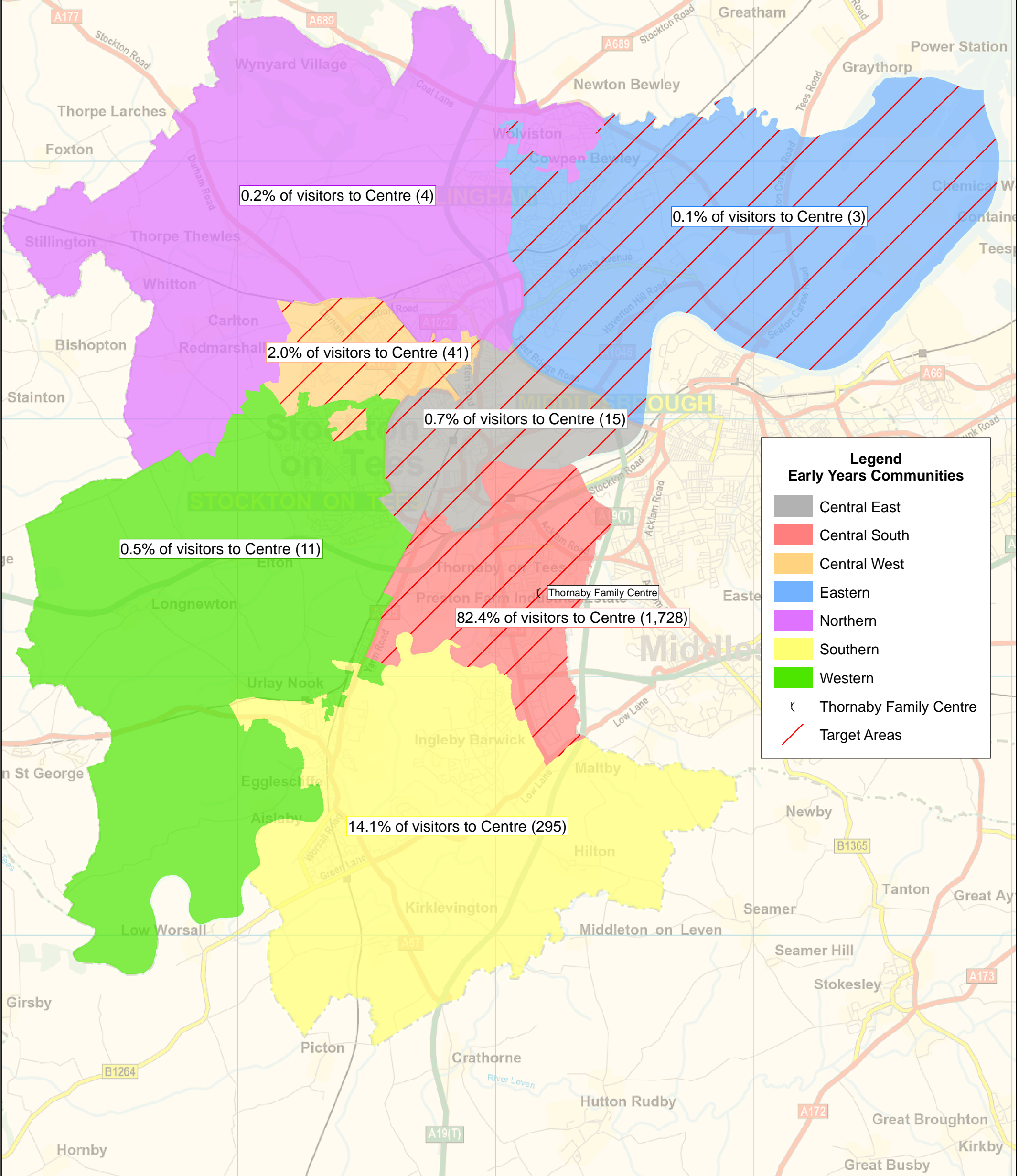
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**APPENDIX 1**

Date 13/10/2011

Scale 1:70,000

Map showing the percentage and number of visits children have made from each Early Years Community to the Thornaby Family Centre between 06/09/2010 and 05/09/2011.



**Legend**  
**Early Years Communities**

- Central East
- Central South
- Central West
- Eastern
- Northern
- Southern
- Western
- Thornaby Family Centre
- Target Areas

**Stockton-on-Tees**  
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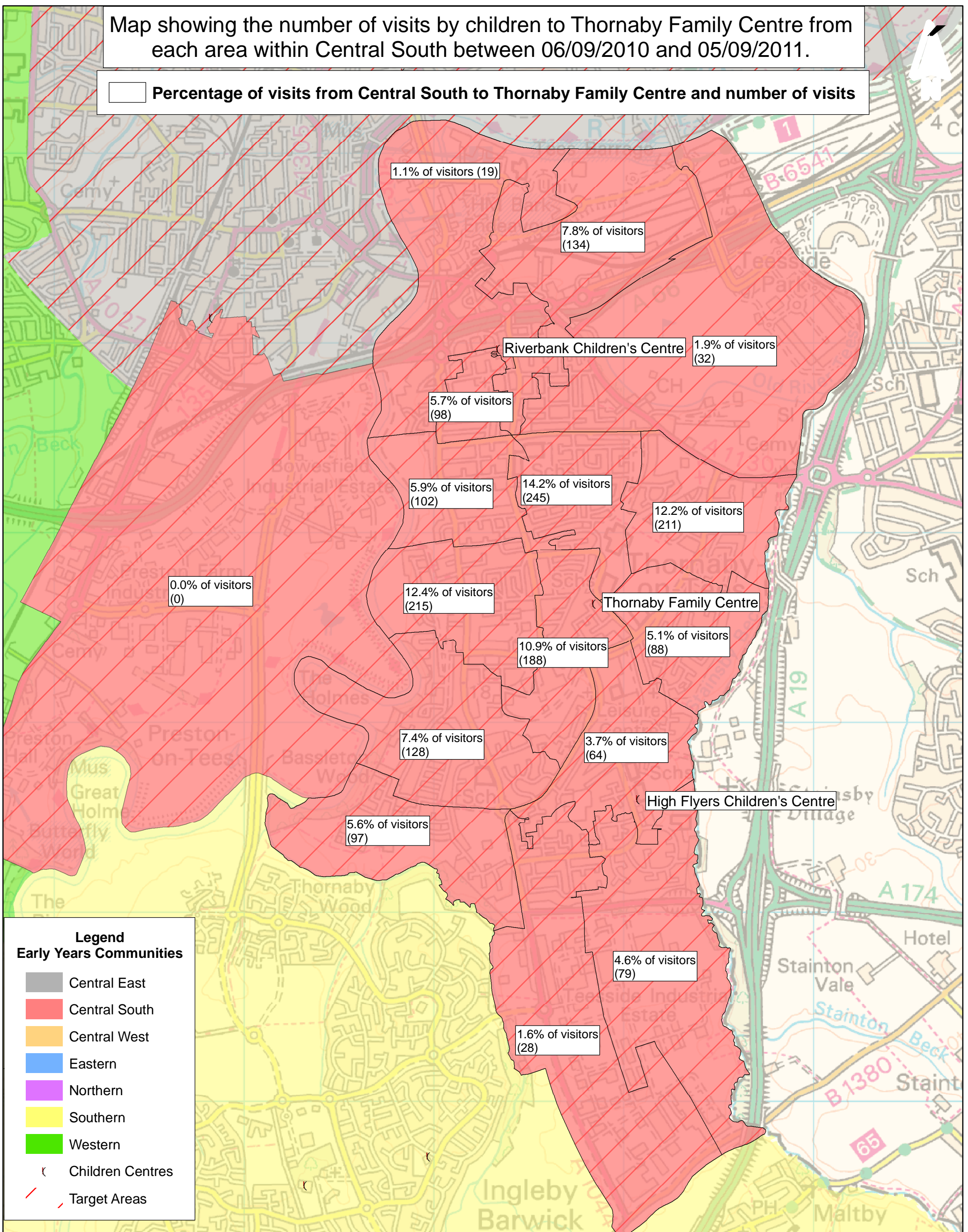
**APPENDIX 2**

Date 13/10/2011

Scale 1:70,000

Map showing the number of visits by children to Thornaby Family Centre from each area within Central South between 06/09/2010 and 05/09/2011.

Percentage of visits from Central South to Thornaby Family Centre and number of visits



**Legend**  
**Early Years Communities**

- Central East
- Central South
- Central West
- Eastern
- Northern
- Southern
- Western

Children Centres  
Target Areas

Analysis of Child Flow from Proposed Areas to 11 Existing Centre and Home Visits 2010/11												Appendix 3	
	Home	Footsteps	New Life	Star	Sunrise	Elmtree	Frederick Natrass	Redhill	Barleyfields	High Flyers	Layfield	Riverbank	Total
<b>North</b>	93	1,416	617	50	44	252	1,041	362	54	17		10	3,956
%	2.4	35.8	15.6	1.3	1.1	6.4	26.3	9.2	1.4	0.4		0.3	
<b>South</b>	98	29	29	76	227	14	26	17	3,640	1,024	30	816	6,036
%	1.6	0.5	0.5	1.3	3.8	0.2	0.4	0.3	60.3	17.0	0.5	13.5	
<b>West</b>	40	30	19	519	1,932	375	44	202	108	97	6	40	3,412
%	1.2	0.9	0.6	15.2	56.6	11.0	1.3	5.9	3.2	2.8	0.1	1.2	
<b>Central East</b>	853	61	22	3,223	3,094	55	516	395	23	70		142	8,454
%	10.1	0.7	0.3	38.1	36.6	0.7	6.1	4.7	0.3	0.8		1.7	
<b>Central South</b>	766	7	-3	415	700		16	35	313	3,154	4	3,547	8,960
%	8.6	0.1	0.0	4.6	7.8		0.2	0.4	3.5	35.2	0.0	39.6	
<b>Central West</b>	795	46	8	178	91	266	571	2,796	52	58	1	208	5,070
%	15.7	0.9	0.2	3.5	1.8	5.2	11.3	55.1	1.0	1.1	0.0	4.0	
<b>East</b>	848	4,275	1,320	76	11	3	32	68	7	7		14	6,661
%	14.6	64.2	19.8	1.1	0.2	-	0.5	1.0	0.1	0.1		0.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,493</b>	<b>5,864</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>4,537</b>	<b>6,099</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>2,246</b>	<b>3,875</b>	<b>4,197</b>	<b>4,427</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>42,549</b>



# Proposed Changes to Early Years Services in Stockton-on-Tees

## Public Consultation – Final Report

October 2011



Stockton-on-Tees  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

*Passionate*  
about people

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarises the results of the public consultation exercise carried out between 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 seeking view on proposed changes to Early Years services in the Borough.

