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NOTICE OF MEETING

Meeting	Children and Young People Select Committee
Date and Time	Tuesday 30th January 2018 at 10.00 am
Place	Ashburton Hall, Elizabeth II Court, The Castle, Winchester
Enquiries to	members.services@hants.gov.uk

John Coughlan CBE
Chief Executive
The Castle, Winchester SO23 8UJ

FILMING AND BROADCAST NOTIFICATION

This meeting may be recorded and broadcast live on the County Council's website. The meeting may also be recorded and broadcast by the press and members of the public – please see the Filming Protocol available on the County Council's website.

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members who believe they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter to be considered at the meeting must declare that interest and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3 Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore all Members with a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting should consider whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, consider whether it is appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter is discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 12)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

4. DEPUTATIONS

To receive any deputations notified under Standing Order 12.

5. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements the Chairman may wish to make.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST TO EXERCISE CALL-IN POWERS
(Pages 13 - 168)

To receive a report regarding the consideration of a request to exercise call-in powers in relation to a decision of the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

ABOUT THIS AGENDA:

On request, this agenda can be provided in alternative versions (such as large print, Braille or audio) and in alternative languages.

ABOUT THIS MEETING:

The press and public are welcome to attend the public sessions of the meeting. If you have any particular requirements, for example if you require wheelchair access, please contact members.services@hants.gov.uk for assistance.

County Councillors attending as appointed members of this Committee or by virtue of Standing Order 18.5; or with the concurrence of the Chairman in connection with their duties as members of the Council or as a local County Councillor qualify for travelling expenses.

Agenda Item 3

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Monday,
15th January, 2018

Chairman:
p Councillor Ray Bolton

Vice Chairman:
p Councillor Roz Chadd

p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Fran Carpenter
p Councillor Steve Forster
p Councillor Marge Harvey
p Councillor Wayne Irish
p Councillor Gavin James
p Councillor Kirsty Locke

p Councillor Kirsty Locke
p Councillor Russell Oppenheimer
p Councillor Neville Penman
p Councillor Jackie Porter
p Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade
p Councillor Michael Westbrook

Co-opted Members:

p Ian Brewerton, Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
p Jane Longman, Special School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT, Primary School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT, Church of England Schools Representative
VACANT Roman Catholic Schools Representative

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

p Councillor Peter Edgar – Executive Member for Education
p Councillor Keith Mans – Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services
p Rob Sanders, Deputy Director of Education, Church of England

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received.

34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

Cllr Jackie Porter declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items 6 and 9, as she is the Chair of a Pre-School that receives special educational needs funding, and in Item 8, as she is a Chairman of Trustees in one of the organisations receiving funding for overnight respite services.

Cllr Robert Taylor declared a pecuniary interest in Item 8, as he is a paid part-time employee of Sebastian's Action Trust, who received funding for providing an overnight respite pilot.

Cllr Malcolm Wade made a non-pecuniary interest, as he is a Trustee of an organisation that has previously received a grant from Children's Services.

Cllr Peter Edgar, the Executive Member for Education, who has a standing invitation to attend and speak to the Committee, noted a non-pecuniary interest, which is that he is a lifelong member of the National Association of Head Teachers.

35. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. DEPUTATIONS

The Committee received two deputations on Item 8 'Proposal to close overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services'.

Ms Gail Bedding, Chief Executive of the Hampshire Parent Carer Network, made a deputation requesting that the County Council pause making a decision on closing the overnight residential respite homes until the alternative options had been outlined to parents and carers.

Ms Marie-Louise Johnson made a deputation asking members to consider the equalities impact on children with disabilities when considering the report, and requested that the recommendations be reconsidered.

37. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman did not make any announcements to the meeting.

38. REVENUE BUDGET FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2018/19

The Director of Children's Services and a representative of the Director of Corporate Resources attended before the Committee in order to present the revenue budget for Children's Services for 2018/19 (see report and presentation, Item 6 in the Minute Book).

The presentation outlined the overall County Council financial position. The local government grant settlement announced in 2016 provided provisional figures for authorities for the following three financial years, including 2018/19, to aid

financial planning, and the settlement for 2018/19 was mostly unchanged compared to the forecast position. Since this time, however, a pay offer had been made for local government workers of 2% per annum, and changes to the lower pay grades to reflect the move to the National Living Wage. This element was not costed in the finance settlement, and therefore consideration would need to be given as to how to meet this ongoing cost pressure.

There would be a significant draw down from the Grant Equalisation Reserve in 2018/19 in order to support the savings required as part of Transformation to 2019. In a change from previous years, the Government had changed the Council Tax precept cap, enabling a potential increase of 2.99% without consultation, plus 2% for social care. This development would be discussed by Cabinet in February.

A fair funding review had been announced by Government, which would see a consultation on how local government would be financed in future. This review promised to implement any changes by 2020/21. Also announced was a green paper on funding adult social care, although this would not result in any new funding in this area for 2018/19.

An overview of the Council's reserves strategy and financial position was provided, which set out that of the £524.2m held, approximately £79.4m, or 15.1% of the reserves, were truly 'available' to support one-off spending, although most of this was already allocated.

Members received an update on progress against the 'Transformation to 2019' proposals, as requested in November 2017. As previously noted, Children's Services would be receiving cashflow support from County Treasurers to enable delivery of the £30m of savings required from the Department. This was in part due to the need to phase the savings up to 2022/23, owing to efficiencies for the most part being linked to work around 'partners in practice' and safely reducing the number of looked after children. As part of the Transformation to 2019 programme, the Department would be leading two consultations; one on short breaks activities, and one on home to school transport.

Members heard details on the proposed 2018/19 budget for Children's Services. The priorities for the Department remained the same and had been essential in focusing resource where it was most needed. Many of the key Departmental issues and challenges were not new and had previously been discussed with the Committee. The Department would continue to work to manage increasing demand for children's services, working hard to continue to keep children safe. As previously reported, the issue of unaccompanied asylum seekers was an additional factor impacting on the budget, as the budget accompanying such children were estimated to only cover half of the specialist support costs incurred through their placements. Overviews were also provided of work ongoing within the children with disabilities and home to school transport services.

The main factor impacting on Children's Services continued to be the rising demand for services against a backdrop of reducing resources, with the number of children in care continuing to increase. An overview was provided to Members of how the new resilience-based model developed through 'partners in practice'

would work, and how the number of children in care could be safely reduced, although places would always be available for children who required them.

In considering the more detailed Children's Services revenue budget, and in response to questions, Members heard:

- That almost all of the organisations involved within the 'partners in practice' work operated within the Hampshire boundary, as most were community services and not hospital-based.
- Within the first phase of the 'partners in practice' work, the Department had reviewed the resource needed to make the new model successful, and as part of this had set up a graduate scheme for social workers. This scheme recruited newly-qualified social workers, and provided them with a clear training programme which enabled them to be trained, move around service areas to get a good overview of the social worker role, and to assist on cases. At the end of January 2018, 19 new social workers would graduate from this scheme, with a further 20 due to finish at the end of May, and a further 20 in October. This scheme was proving very popular, and would help tackle the overspend on agency workers by providing 'home grown' talented social workers.
- A placement would be made available to any child whose needs required this support; the aspiration of the new model was to implement early interventions through multi-disciplinary working reducing the likelihood of children needing more specialist care, as preventative work could help tackle the issues before they become critical. Of the current cohort of looked after children, 40% were teenagers. As historic data showed that those over 13 do not fare as well in life as their peers outside of the care system, it was important to safely reduce the number of older children in care, returning them to their families where this was safe and appropriate. The solution to doing this was to provide greater support to families earlier on, learning from programmes such as Troubled Families where this model had been very successful.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendation being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 1, page 1 of the report.

39. CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Director of Children's Services and his representatives attended before the Committee in order to present the capital programme for Children's Services for 2018/19 – 2020/21 (see report and presentation, Item 7 in the Minute Book).

The Capital Programme for Children's Services continued to be an exciting investment for Hampshire, as this was the most significant schools construction activity for over 30 years, and the largest nationally. To date, an additional 8,088 school places had been built, and it was proposed that provision be made for a further 9,632 primary and secondary places. Overall, the pupil number trends showed that the pressure on primary school places was starting to plateau in some areas of the county. However, an increase was now starting to be seen in secondary schools as children progressed through the education system.

The pupil forecasting model includes new housing figures provided by the planning authorities in Hampshire, so proposed new schools to serve housing developments were dependent on housing schemes going ahead. Any slippage in new housing developments would also be reflected in the programme.

The County Council had received approval from the Department for Education for a new 125 place free school in Basingstoke, which will accommodate children with special communication needs and those on the autistic spectrum. This was one of only 20 Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) schools approved in a recent free school initiative. In addition to this, national funding of £215m has been made available for SEND for which Hampshire is expected to receive £3.7m.

There would be a pressure on the Capital Programme over a five year period, owing to additional need, inflation challenges and concerns regarding construction. The County Council did not have any live schemes being delivered in partnership with Carillion, and the Department would be looking at any historic schemes to see if there will be an impact on the County Council.

The County Council is contributing to the government review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and would specifically be lobbying on the restrictions around pooling schemes to pay for major infrastructure projects.

On the 2018/19 to 2020/21 Capital Programme, in response to questions, Members heard:

- Some schemes previously proposed may slip or be suspended if the pupil numbers forecast do not come to fruition. In the case of the Trosnant Schools in Havant, investment would still be taking place, but not at the capacity previously planned due to pupil numbers in Leigh Park not increasing to the number previously forecast.
- Where applicable the Department uses Section 106 funding for new school buildings and expansions, secured through major housing developments. CIL funds tended to be small investments and there was a limit on how many of these could be pooled, although they were on occasion used for school expansions and improvements. If this was required, negotiations would be held within the County Council to agree what proportion of CIL funding would be used for schools.
- The school places plan took its forecasting from housing developments with planning permission, or those developments that were large scale and nearing planning permission. There were a number of speculative projects the Department were aware of, but had not yet been agreed, and therefore they did not currently appear in the places plan. The Department regularly meets with the Local Planning Authorities to ensure the plan is up to date.

It was agreed that any Member could contact the officers to review the planning numbers considered in the report for their District areas.

Although a recorded vote was not requested on the recommendation, those Members who abstained from voting for the recommendation noted that they had

done so as Item 8 had not yet been considered, which may have a related capital programme impact.

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendation being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 1, page 1 of the report.

40. PROPOSALS TO CLOSE TWO OVERNIGHT RESIDENTIAL RESPITE HOMES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AS THE COUNTY COUNCIL MOVES TOWARDS A WIDER RANGE OF OVERNIGHT RESPITE SERVICES.

The Director of Children's Services and his representatives attended before the Committee in order to speak to the 'Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services' item (see Item 8 in the Minute Book).

The report set out the outcomes of the public consultation heard on the proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes – Merrydale in Kings Worthy (Winchester) and Sunbeams in Aldershot – and to offer a wider sustainable overnight respite service to disabled children and their families. The closure would impact on 35 children and their families currently using these centres.

The report in the Committee's papers would be considered by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services at his decision day later in the afternoon.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That currently 23 children and their families used specialist respite care provided through foster carers, and there were 40 foster carers available. These were not currently geographically balanced across the County, so work was ongoing to target areas where there is less respite capacity to ensure that children and their families can access support close to home. The benefit of these specialist foster carers was that families and children could build long-term relationships with individuals, getting to know and trust them to provide respite care.
- There should be no resultant impact on those children and families accessing overnight respite at Firvale in Basingstoke, as the capacity at this centre was enough that it could support additional children.
- That if the decision was made to close Merrydale and Sunbeams, this would not take place until May 2018, in order to ensure that all families have an opportunity to meet with their social worker to consider the alternative options for respite care that would meet their needs.
- Part of the driver for proposing to close Merrydale and Sunbeams and to provide a new offer of overnight respite care was to give children and their families a greater range of options that moved away from traditional overnight stays in accommodation away from their communities.
- A commitment had been made that no child assessed as requiring overnight respite support would have a reduction in this offer; the changes

would instead lead to this offer being delivered in a different way. The eligibility criteria would remain the same, as would the support offered to children and their families; there would be no need for reassessments.

- A further commitment had been made that families would not be adversely financially impacted by any changes to how overnight respite care is offered, with any additional travel required to alternative services supported by Children's Services, and agreed with families on an individual basis.
- All children and their families had been offered a 1-2-1 meeting with their social worker to discuss the proposals and to hold initial discussions about alternative options. Of these, two families had not taken up this offer; it was believed that this was because discussion at this point was too difficult for some of the families affected.
- Drop in sessions were also available to families, and consultation activities listed in the report were also held with staff members. From this point forward, the affected families would be written to once any decision was taken on the future of Merrydale and Sunbeams, offering further 1-2-1 sessions based on the outcome of the decision by the Executive Lead Member.
- The ongoing capital and revenue costs associated with traditional overnight respite care provided by the County Council was part of the driver for the decision to propose closure. However, releasing capital receipts from Merrydale and reducing spending on maintaining buildings would ensure greater investment into the service in future, with the majority of spend on services rather than buildings.

The Chairman moved to debate.

Cllr Robert Taylor left the meeting at this point in proceedings.

A variety of arguments both in support and against the closure of the two overnight respite centres were heard, including:

- That some Members were reassured that the offer to families would not be reducing, with overnight residential respite still on offer to children at a variety of locations. However, there was a strong feeling that overnight provision should take place as close to children's homes as possible.
- That expanding the overnight respite care offer would potentially mean that more children can access these services, which was a positive development.
- Some Members expressed confidence in the officers leading the review and its outcomes, and their trust in the Department to make tough decisions that should lead to better outcomes for children and their families.
- Concerns that children and their families would be very sensitive to change and the fear of unknown respite care. That further support should be given if a decision was taken to close the centres to provide reassurance about the new service model.
- A concern from some Members that because of the small saving to be achieved and the complex needs of the children affected, the proposals were unnecessary and cruel, and would have a significant impact on their welfare.

- That the County Council had a responsibility to improve the quality of life of children in its care, and a concern that this decision did not contribute towards this outcome.
- The view that services should have been double run before any proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams, so that families could experience alternative respite services before the changes are implemented.
- A request that the decision on the closures be delayed until children and their families were fully aware of the alternative options available.

