

**Report for:**  
**ACTION**

**Item Number:**  
**7**

<b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>Title</b>	Changes to Neighbourhood Services
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<b>For Consideration By</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date to be Considered</b>	15 January 2019
<b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>	28 January 2019
<b>Affected Wards</b>	All
<b>Keywords/Index</b>	Future Ealing, Children's Centres, Libraries

**Purpose of Report:**

A report proposing changes to neighbourhood services including Ealing's libraries and children's centres.

Significant cuts of 64% (£143m) in Government funding and rising demand for council services is exerting unprecedented pressure on the council's budgets.

The council's response to these challenges is its Future Ealing outcomes-based programme, through which it is exploring how to transform services, including changing its culture to enable residents who are willing to get more involved to do so.

In the context of the council's funding pressures this report presents the first stage of implementation of a co-ordinated approach to neighbourhoods that will include an approach to supporting active citizenship. It presents to Cabinet proposals for the future provision of Ealing's libraries and children's centres and seeks agreement to consult on these.

## **1. Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Agree, in principle, to proceed with consultation on the changes to the provision of libraries and children's centres as proposed in this report.
- 1.2 Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Environment and Customer Services to finalise the Draft Library Strategy in line with the proposed changes and, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Business and Community, commence public consultation.
- 1.3 Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Children, Adults and Public Health to finalise the Draft Strategy for children's centres in line with the proposed changes and, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Services commence public consultation.
- 1.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Environment and Customer Services, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Business and Community, to invite expressions of interest from the community and other interested parties, to partner with the council to develop and deliver community managed libraries.
- 1.5 Note that a further report will be brought back to Cabinet at the end of the consultation period with recommendations for decision regarding both services and Strategies.

## **2. Reason for Decision and Options Considered**

- 2.1 Ealing continues to face the toughest financial challenges following continued significant and sustained cuts in government grants, alongside rising demand for council services. The total grant Ealing receives has been reduced by £143.7m over the last decade, the equivalent of a 64% funding reduction, and greater than the London and national average. To operate within budget in future years, the council must deliver savings of £57m over the next three fiscal years.
- 2.2 Through the Future Ealing programme the council is reviewing all services. As part of this approach the council wants to take a joined-up approach to provision at neighbourhood level. As part of this it expects to see a significant increase in the role of local people and organisations to shaping and delivering local services. It also wants to ensure that within the limited resources available it meets the administration's aims of protecting outcomes for the most vulnerable.
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood offer as outlined in the Property Assets and Neighbourhood Offer programme July 2018 Cabinet is defined as:

"The best possible provision of Council services and affordable housing across Ealing, which best meets the needs of each particular neighbourhood in the borough."

2.4 The neighbourhoods are organised around the following geographical areas:

- Ealing
- Acton
- Southall
- Northolt
- Greenford
- Hanwell
- Perivale

2.5 In line with that strategic direction the council has reviewed its strategy for provision of libraries and children's centres. The council has high quality provision of both, spread across the borough, and each has delivered savings over time. However, going forward the council believes that the current levels of provision are unaffordable and not necessarily based on the needs of the local population.

2.6 The proposed Library Strategy 2019-2023 will prioritise direct delivery in some neighbourhoods and seek to put in place alternative delivery models in other areas including working with partners to commission third party and community managed libraries. The resulting proposal is to continue to directly deliver 6 libraries in key town centres and neighbourhoods of higher deprivation. All would have revised opening hours based on usage. Further the council will seek to work with the community to identify partners for community managed library provision at the 7 sites not prioritised for direct council delivery. If it is not possible to identify such partners then provision would cease in those areas.

2.7 A children's centre is defined by the DfE as a place or group of places:

- a) which is managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, the local authority with a view to securing that early childhood services in the local authority's area are made available in an integrated way;
- b) through which early childhood services are made available (either by providing the services on site, or by providing advice and assistance on gaining access to services elsewhere); and
- c) at which activities for young children are provided.

2.8 The proposed Children's Centre Strategy 2019-2022 will provide a range of services and opportunities to children aged 0-5 and their parents. The support will continue to be delivered from 7 Main children's centres which fulfil the statutory definition. Ealing's children's centre provision currently operates from 7 main centres and 20 linked sites. The children's centres provide a wide range of early childhood services including early education and childcare places with a particular focus on young children who are vulnerable. Ealing's children's centres also provide a base for delivering midwifery, health visiting and a range of other more specialist health services including for speech and language difficulties, postnatal depression and specialist feeding difficulties. A range of other partners including colleges, JCP and the voluntary sector also rely on the children's centre network to offer services linked to domestic violence support, groups for disabled children and targeted home visiting for young children at risk of harm.