The consultation, which was carried out using a wide range of methods, has generated a wealth of valuable qualitative information and 764 completed questionnaires. These results have been used to inform the final proposals which are being put to Cabinet for approval on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011.

We are grateful to all the people who have taken time to share their views on the proposed changes.

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the consultation was to seek views on a set of proposed changes to Early Years services.

## 3.0 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 POPULATION

#### 3.1.1 **The Review Team determined that there was four ‘types’ of population within the Borough that could be directly impacted by the outcome of the Review; that it would be appropriate to engage in this consultation; and/or, that would be generally interested in the consultation.**

Type of Population	Population Size	Date	Source
No. Families Using Children's Centres in the Borough	6,884	July 2010 - July 2011	eSTART (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council)
No. Families Registered on eSTART (eligible to use Children's Centres in the Borough)	9,271	20/09/11	
TVU 2010 Based Population Estimate - No. Households with Children <5 Years	10,005	2011	Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU)
The whole population of Stockton-on-Tees	192,400	2010	Office for National Statistics

**The size of each of these populations varies widely and each population would require a different sample size (i.e. number of completed questionnaires returned to the Review Team) to achieve statistically representative results.** This situation is explained further in 3.1.2 below.

**It should also be noted that the statistical ‘representativeness’ of the results of ‘qualitative research’, which this consultation was partly made up of<sup>1</sup>, cannot be determined.** This is because the responses to this kind of research are not numerical. Instead, it is most appropriate to ensure that all appropriate ‘qualitative’ research methods are used, as frequently and wherever possible, to engage as fully as possible with the population(s) impacted by the consultation. It is then necessary to secure from that as much information as possible about their feelings and thoughts and analyse the results in an appropriate way to convey the key themes and categories within that information.

3.1.2 In total, the consultation achieved 764 completed questionnaires/a sample size of 764. A diversity profile of the sample is available upon request.

When identifying the statistical ‘representativeness’ of this number, the following things need to be considered.

**Firstly, the population which this sample is taken from needs to be identified.** As highlighted in 3.1.1, the Review has four possible populations to consider. It should be noted that these four populations are not mutually exclusive. Approximately 90% of the Borough’s population of families with children under 5 are currently registered to use Children’s Centres; not all of these families use Children’s Centres currently; but, all of these families will be counted in the overall population for the Borough. It is therefore likely that responses came from each of these four populations.

Secondly, the ‘**confidence level**’ or error rate that will be used when reporting the results needs to be determined. It is commonplace for a 95% confidence level to be used. Basically, this means that when adopting a 95% confidence level to report on results, we can be 95% confident (and, therefore 5% non confident) that the results from the sample would mirror the results from the entire population it is drawn from if the entire population was to respond to the same questions.

**Finally, when the relevant sample and population sizes and appropriate confidence level are established, it is possible to identify the confidence interval for the data.** The confidence interval identifies the degree to which the results from the sample are statistically likely to vary in comparison with the results from the population, if the population was to respond to the same questions.

Taking all of this into account, the table below shows the potentially relevant confidence intervals for this consultation overall.

---

<sup>1</sup> The open ended questions in the questionnaire and the group discussions used in this consultation are examples of qualitative research methods.

Type of Population	Population Size	Sample Size	Confidence Interval
No. Families Using Children's Centres in the Borough	<b>6,884</b>	<b>764</b>	<b>+/- 3.34</b>
No. Families Registered on eSTART (eligible to use Children's Centres in the Borough)	<b>9,271</b>		<b>+/- 3.4</b>
TVU 2010 Based Population Estimate - No. Households with Children <5 Years	<b>10,005</b>		<b>+/- 3.41</b>
The whole population of Stockton-on-Tees	<b>192,400</b>		<b>+/- 3.54</b>

While a single confidence interval cannot be identified, since there are four possible populations present in the sample, the table below shows that, with a sample of 764, **the confidence interval for this work is likely to be between 3.34 and 3.54.**

**In practice this means that we can be 95% confident that, overall, the consultation is statistically likely to reflect the opinion of the populations in question by the overall figure stated, plus or minus between 3.34% and 3.54%.**

## 3.2 DATA COLLECTION

### 3.2.1 Consultation findings were collected via:

- paper and online versions of the same **questionnaire**;
- **facilitated discussions** with users of Children's Centres, the general public and Children's Centre staff and managers;
- attendance of **scheduled meetings with the Council's key partners and representative groups of seldom heard communities across the Borough** (i.e. the BME Network, the Faith Network, etc.); and,
- **direct (email and letter) correspondence** with the consultation team.

### 3.2.2 Questionnaires included:

- information about the **background to the EIG consultation** and the proposals for managing the situation in future;
- **questions about each of the proposals**, giving respondents the opportunity to provide additional comments on each one; and,
- **questions about respondents' key diversity characteristics.**

They were available in **paper and online formats** throughout the period of the consultation. **Paper questionnaires were available upon request**, from a number of '**consultation points**' across the Borough<sup>2</sup> and at each of the facilitated engagement activities.

**Parents of school children** (14,725 letters were sent in the school bag of each primary school child in the Borough; 3,182 questionnaires were sent to Early Years' Foundation Stage Children in the Borough; questionnaires were made available in schools after the

---

<sup>2</sup> Municipal Buildings 'Reception' area; Thornaby Central Library; and, Kingsway House 'Reception' area in Billingham.

summer holidays; and, a facilitated session in one school<sup>3</sup>) and **social care clients** (via their Social Worker) were also made aware of the opportunity to complete the questionnaires.

3.2.3 A number of different types of **facilitated discussions** were undertaken throughout the period of the consultation. They were as follows:

- **Face to face discussions**, between members of the consultation team and **Children’s Centre users** were undertaken in Children’s Centres. Questionnaires were completed with individuals at this time. This provided respondents with the chance to ask questions about the proposals and the consultation process and yielded the vast majority of completed questionnaires. Discussions were open, challenging and frank.
- **Public group discussions**, between the consultation team and **any member of the public with an interest in the proposals and the consultation**, were undertaken on a number of dates at locations throughout the Borough. **These discussions began with a presentation of the background to the consultation and a summary of the proposals. Consultation team members then facilitated discussions with self selected groups of individuals in the audience.** Notes of these discussions were taken and have been analysed and summarised. Please see section 4.2 below. Group members were also invited to complete either paper or online questionnaires either there and then or at their leisure. Discussions that took place were again open and frank and yielded enlightening results particularly in terms of in-depth discussion about how useful people found the Centres; how the proposals may impact people; and, thoughts people had about potential alternative ways forward.

**A particular effort was made to engage with those families living in the target areas, who are identified as target users, but who do not currently use Children’s Centres.**

- **Special events** (including ‘Farm Bus’; ‘Family Fun Session’; and, ‘Circus’ (please see Table 1 below for further details) proved to be particularly effective in attracting these families to the Centres.



Steps were also taken to help ensure that non-English speakers could engage with the consultation.

- The questionnaire was **translated into Arabic and Urdu.**
- **Translated group sessions. A translator and members of the consultation**

---

<sup>3</sup> This session was in addition to the scheduled public sessions which were facilitated and took place as a result of a specific request from a Head Teacher.

**team attended a number of specially arranged sessions with members of the Mandarin/Chinese communities living in Stockton-on-Tees.** The translator interpreted the questionnaire for people from those communities who expressed interest in the session and facilitated their responses to the questionnaire. These sessions were very enlightening and provided an appropriate and effective opportunity to directly engage with one of our seldom heard communities.

Table 1 below identifies where and when the above activities took place.