At the end of debate, the Chairman asked the Executive Lead Member for his views on the discussion heard. Cllr Mans expressed that without prejudicing the decision he was due to consider in the afternoon, he had listened carefully to the deputations, questions and debate, and had found the discussion helpful.

The Chairman moved to the recommendations, and a vote took place on the recommendation as set out below:

For: Cllrs Branson, Bolton, Brooks, Carpenter, Chadd, Forster, Locke, Oppenheimer, Penman (9)
 Against: Cllrs Irish, James, Porter, Wade, Westbrook (5)
 Abstained: Cllr Harvey (1)

RESOLVED

That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services in section 1, paragraph 1.1 of the report.

41. ATTAINMENT OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HAMPSHIRE SCHOOLS

The Committee received a report and presentation (Item 9 in the Minute Book) from representatives of the Director of Children’s Services on the attainment of pupils in Hampshire schools, following on from an update provided in January 2017 on the changes to how attainment is measured nationally.

Members had noted during the previous consideration of this item that there had been an unprecedented change in the way performance was measured in schools in 2016, with the introduction of new standards at key stage one, and key stage two, and the introduction of new GCSE courses and methods of assessment at key stage four. Overall, outcomes for children and young people in Hampshire continued to outperform national averages, although direct comparisons could not be made between previous assessment types and those recently introduced. In particular, Hampshire continued to perform strongly against its comparator statistical authorities, particularly in relation to early years and key stage two.

Data from the previous year seemed to suggest that Hampshire schools were performing better with the new attainment and qualification standards than under the previous regime, which may be in part due to the work undertaken by the

Department to ensure that schools and their leaders understood the changes and how to meet the new expectations.

The Department were aware that mean scores can often hide the scale of performance, and focus was being given to those schools that were performing less well. From the most recent publication of data, there had been a significant reduction in the number of schools classed in this category.

The changes to how key stage four is tested continued, with more challenging GCSEs for English and Maths rolled out and now scored on a 1 to 9 point scale. Previously the Department would monitor how many children got a C or above in these topics; the focus now was on a five or higher.

The move to 'Progress 8' and 'Attainment 8' was leading to some tensions with schools who were perhaps considering offering a less comprehensive syllabus in order to increase the chances of children attaining preferred scores when tested. As Hampshire schools currently showed a score lower than the national average in relation to 'Progress 8', thought would need to be given as to why this is, and how to help schools increase this figure without restricting syllabus selections. Despite the lower than national average 'Progress 8' score, Hampshire schools achieved above average in nearly all performance data metrics.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the data received nationally could be drilled down to individual child level, so children from different cohorts, such as those with an Education, Health and Care Plan or looked after children, could be grouped for analysis. This is something that the Educational Advisory Committee could consider in future, as it fell within their remit.
- The Department were not aware of any maintained schools changing their offer of non-core subjects as a result of changes to how progress was measured, although this was something that the Department would be monitoring.
- The Department were continuing to lead a range of briefings for Head Teachers on the new attainment measures, and the Department had a local inspector attached to each 'requires improvement' school to help them to improve in the areas outlined by OFSTED.

Members agreed that they would benefit from a further school attainment update, to include work ongoing with schools judged as 'requires by OFSTED to improve attainment figures.

RECOMMENDATION

That the information update is noted.

42. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (see Item 10 in the Minute Book).

The Chairman noted that this was the last meeting of the 2017/18 calendar of meetings for the Select Committee, and the topics considered to date would be summarised in an annual report to Full Council in the summer. The Chairman invited Members to contribute items for consideration for the 2018/19 work programme. To aid this, Members would have the slides from the 'Introduction to Children's Services' item considered in Summer 2017 recirculated for information.

At the meeting, the following items were suggested:

- Cllr Oppenheimer asked for an item on school attainment, with a specific focus on 'requires improvement' schools; although it would be important not to duplicate the work of the Education Advisory Panel in considering this matter.
- Cllr Porter wished to invite other organisations and contributors to speak to meetings.
- Cllr Branson asked for an item on mental health in schools.
- Cllr Westbrook raised Home to School Transport, which was already highlighted on the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, subject to any amendments made during the meeting, is agreed.

Chairman, 30 January 2018

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Children and Young People Select Committee
Date:	30 January 2018
Title:	Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services - Consideration of Request to Exercise Call-in Powers
Report From:	Director of Transformation and Governance

Contact name: Barbara Beardwell – Head of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Tel: 01962 845157

Email: Barbara.beardwell@hants.gov.uk

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1. That Members of the Children and Young People Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee (C&YP Committee) determine whether or not they consider that the Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services (Executive Lead Member) should re-consider his decisions as set out in the Decision Record attached at Annex A.

2. Purpose of Report

2.1. The purpose of the meeting to which this Report relates is for the C&YP Committee to consider whether or not it should exercise its powers under Section 9F of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (‘the 2000 Act’), referred to in the County Council’s Constitution as ‘Call-in’.

3. Contextual information

3.1. As part of the Transformation to 2017 programme, the Executive Lead Member approved on 16 September 2015 for submission to Cabinet the proposed savings options for the Department, which included savings of £3.2m for Children with Disabilities remodelling, relating in part to reduced reliance on residential care, particularly for overnight respite. These savings proposals were approved by Cabinet on 5 October 2015 and recommended to County Council, where on 22 October 2015 the overall Transformation to 2017 savings were approved.

- 3.2. The Executive Lead Member on 17 July 2017 gave permission for a staff and public consultation to be commenced on proposals to close two overnight respite homes for children with disabilities as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services. The decision report is attached as Annex B and the decision record can be found at Annex C.
- 3.3. On 15 January 2018 the C&YP Committee met at 10am and as part of their agenda pre-scrutinised the 'Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services' report prior to its consideration by the Executive Lead Member at the Decision Day that afternoon. A copy of the report to the C&YP Committee is attached at Annex D.
- 3.4. The C&YP Committee resolved to 'support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member in section 1, paragraph 1.1 of the report' and made no further recommendations to the Executive Lead Member.
- 3.5. On 15 January 2018 at 2pm the Executive Lead Member received the report presented to the C&YP Committee and approved the recommendation in the report to close Merrydale and Sunbeams residential respite homes for disabled children in Spring 2018. The Executive Lead Member added an additional recommendation at his Decision Day which requested that a regular report be produced showing whether children currently receiving respite care at Merrydale and Sunbeams had been found suitable alternative arrangements for their care, including travel provision between their homes, their school and the care location. The decision record dated 15 January 2018 is attached at Annex A.
- 3.6. Following the decision of the Executive Lead Member on 15 January 2018, a Call-in request was made by a quorum of Members of the C&YP Committee on 16 January 2018 for a meeting of the Committee to be held in order for it to consider whether or not it should exercise its Call-in powers. The reasons given for the Call-in request are attached at Annex E to this Report.

4. Legal and Constitutional Position

- 4.1. Legal provisions in respect of Call-in are set out at Section 9F of Part 1A of the 2000 Act and reflected at Part 3, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1.17 of the County Council's Constitution. A copy of Part 3, Chapter 3, Paragraph 1.17 of the Constitution is attached at Annex F for ease of reference. It should be noted however that discussion of the Executive decision subject of the Call-in request is not limited to the points raised in the request.

- 4.2. When a Scrutiny Committee meets in order to consider whether or not it should exercise its Call-in powers in respect of an Executive Decision, a Select Committee is required to consider whether or not to recommend:
- a) that the decision be reconsidered by the relevant decision maker; or
 - b) that its function in respect of review or scrutiny of the decision should be exercised by the County Council.
- 4.3. It should however be noted that the recommendation as referred to at 4.2 b) is not available where the Executive decision in question is in line with the Budget or Policy Framework. Neither does the exercise of Call-in powers prevent implementation of a decision within the Budget and Policy Framework. As indicated at Section 3 of this Report, the decision of the Executive Lead Member relates to proposals regarding implementation of the County Council's Decision in respect of savings option proposals approved by the County Council in respect to Overnight Respite Services, following the outcome of the Spending Review Consultation on the Transformation to 2017 Programme, agreed by the Executive Lead Member on 16 September 2015, prior to consideration by the County Council at its meeting on 22 October 2015. Therefore, should the C&YP Committee determine it appropriate to exercise its Call-in powers, the recommendation open to the Committee is as set out in paragraph 4.2 a).

5. Scrutiny

- 5.1. The role of a Scrutiny Committee includes both developing and reviewing policy and holding the Executive to account. A Scrutiny Committee may not however discharge any functions other than those conferred on it, and whilst it is perfectly proper for a Scrutiny Committee to offer advice and recommendations to an Executive decision maker, in law responsibility for an Executive decision is that of the Executive.
- 5.2. Statutory Guidance confirms that pre-scrutiny of a proposed Executive decision might consist of (inter-alia) seeking the views of local stakeholders and interested parties, and advises that the Executive should take into account any views expressed by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee when determining their final decision. The Executive is not however limited to consideration only of the views of a Scrutiny Committee, and may take into account other factors in its decision making process and make other determinations as it thinks fit.
- 5.3. It should be noted that after a recorded vote of the C&YP Committee on the 15 January 2018, the Committee voted to support the recommendation in the report. The outcome of the vote is available in the published minute.

5.4. Statutory guidance advises that when operated effectively, call-in provisions should ensure that there is an appropriate balance between effectively holding the Executive to account, being able to question decisions before they are recommended, and allowing effective and efficient decision making by the Executive within the policy framework and budget agreed by the full Council. Whilst neither the law nor the County Council's Constitution prevent call-in of an Executive Decision, it is clear in the statutory guidance that a decision maker should only be asked to reconsider a decision once. As indicated above in this Report, the decision of the Executive Lead Member of 15 January 2018 was pre-scrutinised by the C&YP Committee prior to the Executive Member decision, when the decision of the C&YP Committee was to support the decision.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities	yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services – Transformation to 2017 – Revenue Savings Proposals</u>	16/09/2015
<u>Cabinet - Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2017 Proposals</u>	5/10/2015
<u>County Council - Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2017 Proposals</u>	22/10/2015
<u>Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services – Permission to consult on proposals to close two overnight respite residential homes for children with disabilities as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.</u>	17/07/2017
<u>Executive Lead Member for Children’s Services – Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.</u>	15/01/2018

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. A summary statement is available at section 9 of the decision report. The full assessment is available at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm.

Impact on Crime and Disorder and Climate Change:

As per the decision report attached at Annex B, there are not considered to be impacts on crime and disorder and climate change.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	15 January 2018
Title:	Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Amber James

Tel: 01962 845973

Email: Amber.james@hants.gov.uk

1. The decision:

- a) That, taking into account relevant information and the outcomes of the public and staff consultation, and the petition received, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gives approval that Merrydale and Sunbeams residential respite homes for disabled children close in Spring 2018.
- b) That a regular report is produced showing whether children currently receiving respite care at Merrydale and Sunbeams have been found suitable alternative arrangements for their care, including travel provision between their homes, their school and the care location.

2. Reason(s) for the decision:

- 2.1. Approval is a legislative requirement.
- 2.2 Hampshire County Council's strategic approach to meeting the needs of disabled children and their families who meet the need for overnight respite is to develop a wider range of options than purely support from overnight residential respite provision to provide a sustainable offer to disabled children and their families now and in the future.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

- 3.1. Investing in the current buildings of Merrydale and Sunbeams.
- 3.2. Building a new purpose built facility.
- 3.3. Converting Merrydale to a long stay residential home.
- 3.4. Keeping Merrydale and Sunbeams open.

4. Conflicts of interest:

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted:

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

7. Statement from the Decision Maker:

In reaching this decision, I have taken into account the pre-scrutiny of the recommendations undertaken by the Children and Young People's Select Committee. I also note the Equality Impact Assessments that have been carried out, as referenced in the report.

Approved by:

Date:

15 January 2018

**Councillor Keith Mans,
Executive Lead Member for Children's Services**

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	17 July 2017
Title:	Permission to consult on proposals to close two overnight respite residential homes for children with disabilities as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Amber James

Tel: 01962 845973

Email: amber.james@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to request permission to consult on the proposed closure of Sunbeams and Merrydale, two Hampshire County Council-owned residential respite homes, as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.
- 1.2. The County Council is reviewing how it provides overnight respite to disabled children and their families. Children's Services is developing a new offer, expanding the range of services available to give greater choice to current and future users of in-house residential respite.
- 1.3. If, following consultation, a decision is made by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services to close the two homes, the 47 children and young people currently receiving services at Merrydale and Sunbeams would receive an equivalent offer to meet need – there would be no reduction in services from the County Council.
- 1.4. '*Aiming High for Disabled Children*' accelerated a change in approach from providing overnight respite for disabled children in primarily institution-based care, to offering a range of services which enables disabled children and young people to remain in their communities and alongside their disabled and non-disabled peers.¹ The County Council's offer for overnight respite is historically based on residential services.

¹ *Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families*. HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills, May 2007.

- 1.5. Over the last three years, the County Council has worked with parents of children with disabilities to explore new ways to provide overnight respite within a context of working to improve choice and increased flexibility. Service user engagement, pilot projects and national research show a clear preference towards options which provide greater personalisation of overnight respite for disabled children and young people, and their parents and carers.
- 1.6. The proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale is being made on the basis of:
- The future availability of a new offer of overnight respite which is more in line with feedback from service users and their families and a less institutionalised approach;
 - Analysis that greater value for money per bed per night can be achieved by working more closely with independent providers. The County Council wants to ensure that any money spent is on the children receiving the service, not on infrastructure costs; and
 - The ongoing costs associated with maintaining Sunbeams and Merrydale, which both require improvement to the condition of the buildings.
- 1.7. An eight-week consultation period is proposed, during which the views of service users, their families, staff and other stakeholders would be sought on the proposal to close the two homes. If approved, the consultation would directly engage with the individual children and young people, their parents and carers who are directly impacted by this proposal. The consultation would explore what impact the proposals might have on them, and what their options may be in continuing to access overnight respite. A separate parallel consultation would also be held with staff who work in the homes.

2. Contextual and background information

- 2.1. This proposed consultation relates to overnight respite in two residential respite homes owned and run by the County Council. The proposal **excludes** short break activities.