- 2.9 The 7 main children centres will continue to operate as currently, and the linked children centre sites will be reconfigured to meet further efficiencies.
- 2.10 Based on an understanding of need and current uptake, a new arrangement of services across the 20 linked children centres has been developed and will be set out in the Children's Centre Strategy 2019 – 2022. A principle aim has been to retain sufficient geographical coverage and protect the outcomes for the most vulnerable young children and to offer their families continued access to children centre services.
- 2.11 In 9 of the 20 linked children centres, services will continue or be slightly enhanced by some displaced services from the remaining 11 linked children centres. Reconfiguration of services in the 11 remaining smaller children centres will be more significant taking account of available resourcing. Under the 2013 DfE Guidance they may remain linked sites and where it is offered retain early education and childcare. However, they will offer a less extensive range of early childhood services. Partnership activity such as the early health offer at these 11 sites will be subject to negotiation around timetabling and depending on these negotiations it is possible that a small number of centres may close.
- 2.12 The council has considered the option of continuing with current levels of provision of libraries and children's centres but does not believe that this is appropriate in the light of the council's requirement to deliver a balanced budget. It has also considered deeper reductions in service offer but considers that this proposal will enable the council to best meet its statutory responsibilities and the needs of communities.
- 2.13 The Budget Strategy 2019/20 report considered by Cabinet in December 2018 reiterated the financial challenges facing the council showing a budget gap for 19/20 of £31.549m. The December report proposed £12.347m of general fund savings of which £3.725m related to 19/20. These savings when combined with new grant allocations as announced through the Autumn Budget Statement results in a revised budget gap of £24.848m. The neighbourhood approach enables a considered and targeted provision of services to those in most need and provides a contribution to the council's financial challenge.

### **3 Key Implications**

#### *Strategic context*

- 3.1 As part of the services to neighbourhoods' outcome review the council will consider the strategic direction for a range of services that are delivered at local level. These include libraries and children's centres but also may eventually include community centres, leisure facilities and parks.
- 3.2 The council aims to enable residents who are willing to get more involved to do so and to offer more control to communities and the council will be asking Residents, community groups & businesses to play a more active role in

supporting local services. This will enable the council to target its limited resources where they can have the most impact and to work with residents to increase local involvement where possible. The council has considerable experience in facilitating active citizenship through a range of channels including [www.dosomethinggood.org.uk](http://www.dosomethinggood.org.uk). The Talk Future Ealing programme conducted over summer and autumn also showed that there are elements of the local community that are keen to engage with the council. To maximise these opportunities at scale and to drive the necessary cultural change will require the council to take a more co-ordinated and neighbourhood led approach in the future.

3.3 The council also recognises that many services offered to vulnerable young children and their families across the children's centre network can be more effectively and safely delivered by trained professionals. The council shall set out a clear strategy for service delivery including where the opportunities for the community to play a more active role will exist.

3.4 This will largely impact on the library proposals. Recognising that many aspects of the children's centre offer would not be appropriate to delegate beyond the extensive volunteering activity which already exists.

3.5 The key principles of the future strategy for the provision of libraries and children's centres are to:

- Take a neighbourhood approach, so that resources are tailored as far as possible to meet need where it is greatest whilst maintaining a reasonable geographic spread of provision to ensure access.
- Target provision towards the most vulnerable individuals and generally in geographic areas of higher deprivation and need.
- Consideration of further co-location of services where appropriate including with partners.
- Work with the community where appropriate to co-produce solutions and protect outcomes.
- Ensure that services offered provide a high-quality environment for individuals and are effective in meeting priority outcomes.
- Realise savings to meet the council's requirement to set a balanced budget
- Meet legal requirements for service provision

3.6 The key elements of the proposed strategies for libraries and children's centres can be summarised as:

- Remodel the Library Service around a core statutory provision of 6 libraries directly managed by the council. In addition, the council will seek to retain services at other sites by promoting opportunities for community managed libraries in up to 7 areas. This approach mirrors that taken in many parts of the country to seek to maximise coverage of library provision by involving the community in delivery. In the event a partner cannot be identified for each community managed library site, it would be closed.