**Table 1. EIG CONSULTATION – ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES’ SCHEDULE**

<b>TYPE OF ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
Face to face discussions	02.08.11	1200 - 1500	Ragworth (CC)
Face to face discussions	02.08.11	1230 – 1530	Frederick Nattrass (CC)
Public group discussion	05.08.11	1900 - 2030	Stockton Parish Church (St Thomas)
Face to face discussions	05.08.11	1300 - 1500	New Life (CC)
Face to face discussions	11.08.11	0900 - 1200	Redhill (CC)
Face to face discussions	12.08.11	0930 – 1230	Thornaby Family Centre (CC)
Face to face discussions	15.08.11	1300 – 1500	Riverbank (CC)
Face to face discussions	15.08.11	0900 – 1200	Elm Tree (CC)
‘Farm Bus’	16.08.11	1000 – 1500	Sunrise (CC)
Face to face discussions	16.08.11	0930 – 1130	Beckfields (CC)
Public group discussion	18.08.11	1900 - 2030	Barley Fields Children’s Centre
Face to face discussions	22.08.11	1000 – 1300	High Flyers (CC)
Face to face discussions	23.08.11	0930 - 1230	Newtown (CC)
Face to face discussions	24.08.11	0930 - 1230	Newtown (CC)
Face to face discussions	26.08.11	0930 - 1230	Thornaby Family Centre (CC)
‘Family Fun Session’	31.08.11	1000 - 1300	Footsteps (CC)
‘Circus’	01.09.11	1200 - 1500	Frederick Nattrass (CC)
Public group discussion	06.09.11	1900 - 2030	Billingham Forum
Face to face discussions	09.09.11	0930 - 1230	Layfield

Face to face discussions	12.09.11	0930 - 1230	Barley Field
Face to face discussions	13.09.11	0900 - 1200	New Life (CC)
Face to face discussions	13.09.11	0930 – 1230	Sunrise (CC)
Face to face discussions	14.09.11	1300 - 1500	Layfield
Face to face discussions	15.09.11	1300 - 1500	Barley Field
Face to face discussions	15.09.11	0930 - 1130	Beckfields (CC)
Face to face discussions	16.09.11	0930 - 1230	Thornaby Family Centre (CC)
Public group discussion	19.09.11	1900 - 2030	The Robert Atkinson Centre, Thorntree Road
Face to face discussions	20.09.11	1100 – 1400	Riverbank (CC)
Face to face discussions	20.09.11	0930 - 1230	Star (CC)
Face to face discussions	21.09.11	0930 - 1230	Star (CC)
Face to face discussions	22.09.11	0900 - 1200	Frederick Nattrass (CC)
Face to face discussions	22.09.11	0930 – 1230	Sunrise (CC)
Face to face discussions	23.09.11	0900 - 1200	Footsteps (CC)
Face to face discussions	23.09.11	1200 – 1500	Elm Tree (CC)
Face to face discussions	26.09.11	1300 - 1500	Redhill (CC)
Translated group session	26.09.11	1300 - 1500	Star (CC)
Face to face discussions	27.09.11	1000 - 1300	High Flyers (CC)
Translated group session	27.09.11	1030 – 1200	Johnson House, Yarm Road
Face to face discussions	28.09.11	1300 - 1500	Ragworth (CC)
Translated group session	29.09.11	1030 – 1200	Johnson House, Yarm Road
Translated group session	29.09.11	1330 - 1500	Sunrise (CC)
Face to face discussions	29.9.11	18000- 1900	Sikh Temple Thornaby
Scheduled Meeting	6.9.11	1200	Disability Advisory Group
Scheduled Meeting	14.9.11	1800	Faith Network
Scheduled Meeting	5.9.11	1745	Northern Area Partnership
Scheduled	29.9.11	1800	Central Area Partnership



Meeting			
Scheduled Meeting	27.9.11	0930	Eastern Area Partnership
Scheduled Meeting	26.9.11	1800	Western Area Partnership
Scheduled Meeting	20.9.11	1400	Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership
Scheduled Meeting	16.8.11	930	Safer Stockton Partnership
Scheduled Meeting	12.9.11	1900	Parish Council Liaison Forum
Scheduled Meeting	29.9.11	16.30	Children's Trust Board
Scheduled Meeting	4.8.11	1230	North Tees Commissioning Consortium
Scheduled Meeting	7.9.11	1100	LSPB
Scheduled Meeting	13.9.11	1700 - 1900	Local Strategic Partnership
Consultation Session	27.9.11	1700 - 1900	Early Years Staff
CYP Visit	9.9.11	1100	Footsteps
CYP Visit	29.9.11	1100	Frederick Nattrass
CYP Visit	1.10.11	1100	Sunrise – Dad's Group

The key findings from all data collection routes are summarised in section 4.0 below.

### 3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

3.4.1 Results from completed (paper and online) questionnaires were analysed as follows:

- **All answers to questions which asked for yes or no answers were summed and percentage responses for the whole of the Borough were calculated.** Analysis of all such answers was then completed to identify the percentage of responses achieved for each question in each of the proposed 'Early Years' Community Areas'. The findings from this analysis are provided in section 4.0 below.
  - **It should be noted that in some cases the number of respondents to each question does not equal the total number of completed questionnaires received.** This is because respondents chose to complete the questions they felt were either most relevant to them or which they felt they could respond to. It was not mandatory for each respondent to provide a response to each question.
- **All answers to open ended questions were analysed to identify key 'themes' in the data and, within those themes, the key 'categories' of different comments recorded.** The total number of comments received in response to each open ended question was calculated by theme and also by each category within each theme. Then, finally in this respect, quotes which helped illustrate key issues, concerns, suggestions and comments in the answers to the open ended

questions were extracted and have been included in the summary of the key findings in section 4.0 below.

- **It should be noted that (a) not all respondents provided answers to each open ended question and (b) some respondents made a number of different comments within their response to open ended questions.** Because of this, the total number of comments received will, in some cases, exceed both the total number of completed questionnaires received and the number of respondents to each question.

3.4.2 **Findings from the facilitated discussions were analysed to identify key themes and categories of information provided.** The key findings from this analysis are provided in section 4.0 below.

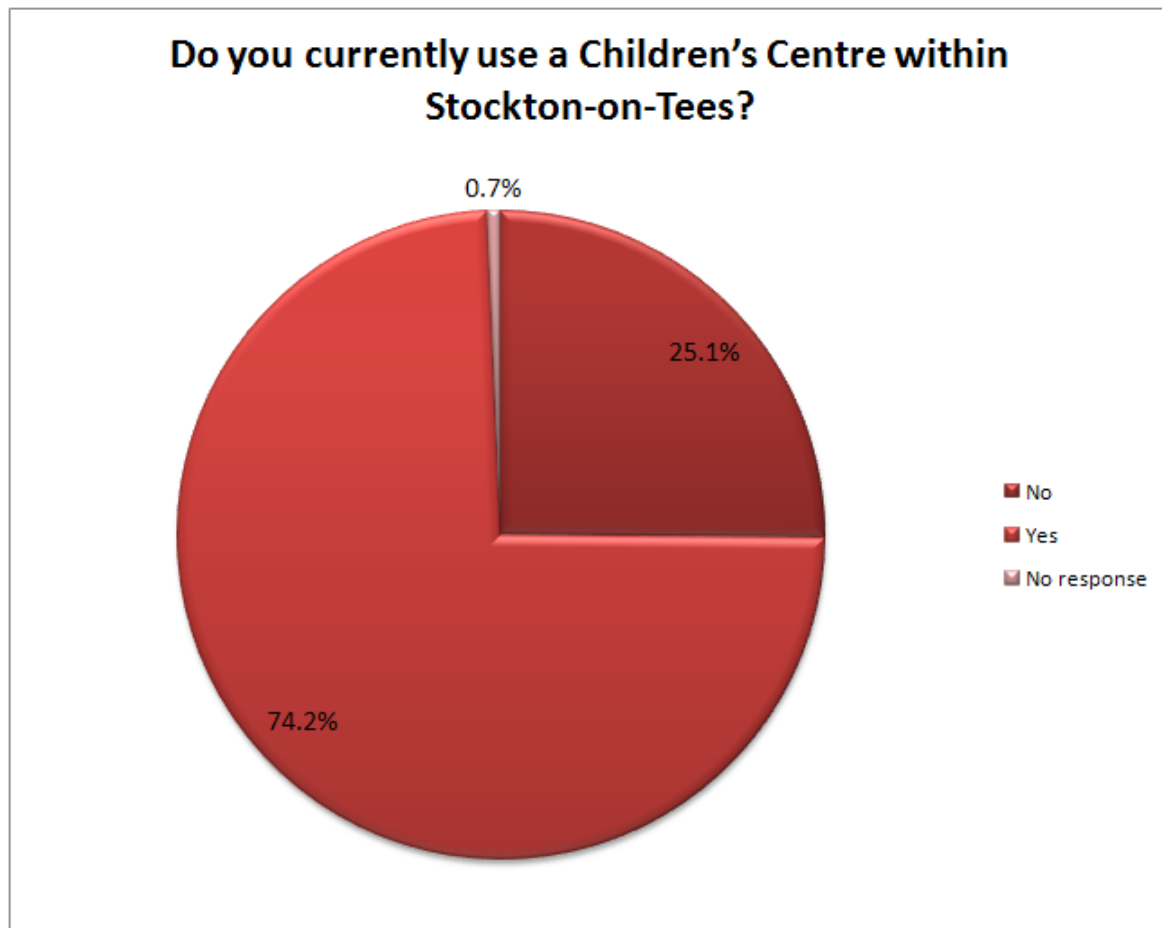
3.4.3 **Minutes from scheduled meetings with partners which relate to the EIG consultation were extracted** and have been included in section 4.0 below.

3.4.4 **Direct email and letter correspondence was analysed to identify key concerns** and are summarised in section 4.0 below.

## 4.0 RESULTS

As summarised above, the consultation achieved a large number of responses through four principle routes: questionnaires; facilitated discussions; partnership discussions; and, (email and letter) correspondence. The findings from each 'route' are summarised below.

### 4.1 QUESTIONNAIRES



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 74.2% of the sample currently use Children's Centres in Stockton on Tees.

#### RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	15	120		135
CENTRAL SOUTH	17	118		135
CENTRAL WEST	12	112		124
EASTERN	13	89		102
NORTHERN/WESTERN/SOUTHERN	28	56		84
UNKNOWN <sup>4</sup>	107	72		179
Grand Total	192	567	5	764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents

<sup>4</sup> Responses received via internet and some paper responses did not identify respondents location

who said they don't currently use Children's Centres in the Borough did not tell us where they lived. It also shows that the majority of respondents who do currently use Children's Centres in the Borough live in the 'Central East' area.

The table also shows that 5 (0.7% of all) respondents did not respond to this question.

#### OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	Attend for appointments	Other	Centres attended Stated
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	13	5	86

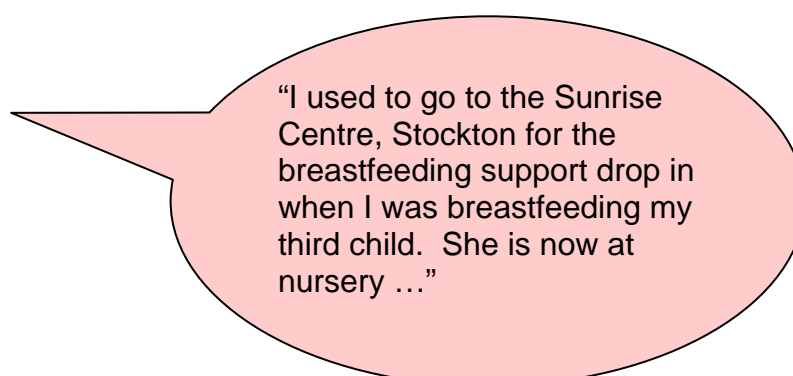
The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under three key themes.

In total, 104 respondents who said 'YES' provided comments. 86 respondents stated which centre they used with 'Frederick Natrass' scoring the highest.

Key Theme	Have no current need	Centres are not accessible/ viable for me	Attend for appointments	Other	Centres which are used
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	110	17	10	18	2

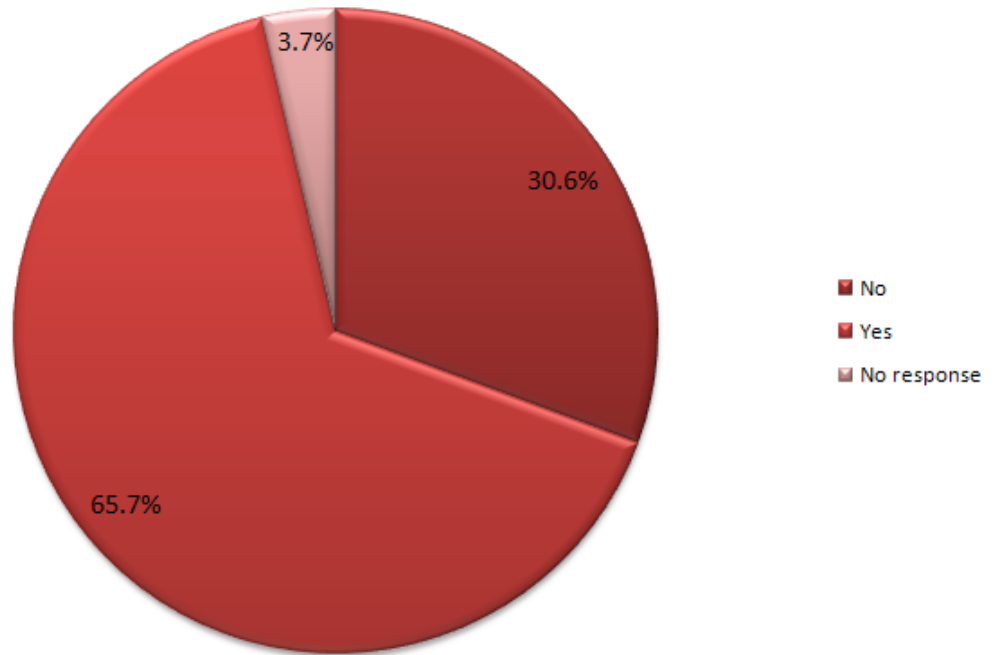
The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

In total, 157 who respondents who indicated that they did not use a Centre provided comments. The most frequently quoted key theme (accounting for 110 of all comments made by these respondents) was that respondents did not use the Centres currently because they 'have no current need' primarily because their 'children are too old'.



A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.

**Do you agree with our proposal to focus our funding on those in need?**



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 65.7% of the sample agree that funding should be focused on those in need.

**RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA**

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	41	95	28	136
CENTRAL SOUTH	38	93		131
CENTRAL WEST	48	71		119
EASTERN	30	66		96
NORTHERN/WESTERN/SOUTHERN	29	53		82
UNKNOWN	48	124		172
Grand Total	234	502		764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree that funding should be focused on those in need did not identify their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree that funding should be focused on those in need were from the 'Central West' area of the Borough and an equal proportion of the same respondents chose not to reveal their location.

The table also shows that 28 (3.7% of all) respondents did not respond to this question.

## OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	How best to target provision of services	Money	Equality of offer/ provision	Other	Location
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	99	14	75	11	3

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

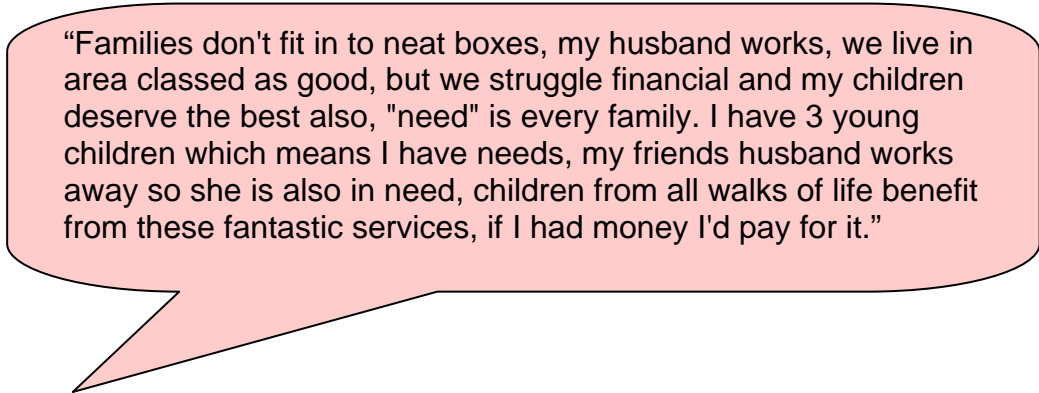
In total, 202 respondents who said 'YES' provided comments. The top reason given was simply that funding should be focused on those in most need in the Borough, however, many respondents also commented that all children deserved a good start in life and access to a children's centre.

Key Theme	How best to target provision of services	Money	Equality of offer/ provision	Other	Location
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	16	45	154	25	36

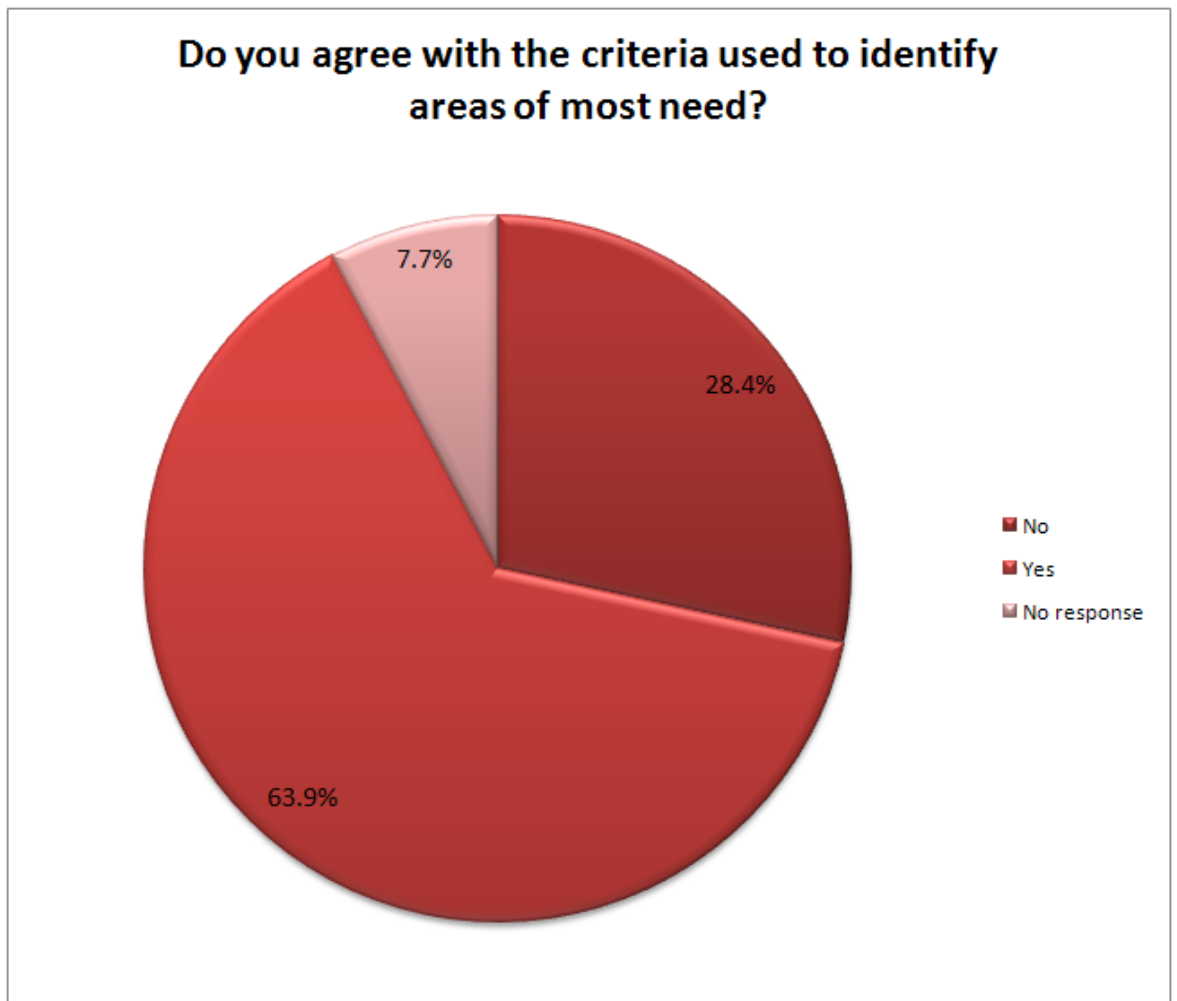
The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

In total, 276 comments were received from respondents who said 'NO' to this question. The main reason cited by respondents who were against the proposal was that equality of provision would be better. Other reasons given were that service provision should not be postcode dependent and that working parents were still in need of the support provided through children's centres.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.