A national and local change of approach

- 2.2. Hampshire is one of only eight 'Good' / 'Outstanding' local authorities chosen by the Department for Education to innovate and test new ways of social work practice for vulnerable children and families. Hampshire Children's Services' vision is '*building resilience together*' and involves radical, whole system change.
- 2.3. National reviews have taken place in recent years which consider the shape of care for children with disabilities. '*Aiming High for Disabled Children*'

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/PU213.pdf>

accelerated a change in approach from providing overnight respite for disabled children in primarily institution-based care, to offering a range of services which enable disabled children and young people to remain in their communities and alongside their disabled and non-disabled peers.

- 2.4. Reporting in January 2017, the Department of Health's Lenehan Review took a strategic overview of the practical action which could be taken to co-ordinate care, support and treatment for children and young people with complex needs (and behaviour that challenges), involving mental health problems and learning disabilities and/or autism.² Dame Christine Lenehan spoke to a range of organisations and individuals, including young people and their families, and made 11 recommendations for the improvement of the system. The two key recommendations were:
- *“At a local level, commissioning and delivery of all services for our children should acknowledge and respect their right to a childhood.”*
 - *“Urgent action at a national level to prevent these children being institutionalised at an early age, at huge cost to the taxpayer and with low ambitions for improving their lives.”*
- 2.5. These findings/recommendations are consistent with the themes discussed through engagement with providers, children and young people with disabilities, and their parents/carers, on the redesign of respite care in Hampshire. Of the children the County Council is responsible for, there are proportionally more disabled children placed in residential care settings than non-disabled children in Hampshire, and it is this imbalance that the County Council wishes to address.

Overnight respite services for children with disabilities

- 2.6. The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 place a duty on local authorities to provide a range of services for disabled children and their families which includes, “overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere.” The County Council's offer for overnight respite is historically based on residential services.
- 2.7. Children with disabilities are assessed by qualified children's social workers against Hampshire County Council's eligibility criteria. The County Allocation Panel (CAP) approves individual children/young people for overnight respite, where the need for it has been clearly proven via assessment and planning.
- 2.8. Services can be provided for children between the ages of 0-18 who live at home with their parents or carers, and, if approved for overnight respite, would receive regular programmed overnight stays at one of the three County Council-owned residential homes or with an external provider. As at January 2017, 233 children and young people were approved to receive overnight respite.

² *These are our children: A review by Dame Christine Lenehan*, Director of the Council for Disabled Children. Review commissioned by the Department of Health, January 2017.

2.9. As of 31 March 2017, the two homes proposed for closure were supporting 47 children. Children require a high level of staff support whilst staying at a residential home. Staffing levels vary depending on the child's needs and individual care plans. Typically the staffing ratio is two children to one member of staff. However, some children receive one-to-one or two-to-one support, depending on their level of need. There are 42 members of staff employed to work in the two homes.

Financial context

2.10. Since the start of national austerity measures in 2010, central Government has significantly reduced its funding to the County Council. In response, the County Council has worked diligently to stretch every penny and deliver more with less money – achieving over £340 million in recurring savings, while protecting the quality of services as far as possible and keeping Council Tax low.

3. Proposal to consult on the closure of Sunbeams and Merrydale, overnight respite homes for children with disabilities

3.1. Overnight respite is currently provided either in one of the three County Council residential respite homes – Merrydale in Kings Worthy, Winchester; Sunbeams in Aldershot; and Firvale in Basingstoke – or purchased via the Council's contract with external providers.

3.2. **Firvale is not proposed to close.** Firvale is a purpose built nine-bed home in Basingstoke, owned by Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (HHFT), and jointly funded and managed by the County Council and HHFT providing for a cohort of children who have very complex needs. The table in paragraph 3.9 sets out the bed night costs for Merrydale and Sunbeams. The bed night costs for Firvale are higher than Merrydale and Sunbeams due to the complex needs of the children who stay there. Firvale has not been included in this table.

3.3. The proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale is based on:

- The future availability of a new offer of overnight respite which is more in line with feedback from service users and their families and a less institutionalised approach;
- Analysis that greater value for money per bed per night can be achieved by working more closely with independent providers. The County Council wants to ensure that any money spent is on the children receiving the service, not on infrastructure costs; and
- The ongoing costs associated with maintaining Sunbeams and Merrydale, which both require improvement to the condition of the buildings.

3.4. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out on this proposal to consult, to inform and support the proposed consultation materials. The initial EIA is available online at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm.

Merrydale, Kings Worthy, Winchester

- 3.5. Merrydale is a 13-bed home. Merrydale previously incorporated four beds for children with complex health needs, staffed and paid for by the NHS. Those four beds are no longer resourced by the NHS, which has meant that Merrydale has moved from a nine-bed home to 13 beds. As of 31 March 2017, there were 28 users of Merrydale. The children and young people who access Merrydale have severe learning disabilities. Whilst not a purpose built home, over the years a number of adaptations have been made to the premises to ensure the needs and safety of the children using the home and the regulatory requirements have continued to be met.

The potential property liabilities of Merrydale over the next six to eight years have been assessed by the County Council's building surveyors. In order to maintain the home to a safe and quality standard, the home would require refurbishment costing in the region of £390,000. To provide an ongoing home for the future, money would need to be spent on upgrading the bathrooms/wet rooms, laundry, kitchenettes, internal and external decoration and specialist garden equipment/furniture.

Sunbeams, Aldershot

- 3.6. Sunbeams is a four-bed home. As of 31 March 2017, there were 19 users of Sunbeams. Sunbeams is co-located within premises which also house other services for children and young people. The children who access Sunbeams have severe learning disabilities. Whilst not a purpose built home, over the years a number of adaptations have been made to the premises to ensure the needs and safety of the children using the home and the regulatory requirements are met.

The potential property liabilities of Sunbeams over the next six to eight years have been assessed by the County Council's building surveyors. In order to maintain the home to a safe and quality standard for the future, the home would require refurbishment costing in the region of £310,000. Money would need to be spent on replacing two boilers and replacing lighting.

Average unit rates

- 3.7. The table below shows a comparison of average unit rates, based on different methodologies, between the in-house and external residential respite units. The 2015/16 actuals show the actual average unit rates per night, per service user during the financial year April 2015 to March 2016. The 1:2 and 1:1 rates compare the average contracted rates per night, per service user for those ratios of care compared to the equivalent in-house rate, assuming 80% occupancy.

	Sunbeams	Merrydale	External
2015/16 Actuals	£588.63	£635.59	£319.92
1:2 rate** (per night)	£470.78	£383.60	*£278.40
1:1 rate** (per night)	£686.40	£626.58	*£561.34

*Average contracted rates

**Based on all in-house service users being one ratio at 80% occupancy

3.10 The table in 3.9 shows the bednight costs for Merrydale and Sunbeams. Firvale has not been included in this table as it remains open but the bednight costs are higher than Merrydale and Firvale due to the complex needs of the children who stay there.

4. Ongoing engagement with children with disabilities and their parents

4.1. The Children's Services Department has a long history of engagement with children who have disabilities and their parents, and has carried out a number of formal public consultations on proposals for change. Please see Integral Appendix A.

4.2. Throughout 2015 and 2016, substantial engagement has taken place with children with disabilities and their parents, and with providers of overnight respite services, to understand what service users want to receive from overnight respite, and what the marketplace has to offer.

4.3. The County Council has developed a valued partnership with the *Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN)* and *Parent Voice*, both contributing to review how overnight respite is provided. Feedback from focus groups, workshops and surveys involving HPCN, *Parent Voice* and families who currently receive overnight respite, has contributed to option development and appraisal.

4.4. Engagement with families told the County Council that:

- There is a desire for a wider choice of overnight respite, beyond a stay in a traditional respite home;
- There is a desire to offer children and young people the opportunity to take part in exciting and stimulating activities as a core part of the respite offer;
- There is a need to support older children to develop life skills and independent living skills as part of an overnight break;
- There is a need for parents and carers to have access to help to find solutions for underlying issues – such as sleep deprivation – which would enable families to become more resilient;

- Parents and carers have requested more variety of duration of overnight respite, particularly when travel time to and from a respite setting is taken into account;
 - Some families would like to be able to combine an overnight respite for the whole family with shared and individual activities available in a supported environment; and
 - There is a need to offer age-appropriate overnight respite.
- 4.5. Research and engagement with providers of services to disabled children showed that:
- There was a significant reliance on the local authority in commissioning services, which meant that the market responded to the demands and needs identified to them by local authorities, rather than the wishes of families; and
 - Small scale projects and initiatives in particular locations, offered alternatives to traditional overnight respite.
- 4.6. Following further discussion with families, it was agreed to pilot new approaches on a small scale, allowing the County Council, providers and families to work together to co-produce new services and test how they worked.

5. Pilot projects for Overnight Respite

- 5.1. The co-produced pilot approach facilitated a greater level of engagement with families and providers. The benefits of the approach were tested and measured, prior to countywide rollout. The focus and design of the pilots was agreed with families in early 2016. The pilot services were delivered during the summer/autumn 2016, with evaluation at key points during and after the pilots.
- 5.2. The four pilots of alternatives to traditional overnight respite were:
- Disability Challengers Overnight Activity Breaks
 - Minstead Trust 16+ Overnight Independence Breaks
 - Sebastian's Action Trust Whole Family Overnight Break
 - Kids Intensive Sleep Support Programme

26 families took part in the four pilot services. The ages of the children ranged from 4-17 years old.

Excluding the Intensive Sleep Support pilot, at the time 6 families were receiving services from an in-house overnight respite home, and 6 were accessing support via an external overnight respite home. One family was in receipt of a personal budget. The remaining service users had not yet been allocated an overnight respite service.

5.3. After the pilots, workshops and focus groups were carried out with providers and families. Feedback showed that the pilots were well-received by children and families, and pilot services were considered to be appropriate alternatives to residential overnight respite. Feedback showed:

- Positive outcomes and experiences in relation to Overnight Activity Breaks, Overnight Independence Breaks and Whole Family Overnight Breaks;
- The need to ensure a variety of changing activities were on offer for Overnight Activity Breaks;
- There is potential for significant development of independent living skills associated with Overnight Independence Breaks;
- Demand for Whole Family Overnight Breaks was likely to be relatively low and more likely to meet the needs of families with younger children; and
- Sleep intervention work needed to be appropriately targeted as an intervention rather than an overnight respite. The full benefits of this programme were difficult to evidence within the pilot timescales. This was due to the nature of the support being provided, which required a longer term intervention.

6. How overnight respite could be accessed and delivered

6.1. The pilot projects supported the development of a commissioning strategy which is designed to give children and families eligible for overnight respite greater choice and flexibility.

6.2. Children's Services intend to issue a new tender for providers of overnight respite, replacing the existing framework with one which takes a more modern, outcome-focused approach, *and* takes into account the lessons learned from the pilots which would potentially see the expansion of the pilot areas around the county. Contracts with external providers would be structured so that any changes in demand may be accommodated without undue commercial risk to the County Council.

6.3. The table below sets out the new offer planned to become available to families eligible for overnight respite later in the year. Options within this new offer are not mutually exclusive, and families would be able to create overnight respite packages which meet the needs of their children. Families' choice of overnight respite can vary over time as the needs of the family change.

New service offer	Description of service	External provider or in-house?	A new or existing service?
Firvale – residential overnight respite provision	Firvale is a purpose built nine-bed home in Basingstoke, jointly funded and managed by Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. Four beds are for children and young people with complex health and disability needs, funded by HHFT. Another five beds provide overnight respite for children and young people with severe learning disabilities, funded by Hampshire County Council. The children who access Firvale have severe learning disabilities, complex health needs and severe physical disabilities.	In-house	Existing
Revised Overnight Respite Framework Agreement	A new framework agreement (replacing the current Overnight Respite Framework Agreement) is due to be tendered and will be in place later in the year. It is anticipated that this will provide families with access to at least five overnight respite residential homes across the county.	External	Existing but refreshed
Specialist Respite Care	Formerly known as 'Family Link,' Specialist Respite Care is a form of respite for families. Specialist respite carers are registered foster carers who are linked to a family to provide overnight respite for children. Specialist respite carers, with the support of their supervising social worker from the Children's Services Fostering Team and the child's social worker, provide breaks which can be for a few hours at a time or can be overnight, depending on the needs of the family. This service is due to be available in autumn 2017.	In-house	Existing but refreshed
Whole Family Overnight Breaks	Family Breaks provide an opportunity for the whole family to go away together, spending time at a location that is fully equipped to support those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The County Council is due to develop this service and an approved list of providers will be in place later in the year.	External	New

New service offer	Description of service	External provider or in-house?	A new or existing service?
	Families would also be able to request consideration of new providers to be added to the list to widen the choice of where they spend the break.		
Care Support	A family may wish to have a break in their own home, either for shorter periods during the day or having a carer stay overnight, so the child does not need to stay somewhere else e.g. in a residential setting. This could be with or without the parents in the home.	External	Existing but refreshed
Enhanced activities	In consultation with children and families, in-house and external providers offer a range of on and off-site activities. Where an additional need is identified, for example, an increase in activity centre-based trips, an enhanced offer can be supported via the existing short breaks activities programme. Activity Breaks can also be accessed via family Breaks.	External	New
Overnight Independence Skills Break	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overnight respite providers can provide a skills development-based break for older young people aged 16 years and over. 2. The County Council is currently developing a pilot project for young people aged 16-25 years old. Service users would have personalised plans to identify and work to meet specific independence outcomes. This is a longer-term option which is being explored; providers are being consulted on the feasibility of meeting this requirement by changing what current residential provision the County Council provides within the market. 	External	New

7. Staffing implications

- 7.1. Proposals in the consultation would directly impact on staff. The proposal would mean a reduction in staffing equivalent to 31.45 FTE (42 headcount) of which 23.31 FTE are permanent employees and 8.14 FTE are temporary employees.
- There are currently 24 members of staff working at Merrydale (18.42 FTE)
 - There are currently 18 members of staff working at Sunbeams (13.03 FTE)
- 7.2. If the proposals to open a public consultation are agreed, a separate consultation, on the proposed staffing changes and the implications, would take place with staff and trade unions between 7 August and 2 October 2017. Managers, together with dedicated HR support, would ensure staff members are given every opportunity to ask questions and offer feedback throughout the staff consultation process.
- 7.3. The proposal would include the opportunity to apply for Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy (EVR2) to minimise compulsory redundancy. The application window would be extended to allow for the proposed closing date for EVR2 applications to be after the Executive Lead Member's decision on the proposals, allowing staff time to consider their application with full knowledge of the decision outcome. Redeployment and outplacement support would be provided.
- 7.4. It would be the intention to allow staff from Firvale to apply for EVR2, on the basis that applications from Firvale staff would only be accepted where it guarantees a redeployment opportunity for a displaced staff member from either Sunbeams or Merrydale, and would prevent a compulsory redundancy.