- The proposed Libraries Strategy 2019-2023 will be based on a current assessment of need across the borough and guided by the National Libraries Task Force Strategy. Libraries Deliver: Ambition for public libraries in England 2016 – 2021.
- Ensure the provision meets the times when it is most needed, whilst reducing the opening hours of all libraries.
- Reconfigure the children’s centre offer to maintain the well-established and effective joint education, safeguarding, support and health services which will continue to be provided through a network of children centre sites.
- The proposed Children’s Centre Strategy 2019-2022 will be based on a current assessment of need across the borough and utilisation of services at each children’s centre. The revised configuration will aim to retain sufficient geographical coverage to facilitate local access to services. Consultation with local families and the community will help develop and shape this strategy further.
- A remodelled children’s centre service retains 7 Main centres and 9 linked centres. The remaining 11 children’s centres are proposed to be significantly reconfigured. Some of the childcare providers on these sites have already expressed an interest in expanding their education and childcare offer and negotiation with other key partners including housing associations who own two of the buildings and work with the midwifery and health visiting services will focus on maintaining services and minimising disruption.
- Where possible the proposed Strategy shall seek to avoid closures of any children’s centre buildings. The response of service providers to the consultation shall inform any final proposal.

3.7 The council currently has a comprehensive offer of 13 libraries and 7 Main children centres and 20 linked children centre sites providing a wide geographic coverage. Both services perform well against performance indicators. However, the current delivery models need to establish a revised balance given the acute budget pressures between retaining essential and valuable services and sustainability. The council is therefore presenting proposals for future provision that remodels it to meet the council’s legal obligations whilst delivering the necessary savings to protect other areas including duties to looked after children, adult social care and homelessness.

3.8 Service specific elements for libraries and children’s centres of the strategy include:

### **Libraries**

3.9 When finalised, the proposals in the draft Ealing Library Strategy 2019–2023 will continue to deliver a comprehensive and efficient service that has a sustainable future within the resources available. It will build on the work already taking place

including working with charitable trusts, communities and other partners to devise new service models

### 3.10 The aims of the strategy are to:

1. Co-create a comprehensive service to neighbourhoods offer with our communities and other partners.
2. Provide a modern library service in safe, accessible and friendly spaces (real and virtual) to help more people:
  - Develop reading, learning, functional and entrepreneurial skills;
  - Be independent users of IT and digital services, as consumers and producers;
  - Get involved in civic and community life and;
  - Access the arts, imagination and creativity
3. Improve, extend and sustain what we do through:
  - Partnering with communities and businesses;
  - Being relevant and innovative;
  - Creating and exploiting commercial opportunities to unlock value and efficiencies in our assets (buildings, land and resources);
  - Continuous professional development of our staff to deliver modern and efficient services

### 3.11 The major strategic shift in the Strategy is to:

- Consolidate the library service through 6 libraries directly run by the council; in addition, the Council is aiming to deliver 7 community managed libraries to ensure coverage across the 7 designated Neighbourhoods. This will include;
  - A new central library in Ealing with good transport links for all Ealing residents,
  - Town Centre/Neighbourhood libraries and Local Branch libraries to meet the needs of communities in the most deprived areas.
- Provide the opportunity for co-produced libraries through a community managed library offer in the least deprived areas of the borough in partnership with the community and other partners.
- Keep the current extended study opening hours in Acton, Ealing Central and Southall Libraries from April to June.
- Reduce opening hours across the library offer so that services are open when they are most needed and closed when they are not.
- Retain the home library service as a commissioned service through the voluntary sector.

## Children's Centres

3.12 In 2012 Ealing merged its children centre offer into 7 Main localities, with early years services additionally provided through 20 linked sites.

3.13 All children's centres in Ealing have remained open and contributed towards the deliver of statutory children's centre services across 7 Main children centre locality areas following the merger in 2012. Under the current proposals Ealing will continue to have 7 Main children centres and 9 linked children centres as now. The offer in the remaining 11 linked sites is proposed to be significantly reconfigured to meet the current budget constraints. It is possible that a small number of centres may close.