"Families don't fit in to neat boxes, my husband works, we live in area classed as good, but we struggle financial and my children deserve the best also, "need" is every family. I have 3 young children which means I have needs, my friends husband works away so she is also in need, children from all walks of life benefit from these fantastic services, if I had money I'd pay for it."



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 63.9% of the sample agree with the criteria used to identify areas of most need.

#### RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	33	98	59	131
CENTRAL SOUTH	27	98		125
CENTRAL WEST	52	61		113
EASTERN	34	59		93
NORTHERN/WESTERN/ SOUTHERN	34	45		79
UNKNOWN	37	127		164
Grand Total	217	488		764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree with criteria used to identify areas of most need did not reveal their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree with criteria used to identify areas of most need were from the 'Central West' area of the Borough.

The table also shows that 59 (7.7% of all) respondents did not respond to this question.

## OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	General acceptance of proposed criteria	Location/postcode	Health/Social care and support needs	Social and economic status	Money Income	Other	Equality of provision
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	117	10	26	16	9	15	5

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under seven key themes.

In total, 198 comments were from respondents said 'YES'. Most respondents simply commented that the criteria seemed out right.

Key Theme	General acceptance of proposed criteria	Location/postcode	Health/Social care and support needs	Social and economic status	Money Income	Other	Equality of provision
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	16	34	41	12	27	14	55

The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under seven key themes.

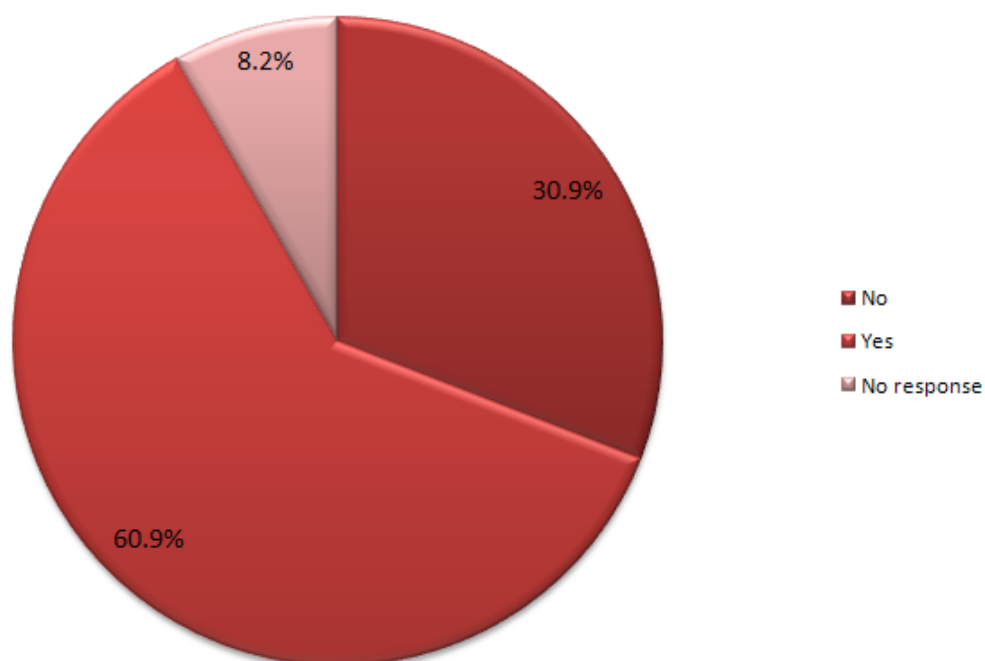
In total, 199 comments were received from respondents who said 'NO' to this question. The main reason respondents did not agree with this criteria was that everyone needs help and should be able to use the centres, followed by the comment that postcode/location cannot alone determine the level of need experienced by individual families.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.

"... Many years ago I was a social worker and was familiar with some deprived areas. We must help these families to escape the culture of poverty and hopelessness. Given the right help the children will lead the way".



**Do you agree with the proposal to contract with another organisation to provide Children’s Centre services for the North, West and South?**



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 60.9% of the sample agree with the proposal to contract with another organisation to provide Children’s Centre services for the North, West and South.

**RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS’ COMMUNITY AREA**

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS’ COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	30	91	63	121
CENTRAL SOUTH	46	73		119
CENTRAL WEST	45	75		120
EASTERN	25	70		95
NORTHERN/WESTERN/SOUTHERN	34	48		82
UNKNOWN	56	108		164
Grand Total	236	465		764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree with the proposal to contract with another organisation to provide Children's Centre services for the North, West and South did not identify their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree with proposal also did not reveal their location.

The table also shows that 63 (8.2% of all) respondents did not answer this question

#### OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	If it enhances/ maintains current provision	Money/ payment	Other	Council involvement	Skills, experience and regulation	Preferred types of providers
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	124	23	42	9	21	147

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under six key themes.

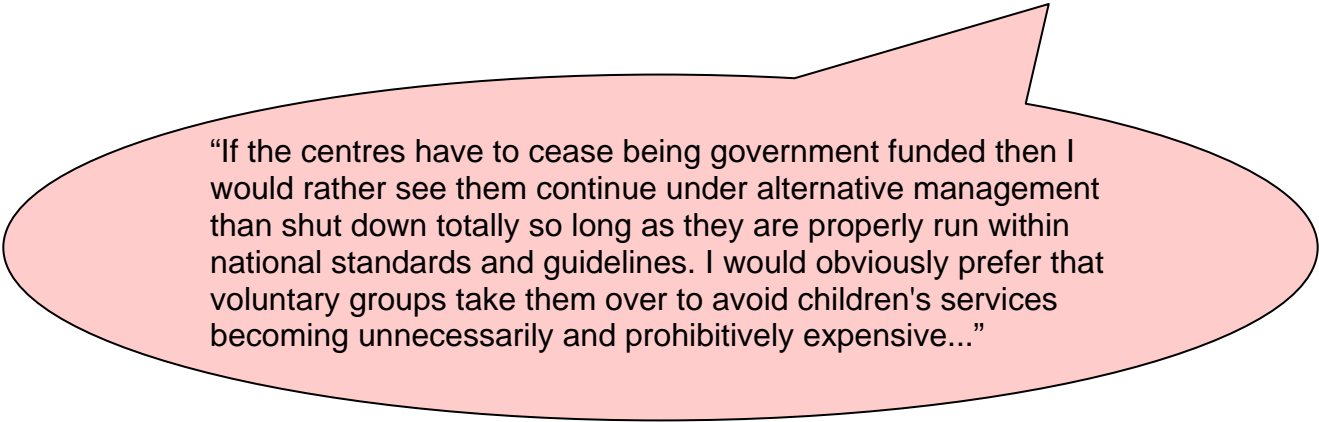
In total, 366 comments were received from respondents who agreed with the proposal. 147 comments related to the type of provider the partner should be with the most frequent comment being that the centres should be run by voluntary/ not for profit organisations. The main reason for support was "if this is the only way to retain centres".

Key Theme	If it enhances/ maintains current provision	Money/ payment	Other	Council involvement	Skills, experience and regulation	Preferred types of providers
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	1	19	18	123	3	43

The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under six key themes.

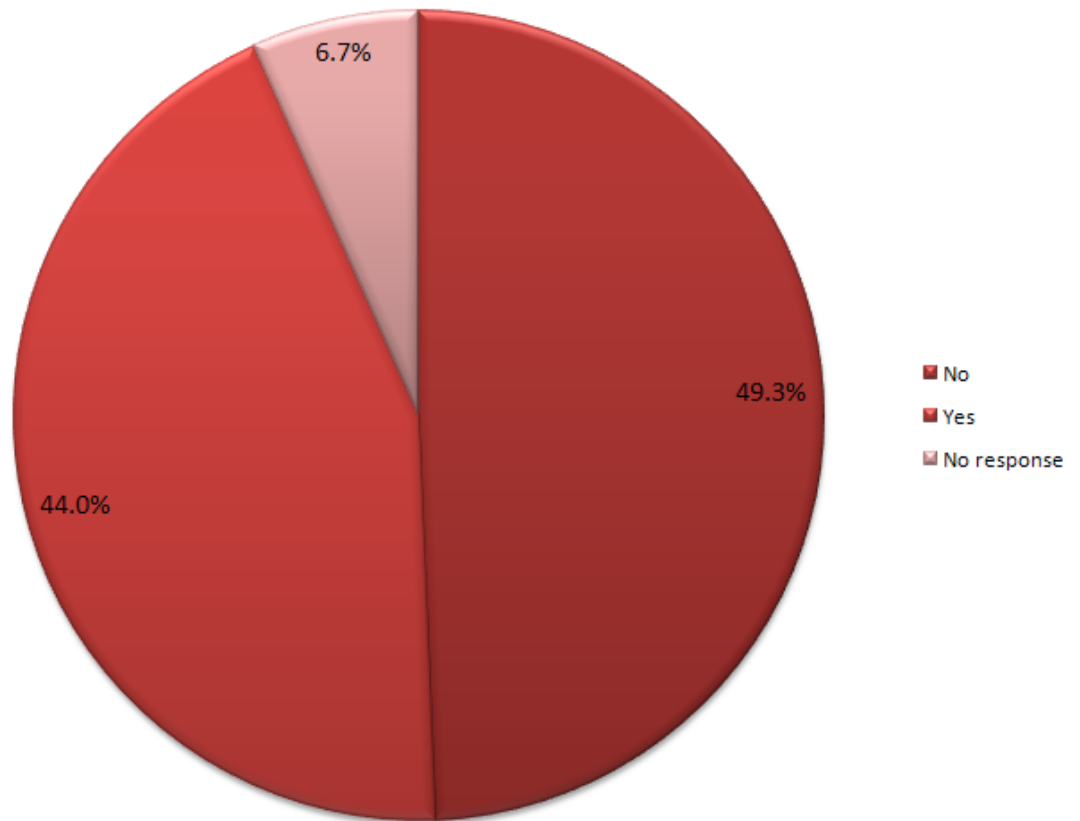
In total, 207 comments were from respondents against the proposal. The main reasons stated by respondents against the proposal were that the current situation was the best and that the private sector was not suitable.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.