8. Engagement and process for consultation

- 8.1. The consultation would seek views on the proposals to close Sunbeams and Merrydale, residential respite homes, providing overnight respite for children with disabilities. It is proposed that an eight-week consultation would be undertaken, commencing from 7 August 2017. During this time, views would be sought, including those of service users, their parents or carers, staff, trade unions and other stakeholders.
- 8.2. The consultation would gather views through both online and paper questionnaires. The consultation would be published on the County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/consultations. An Easy-Read version of the consultation document would also be made available.
- 8.3. To facilitate consultation with children and young people with disabilities, and their parents, letters about the consultation would be sent, and one-to-one meetings with a familiar child social worker would be offered to all 47 users of the two homes proposed to close. Child social workers would work with children and their families to help them to consider the proposals and the

impact they might have on them if the two homes closed. The child social worker would also explain the alternative options which would be available to meet their respite needs. To aid the inclusion of children, young people and their parents/carers, additional online response options would be made available including the ability to record a video or audio response, as well as written responses.

- 8.4. Children and young people, their parents or carers, and other stakeholders would also have the opportunity to attend a consultation event. These events would be advertised on the County Council's consultation webpage, at Sunbeams and Merrydale, in press releases and using the County Council's social media channels.
- 8.5. Providers of overnight respite and other stakeholders would be contacted by the County Council about the consultation to make them aware of the proposals.
- 8.6. If it is agreed to undertake a public consultation on the proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams, findings would be published in a report to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, for a decision on the proposed closures by the end of 2017. Outcomes from the consultation would also be used to update the Equality Impact Assessment, presented to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

- 9.1. A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on these proposals to consult which has shown that the proposal would directly impact 47 children and young people with disabilities, and their parents and carers. The proposal also directly impacts 42 staff (headcount, equivalent to 31.45 full time equivalent employees).
- 9.2. There are currently 19 children and young people using Sunbeams, aged between 10 and 17. There are 28 children and young people using Merrydale, aged between 10 and 17. In both homes, the majority of current service users are male.
- 9.3. The Equality Impact Assessment outlines the provision of services at Sunbeams and Merrydale for children with a range of mobility, learning, physical and sensory disabilities. The majority of users are recorded as having one or more types of disability. If approved, the consultation would undertake significant, supported engagement activity during the consultation period. If, pending a further decision by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services the homes were to close, every child and family affected would be offered an alternative and suitable care package that would meet their assessed needs.
- 9.4. Potential issues relating to poverty and rurality have also been identified by the Equality Impact Assessment. The proposed closure of the two homes could change the market of providers of overnight respite services. Should there be a change in the marketplace, there is a risk that children and young people with disabilities and their families may not be able to access their

preferred overnight break, or a break that they need. In some areas of the county, it could mean that children and their families need to travel further, potentially increasing travel time and cost. As a result families on low incomes and people in rural areas may experience an increased sense of isolation and pressure. Pending the outcome of the tender process, there could also be a lack of alternative overnight respite services located in the centre, north and east of the county, with the main service providers operating in the south and west of the county. This is a continuation of the current position.

- 9.5. There are 42 members of staff employed to work in the homes (31.45 FTE). Sunbeams employ a higher number of women than men. The majority of staff working in the homes are aged between 30 and 59, which is higher than the Hampshire County Council average. The proposal could lead to voluntary redundancy or compulsory redundancy and, in turn, lead to loss of earnings.
- 9.6. The full Equality Impact Assessment is available to view at:
www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm

10. Alternative options

- 10.1. A number of alternative options have been explored and rejected:
 - a. To invest resources in improving the buildings and services at the two homes. This has been rejected because this option would not seek to improve children's outcomes, would not allow investment in a wider range of services which families tell the County Council they want, and would not be in line with the approach to stop institutionalising care.
 - b. To convert Merrydale to long stay residential usage. This has been rejected as a previous business case demonstrated this was not financially viable or sustainable. This also does not support the principles of developing a new and broader service for overnight respite provision.
 - c. To reconfigure existing overnight respite services. For example, increasing the range of overnight respite on offer from the external market, decreasing the number of purchased or in-house residential stays – selected on the basis of being the lowest cost to implement and strongest outcomes for children and young people. This option has been rejected because this would not offer families the range or flexibility to tailor services.
 - d. To make no change and continue to keep the two homes open. Through engagement with children and young people, and their parents or carers, the County Council has been told they would like more choice, control and flexibility. Also, this option would not improve value for money.

11. Finance

- 11.1. The table below shows the **net** budgets and outturns for the County Council's three residential respite homes. This includes capital purchases:

Residential respite home	2016/17 Budget	2016/17 Outturn	Variance	2017/18 Budget
Firvale:	668,000	629,865	(38,135)	675,000
Sunbeams:	459,000	453,808	(5,192)	466,000
Merrydale:	628,000	794,631	166,631	645,000

If, following public consultation, the decision is taken to close the two homes, it is estimated that £452,000 would be saved. These estimated savings have been calculated taking into account the saving that would be made if Merrydale and Sunbeams were to close and the additional costs associated with increasing capacity both at Firvale and purchased respite with external providers.

- 11.2. However, in reviewing how the County Council provides overnight respite, Children's Services is developing a new offer, which is designed to give greater choice to current and future users of in-house residential respite. Should the homes close, the 47 children and young people currently receiving services at Merrydale and Sunbeams would receive an equivalent offer to meet need – there would be no reduction in services from the County Council.

12. Legal implications

- 12.1. Local authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 section 149 to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 12.2. The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 place a duty on local authorities to provide a range of services for disabled children and their families which includes "overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere." These overnight breaks can be provided to children under Section 17 or Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

13. Recommendation(s)

- 13.1. That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services:
- Gives approval to go out to public consultation on the proposal to close two residential respite homes for children with disabilities: Merrydale in Kings Worthy, Winchester and Sunbeams in Aldershot, with a further report setting out the findings of the consultation to be brought by the end of the year.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	No
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	No

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Executive Member for Children's Services		
Respite for Disabled Children Grant Awards for 2014-15	5195	22 January 2014
Respite statement: Service Statement review 2014-15	5580	26 March 2014
Children with Disabilities Public Consultation	5933	25 July 2014
Revenue Budget report for Children's Services for 2015/16	6286	21 January 2015
Respite Grants Allocation for 2015/16	6447	23 March 2015
Transformation to 2017 - Revenue Savings Proposals	6889	16 September 2015
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2016/17	7131	20 January 2016
Respite for Disabled Children Grants for 2016-17	7216	18 March 2016
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2017/18	8019	18 January 2017
Cabinet		
Cabinet: Revenue Budget and Precept 2015/16	6373	6 February 2015
Transformation to 2017: Consultation Outcomes	6942	21 September 2015
Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2017 Savings Proposals	6920	5 October 2015
Children and Young People's Select Committee (ref: Respite Task and Finish Group)		
Respite Task & Finish Group report	6003	23 July 2014

Consideration of Request to Exercise Call-in Powers	6083	12 September 2014
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Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Children Act	1989
Local Government Act	1999
Equality Act	2010
Respite: Statutory guidance on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children using respite	2010
The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations	2011
Children and Families Act	2014
Best Value Statutory Guidance (revised and updated)	2015

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents	
<p>The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)</p>	
<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

- 1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
 - Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- 1.2. The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- 1.3. Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- 1.4. Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
- 1.5. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. A summary statement is available at section 9 of this report. The full assessment is available at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. There are not considered to be impacts on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. There are not considered to be impacts on climate change.

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HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Executive Decision Record

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	17 July 2017
Title:	Permission to consult on proposal to close two overnight respite residential homes for children with disabilities as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Amber James

Tel: 01962 845973

Email: Amber.james@hants.gov.uk

1. The decision:

- a) That the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gives approval to go out to public consultation on the proposal to close two residential respite homes for children with disabilities; Merrydale in Kings Worthy, Winchester and Sunbeams in Aldershot, with a further report setting out the findings of the consultation to be brought by the end of the year.
- b) That officers provide the Executive Lead Member with ongoing feedback on the progress of consultation with affected members of staff.

2. Reason(s) for the decision:

- 2.1. The County Council is reviewing how it provides overnight respite to disabled children and their families. Children's Services is developing a new offer, expanding the range of services available to give greater choice to current and future users of in-house residential respite.

3. Other options considered and rejected:

3.1 A number of alternative options have been explored and rejected:

- a) To invest resources in improving the buildings and services at the two homes. This has been rejected because this option would not seek to improve children's outcomes, would not allow investment in a wider range of services which families tell the County Council they want, and would not be in line with the approach to stop institutionalising care.
- b) To convert Merrydale to long stay residential usage. This has been rejected as a previous business case demonstrated this was not financially viable or sustainable. This also does not support the principles of developing a new and broader service for overnight respite provision.

- c) To reconfigure existing overnight respite services. For example, increasing the range of overnight respite on offer from the external market, decreasing the number of purchased or in-house residential stays – selected on the basis of being the lowest cost to implement and strongest outcomes for children and young people. This option has been rejected because this would not offer families the range or flexibility to tailor services.
- d) To make no change and continue to keep the two homes open. Through engagement with children and young people, and their parents or carers, the County Council has been told they would like more choice, control and flexibility. Also, this option would not improve value for money.

4. Conflicts of interest:

4.1. Conflicts of interest declared by the decision-maker:

4.2. Conflicts of interest declared by other Executive Members consulted:

5. Dispensation granted by the Conduct Advisory Panel: none.

6. Reason(s) for the matter being dealt with if urgent: not applicable.

7. Statement from the Decision Maker:

Approved by:	Date:
-----	17 July 2017
Councillor Keith Mans, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services	

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Front Cover Report

Committee:	Children and Young People Select Committee
Date:	15 January 2018
Title:	Overnight Residential Respite Homes
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

Contact name: Amber James

Tel: 01962 845973

Email: amber.james@hants.gov.uk

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Children and Young People Select Committee support the recommendations being proposed to the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in section 1 (paragraph 1.1) of the attached report.

2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council's strategic approach to meeting the needs of disabled children and their families who meet the need for overnight respite is to develop a wider range of options than purely support from overnight residential respite provision. The strategy has been developed through engagement with parents, carers and providers to provide a sustainable offer to disabled children and their families now and in the future.
- 2.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services of the outcomes from the consultation of the proposal to close two of Hampshire's residential respite homes, Merrydale and Sunbeams. The report outlines the contextual position in relation to current and proposed overnight respite services delivered by Hampshire County Council, the impact on the cohort of children currently receiving respite from Merrydale and Sunbeams and the feedback from the consultation.
- 2.3 On 17 July 2017, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gave permission to commence a public and staff consultation on the proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale.
- 2.4 Feedback received during the consultation has indicated that the majority of respondents disagree with the proposals to close the homes and a clear view that residential overnight respite provision was necessary.

2.5 Hampshire County Council has considered the views expressed through both the public and staff consultations. The County Council recognises there is strong feeling against the proposed closure of the two homes which are valued by families using them. The proposed overnight respite provision is predicated on offering families a more flexible choice of services, within the current financial constraints.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services		
Date:	15 January 2018		
Title:	Proposals to close two overnight residential respite homes for children with disabilities as the County Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services.		
Report From:	Director of Children's Services		
Contact name:	Amber James		
Tel:	01962 845973	Email:	amber.james@hants.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 Taking into account relevant information and the outcomes of the public and staff consultation, and the petition received, it is recommended that Merrydale and Sunbeams residential respite homes for disabled children close in Spring 2018.

2 Executive summary

- 2.1 Hampshire County Council's strategic approach to meeting the needs of disabled children and their families who meet the criteria for overnight respite is to develop a wider range of options rather than continuing to purely provide support with overnight residential respite provision. This strategy has been developed through engagement with parents, carers and providers with a view to providing a sustainable offer to disabled children and their families.
- 2.2 On 17 July 2017, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gave permission to commence a public and staff consultation on the proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale – two County Council maintained residential respite homes.
- 2.3 The purpose of this report is to inform the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services of the outcomes of public and staff consultation.
- 2.4 Feedback received during the consultation has indicated that the majority of respondents disagree with the proposals to close the homes and a clear view that residential overnight respite provision was necessary.

3 Contextual Information

- 3.1 The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 place a duty on local authorities to provide a range of services for disabled children and their families which includes, “overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere.”
- 3.2 Local authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 section 149 to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 3.3 Disabled children have their needs assessed by qualified children’s social workers against Hampshire County Council’s eligibility criteria. The County Allocation Panel (CAP) consisting of disabled children’s team managers, a district manager, and an in-house respite home manager approves individual children for overnight respite, where the need has been clearly identified via assessment and planning.
- 3.4 Following assessment and approval, regular programmed overnight stays may be provided by one of the three County Council residential respite homes, a specialist respite carer or with an external provider. As at November 2017, 126 children and young people are currently receiving overnight respite across the range of respite provision.

4 Current overnight respite provision in Hampshire

- 4.1 Overnight respite is currently provided either in one of the three County Council residential respite homes – Merrydale in Kings Worthy, Winchester; Sunbeams in Aldershot; and Firvale in Basingstoke – or purchased via the County Council’s contract with external providers. Overnight respite is also delivered via the Specialist Respite Care scheme (formerly ‘Family Link’).
- 4.2 As at 1 November 2017, there were 126 children receiving overnight respite care. Merrydale and Sunbeams were supporting 35 children who were receiving 1,188 overnights per annum, which represents 28% of the total cohort of children receiving overnight respite as at 1 November 2017. 91 (72%) children were receiving overnights through Firvale, external provision or Specialist Respite Care (this is a form of specialist respite foster care – see below). Children can require a high level of staff support whilst staying at a residential home and staffing levels vary depending on the child’s needs and individual care plans. Typically the staffing ratio is two children to one member of staff. However, some children receive one-to-one or two-to-one support, depending on their level of need.
- 4.3 Children and young people accessing Merrydale and Sunbeams receive an allocated number of overnight stays determined upon their assessed need. The

current allocation of nights per child ranges from 16 nights per year to 61 nights per year. This includes a mix of week day and weekend stays. Which nights are allocated to a child are agreed with the family on an individual basis taking into account the home's ability to meet demand for stays during weekends and school holidays.