3.14 The proposed Ealing Children's Centre Strategy 2019 – 2022 will set out a strategic direction for the service to work towards a sustainable model of delivery. The council has already re-tendered the Early Start 0-19 service to improve the identification of need and improve the quality of support from those identified as vulnerable. This supports the implementation of this proposed strategy. The following principles are also taken into account:

- Maintain council funded activity in children's centres which are identified as serving high levels of need whilst accepting service configuration will be necessary on some sites.
- Maintain a geographic coverage of children's centres across the borough so that families with young children will maintain an option to access services close to home.
- Maintain access by young children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Prioritise vulnerable young children's 0- 5 years access to existing or alternative service arrangements.
- Minimise disruption to statutory health checks by negotiating alternative local venues, especially in areas of relatively high vulnerability and poor outcomes.
- Seek to improve access to high quality childcare on the remaining children's centres sites by expanding where practicable the number of childcare places available there to vulnerable children, especially vulnerable two-year olds whose take up in Ealing is below national and London average.
- Retain integration with pathways to more acute services to ensure that the preventative opportunity of early intervention is maximised, including ensuring more specialist services delivered in children's centres are maintained.

3.15 It is in the above context that the proposed future approaches for libraries and children's centres are being considered. A summary of the proposed changes is:

Service	Current Service Offer	Proposed Service Offer
<b>Libraries</b>	13 libraries all run by Ealing Library Service	4 Town Centre/Neighbourhood libraries run by Ealing Library Service to be located in: Acton (co-location with Leisure) Ealing Northolt Southall (co-location with Dominion Community Centre)
		2 Local Branch libraries run by Ealing Library Service in areas of the borough with high deprivation needs: Jubilee Gardens in Southall (Co location with Health) Northolt Leisure (co location)
		Community Managed Libraries run by community organisations / partners; if no viable partner is identified then these libraries would close)  4 Neighbourhood Community Managed Libraries located as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greenford</li> <li>• Hanwell</li> <li>• Perivale</li> </ul> 4 Neighbourhood Branch libraries run as Community Managed Libraries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northfields</li> <li>• Pitshanger</li> <li>• West Ealing</li> <li>• Wood End</li> </ul>
		Study session opening around exams protected where the library remains open
		Opening hours reduced across all libraries
		<b>Children's Centres</b>
20 linked children centres	9 Children Centre Linked Sites as currently provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grange</li> <li>• Greenfields</li> <li>• Hathaway</li> <li>• John Perryn</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limetrees</li> <li>• Maples</li> <li>• Petts Hill</li> <li>• Southall Park</li> <li>• St John's (Jubilee)</li> </ul> <p>11 Children Centre Linked Sites which will provide a reconfigured service offer. The centres in bold have education and childcare on site or could offer additional places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acton Park</b></li> <li>• <b>Copley</b></li> <li>• <b>Dormers Wells</b></li> <li>• <b>Havelock</b></li> <li>• Horsenden</li> <li>• <b>Northolt Park</b></li> <li>• North Ealing</li> <li>• <b>Windmill</b></li> <li>• <b>Windmill Park</b></li> <li>• <b>West Twyford</b></li> <li>• Wood End</li> </ul>
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#### 4 Financial

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget as set out in the Budget Strategy reports and, as shown in the December 2018 Budget Strategy Update report, further savings are required to achieve this. Following prolonged and significant reductions in Government funding that has resulted in real term reductions since 2010/11 of £143.7m (-64.3%) the options available to the Council to set a balanced budget are limited and will involve tough choices that impact on front line service delivery in addition to the ongoing efficiencies that are being delivered. Wherever possible the council has and will continue to seek to identify creative solutions that reduce spending but as far as possible limit any negative impact on community outcomes. However, the scale of the financial challenge that the council faces means that consideration needs to be given as to whether it continues to be possible to deliver the full range of services the council provides to current service standards, and that the council will have to prioritise the activity that it delivers within available resources.
- 4.2 The budget strategy report seeks to fundamentally re-align council services with the priorities as set out in the Future Ealing programme and support the Administrations priorities.
- 4.3 The council sets to achieve better outcomes for individuals in the borough by redesigning and modernising services, engaging more individuals and, so far as possible, focusing services where they are most needed.
- 4.4 The council must deliver savings of c£57m over the next three financial years. Through the December 2018 Budget Strategy 2019/20 report to Cabinet, the council outlined a delivery programme that, if successfully implemented, will

deliver financial savings of £11.825m over the MTFs period (£12.347m over the longer term) with £3.725m being attributable to closing the 19/20 budget gap of £31.549m. The council continues to review the best allocation of resources to deliver priority outcomes and reduce costs against this challenging backdrop of significantly reduced resources.