“If the centres have to cease being government funded then I would rather see them continue under alternative management than shut down totally so long as they are properly run within national standards and guidelines. I would obviously prefer that voluntary groups take them over to avoid children's services becoming unnecessarily and prohibitively expensive...”

**Do you agree with the proposal to charge for services in the Children's Centres in the North, West and South?**



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 49.3% of the sample disagree with the proposal to charge for services in the Children's Centres in the North, West and South.

## RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	66	62	51	128
CENTRAL SOUTH	76	50		126
CENTRAL WEST	68	47		115
EASTERN	55	38		93
NORTHERN/WESTERN/SOUTHERN	34	47		81
UNKNOWN	78	92		170
Grand Total	377	336		764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree with the proposal to charge for services in the Children's Centres in the North, West and South did not identify their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree with the proposal also did not reveal their location.

Notably, respondents from the Northern, Western and Southern supported charging more than they were against it.

The table also shows that 51 (6.7% of all) respondents did not answer this question.

## OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	Unfair/unreasonable	Equality/continuity of provision	Other	Exceptional needs, not identified by the proposed criteria, need to be considered	Happy to pay ...
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	66	7	13	7	197

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

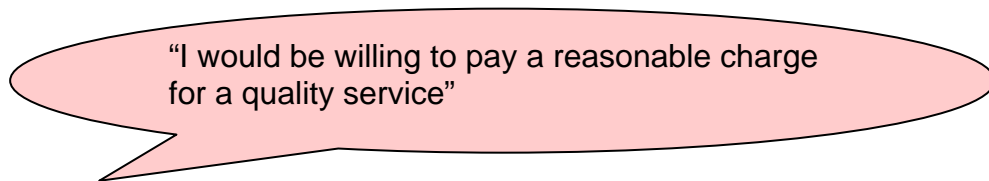
In total, 290 comments were received from respondents agreeing with the proposal. The most frequent comment was that respondents were happy to pay if it applied to all areas and was affordable.

Key Theme	Unfair/ unreasonable	Equality/ continuity of provision	Other	Exceptional needs, not identified by the proposed criteria, need to be considered	Happy to pay ...
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	234	63	13	15	24

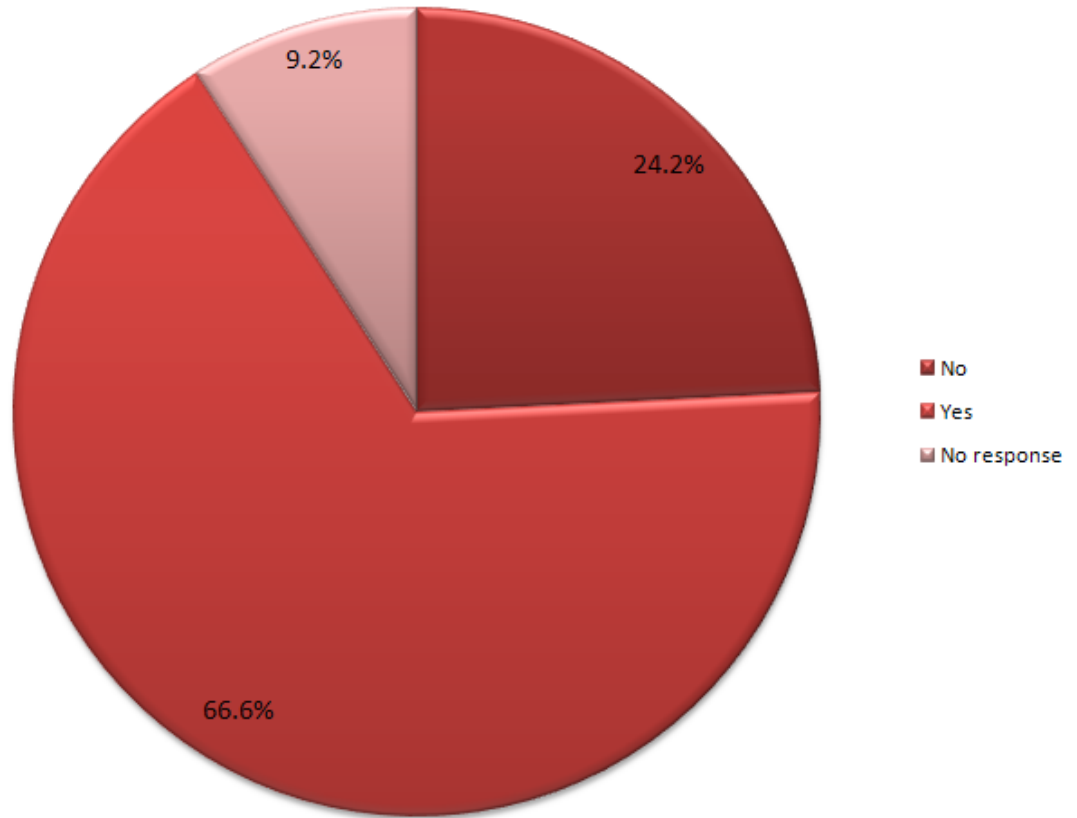
The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

In total, 349 comments were received from respondents who answered 'NO' to this question. The main reason given by respondents against charging was that many parents could not afford to pay even in the more affluent areas. Another recurring comment was that the centres should be free to everyone.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.



**Do you agree with the proposal to seek a partner to operate in the 4 target areas?**



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 66.6% of the sample agree with the proposal to seek a partner to operate in the four target areas.

**RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA**

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	35	93	70	128
CENTRAL SOUTH	35	86		121
CENTRAL WEST	39	75		114
EASTERN	12	81		93
NORTHERN/WESTERN/ SOUTHERN	20	51		71
UNKNOWN	44	123		97
Grand Total	185	509		70

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree with the proposal to seek a partner to operate in the four target areas did not identify their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree with the proposal also did not reveal their location.

The table also shows that 70 (9.2% of all) respondents did not respond to this question.

#### OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	Council role/ involvement	Yes, agree in principle, if so long as/but ...	Preferred types of partners	Other	Don't agree, because it ...
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	11	81	107	47	9

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

In total, 255 comments were received at this stage. The most frequently quoted key theme (accounting for 42.0% of all comments made by these respondents) was 'preferred types of partners' with most comments highlighting a preference for 'local (voluntary/not for profit) arrangements'.

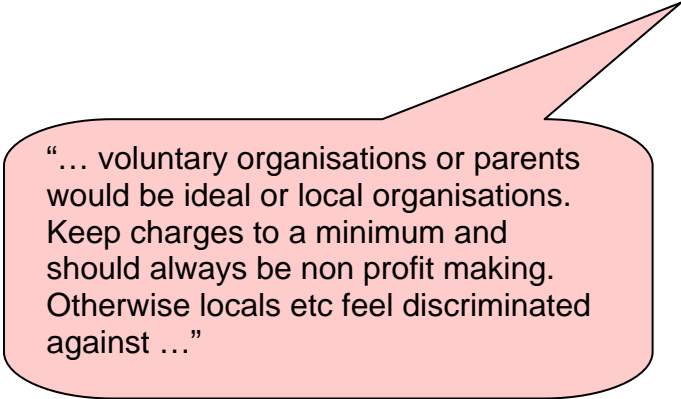
Key Theme	Council role/ involvement	Yes, agree in principle, if so long as/but ...	Preferred types of partners	Other	Don't agree, because it ...
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	68	5	13	9	33