- 4.4 As at 1 November 2017, there were 16 children accessing 442 nights in the 5 social care beds in Firvale. 2 children are in the process of being introduced to the home via tea visits who will be receiving 48 nights.
- 4.5 There are currently 50 children receiving their overnight respite from external providers. This equates to 1,338 nights per annum. The providers are Keys Care, Kids, Rose Road and Beechside. In addition 2 children are receiving a total of 58 overnights at the school they attend.
- 4.6 23 children are receiving overnight respite through the Specialist Respite Care service, a total of 782 nights per annum. This service is described later in this report.
- 4.7 The three in-house County Council units are described below.

4.8 Firvale (not proposed to close)

Firvale is a purpose built nine-bed home in Basingstoke within which the County Council and Hampshire Hospitals Foundation Trust (HHFT) jointly deliver services to a cohort of children who have very complex needs.

4.9 Merrydale, Kings Worthy, Winchester

Merrydale is a 13-bed residential respite home. As at 1 November 2017, there were 19 children using Merrydale. Whilst not a purpose built home, over the years a number of adaptations have been made to ensure the needs and safety of the children using the home and the regulatory requirements have continued to be met.

The potential property liabilities associated with Merrydale over the next five to ten years have been assessed by the County Council's Property Services Department. It is expected that over this period, a minimum of £420,000 would have to be invested in the Merrydale building to ensure its safe and continued use. Works already identified include upgrading the bathrooms/wet rooms, laundry, kitchenettes, internal and external decoration and specialist garden equipment/furniture.

4.10 Sunbeams, Aldershot

Sunbeams is a four-bed respite home and as at 1 November 2017, there were 16 children accessing its services. Sunbeams is co-located within premises that also deliver other services for children and young people. The children who access Sunbeams have severe learning disabilities. Whilst not a purpose built home, over the years a number of adaptations have been made to the premises

to ensure the needs and safety of the children using the home and the regulatory requirements are met.

The potential property liabilities of Sunbeams over the next five to ten years have been assessed by the County Council's Property Services Department. It is expected that over this period, as a minimum £330,000 would have to be invested to ensure its safe and continued use. Works already identified include the replacement of two boilers and lighting systems.

Contrary to public belief raised during the public consultation, there is no covenant in place on the Sunbeams' titles.

4.11 Average bed night rates

The table below shows a comparison of average bed night rates, based on staffing ratios, between the in-house and external residential respite units for the 2015/16 financial year, and assuming 80% occupancy.

The 2015/16 actuals show the actual average unit rates per night, per service user during the financial year April 2015 to March 2016. The 1:2 and 1:1 rates compare the average contracted rates per night, per service user for those ratios of care compared to the equivalent in-house rate, assuming 80% occupancy. The table below sets out the bed night costs for Merrydale and Sunbeams.

	Sunbeams	Merrydale	External
2015/16 Actuals	£588.63	£635.59	£319.92
1:2 rate** (per night) based on 80% occupancy	£470.78	£383.60	*£278.40
1:1 rate** (per night)	£686.40	£626.58	*£561.34

* Average contracted rates

** Based on all in-house service users being one ratio at 80% occupancy

5 The Pilot Projects

- 5.1 Over the last three years, the County Council has worked with parents of children with disabilities to explore new ways to provide overnight respite within a context of working to improve choice and increased flexibility. Service user engagement, pilot projects and national research show a clear preference towards options which provide greater personalisation of overnight respite for disabled children and young people, and their parents and carers.
- 5.2 Hampshire's Children's Services Department has a long history of engagement with children who have disabilities and their parents, and has carried out a number of formal public consultations on proposals for change. Throughout 2015 and 2016, substantial engagement has taken place with children with disabilities and their parents, and with providers of overnight respite services, to understand

what service users want to receive from overnight respite, and what the external service providers have to offer.

- 5.3 The County Council has developed a valued partnership with the Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN) and Parent Voice, both contributing to consider how overnight respite is provided. Feedback from focus groups, workshops and surveys involving HPCN, Parent Voice and families who currently receive overnight respite, has contributed to option development and appraisal.
- 5.4 Engagement with families told the County Council that:
- There is a desire for a wider choice of overnight respite, beyond a stay in a traditional respite home;
 - There is a desire to offer children and young people the opportunity to take part in exciting and stimulating activities as a core part of the respite offer;
 - There is a need to support older children to develop life skills and independent living skills as part of an overnight break
 - There is a need for parents and carers to have access to help to find solutions for underlying issues – such as sleep deprivation – which would enable families to become more resilient;
 - Parents and carers have requested more variety of duration of overnight respite, particularly when travel time to and from a respite setting is taken into account;
 - Some families would like to be able to combine an overnight respite for the whole family with shared and individual activities available in a supported environment; and
 - There is a need to offer age-appropriate overnight respite.
- 5.5 Research and engagement with providers of services to disabled children showed that:
- There was a significant reliance on the local authority in commissioning services, which meant that the market responded to the demands and needs identified to them by local authorities, rather than the wishes of families; and
 - Small scale projects and initiatives in particular locations, offered alternatives to traditional overnight respite.
- 5.6 Following further discussion with families, it was agreed to pilot new approaches on a small scale, allowing the County Council, providers and families to work together to co-produce new services and test how they worked.
- 5.7 During 2016 five pilots were carried out to test the feasibility and viability of the alternative breaks. The pilots were reviewed at the mid-point and showed that families were reporting an increase in satisfaction in the standard of care and the suitability of the break when compared to a residential respite break.
- 5.8 During the pilots, workshops were carried out with the pilot providers to gather feedback, develop specifications and discuss scalability. An end of pilot survey was sent to all the families that took part and they were also invited to take part in a focus group. A short questionnaire was sent to all families who were in

receipt of current residential respite care to gather their views on the pilot concepts.

5.9 The five pilots and their outcomes were;

1) TEC (Technology Enabled Care) formerly Telecare

TEC is a way of providing support to families via assistive technology. The pilot ran with 30 children and families who were supported in their home through a range of equipment such as sensors, alarms, CCTV, monitors etc. The equipment meant that parents, who were often up multiple times in the night checking on their child, or perhaps even sleeping next to their child to check on them regularly, were able to have improved sleep patterns leading to improved peace of mind and a reduction in stress.

The pilot was not only successful in terms of improved outcomes for families but also in terms of cost avoidance.

2) Family Breaks

The purpose of this pilot was to provide an opportunity for all the family to enjoy time together in a safe environment which meets their needs. Five families received a total of 21 nights provided by Sebastian's Action Trust at The Bluebells.

There was mixed feedback from the pilot families, supported by only 40% of respondents to the wider survey expressing an interest in this type of break.

3) Activity Breaks

This break aimed to enable children and young people to enjoy a diverse range of physical activities that they may not normally have access to at a residential unit. Six families attended Hampshire County Council's Runways End activity centre, with Disability Challengers providing the care support and HC3S the catering for a total of 18 nights.

The pilots were well received; however families told us that they would like a range of activities on offer not limited to activity centres. A survey of current residential respite providers found that a wide range of activities were currently already on offer, including, trips to the zoo, country parks and theme parks. Activity Breaks are limited by the Ofsted 56 night restriction¹ which would make this option less attractive to providers.

¹ The Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children (England) Regulations 2013: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/1394/made> Ofsted guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-residential-holiday-schemes-for-disabled-children>: "A provider may operate at any time throughout the year. There is no minimum number of days they can operate. However, a provider cannot operate for more than 56 days in any 12-month period. No individual child can be accommodated for more than 28 consecutive days in any 12-month period."

4) 16+ Independence

This was a targeted break to deliver individual outcomes for young people to achieve more independence moving into adulthood. Four families took part receiving 10 nights each.

The outcomes of the pilot greatly surpassed the expectations of the parents and young people and demonstrated that, over a period of time, significant outcomes could be achieved that would reduce reliance on long term support.

5) Intensive Support Programme

The aim of this pilot was to support families in addressing sleep issues, to reduce any potential reliance on residential respite or an increase in residential respite care. Ten families took part in the pilot which has been extended for a 6 month period to allow for the longer term interventions required to effect sustained changes.

Initial feedback from the pilot provider was that it was taking longer than expected to demonstrate any benefits and that the issues presented were more complex than anticipated. This type of intervention is likely to deliver more benefits as a preventative measure to prevent increases in respite and may be less beneficial to extremely complex or high need children.

5.10 The new service offer

5.11 The pilot outcomes have been used to develop the new offer planned. The table below sets out the full scope of the new offer planned to become available to families eligible for overnight respite. Options within this new offer are not mutually exclusive, and families would be able to create overnight respite packages which meet the needs of their children. Families' choice of overnight respite can vary over time as the needs of the family change.

New service offer	Description of service	External provider or in-house?	New or existing service?
Firvale – residential overnight respite provision	Firvale is a purpose built nine-bed home in Basingstoke. Four beds are for children and young people with complex health and disability needs, funded by HHFT. Another five beds provide overnight respite for children and young people with severe learning disabilities, funded by Hampshire County Council. The children who access Firvale have severe learning disabilities, complex health needs and severe physical disabilities.	In-house	Existing
Revised Overnight Respite	A new framework agreement is now in place which provides families' access to three contracted providers with additional	External	Existing but refreshed

New service offer	Description of service	External provider or in-house?	New or existing service?
Framework Agreement	providers currently going through the application process.		
Specialist Respite Care	Formerly known as 'Family Link,' Specialist Respite Care is a form of respite for families. Specialist respite carers are registered foster carers who are linked to a family to provide overnight respite for children. Specialist respite carers, with the support of their supervising social worker from the Children's Services Fostering Team and the child's social worker, provide breaks which can be for a few hours at a time or can be overnight, depending on the needs of the family.	In-house	Existing but refreshed
Whole Family Overnight Breaks	Family Breaks provide an opportunity for the whole family to go away together, spending time at a location that is fully equipped to support those with learning difficulties and disabilities. The County Council is due to develop this service and an approved list of providers will be in place later in the year. Families would also be able to request consideration of new providers to be added to the list to widen the choice of where they spend the break.	External	New
Care Support	A family may wish to have a break in their own home, either for shorter periods during the day or having a carer stay overnight, so the child does not need to stay somewhere else e.g. in a residential setting. This could be with or without the parents in the home.	External	Existing but refreshed
Enhanced activities	In consultation with children and families, in-house and external providers offer a range of on and off-site activities. Where an additional need is identified, for example, an increase in activity centre-based trips, an enhanced offer can be supported via the existing short breaks activities programme. Activity Breaks can also be accessed via family Breaks.	External	New

6 Proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams

- 6.1 In 2007, '*Aiming High for Disabled Children*' accelerated a change in approach from providing overnight respite for disabled children in primarily institution-based care, to offering a range of services which enables disabled children and young people to remain in their communities and alongside their disabled and non-disabled peers.²
- 6.2 The County Council has been reviewing how it provides overnight respite to disabled children and their families over the past 3 years to expand the range of services available to give greater choice to current and future users of in-house residential respite.
- 6.3 As outlined in 5.4, engagement with families took place to consider what alternative options may be appropriate for children and families leading to an initial pilot period and then the development of the alternative options outlined in 5.11.
- 6.4 Two of the in-house homes (Merrydale and Sunbeams) require significant capital investment to improve them. The County Council remains committed to providing high quality services to disabled children and their families within a reducing budget. The County Council would put capital investment into the refurbishment of these homes if it thought that this was the appropriate way to support disabled children and their families for the future as it has with the residential children's homes. However, this paper sets out that this is not the best approach to delivering a range of services to disabled children.
- 6.5 Engagement with providers and analysis of the cost and quality of external provision evidences that the County Council can commission an equivalent level of service without the infrastructure costs creating a revenue saving of £452,000 per year.
- 6.6 On 17 July 2017, the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services gave permission to commence a public and staff consultation on the proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale.

6.7 Financial context

- 6.8 The prolonged period of austerity has led to significant reductions in government grant for the County Council. In response, the County Council has worked diligently to stretch every penny and deliver more with less money – achieving

² *Aiming High for Disabled Children: better support for families*. HM Treasury and Department for Education and Skills, May 2007.
<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/PU213.pdf>

over £340 million in recurring savings, whilst protecting the quality of services as far as possible and keeping Council Tax low.

6.9 The table below shows the **net** budgets and outturns for the County Council's three residential respite homes. This includes capital purchases:

Residential respite home	2016/17 Budget	2016/17 Outturn	Variance	2017/18 Budget
Sunbeams:	459,000	453,808	(5,192)	466,000
Merrydale:	628,000	794,631	166,631	645,000

6.10 If the decision is taken to close the two homes, it is estimated that £452,000 would be saved. These estimated savings have been calculated taking into account the saving that would be made if Merrydale and Sunbeams were to close as well as the additional costs associated with increasing capacity both at Firvale and purchased respite with external providers.

6.11 The proposal to close Sunbeams and Merrydale is being made on the basis of:

- The future availability of a new offer of overnight respite which is more aligned with feedback from service users and their families, and offers a wider range of options than the service historically available;
- Analysis that greater value for money per bed per night can be achieved by working more closely with independent providers. The County Council wants to ensure that any money spent is on the children receiving the service, not on infrastructure costs; and
- The ongoing capital and revenue costs associated with maintaining Sunbeams and Merrydale, both of which require significant on-going investment to ensure they are able to meet the continuing and forecast needs of their client group.

7 The Consultation Methodology

7.1 Staff/trade union consultation methodology

7.2 The proposals in the consultation would directly impact on staff. The proposal would mean a reduction in staffing equivalent to 27.07 FTE (38 individual staff members) of which 23.06 FTE are permanent employees and 4.01 FTE are temporary employees (based on staffing data 31 December 2017).