### Children's Centres

Children's Centre	2019-20 £M	2020/21 £M	2021/22 £M	2022/23 £M	Total Savings £M
Opening Net General Fund Budget	1.348	1.190	1.032	1.032	
General Fund	-0.158	-0.158	0.000	0.000	-0.316
DSG	-0.246	-0.246	0.000	0.000	-0.492
<b>Total Net Children's Centre Savings</b>	<b>-0.404</b>	<b>-0.404</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>-0.808</b>
Draft General Fund Net Budget after Savings	1.190	1.032	1.032	1.032	

- 4.5 The total budget for the affected children's centres is £1.348m, split between the General Fund Budget (£0.527m) and High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) (£0.821m).
- 4.6 This proposal will deliver part year net general fund savings in 2019/20 and 2020/21 amounting to £0.158m p.a. The full year impact of this proposal will be £0.316m and will be realised from 2021/22.
- 4.7 This proposal also releases savings against the High Needs block of DSG, of £0.246m in 2020/21 and 2021/22 and the full year effect will be realised in 2021/22 (£0.492m).
- 4.8 The impact on children centres budgets of this report's proposals is set out above, if implemented following consultation.

### Libraries

Library Service	2019-20 £M	2020/21 £M	2021/22 £M	2022/23 £M	Total Savings £M
Opening Budget	2.194	1.163	0.579	0.566	
Review of Neighbourhood Provision	-0.571	-0.571	0.000	0.000	-1.142
Other saving opportunities ( <i>FE1-1915 approved by December 2018 Cabinet</i> )	-0.399	-0.013	-0.013	-0.013	-0.438
CIE Management & Tiers Spans Savings - Wave 2 ( <i>CIE14 approved by February 2018 Cabinet</i> )	-0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	-0.061
<b>Total Net Library Service Savings</b>	<b>-1.031</b>	<b>-0.584</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>-1.641</b>
Draft Budget after Savings	1.163	0.579	0.566	0.553	

4.9 The saving associated with the review of library services to neighbourhoods provision delivers a saving of £1.142m. This is in addition to other approved savings totalling £0.499m, identified by the library service and will be achieved through staff efficiencies (£0.061m), reductions in IT contract costs and operational and staffing savings in the new central library (£0.438m). This represents a total saving of £1.641m (75% of the current libraries budget).

4.10 The savings shown above are net of redundancy costs, pension fund strain and implementation costs. It is not possible to fully scope the costs until the results of public consultation have been analysed and reported back in June as this will undoubtedly shape the proposed strategies and implementation plan. The funding of these costs will be incorporated within the council's medium term financial strategy required to implement other savings proposals.

4.11 The net budget savings incorporated within the MTFs are consolidated below:

Description	2019/20 £M	2020/21 £M	2021/22 £M	2022/23 £M	Total Savings £M
Children's Centre	-0.158	-0.158	0.000	0.000	-0.316
Library Service	-1.031	-0.584	-0.013	-0.013	-1.641
<b>Total General Fund Savings</b>	<b>-1.189</b>	<b>-0.742</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>-0.013</b>	<b>-1.957</b>
Estimated Redundancy	0.505	-0.191	-0.152	-0.162	0.000
<b>Total Net General Fund Savings</b>	<b>-0.684</b>	<b>-0.933</b>	<b>-0.165</b>	<b>-0.175</b>	<b>-1.957</b>

4.12 These proposals take no account of the future alternative uses of the assets that services are delivered from. This will be covered within the emerging Asset Strategy and the subject of future reports to cabinet.

## 5 Legal Implications

### In relation to libraries:

5.1 Section 7 of The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places a duty on the Council as Library Authority, as follows:

- (1) To provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof,

Provided, that although a library authority shall have power to make facilities for the borrowing of books and other materials available to any persons it shall not by virtue of this subsection be under a duty to make such facilities available to persons other than those whose residence or place of work is within the library area of the authority or who are undergoing full-time education within that area.

- (2) In fulfilling its duty under the preceding subsection, a library authority shall in particular have regard to the desirability—

(a) of securing, by the keeping of adequate stocks, by arrangements with other library authorities, and by any other appropriate means, that facilities are available for the borrowing of, or reference to, books and other printed matter, and pictures, gramophone records, films and other materials, sufficient in number, range and quality to meet the general requirements and any special requirements both of adults and children; and

(b) of encouraging both adults and children to make full use of the library service, and of providing advice as to its use and of making available such bibliographical and other information as may be required by persons using it; and

(c) of securing, in relation to any matter concerning the functions both of the library authority as such and any other authority whose functions are exercisable within the library area, that there is full co-operation between the persons engaged in carrying out those functions.