The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

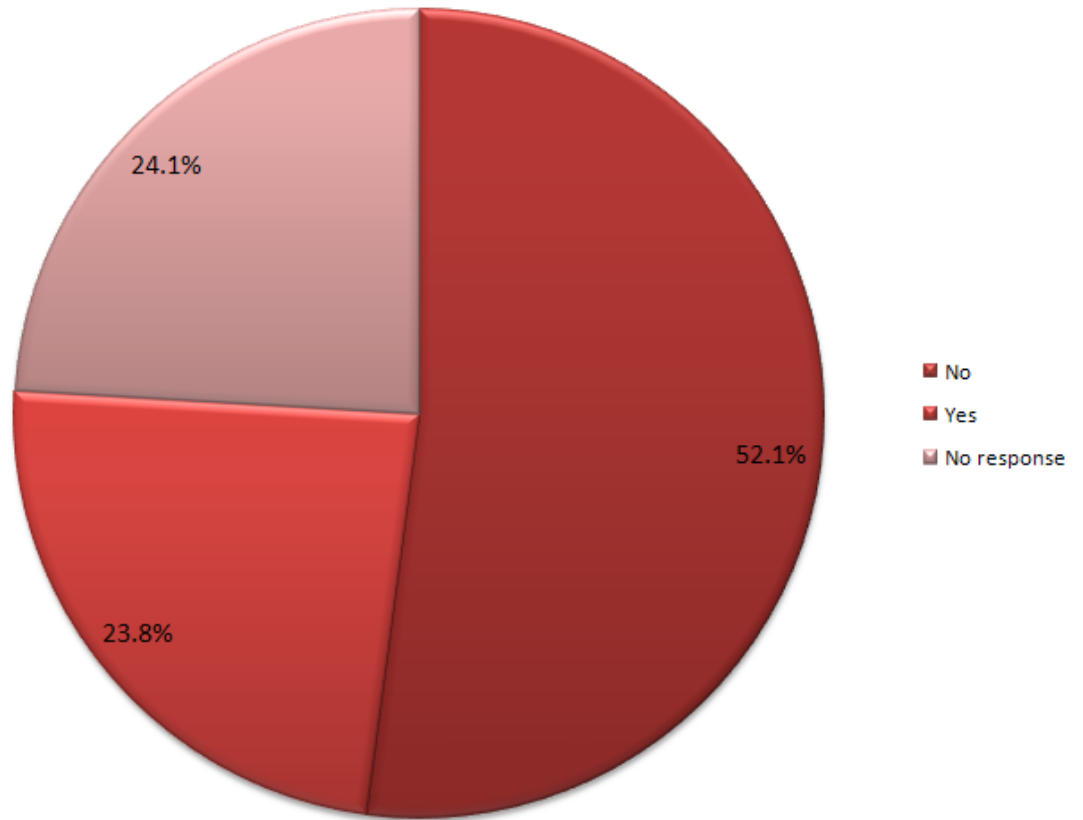
In total, 128 comments were received from respondents who did not agree with the proposal. The main reason given by respondents not supporting the proposal to seek a partner was that they preferred the current situation with centres being run by the Council according to SureStart principles. Concerns over quality were also cited.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.



“... voluntary organisations or parents would be ideal or local organisations. Keep charges to a minimum and should always be non profit making. Otherwise locals etc feel discriminated against ...”

**Do you agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby?**



The pie chart above shows that, overall, 52.1% of the sample did not agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby.

## RESPONSES BY PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA

PROPOSED EARLY YEARS' COMMUNITY AREA	No	Yes	No response	Grand Total
CENTRAL EAST	51	39	184	90
CENTRAL SOUTH	107	17		124
CENTRAL WEST	71	23		94
EASTERN	47	22		69
NORTHERN/WESTERN/SOUTHERN	37	21		58
UNKNOWN	85	60		145
Grand Total	398	182		764

The table of results by 'area' provided above identifies that the majority of respondents who agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby did not identify their location. It also shows that the majority of respondents that did not agree with the proposal were from the 'Central South' area in which the Centre is located.

This table also shows that 184 (24.1% of all) respondents did not respond to this question.

## OPEN ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES BY YES/NO RESPONSE AND THEME

Key Theme	Continuity of provision in local area	Access to services locally	Alternative suggestions for closure	Equality of provision	Other
Total Number of Comments Received - YES	96	10	9	2	4

The table above shows that respondents who said 'YES' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

In total, 121 comments were received at this stage. The most frequently quoted key theme (accounting for 79.3% of all comments made by these respondents) highlighted that they felt there would be some 'continuity of provision in local area' for primarily the following reason: 'there are 2 other Children's Centres in Thornaby'.

Key Theme	Continuity of provision in local area	Access to services locally	Alternative suggestions for closure	Equality of provision	Other
Total Number of Comments Received - NO	216	66	3	34	4

The table above shows that respondents who said 'NO' to this question provided open ended responses which could be grouped under five key themes.

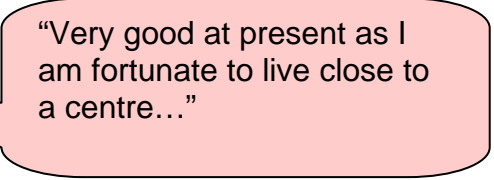
In total, 323 comments were received from respondents who were against the proposal. The top reason was that local people need the centre. Other reasons were that the Centre was well used, provided a good service and those users would have to travel to the other centres which would be difficult for some.

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.

“This is my local family centre and I take my son to stay and play. Having no transport makes it difficult to travel further away and being an only child and new to the area he needs interaction with other children”

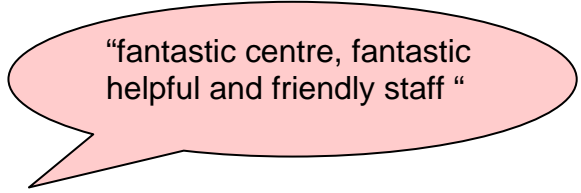
The questionnaire also invited respondents to provide ‘**other**’ comments in relation to seven key themes (location; level of provision; types of services; variety of services; opening hours; days of opening; and, ‘miscellaneous’). Responses to these questions were analysed in the same way as the other open ended questions in the questionnaire and the findings by theme and category are summarised below.

With regard to **location**, 119 comments were received in relation to the following three categories: overall assessment; suggestions; and reference to particular Centres. Across these categories, most (52.9% of) comments related to an **overall assessment of the location of the Centres**. Within that section of the results, most comments identified that the locations were currently either **very good or good**.



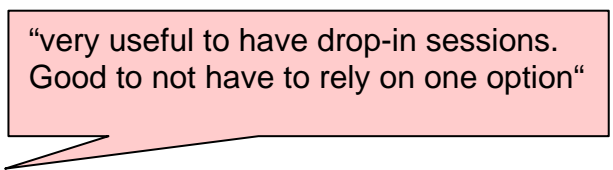
“Very good at present as I am fortunate to live close to a centre...”

A total of 189 comments were received in relation to the key theme: ‘**level of provision**’. Within this theme, comments were grouped into the following four categories: suggestions; reference to specific Centres; an overall assessment of the level of provision in the Centres and the types of services used. The largest category, comprising 75.7% of all comments in this regard, was an **overall assessment of the level of provision**. Within that section of the results, the majority of all comments identified that the level of provision was currently ‘**excellent/perfect/amazing**’.



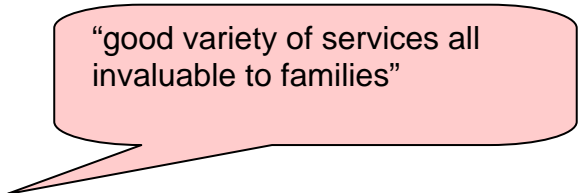
“fantastic centre, fantastic helpful and friendly staff “

The results relating to ‘**types of services**’ show that 248 comments were received. Within that theme, comments were grouped into the following three categories: overall assessment of the types of services provided, reference to currently good services and suggestions for changes/improvements to types of services. The category with the most (56.9% of) comments in this respect was an **overall assessment of the types of services offered/provided**. Within that category, most comments identified that current types of services offered/provided are ‘**good**’.



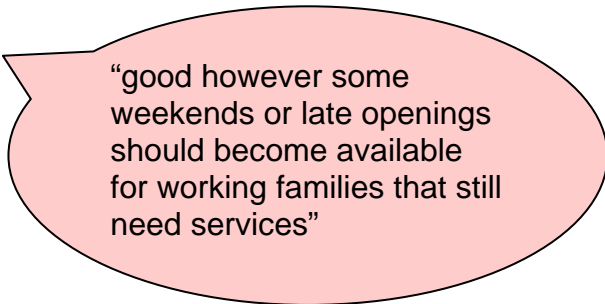
“very useful to have drop-in sessions. Good to not have to rely on one option“

In terms of ‘**variety of services**’, 158 comments were received in relation to the following two categories: suggestions and an overall assessment of the variety of services currently. 92.4% of all comments received related to the category of ‘**overall assessment**’. The majority of all comments in that category identified that the current variety of services was ‘**very good**’ or ‘**good**’.



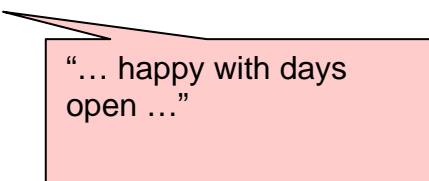
“good variety of services all invaluable to families”

With regard to **'opening hours'**, 10 comments were received in relation to the two following categories: overall assessment of opening hours and suggestions for changes/improvements. 60% of all comments received related to **'suggestions'** with the majority of all comments in that category relating to Centres' **being open in early evening/at weekend**.



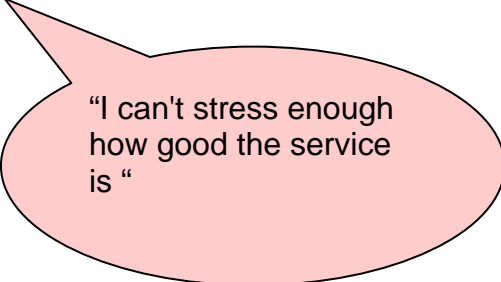
“good however some weekends or late openings should become available for working families that still need services”

The theme of **'days of opening'** yielded a total of 234 comments which were grouped into the following two categories: overall assessment of days of opening and suggestions for change/improvement. The category which received the majority (52.1%) of comments was **'overall assessment'**. Within that category, most comments related to current days of opening being **'OK/acceptable/fine'**.



“... happy with days open ...”

Finally in this respect, the **miscellaneous** theme raised 123 comments in relation to 25 different categories. The three categories that included the most comments in this regard were **'everything is good'** (39.8% of all miscellaneous comments); **'it's (the service/Centre) excellent'** (17.9% of all miscellaneous comments); and, **'always have to book due to high levels of demand'** (5.7% of all miscellaneous comments).



“I can't stress enough how good the service is “

A detailed breakdown of the categories of comments received in relation to each key theme is available upon request.

## 4.2 FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS – PUBLIC AND STAFF

As outlined above, a number of facilitated discussions were held with the public and staff during the consultation period.