- There are currently 22 individual members of staff working at Merrydale (16.01FTE)
- There are currently 16 individual members of staff working at Sunbeams (11.03 FTE)

- 7.3 All possible steps would be taken to minimise compulsory redundancies arising from the proposed home closures. With this in mind, the opportunity to apply for Enhanced Voluntary Redundancy (EVR2) has been offered to staff across all three homes. The application window has been extended to allow for the proposed closing date for EVR2 applications to be after the Executive Lead Member's decision on the proposals, allowing staff to consider their application with full knowledge of the decision outcome.
- 7.4 Firvale staff have been allowed to apply for EVR2, on the basis that applications from Firvale staff would only be accepted where it guarantees a redeployment opportunity for a displaced staff member from either Sunbeams or Merrydale, and would prevent a compulsory redundancy.
- 7.5 The current enhanced redundancy package is known as 'EVR2' and offers payment equivalent to 20 weeks' pay or compulsory redundancy entitlement (maximum of 30 weeks) whichever is the higher. Eligibility criteria based upon length of service and contract type apply to EVR2 entitlement.
- 7.6 Staff who are Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme who have over 2 years pensionable service and are aged 55 or over are entitled to receive their full redundancy payment and unreduced pension access, regardless of whether they leave on EVR2 or compulsory redundancy grounds.
- 7.7 The potential cost of EVR2 for Sunbeams and Merrydale staff is approximately £273,900. The maximum pension strain would be £160,900* (*based on available data for 31 March 2018).
- 7.8 Staff that do not apply for EVR2 would be at risk of compulsory redundancy and would be given redeployment status and support for a three month period to help them secure alternative employment within the County Council. Compulsory redundancy would be a last resort.
- 7.9 Should staff be successful in securing redeployment into another role within the County Council, reasonable training would be provided, as required.
- 7.10 Outplacement support would be provided to staff at risk of compulsory redundancy in the form of a workshop to provide skills and guidance in areas such as writing CVs, completing job application forms and interview skills.
- 7.11 All affected staff and their union representatives have been consulted on the staffing implications of the proposed closures.
- 7.12 Staff briefings took place with staff in Merrydale, Sunbeams and Firvale on 14 June 2017, prior to the consultation period, to inform staff of the decision to ask the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services for permission to consult on the proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams. Union representatives were invited to support staff at this meeting.
- 7.13 All affected staff within the specialist respite service and their union representatives have been consulted on potential closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams and the impact on staffing. A separate staff and union consultation

took place alongside the public consultation between 7 August and 2 October 2017.

- 7.14 Recognised trade union and employee representatives were fully informed of the proposals through a briefing at the union group meeting on 19 July 2017 and an s.188 notice which was issued on 4 August 2017. There have been further meetings during the consultation period on 17 August and 13 September 2017 with union representatives where they have had the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns.
- 7.15 Three staff briefings took place at the start of consultation followed by nine HR drop in sessions across the three homes where 42 employees, employed at the time, attended individual sessions. Three staffing briefings were held post consultation to update staff on the outcome of the staff and union consultation and update them on new timescales.
- 7.16 Staff have been encouraged to provide comments and feedback through:
- a) Staff briefings – held in August, October 2017.
 - b) HR Drop in sessions held throughout August and September 2017
 - c) Team meetings
 - d) Emails to their relevant human resources teams.
 - e) Trade union representatives or elected staff representatives
- 7.17 Managers, together with dedicated HR support, ensured staff members were given every opportunity to ask questions and offer feedback throughout the staff consultation process. Questions have been captured and a frequently asked set of questions and answers has been circulated to staff via email and have been placed on the restructure web page for Hampshire County Council staff.

7.18 The Public Consultation Methodology

- 7.19 The County Council carried out an eight-week open consultation from 7 August 2017 to 2 October 2017 to seek residents' and stakeholders' views on the proposals to close overnight respite homes at Merrydale in Winchester and Sunbeams in Aldershot.
- 7.20 During the consultation period, communication took place in a range of ways to raise awareness of the consultation and provide opportunities for key stakeholders to raise questions.
- 7.21 'Unstructured' responses could also be sent via email or written letter and those received by the consultation close date were incorporated into the consultation findings report.

7.22 Communications/publicity

- 7.23 Ahead of, and during the consultation period, communications took place in a range of ways to raise awareness of the consultation and provide opportunities for key stakeholders to raise questions.

- Pre-engagement workshops were held with representative parents and Hampshire Parent Carer Network (HPCN). Feedback from these events helped to shape the development of the consultation.
- A dedicated webpage was set up on Hantsweb (Hampshire County Council's website), providing full details of the consultation timeframe, the drop-in events and links to the consultation document and online questionnaire. The web address for the consultation web page or hyperlinks to the page were included in all communications publicising the consultation.
- A news item was placed on the home page of the County Council's external facing website (Hantsweb) and also on its intranet for staff (Hantsnet) with encouragement to both respond to, and spread the word about, the consultation. Information was also displayed on the plasma screens in the County Council's headquarters' reception/foyer and café areas where there is a lot of traffic in terms of both County Council staff and visitors who are not County Council personnel.
- An email in-box was set up during the consultation specifically to deal with non-media enquiries relating to the consultation. Enquiries were responded to within 10 working days of receipt.
- The consultation was publicised through editorial in Hampshire newspapers, broadcast items on regional television and radio news bulletins, together with TV and radio interviews with the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services.
- Posts were placed at the start of the consultation on the County Council's Twitter feed (@hantsconnect) that has 44,000 followers, Hampshire County Council's Facebook account (over 3,000 followers) and on the County Council's LinkedIn account (11,000 followers). Additional reminders were posted at intervals during the consultation period. The postings were aimed at alerting people to the consultation and encouraging responses.
- Letters were sent to the families who would be directly affected by the proposals if they are agreed. The letters alerted them to the consultation, providing links to read the document and questionnaire. The letters also advised families about the opportunity to attend one of the drop-in events. Additionally, social workers met with the families in their own homes.
- Information about the consultation was sent to Support4SEND, Hantslocaloffer, Hampshire Parent Carer Network, Parent Voice and Community Service Volunteers, for adding to their own websites and sharing with/dissemination to parents and carers of children with learning difficulties and disabilities within their networks.
- Through the County Council's schools communication channel, information was disseminated to all of Hampshire's 526 schools' head teachers and governors, and schools with nursery units (11) and the County Council's three maintained

nursery schools to notify them of the consultation and asking for details and links to be included in their own parent mail communications.

- A briefing paper, copy of the consultation document and the consultation questionnaire were sent, via email, to all Hampshire County Councillors and Hampshire MPs.
- Letters were sent to, and an information and engagement event was held for professional agency stakeholders – including health commissioners and providers.
- Letters were sent to, and an information and engagement event was held for external providers of residential respite services.
- Consultation meetings were held with staff working in the County Council's residential respite homes.
- Easy Read versions of the consultation document and response form were made available to all parents/carers through children's social workers, and on request. Paper copies of the Easy Read documents were posted on Hantsweb for ease of access. The online response form also linked to an online Easy Read questionnaire, in an effort to make the consultation as inclusive as possible.

7.24 Communication with families directly affected by the proposals

7.25 To aid children and young people with disabilities, and their parents, who would be directly impacted by the proposals, one-to-one meetings were arranged for them with children's social workers and paper copies of the Information Pack and Response Form were sent to families by post. Meetings with children's social workers were designed to enable those directly affected by the proposals to make an informed response to the consultation. The children's social workers were able to discuss the proposals with children and parents, and with them, consider appropriate and available alternative services which would meet their respite needs, should the decision be made to close one or both residential respite homes.

7.26 In addition, a series of six drop-in consultation events were organised, enabling contact between parents and interested people to talk directly with County Council officers from the Children's Services department. The events were advertised on the County Council's consultation webpage, at Sunbeams and Merrydale, through the Hampshire Parent Carer Network and Parent Voice, in local press and through the County Council's social media channels.

8 Response to the Public Consultation

(Full analysis of the public consultation can be found at Appendix C)

- 8.1 A total of 366 responses to the consultation questionnaire were submitted. 339 responses were received via the online response form, of which 3 were from an organisation or group, 336 from individual responses. Of those individual responses, 33 were the easy-read online version of the consultation questionnaire.
- 8.2 There were 27 responses received via the paper response form; one from an organisation or group and 26 from individual responses. In addition, 12 'unstructured' responses were also received by the consultation deadline; nine were from members of the public, two responses from two political representatives and one from a stakeholder organisation. A list of organisations or groups (where names were provided) can be found in appendix two of the consultation findings report.
- 8.3 141 responses were received from parents, carers and family members of children with disabilities or special educational needs. Of these, 98 responses were from families of a disabled child accessing overnight respite, 85 responses (25%) were received from respondents that indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Merrydale or Sunbeams:
- **55** were from those who indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Merrydale.
 - **30** were from those who indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Sunbeams.
- 8.4 Of these responses, two were received from young people who currently use the homes. 49% of respondents with a disabled child stated their child was aged 8-15 whilst 33% stated their child was 16-18 years.
- 8.5 22 responses were received from staff working at Sunbeams or Merrydale.
- 8.6 A petition entitled, "Prevent the closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams respite centres" was received by Hampshire County Council on 22 December 2017. This contained 4313 verified signatories.

8.7 Contextual responses about the proposed closures

- 8.8 The consultation responses indicate that there is strong concern about the proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams and that whilst the buildings may need improvement, ensuring the provision of overnight respite remains necessary.
- 8.9 Respondents questioned the County Council's use of the term "institutionalised". The use of this language in the Consultation Information Pack was to recognise that traditional overnight respite tends to lend itself to disabled children being cared for in isolation from their broader community, rather than supporting them to be a part of it. Such an environment is restrictive as the requirements of the organisation may stop truly individualised plans being created for children and it

is the County Council's vision to provide a range of options that support individualisation and more opportunities for skills and independence development.

8.10 Parents have told us that they would like an increased offer and choice of provision. The County Council has responded to this by growing alternative provision of respite but acknowledges that for some children a traditional overnight respite provision is the right service within that wider offer to meet their needs. However, families should be choosing this for their child out of preference to meet their particular circumstances, rather than it being the only offer available.

8.11 The first set of questions in the consultation response form asked respondents to rate the extent to which they agreed with the proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams and what the most important aspects of overnight respite are for children and their families.

8.12 **To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Merrydale?**

87% of respondents had a strong concern about the proposal to close Merrydale, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

There was a negative response regarding the closure of Merrydale from all response groups, however some groups were more concerned than others.

Respondents who indicated they were a family member of a child with disabilities were more likely to disagree with the proposals than any other group (94%).

Respondents that indicated they had a health or disability issue were more likely to disagree (88%) with the proposals than those without health or disability issues (86%).

Parents or carers with older children (ages 16-25) who currently use respite homes, were less likely to agree with the proposals (88%) in comparison to parents or carers with younger children (ages 0-15) who use respite homes (83%).

8.13 **To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Sunbeams?**

As with the response about the proposal to close Merrydale, 87% of respondents had a strong concern about the proposal to close Sunbeams, either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

There was a negative response regarding the closure of Sunbeams from all response groups, however some groups were more concerned than others.

Respondents who indicated they were a family member of a child with disabilities were more likely to disagree with the proposals than any other group (97%).

Respondents that indicated they had a health or disability issue were more likely to disagree (88%) with the proposals than those without health or disability issues (86%).

Parents or carers with older children (ages 16-25) who currently use respite homes, are less likely to agree with the proposals (92%) in comparison to parents or carers with younger children (ages 0-15) who use respite homes (84%).

8.14 The most important aspects of respite for children with disabilities

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several aspects of overnight respite.

Almost all respondents felt that it was very important that children using overnight respite felt, 'happy' (96%), 'secure' (96%) and 'safe' (95%).

Although still viewed as important by the majority, a smaller proportion of respondents felt that 'making their own decisions' (62%) and 'having access to facilities and equipment not available at home' (64%) were very important aspects of respite for children.

The level of importance given to each aspect of respite care did vary slightly across the core respondent groups. Respondents who worked in respite care were more likely to see all aspects of respite provision as similarly important, whereas parents and carers placed much greater emphasis on the safety and care of their child, than their need for equipment or developing independence.

A further factor that impacted on the perceived importance of different aspects of respite was the age of the child with disabilities. Respondents who identified that they were a parent or carer were asked how old the child is/children are who have a disability. Responses showed that respite care being with friends, having access to facilities/equipment that is not available at home and making their own decisions was relatively more important to those in the older age group.

8.15 Important aspects of respite care for parents/carers

All respondents were asked to choose what they thought the most important aspects of overnight respite are for parents or carers with children with disabilities. 'A break from caring' (91%) and 'time spent with other children in the family' (88%) were considered to be the most important aspects of overnight respite by the majority of respondents.

Those with very young children at home (ages 0-4) identify this as the most important aspect (100%) above any other group.

Parents or carers with children at home thought that spending time with family is an important aspect of respite care. Those with children in the 0-4 age bracket identified this as the most important aspect above any other group.

8.16 The Impact of proposed closures on respondents

Respondents were encouraged to consider and set out the potential impact of the proposed closures, specifically: *To describe what impact, if any, the proposed closures would have on them, their family, people they know or work with, or their group or organisation.*

A group of medical professionals from the Child Health Department, Royal Hampshire County Hospital (Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) in their collective response to the consultation highlighted three potential impacts of the proposed closures: increased attendance for mental health related issues in siblings; an increased length of stays in hospitals, as often if a child is recovering from an illness, the discharge from hospital to a respite setting can be facilitated earlier than discharge to home; and the potential increase in demand from parents asking to support Education Health and Care Plan requests for out of county placements.

- **To describe what impact, if any, the proposed closures would have on them, their family, people they know or work with, or their group or organisation.**

285 responses were received.

The most common themes were:

- loss of rest for parents and carers (33%)
- increased stress for parents and carers (30%)
- impact on siblings and family (28%)
- the loss of a safe, supportive facility (28%)
- wider service and financial pressures (22%)
- the emotional impact on children of moving from provision they are familiar with and staff they trust (21%)
- the loss of experienced staff (10%)
- anger that the outcome is pre-determined (11%)

8.17 Loss of rest for parents and carers

Families who currently receive overnight respite will continue to receive support whilst they are still eligible so there should be no loss of rest for parents and carers if the proposals are agreed and implemented.

The County Council is clear that there will not be any reductions in children's current overnight respite care packages if they choose to access an alternative residential overnight respite provision. Reassessments will not be required if the decision is taken to close Merrydale and/ or Sunbeams. Ongoing reviews will continue to ensure that services remain appropriate to children and their families.