5.2 The legislation itself is not prescriptive about what a comprehensive and efficient service is. However, in the case of *Bailey v London Borough of Brent* [2011] the Judge confirmed that comprehensive does not mean that every resident lives close to a library. Comprehensive has been taken to mean delivering a service that is accessible to all residents using reasonable means, including digital technologies. An efficient service must make the best use of the assets available to meet its core objectives and vision, recognising the constraints on council resources. Decisions about the Service must be embedded within a clear strategic framework which draws upon evidence about needs and aspirations across the diverse communities of the borough. Accordingly, when considering how to meet its statutory duty, it is important for the Council to carry out an assessment of the needs which the service has to meet. The Council's assessment of need should be consulted upon along with the draft strategy which contains proposals to change the service.

#### In relation to children's centres

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

5.4 A "young child" is defined as a child during the period from birth until 31 August following the child's 5th birthday.

5.5 In discharging its functions under the 2006 Act, the council must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State published the "Sure Start Children's centres statutory guidance" in 2013.

- 5.6 By section 3 of the 2006 Act, the council must make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in its area are provided in an integrated manner, which is calculated to facilitate access to those services, and to maximise the benefit of those services to parents, prospective parents and young children.
- 5.7 “Early childhood services” are defined by section 2 of the 2006 Act and include “early years provision” for young children – i.e. the provision of childcare for a young child.
- 5.8 In deciding what “arrangements” to make under this section, a local authority must have regard to (a) the quantity and quality of early childhood services that are provided, or expected to be provided, in the area; and (b) where in that area those services are provided or are expected to be provided. The statutory guidance makes clear that this consideration will be relevant to deciding whether or not a children’s centre in a particular area should directly provide childcare on site, or whether there is sufficiently accessible childcare already in the area.
- 5.9 There is no statutory requirement for a local authority to provide childcare at a children’s centre however section 5A of the 2006 Act requires the council to ensure there are arrangements under section 3, so far as is reasonably practicable, include arrangements for sufficient provision of children’s centres to meet local need.
- 5.10 By section 5A(5) of the 2006 Act, a service, including the provision of childcare, is “made available” by providing the service or by providing advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents on gaining access to the service. The council must consider whether early childhood services (including childcare) should be provided through a children’s centre and when doing this must take into account whether providing a service through a children’s centre would (a) facilitate access to it; or (b) maximize its benefit to parents, prospective parents and young children: see section 5E of the 2006 Act.
- 5.11 The statutory definition of a children’s centre is found in section 5A(4) of the 2006 Act. It is a place (a) managed by or on behalf of, or under arrangements with, an English local authority, with a view to securing that early childhood services are made available in an integrated manner; (b) through which each of the early childhood services is made available; and (c) at which activities for young children are provided, whether by way of early years provision or otherwise.
- 5.12 This proposal in the consultation recommends closing and reconfiguring children’s centres. Ceasing to provide childcare at a children’s centre amounts to a “significant change” in the services provided through a children’s centre. The council must secure that such consultation as they think appropriate is carried out before any significant change is made in the services provided through a relevant children’s centre: section 5D(1)(b) of the 2006 Act.
- 5.13 The statutory guidance states that the council should “not close an existing children’s centre site in any reorganisation of provision unless they can demonstrate that, where they decide to close a children’s centre site, the

outcomes for children, particularly the most disadvantaged, would not be adversely affected and will not compromise the duty to have sufficient children's centres to meet local need. The starting point should therefore be a presumption against the closure of children's centres"

5.14 The consultation should explain how the council will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. The consultation should take account of take account of families crossing local authority borders to use children's centres in their authority and vice versa as families and carers are free to access early childhood services where it suits them best.

5.15 It should also be clear how respondent's views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond. Decisions following consultation should be announced publicly and should explain why decisions were taken.

5.16 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 creates a general duty on the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. The Council is under a duty to provide such day care for children in need within their area who are (a) aged five or under; and (b) not yet attending schools, as is appropriate.

#### In relation to consultations:

5.17 When making decisions the Council must act reasonably and rationally. They must take into account all relevant information and disregard all irrelevant information and take into account the views of those affected before any final decision is made. The consultation process and analysis meets these principles.

#### In relation to Equalities

5.18 The Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. This general duty is set out in s.149 Equality Act 2010. In summary, the duty requires the Council decision makers to have due regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

5.19 The Act makes clear that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

5.20 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

5.21 Draft Equality Analysis Assessments regarding these proposals have been prepared and will need to be consulted upon along with the draft Strategies and members should have regard to the potential impacts on protected groups. These documents are likely to evolve as feedback is given during the consultation process. Final Equality Analysis Assessments will need to be prepared ahead of the final decisions being made at Cabinet in July.