Over 20 people attended the Barley Fields drop in discussion (including a mixture of mums and childcare professionals/childminders); two childminders and a LINK (Local Involvement Network) member attended the Robert Atkinson Centre; and, approximately 50 people attended the facilitated discussion held for staff/managers at the Education Centre. At each session, a presentation was given and attendees were asked for their opinion on the proposals via four questions.

### Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to focus on those most in need?

- Overall, those that attended sessions **agreed that the focus should be on those most in need however the definition of need was challenged**. It was believed that the criteria used to define “need” **did not capture those that suffer from postnatal depression**, those who are **isolated**, and those who are **struggling financially** and had **little or no disposable income**. It was suggested that there may be families who live in areas not targeted that would be seen as in “need”

under these criteria. It was also felt that the **popularity of each Centre contributed to whether it was needed.**

- There was also a **concern that those that are defined as being in need by the criteria set out in the consultation are hard to reach and do not always use the services.** Although it was noted that there is a data sharing agreement in place, **issues were raised about the communication and (a lack of/sporadic) sharing of information/data to Council staff by health staff,** which could make it difficult to identify those families that are in need. It was suggested that this could lead to Centres being under-utilised.
- It was noted by those that attended the staff discussions that **there are some targeted sessions and activities currently taking place, with staff working to identify needy families from registered users and non-users.** However, **those not being targeted are beginning to question why they can't access these services.**
- Attendees at the staff discussion raised the issue of the **stigma attached to being defined as "needy"**, which may deter families from attending the Centres. Staff noted that they have **worked hard to dispel the stigma** attached to attending a Centre, and that being able to **mix clients from different areas** helps to take away the stigma.
- Those that attended the Barley Fields discussion felt that **more information should be available in the Centres,** including the different choices of childcare available and the home visiting service.
- Finally, it was noted that **defining children by need goes against the spirit of "Every Child Matters"**.

## Q2 Do you agree with the proposal to charge for some services in children's Centres?

- There was a consensus across all facilitated discussions that **if a charge is brought in this should be a nominal charge to cover running costs, not to make profit, and should be applied to Children's Centres in all areas.** It was believed that refreshments should be available at the Centres if charging is introduced. **Some Centres were already charging for activities provided by external providers and attendance had not been affected.**

*"...I would use a service that was just down the road that I had to pay for, but it couldn't cost too much. There's a limit"*

- It was commented that **families may use and/or appreciate Centres more when they have to pay for the services.**
- A group at the Barley Fields discussion requested **use of the room to set up their own sessions, without the need for Children Centre staff.**
- **Concerns were raised regarding collecting money on the door at Centres** and the holding of cash, both for safety reasons and for fear of stigmatising those in need. Some **suggestions were made about how to overcome that,** including for example **introducing a membership card which can be preloaded with cash or used for payment.**

- It was suggested that **some targeted activities could be free, with outreach teams identifying families in need, and a charge made for universal stay and play sessions, baby signing, massage etc.** There was concern that having sessions were some pay to attend and some don't would be difficult to manage.

**Q3 Do you agree with the proposal for the council to work with partners in some Centres?**

- Again, there was a **consensus that if partners are brought in these should be “not for profit” organisations, e.g. voluntary or charity organisations.** There was concern regarding the quality of external provision, record keeping, different working practices and that parents/childcare professionals are excluded from decision making.
- Those that attended the facilitated discussions believed that **partners should be monitored and parents, childcare professionals, and the community should be involved in the running of the children Centres.** It was also suggested that **Centres should be fully utilised by the community, with partners opening the Centres for youth clubs, community meetings and other activities.**

**Q4 Do you agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby?**

- The majority of those that attended the facilitated discussions **did not agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre.** It was believed that this was a **well used Centre with good facilities and situated in an easily accessible locations for the town Centre and bus routes.** It was suggested that those who currently use the Centre may not use the other Centres in Thornaby for a variety reasons.
- It was suggested that the **Thornaby Family Centre be considered for a partnership arrangement,** or that the attendance for all Centres, both in Thornaby and across the Borough, be considered.

**Q5 Any other comments?**

- There was also an opportunity at each session for attendees to make further comments on the children Centres. Attendees **stressed the need to ensure standards are kept high; there is continuous improvement; and, effective monitoring is in place.**
- **A need for better communication and practices between health staff, Centre staff, and mums was highlighted.** A need for more **promotion of the services that are on offer at the Centres** was also identified, however it was felt that producing a number of leaflets was not always the best way of doing this.



*"I can remember being handed leaflets, it doesn't work, you put them to one side. Do they have the knowledge of what's going on in the Centres?"*

- Those attendees who are **childminders** noted that they received training through the Council and were keen not to lose this.
- Attendees from Ingleby Barwick noted that the Children's Centres are in high demand, and more groups/activities or improvements in the booking system would be appreciated. Those attending the staff discussion also suggested **changing the stay and play sessions booking system**, for those Centres in the target areas, with families living in those areas booking a week in advance and those in non-target areas booking any available spaces the day before.
- Finally, Children's Centres are seen as being invaluable source of social interaction for mums and children, and a useful resource for those who are socially isolated or suffering from postnatal depression. It was commented that the structure that is put in place must ensure that children don't 'fall through' the system.

#### 4.3 PARTNERSHIP DISCUSSIONS

The consultation proposals were discussed at a wide range of partnership and consultative forums including Renaissance (the Stockton-on-Tees Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)) and its associated Area and Thematic Partnership Boards; the Local Public Service Board (LPSB); and, the Parish Council Liaison Forum (PCLF).

##### Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to focus on those most in need?

- The LSP supported the need to target resources to those in most need and try and ensure that they used the service.
- The Central Area Partnership Board questioned whether some of the areas identified were deprived e.g. Flowers Estate. The PCLF also commented that there were areas of deprivation not in the target areas identified. They also highlighted that more affluent parents were travelling around the Borough accessing services at the various Children's Centres and that families from outside of Stockton Borough were also using the Centres.
- The North Tees Commissioning Consortium Board meeting commented that if resource allocation was being directed at the more deprived areas of the Borough, it would have an impact on those less deprived areas such as Ingleby Barwick that have a higher proportion of their population between the ages of 1 and 5 years.

##### Q2 Do you agree with proposal to charge for some services in children's centres?

- There were no specific comments in relation to this question.

**Q3 Do you agree with the proposal to seek a partner to operate in the 4 target areas?**

- The Eastern Area Partnership commented that whichever organisations were identified to work in partnership with the Council, they needed to have a **good track record and reputation**. The LSP also highlighted the **need to maintain the high profile of safeguarding issues**.
- The Housing and Neighbourhood Partnership felt that a **number of partners and organisations would be interested in operating from Centres in partnership with the Council**. The Eastern Area Partnership referred to the **need to link in with Community Asset Transfer**.
- The Central Area Partnership expressed **concern that if a partner was not identified to work with Elm Tree, the viability of the centre was at risk and this would result in wasted investment in the centre**.

**Q4 Do you agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby?**

- There were **no specific comments** in relation to this question.

**Q5 Any other comments?**

- Safer Stockton Partnership highlighted the **increase in levels of domestic violence and stressed that this should be a consideration in future planning of early years services**.

#### **4.4 CORRESPONDENCE**

In addition to the questionnaires and facilitated discussion, seven written submission were received during the consultation. One respondent simply stated they agreed with the proposals set out in the consultation document.

**Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to focus on those most in need?**

- One respondent **understood the rationale for focusing on those in need** but, like those who attended the facilitated discussion, **questioned the criteria for identifying need**, believing that this **should not just be related to geographical or socio-economic factors**.

*“Just because you may live in an area which is considered more affluent, does not mean that your need is any less than anyone else”*

- The respondent noted that they were **pleased with the suggestion of increased outreach work to help target those who have not used the service**, and believe this is a suitable way to engage families living in rural areas, hoping that it would link with other family services.

**Q2 Do you agree with the proposal to charge for some services in children’s centres?**

- Two respondents **agreed with introducing charges**. It was suggested by one

respondent that this take the form of a **small donation** when attending the centres, e.g. 50p. The second respondent, however, felt that a 'fair charging policy' should be implemented whereby **those that are able to pay for the service do so**, while those that are not able continue to receive the service for free.

**Q3 Do you agree with the proposal for the council to work with partners in some centres?**

- One respondent stated they were **“especially pleased”** that the **voluntary and community sector are mentioned as a possible partner organisation**, however do not want these to be seen as a cheaper alternative. They also noted their **concern for the future of a second Children’s Centre in the target areas if a partner does not come forward**.

**Q4 Do you agree with the proposal to stop operating from the Family Centre in Thornaby?**

- There were **no specific comments** received by correspondence regarding the Thornaby Family Centre.

**Q5 Any other comments?**

- **One respondent praised the service they received from the Children’s Centres in Billingham**, noting they had **received welcome support** and their child enjoys the activities they attend.
- **Queries were raised by two respondents in relation to the boundaries of the areas identified**. One respondent felt that the map did not clearly show the catchment areas of the centres. There was **concern that there are areas within the non targeted boundaries that are deprived, and areas included in the targeted boundaries that are affluent**. There was an **issue raised particularly with the boundary between Western and Central West**, with one respondent believing this could affect the viability of Elm Tree Children Centre as the partner’s venue, and consequently the viability of the community centre as a whole. **Concern was also raised that the rural areas had not been included on the map in the consultation document**.
- Three respondents supported the **suggestion that partners could extend the role of the Children Centre buildings so that they could be used for other activities within the community, not just Early Years services**. They particularly felt the extended use of Children Centres may provide an opportunity for a Youth Café to be developed within Ingleby Barwick, and believed that Barley Fields was an appropriate venue for such a café.

*“Our children are the future and the more investment they have, the better the future could be”.*