Families who are newly assessed as requiring respite support will also continue to be able to access this type of provision.

Children's Services eligibility criteria remains unchanged. It is the location of the delivery of the support, and the range of support on offer that is changing.

8.18 Increased stress for parents and carers

There is no reduction in care proposed should the decision be made to close Merrydale and Sunbeams. The Council will work with all affected families to identify alternative arrangements that are suitable to meet their child/children's needs. The approach that has been and would be taken is outlined in the sections below with the aim that there is no increased stress for parents and carers.

8.19 Impact on siblings and family

Concerns were raised through the consultation that the proposals would affect siblings who are able to spend time with parents accessing activities that their disabled sibling may not be able to engage in or may not want to, when they are having overnight stays at Merrydale and Sunbeams. If it is agreed that the homes should close, a suitable, alternative option would be offered so that sibling time with parents could be maintained.

The consultation responses also raised wider questions about the support offered to young carers and siblings of children with disabilities. Children's Services currently funds Hampshire Young Carers Alliance (HYCA) to provide a young carers' service.

Via the Short Break Activities grants, Hampshire County Council currently funds provision which allows siblings to attend activities. These presently include YMCA, Avon Tyrell and some Disability Challengers schemes. These inclusive services enable children with a disability to enjoy Short Breaks activities with their siblings, and enables families to access one service for their children.

Where families give consent for their details to be shared, families of children with disabilities can be linked up; perhaps where there are children and siblings in similar circumstances, giving the families the opportunity to share experiences, and benefit from new friendships and support networks.

8.20 The loss of a safe, supportive facility

The County Council recognises that it is important that children feel safe and secure where they receive care away from their families. Parents and carers need to build trusting relationships with staff and change can be difficult for children and their parents. There are obvious emotional ties between children and their families with Merrydale and Sunbeams where trusting relationships have been built.

If the decision is made to close these provisions, opportunities will be put in place to enable these endings and goodbyes to be managed and the children's time at these provisions celebrated, recognising that the way that this is achieved may well be individual for each child.

Families would be supported to build trusting relationships with new providers and their staff. Social workers will support children to have a managed transition, agreed with their family, which works with the child and family's timescales.

8.21 The emotional impact on children of moving from provision they are familiar with and staff they trust

Care packages would not be reduced for any child receiving overnight respite currently at Merrydale and Sunbeams. A suitable alternative would be offered through discussion between children's social workers and families and they would be supported through a transition that helps them get to know the new respite environment and staff group and that all questions and concerns are addressed.

The transition from one setting to another may cause stress and anxiety to the directly affected children and families. Given the needs of children attending Merrydale and Sunbeams, the impact of such change for them could be particularly challenging. To enable these transitions to be successful, social workers would undertake individualised planning for each child. There would be opportunities for the child to be visited by staff from their new provision at home, to make visits to the provision and for staff from Merrydale and Sunbeams as well as parents to share information about the children they care for with the new provider.

All the children and families directly affected by the proposals were offered one-to-one meetings with a social worker during the consultation to explore what their individual options would be. Each child has a potential option identified in the event of closure. Families have been supported to visit alternative settings if they wished to and for some children, these new respite arrangements have been progressed in advance of any decision, at the parent's request.

Parents and carers of children accessing Firvale have also been made aware of the potential changes to the in-house offer. This group may also be impacted in the event of any closure due to potential new children accessing Firvale as an alternative.

Where families have chosen not to identify an alternative, social workers have used their own professional judgement based on the knowledge of the family to identify a potential suitable alternative. These are not fixed and should the decision be taken to close one or both of the homes, families would have the opportunity to have further discussions with their social workers about the alternative options available. Individualised transition plans would be put in place for each child. Children would have the opportunity to visit any new provision prior to commencing overnights and their care plan would be reviewed regularly to ensure it meets the needs of the child.

Children's Services monitors and reviews children's care plans jointly with their family to ensure that they are effective; this includes any respite arrangements. The County Council would ensure that full transition plans are agreed with families before any proposed closures take effect. All providers of overnight respite put in place individual care plans for each child, informed by information from the child or young person, their parents or carers and anyone else identified. This ensures that the provider is able to meet the individual needs of a child and tailor its support accordingly.

If the decision is made to close Merrydale and Sunbeams the County Council would work with providers to support the transition plans for groups of children. External providers would use this information to look at matching children, for example to maintain school friendships and existing relationships. Children and young people who currently access Merrydale and Sunbeams would continue to have opportunities to mix with an appropriate peer group which would enable them to maintain existing and establish new, relationships.

The alternative overnight respite providers are established and experienced in caring for children with complex needs and disabilities. Many Hampshire families already access these services. They are experienced in welcoming and settling new children into their environment, making bonds and developing trusting relationships with children and their families. The staff work with parents to understand the needs of their children and how best to meet these.

The County Council has considered whether, if the decision was made to close the homes, they be kept open longer to allow those who are 16 or 17 years old the opportunity to move to adult provision (preventing a move to an alternative overnight respite provision and then a potential further move to an adult provision). This would not be possible but the County Council acknowledges that two moves in such a short period would not be the best outcome for these young people. Therefore for the children approaching adulthood, alternative plans would be focused on accessing their adult provisions earlier, negating the need for a further change wherever possible.

8.22 The loss of experienced staff

The options for existing staff are discussed in section 7.

Staff who may leave under EVR/CR will have valuable skills and experience relevant to being a foster carer providing short-term respite care in their homes for children with disabilities. Staff would be eligible to apply to become a foster carer for the Specialist Respite Care Service (SRC). Information about Specialist Respite Care is provided in section 8.36.

8.23 Wider service and financial pressures

Concerns were raised during the consultation that the impact on families could potentially lead to family breakdowns or families needing further support, perhaps even full time care.

Children and families would not receive a reduction in overnight respite as a result of these proposals. Therefore, it is not anticipated that the closure of one or two in-house units in Children's Services would result in a displacement of spend to Adults Services. Any older young people taking the opportunity to potentially transition to Adults Services earlier, as a result of any closure, would continue to be funded by Children's Services until they are 18 years old.

Where respite families are experiencing extreme difficulties providers can be approached to offer emergency overnights, including same day referrals. All contracted providers are expected to consider emergency respite placements when the need arises. For children known to them this is much easier, but where possible they will also consider children they have not previously cared for. One provider will have a bed specifically for emergencies, which will be kept free for such instances.

8.24 Anger that the outcome is pre-determined

It is recognised that some people hold the view that the outcome of the consultation has been pre-determined. However, no decision about the proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams has yet been made.

8.25 Views on alternative options

8.26 Respondents were then asked to consider the alternative options presented:

- **For their comments on the proposals, and the alternative options which have been considered or rejected.**

8.27 Alternative Overnight Residential Respite

11% of respondents commented about the alternative respite provision proposed.

The most common themes in relation to alternative overnight residential respite were:

- Limited range of options; alternative homes do not cater for the same range of disabilities
- Concerns that other local provision did not offer the same standards of care and had lower Ofsted ratings than Merrydale and Sunbeams
- Lack of clarity as to whether there are comparable facilities in the alternative options
- Distance and travel concerns
- Concerns that private homes had higher staff turnover
- Concerns that the County Council would be less able to influence the quality of provision with external providers

8.28 Limited range of options; alternative homes do not cater for the same range of disabilities

The current known overnight respite market local to Hampshire consists of;

Firvale	Basingstoke
Cherry Trees	Guildford
Tree Tops	Chertsey
Castle Gate	Newbury
Rose Road	Southampton
Galena	Southampton
Kids	Fareham (although please note that this provision will be moving to purpose built premises in Waterlooville in the New Year)
Beechside	Portsmouth

The homes above provide for the same range of needs and disabilities as Merrydale and Sunbeams currently.

For children meeting specific eligibility criteria for life limiting conditions there are also specialist settings such as;

Naomi House	Winchester
Shooting Stars Chase	Guildford
Chestnut Tree House	West Sussex

If other overnight respite provision is identified this will be explored with the possibility of utilising such services to offer children and their families further choice.

8.29 Concerns that the market will not be able to cope with the demand

Based on the face-to-face discussions with families and their social workers, there is currently sufficient capacity in the market to accommodate potential children transferring from Sunbeams and Merrydale, should the closures take place.

Some providers in the local market are registered charities; Rose Road, Kids, Cherry Trees (and previously Stephens Ark Mencap). There are also two local authority providers (in addition to Hampshire County Council's Firvale); Beechside is a Portsmouth City Council operated service and Castle Gate is a West Berkshire Council operated service. Galena is run by Keys Group which is a private company.

The mixed economy affords the market a level of stability. The County Council works closely with the providers and has built positive relationships over the

years to be able to support settings facing challenges. For example, should a critical provider of care be in financial difficulty the County Council would work with them to move to a more stable position whilst simultaneously monitoring the risk.

Providers have advised the County Council that they are able to meet the potential volume of nights. At this stage they are unable to comment on meeting the current particular days being received, without further detail regarding specific patterns of overnights for individual families. These details have not yet been provided at this initial scoping phase.

The potential demand increase for Firvale has been scoped and this indicates that the potential volume of nights can be met.

External providers are currently aware of potential numbers of children and numbers of nights. Should the decision be made to close one or more of the homes, more detailed discussions would be had regarding individual child needs and circumstances, to ensure that these could be met by a particular provider.

Current and potential capacity of the existing market consists of:

- a) Existing capacity, i.e. the provider is not running at full capacity within its current opening times and is able to accommodate more children within current offer;
- b) The provider is able to increase opening times thus increasing capacity, should this be required. (If this is the case it is acknowledged that staff recruitment activity may be required and would need to be built in to any transition timeline.)

If demand were to increase, effective contract management and on-going dialogue with our providers would ensure that there is sufficient capacity going forward.

There is a potential new provision in the North West of the county that will be able to apply to deliver services, adding even more market capacity to the current availability detailed above. This provision is dependent on Ofsted registration in April 2018.

Furthermore, when Kids moves to its new premises in Waterloo in 2018, this will further increase the number of beds in the market and add to the available capacity for current and future demand.

With the increased respite offer, the development of an increased number and range of arrangements with external service providers, and the development of the Specialist Respite Care service, there is a foundation for growth in respite support that would be able to meet an increase in demand. This includes consideration of forecasted population growth figures which takes into account planned new homes being built in the county over the next 6 years. Preventative interventions such as the Sleep Support service for families (where non-medical sleep issues are the main reason for respite being required) will present opportunities to tackle the core underlying issues (e.g. sleep).

Where any gaps in provision are identified later in the process for any reason, the County Council would work with current providers, and carers to fill these where possible. Where this is not feasible work with carers and the market would be undertaken to identify other solutions.

A further option for managing any gaps in provision is via a direct payment. These would enable families to commission their services directly.

The County Council's approach to contracting with external service providers ensures that any new overnight providers or new settings that meet the required standards are able to apply to deliver overnight services to Hampshire without having to wait until a new tender is issued.

If an alternative provider does not feel it is able to meet the needs of the child for any reason, there is a range of other options that would be explored to secure suitable alternative provision for the family.

8.30 Concerns that other local provision did not offer the same standards of care and had lower Ofsted ratings than Merrydale and Sunbeams

Hampshire County Council's three residential respite services Firvale, Merrydale and Sunbeams have all been graded by Ofsted as being 'Good' following their most recent inspections. All three services are managed and supported by the same management team. As such there is a consistency across all three homes in the services and care provided. All provide suitable accommodation and facilities that meet the needs of the children they look after during their respite.

All overnight respite units are inspected by Ofsted. The County Council promotes access to settings with an Ofsted rating of 'Good' or above.

Where a contracted provider has a less than 'Good' rating support is provided to develop and improve practice to move back to 'Good' at the next inspection.

During this period new families would not be referred to the service and risk assessments for existing children accessing the provision would be undertaken by the children's social worker.

Where parental choice or specific needs dictate, new children may access 'requires improvement' settings following a comprehensive risk assessment process being undertaken.

Regarding suitability of care; should the closures go ahead, more detailed discussions with providers would start to take place. Where a provider has been identified as a potential alternative for a child, information would then be shared regarding the individual needs. Providers would undertake their assessment and meet with the child to ascertain if the setting can meet their specific requirements.

8.31 Lack of clarity as to whether there are comparable facilities in the alternative options

The alternative overnight respite providers outlined in the consultation are established providers who have experience of providing overnight respite for many children and young people. The children for whom they currently provide respite have similar needs to those currently at Merrydale and Sunbeams. The settings are structured to provide environments to meet the needs of these children and young people. They will also provide appropriate peer groups for them.

The County Council's external providers of overnight respite are contracted to deliver services according to the following principles;

- Children accessing overnight respite are loved, happy, healthy, safe from harm and able to develop, thrive and fulfil their potential.
- Overnight respite staff value and nurture each child as an individual with talents, strengths and capabilities that can develop over time.
- Overnight respite providers foster positive relationships, encouraging strong bonds between children and staff in the home on the basis of jointly undertaken activities, shared daily life, domestic and non-domestic routines and established boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Providers are ambitious, nurturing children's school learning and out-of-school learning and their ambitions for their future.
- Providers are attentive to children's need, supporting emotional, mental and physical health needs, including repairing earlier damage to self-esteem and encouraging friendships.
- Overnight respite providers are outward facing, working with the wider system of professionals for each child, and with children's families and communities of origin to sustain links and understand past problems.
- Overnight respite providers have high expectations of staff as committed members of a team, as decision makers and as activity leaders. In support of this, children's homes should ensure all staff and managers are engaged in on-going learning about their role and the children and families they work with.
- Overnight respite is provided in a safe and stimulating environment in high-quality buildings, with spaces that support, nurture and allow privacy as well as common spaces and spaces to be active.
- Providers offer a range of on and off site activities which meet the needs of individual children and respond to their preferences.
- Overnight respite staff are sensitive when listening to the wishes and feelings of each child, especially those with communication challenges. They ensure that all children are able to participate and be involved in planning activities, and providing feedback on the service.

Each child will have a personalised respite plan identifying what the desired outcomes are for that individual during their time at respite.

8.32 Lack of clarity about the 16+ independence breaks

The 16+ independence breaks are a targeted break that focuses on supporting young people to work towards developing skills. The aim of this provision is for young people to achieve more independence as they move into adulthood.