#### In relation to property disposal:

5.22 The Council has the power to dispose of property which is surplus to its requirements under section 123 of the Local Government 1972 Act in any manner it wishes. This is subject to an obligation to obtain the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained (except for leases of seven years or less) unless the Secretary of State's consent is obtained for the disposal whether pursuant to the General Disposal Consent contained in Circular 03/2003 or by means of an express consent.

## **6 Value for Money**

6.1 The budget setting process addresses the council's performance in delivering national and local priorities and focuses on the needs of its communities. The budget process has required services to demonstrate this through budget proposals submissions.

6.2 The council consistently monitors performance and finance in tandem, to ensure that value for money services are commissioned and provided and regularly adjusts its activities, where improved performance and better value for money can be achieved. The proposals contained within this report are set within the context of the financial constraints facing the council, as well as improving performance and achieving better value for money.

## **7 Sustainability Impact Appraisal**

7.1 Any sustainability impacts will be considered before final decisions are taken post-consultation on the proposals.

## **8 Risk Management**

8.1 It is important that spending is contained within budget so that the council can maintain its financial standing in the face of further pressure on resources. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy is continually under review and builds in projections for the MTFS period and beyond as further details and analysis

become available. These updates are regularly reviewed by Corporate Board and the Portfolio Holder and updates on the financial environment the Council is operating in are provided in Budget Strategy reports to Cabinet.

8.2 In developing proposals the council has had regard to need for services, particularly for the most vulnerable. It has also developed an approach which aims to minimise the impact of budget reductions and avoid unnecessary service closures by working with the community and providers to develop alternative proposals for delivery at a number of sites.

## **9 Community Safety**

None

## **10 Links to the 3 Key Priorities for the Borough**

10.1 The council's administration has three key priorities for Ealing. They are:

- Good, genuinely affordable homes.
- Opportunities and living incomes.
- A healthy and great place.

10.2 The proposals covered in this report relating to libraries and children's centres have direct links with two of the priorities: Opportunities and living incomes, and a healthy and great place.

## **11 Equalities, Human Rights and Community Cohesion**

Equality Analysis Assessments have been prepared in draft. These are attached at Appendices 1 and 2 in relation to both the draft Libraries and children's centres strategies. These assessments will need to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and updated during and at the end of the consultation process, prior to final decisions being made by Cabinet later in the year.

## **12 Staffing/Workforce and Accommodation implications:**

12.1 Libraries: to deliver the savings required will have an impact on staff, as staff inevitably are our biggest expenditure. The strategic shift to a mixed model of delivery reducing from 13 libraries to 6 directly run by the local authority will result in a reduction in staff needed to run the service. The current staffing levels in libraries direct delivery is 78FTE (153 individuals). An organisational change report and staff consultation will be implemented following the council's usual process for organisational change in June 2019.

12.2 Community managed libraries will be run by the community, providing space for a library. The community managed libraries will be supported by contact with

the Library Service through peripatetic site visits, advice and other support services. The council will not provide library staff permanently located or seconded to the community managed library. The community partner will determine how these spaces are run and propose its own operational arrangements as part of an extended community offer.

12.3 The proposed changes to children's centres to deliver the savings required could have an impact on 35 FTE staff if this proposal is agreed and there will be a reduction in staffing capacity to run the service. A detailed public consultation will take place beginning in February 2019 and this will contribute towards the new proposed staffing structure.

12.3.1 A children's centre organisational change report and staff consultation will then be implemented following a decision. The phasing of financial savings between 2019/20 to 2021/22 will support the implementation of the council's usual managed process with the aim of reducing the need for redundancies.

### **13 Property and Assets**

13.1 These proposals take no account of the future alternative uses of the assets that services are delivered from. This will be covered within the emerging Asset Strategy and the subject of future reports to cabinet.

13.2 The aim under the current children centre proposal is to continue to use buildings to provide early childhood services. This reduces the risk of any capital clawback by the government which originally invested £20m capital in Ealing on the basis that the children centre buildings would continue to be used for the delivery of early childhood services for 25 years. There is an opportunity in 8 of the 11 children centre buildings most significantly impacted by the proposed changes to expand provision of the number of their early education and childcare places to meet demand. In the event that a small number of children centres are closed all options around colocation and use of alternative sites will be explored during the consultation process before any decision is taken.

13.3 Community managed libraries may be in existing buildings or on new sites. The tenancy arrangements for community managed libraries will be determined according to the ownership of the building, where these are council buildings, this will be negotiated individually with the community partner.

13.4 The Future Ealing: Property Assets and Neighbourhood Offer Programme report received by Cabinet 10th July 2018 Strategy identified the following library and children centre buildings in scope:

- *Pitshanger Library* – The 16-year lease was due to end on 31 December 2018. This is the most expensive of the non-council owned library sites proposed to be potentially managed by the community. The opportunity to cease occupation of the site has presented an opportunity for the service to be provided more efficiently in partnership with the community. The

council has served a Section 26 notice for a new business tenancy of 12 months under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and. This will give sufficient times for consultation and negotiation with prospective community partners for a community managed library in the Pitshanger area.

- Greenford Library; Hanwell Library and Children Centre buildings, Perivale Library and Wood End Library and Children Centre buildings are all in scope for potential co-locations as community hubs either on the existing site or alternative sites.

#### **14 Any other implications:**

None

#### **15 Consultation**

15.1 The council intends to run two separate, but parallel, consultations, one for libraries and one for children's centres. In both cases the consultation methodology will:

- Run for 12 weeks.
- Set out a clear rationale for the proposals and invite comments and alternatives within the financial and other constraints within which a decision will need to be made.
- Include both an online offer and a programme of face-to-face engagement opportunities.
- Include opportunities for detailed views of users affected.
- Include opportunities for detailed views of those not directly affected.

15.2 Details of the consultation methodology and how people can be involved will be advertised on the council website and through wider communications prior to the start of the consultation period.

#### **16 Timetable for Implementation**

16.1 If Cabinet agrees the proposed approach and basis for consultation, the draft outline timeline is as below. Stages post consultation are indicative and would be subject to decisions made by Cabinet in July.

- Draft Strategies published February 2019
- Consultation commences February 2019
- Consultation closes May 2019
- Report to Cabinet in July 2019, with summary of consultation results. Cabinet gives final decision.
- Implementation commences Autumn 2019.

#### **17 Appendices**

Appendix 1: Initial Draft Equality Analysis Assessment – Libraries

## Appendix 2: Initial Draft Equality Analysis Assessment – Children’s Centres

### 18 Background Information

- [Future Ealing Programme Update](#), Report to Cabinet, March 2018
- [Budget Strategy 2019/20](#), Report to Cabinet, December 2018
- Children’s Centre Statutory Guidance 2013
- Library Contract Extension from September 2018 to August 2023 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018
- Options for the Future Delivery of Leisure and Library Services 19 June 2012
- Options for the Future Delivery of Leisure and Library Services 24 January 2012
- Ealing Library Strategy 2011 – 2014

## Consultation

Name of consultee	Post held	Date sent to consultee	Date response received	Comments appear in paragraph:
<b>Internal</b>				
Cllr Julian Bell	Leader of the Council	14/12/18	18/12/18	
Cllr. Jasbir Anand	Portfolio Holder Business and Community	14/12/18	18.12/18	
Cllr. Yvonne Johnson	Portfolio Holder Schools and Children's Services	14/12/18	18/12/18	
Keith Townsend	Executive Director, Environment and Customer Services	10/12/18	ongoing	
Judith Finlay	Executive Director, Children, Adults and Public Health	10/12/18	ongoing	
Gillian Marston	Director Environment	5/12/18	ongoing	
Alison Reynolds	Director Customer Services	5/12/18	ongoing	
Kieran Read	Director Strategy and Engagement	5/12/18	5/12/18 ongoing	throughout
Ross Brown	Director Finance	5/12/18	ongoing	
Liz Chiles	Director HR and OD	10/12/18	ongoing	
Helen Harris Catherine Taylor Justin Morley	Legal Services	5/12/18	ongoing	throughout
Charles Barnard	Assistant Director, Integrated Early Years	5/12/18	ongoing	throughout
Carole Stewart	,Assistant Director, Arts, Heritage and Libraries	5/12/18	ongoing	throughout
Gary Pyke	Assistant Director, Transformation	5/12/18	ongoing	throughout

## Report History

<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Urgency item? No</b>
Key decision	<b>Yes</b>
Report no.:	Jackie Fisk
	Senior Change and Transformation Officer, <a href="mailto:fiskj@ealing.gov.uk">fiskj@ealing.gov.uk</a> , 0208 825 6853