Working on skills will also be a fundamental part of all provisions ensuring that there is ongoing agreement between children, parents, providers and other professionals involved with the child, such as schools, as to what the priority for the child is and the best approach to achieving this for all.

In addition to the principles outlined at 8.31, overnight respite providers work to a set of principles agreed with Hampshire County Council for older young people. Where appropriate, this will be focussed on developing independence skills as identified below (this list is not exhaustive);

- I can care for myself more independently
- I have an improved awareness of personal safety and have a better understanding of how to use the internet safely
- I am more independent in keeping my room in good order
- I recognise the importance of eating well and have a better understanding of how to keep myself healthy
- I am more independent in preparing a meal
- I have an improved ability to make decisions about how to spend my day
- I have an improved ability to manage my money
- I have greater independence in finding information about community facilities and services
- I have greater independence in travelling by foot, or public transport
- I have improved awareness of road safety
- I demonstrate improvements in understanding appropriate behaviours in different situations
- I have an improved ability to make myself understood
- I have a better understanding of relationships and what I need to do to stay healthy.

8.33 Distance and travel concerns

The County Council recognises that travelling to and from respite venues is an additional concern for families. When planning for alternative provision, transport to or from overnight respite would be considered with families on a case by case basis. The Council is committed to ensuring that families remain able to access provision that would meet their child's needs.

8.34 Concerns that private homes had higher staff turnover

In 2016/17 Hampshire County Council depended on the external market to provide over 2,000 overnights.

Hampshire's external residential respite market generally has a low turnover of staff.

Staffing in these externally commissioned homes is consistent; individuals tend to remain in post at the same setting for several years, this includes both management and practitioner roles.

8.35 Concerns that the County Council would be less able to influence the quality of provision with external providers

Children's Services work closely with the external market and are a significant purchaser of respite services. As a result of this and the relationships developed with external service providers, the County Council has some influence on external service providers who are responsive to input from the County Council in developing and shaping provision to meet evolving needs.

Following any transition providers will be monitored to ensure that they are providing the required levels and standard of care and that feedback from children and families is positive. Any areas for development would be identified and worked through via contract management. As part of the care plan reviewing process social workers would continue to meet with families to ensure that the provision in place, is meeting their needs and that the new package is working. If a family feels that the support is not meeting their needs for any reason, this would be explored by the social worker and where appropriate alternatives could be sought.

The County Council's approach to contracting with external service providers ensures that the service offer is not static and is flexible enough to take account of feedback from families to ensure that any viable future options can be explored.

8.36 Specialist Respite Care

7% of respondents commented on the specialist respite care option. Much of the concern about specialist respite was based on pre-conceived knowledge of the service – and in particular on perceived past failures to meet required need.

The key themes were:

- Limited availability
- Matching
- Suitability for needs
- Not professional carers
- Reliability concerns
- Onerous assessment

- No social progress
- It hasn't worked before

Limited availability

There are currently 40 approved Specialist Respite Carers able to provide respite to one or more children. The Council is launching a new targeted recruitment strategy in January 2018 to increase the number of Specialist Respite Carers.

Matching

Children are matched to carers according to their individual needs. If specific training is required to enable a carer to meet the needs of a child, this is provided through Hampshire County Council or by commissioning specific training from relevant organisations. Introductory sessions give the opportunity for the carer/child/family to meet and confirm suitability of the match prior to the commencement of the placement.

Suitability for needs

The County Council has undertaken a detailed analysis of the needs of children who use overnight respite. This information is being used to target the recruitment of specialist respite carers in Hampshire to meet those needs.

Not professional carers

Carers are skilled in supporting and promoting a range of outcomes for children. Many carers are skilled professionals such as nurses, teachers and learning support assistants who can utilise such skills to children's benefit within a family environment.

Reliability concerns

Specialist Respite Care provides children with the opportunity to spend time with another family on a regular basis, potentially over many years and can result in very close relationships being formed that are supportive of the child and their family. As carers generally only care for one or two children this can enable flexibility around the arrangements that can be made.

Onerous assessment

Specialist Respite Carers are approved foster carers under The Fostering Regulations 2011. Providing Specialist Respite Care requires a high level of skill and commitment. The assessment process provides the opportunity to explore in detail a carer's resilience and commitment and ensure the necessary safeguards to protect children are in place.

No social progress

Specialist Respite Care can provide consistency of care with the same family for a child on a regular basis. The child's individual care plan identifies the outcomes to be met and how these will be achieved. The review of a child's plan includes monitoring how outcomes are being met and provides the mechanism to revise these where needed.

It hasn't worked before

Specialist Respite Care is one of many options to meet the needs of children. Overnight respite away from home can be a difficult step for children and their families and not all options will suit everyone. The County Council is committed to expanding the number of carers available to support better matching for children and families so that care within a family environment is available where it is the appropriate option.

8.37 Overnight Care Support

5% of respondents made comments related to the care support alternative. The key themes were:

- difficulties in recruiting and retaining carers
- additional burden of hospitality that this option would place on the host family
- lack of space to accommodate a carer in their home
- would not offer a break for the family.
- would be socially isolating for the child and not enable them to make friends or develop their independence.

Difficulties in recruiting and retaining carers

This type of support can be accessed via a County Council contracted care support provider who would employ a care worker, or via a personal budget and a family would make their own arrangements, or via a direct payment worker.

Additional burden of hospitality that this option would place on the host family

Some parents/carers choose to use the time to visit friends and family therefore opting to not stay in the home during the overnight.

Lack of space to accommodate a carer in their home

This option is about giving families choice; for those it suits it can be explored, and for those who have concerns around this type of support and how it would work for their particular circumstances, there are other types of respite that can be accessed.

Would not offer a break for the family

Overnight care support in the home is one option for respite. It is recognised that this type of provision may not meet the needs of all families. However, during the consultation period a small number of families have identified this option as their preference.

Would be socially isolating for the child and not enable them to make friends or develop their independence.

For some families they would prefer for their child to stay at home and not to go to another setting for respite, as it is less disruptive and they know they are happy in their own room and familiar environment.

8.38 Family Breaks

2% of respondent comments related to family breaks. The key themes were:

- would not offer a break for the family
- would be difficult for families whose children struggled to adjust to change
- would offer longer breaks, but less frequently, but need little breaks more often.
- opportunities for independent development and social progression would be limited.

Would not offer a break for the family

Family breaks were a pilot project which mixed results. Some families really enjoyed getting away together as a family, especially those with younger children, and for them the opportunity to stay in accessible premises that met their needs worked and was beneficial. For some families it was the first time they had been able to all go swimming together for example, as the setting had hoists in the pool room.

For other families this type of break did not meet their needs as a carer was not provided.

Would be difficult for families whose children struggled to adjust to change

Family breaks are intended to offer families a choice in how they access respite services. It is acknowledged that they would not suit all families for example where children struggle to adjust to change or where families are looking for independent development opportunities.

Would offer longer breaks, but less frequently, but need little breaks more often

In terms of length of overnight respite, some families fed back during the service user engagement that if they were able to have a longer break, they would not need so many shorter breaks during the year. Parents/carers fed back that a

longer break would enable them to re-charge more fully than one or two overnights which were spread out across the year.

Should a family opt for a family break as their alternative package, they could mix and match it with another type of break such as respite in a residential setting. For example they could have half their allocated nights away together as a family and half with the child accessing a respite home.

Opportunities for independent development and social progression would be limited

Families eligible for overnight stays could potentially coordinate dates and share a break to enable their children to spend time together if opportunities to socialise and social progression is a concern for the family with this type of break

8.39 Respondents' own ideas for alternative service provision

Given their concerns about alternative provision, some respondents made other suggestions about how respite services could be adapted to meet the needs of both service users and the County Council.

8.40 Redevelopment/ refurbishment

14% of respondents felt that if the homes were to close and the land sold, that the proceeds and developer contributions could be used to provide a new purpose built facility.

A further 8% of respondents thought that the County Council should re-imagine the use of their overnight respite homes to make the facilities more sustainable by investigating options for mixed use or extending the range of services provided. Respondents saw the potential for the homes to be used as a 'hub' from which other forms of respite could be provided. This, they felt, could help towards the cost of refurbishment of an existing home, or the ongoing running of a new purpose-built facility.

Merrydale and Sunbeams have been adapted over many years to ensure they meet the ever changing requirements of their users and the regulatory infrastructure that surrounds respite care.

Given the age and condition of both buildings, significant capital investment would be required if their use was to be meaningfully altered. Further to this, the location and environment of both homes brings limitations that could severely restrict any form of different use. Therefore, this approach to either location is not recommended.

The County Council could invest in the refurbishment and development of the two homes but this would not achieve the saving of £452,000 per annum required.

8.41 Delayed decision

6% of respondents felt that any decision to close should be postponed to enable a smooth transition for existing users. This was considered to be particularly pertinent for older users, who would soon be transferring to adult care. Respondents also wanted reassurance that nothing would close until alternative care plans were in place.

All children would be supported to identify alternative provision if the decision is to close Merrydale and Sunbeams. The County Council has considered that, if the decision is to close the homes, whether they could be kept open longer to allow those 16 and 17 years olds the opportunity to move to adult provision. This would not be possible but alternative plans will be focused on accessing adult provision earlier, negating the need for further change.

8.42 Review eligibility criteria

There is a perception that there are a number of families who would benefit from overnight respite, but who do not quite meet the existing criteria. 6% of respondents suggested that the County Council could re-assess the eligibility criteria to increase service user numbers which would make the homes more viable and enable them to continue operating.

Children's Services has a published eligibility criterion to receive a service from the disabled children's teams. Social workers in these teams are trained to complete a holistic assessment of a child and their family's needs and the assessment is used to understand the family's need for support or specialist services. Social workers will work with the family to plan how the family can be supported to meet their needs; part of this involves consideration as to whether specialist services are recommended.

Overnight respite is one of the most costly services provided to families, so the County Council needs to ensure that this service is available to the people who need it most, when they need it. This is not just based upon the needs that a particular condition presents but also the wider needs of parents and carers, and their families as a whole.

Overnight respite is considered for families where:

- The child regularly does not sleep through the night and needs supervision to stay safe
- The child has complex health needs that regularly need attention during the night
- The child's support needs are so intensive that the parents/carers need a longer break

The County Council holds a County Allocation Panel every two weeks, where referrals for overnight respite are presented and a panel decision is made as to whether to approve those referrals. Prior to this meeting the child's social worker

would ensure that all other avenues of support had been explored, including support available within the wider family or community.

8.43 Key findings from staff and union consultations

8.44 There were a number of key findings from the staff and union consultations. These are outlined below:

8.45 Maintaining a professional service during the review and minimising the impact on service users

Staff were concerned about ensuring that the quality of the service would not be affected by the proposals and consultation process. Staff have remained professional in their day to day duties to ensure minimal impact. Where staff have had concerns or questions about the proposals they have been able to feed these back to their unit manager and have been taken into consideration as part of the consultation. This is outlined below.

8.46 Loss of experienced staff

Concern was raised that the children using the service often have very complex needs and consequently the staff working at the homes are highly trained and experienced, many with long service. It is recognised that the staff within the homes are highly trained and experienced. If the proposal to close the homes is approved, staff who leave employment, either through EVR2 or compulsory redundancy, would be eligible to become a foster carer for the Specialist Respite Care Service (SRC) and this would not affect their entitlement to retain their redundancy pay or gain access to their pension. In addition redeployment opportunities into other roles with Hampshire County Council would be sought for those at risk of compulsory redundancy.

8.47 HR Processes

During the consultation process there have been discussions with staff regarding the HR timeline; the redeployment opportunities available at Firvale, the department and wider authority that staff would be eligible to apply for; and the redeployment process.

8.48 Voluntary/ compulsory redundancy process

Also during consultation queries have been answered in relation to who would be eligible to apply for enhanced voluntary redundancy (EVR); how to apply; how to calculate the value of their EVR package; the criteria for selection; potential leaving dates and implications for employees who have been accepted for EVR.

8.49 Pay and conditions

Staff raised concerns about the lack of new children and families being approved for overnight respite care and the implication this had for them in terms of

reduced regular overtime and the potential impact this could have on their redundancy payments. With some voluntary turnover in staff during the consultation it is not clear that there would be any reduction in overtime. However, it has been confirmed that redundancy pay would be calculated in line with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) guidelines and Employment with Hampshire County Council (EHCC) policy.

8.50 Transition plans

Staff have raised a number of issues relating to the transition of children between settings. Where possible staff would assist in the transition process and support the children and families with the move.

9 Equality Impact Assessment

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm>

- 9.1 A comprehensive Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) on the impact of these proposals on the children who access Merrydale and Sunbeams and the staff who work in them was carried out in July and has been further considered and revised for decision day taking into account the staff and public consultation findings.
- 9.2 The EIA describes how the County Council has considered the impact of the proposed changes on those with protected characteristics and the action that would be taken by the County Council to minimise this impact. It covers the impact for both children and staff.
- 9.3 The protected characteristics that have been identified as medium or high impact for children are age, disability, poverty and rurality. The County Council has addressed these impacts within this report and in detail in the EIA which has resulted in a lower impact rating after mitigation.
- 9.4 The protected characteristics that have been identified as medium for staff are age, gender and poverty. Again, these impacts have been addressed in this report and the full detail is within the EIA.

10 Proposals and implementation

- 10.1 Hampshire County Council has considered the views expressed through both the public and staff consultations. The County Council recognises there is strong feeling against the proposed closure of the two homes which are valued by families using them. The proposed overnight respite provision is predicated on offering families a more flexible choice of services, within the current financial constraints.
- 10.2 The decision has to be a carefully balanced consideration of all the factors including the responses to the consultation, the needs and welfare of the current

cohort of children accessing Merrydale and Sunbeams, the future needs of disabled children in Hampshire and the availability, quality and capacity in the market, now and in the future.

- 10.3 Having carefully considered the responses from the consultation, the needs of the current 35 children accessing the homes, as well as the future needs of disabled children, the options for the sites against the investment required, this report seeks approval to close Merrydale in Winchester and Sunbeams in Aldershot. Closure is proposed to take place in Spring 2018 to enable detailed discussion with children, their parents/carers and providers to support a smooth transition to alternative provision.
- 10.4 The recommendation for the closure is made on the basis that the buildings do not meet the standards of accommodation that Hampshire County Council would wish to provide, will not meet the future needs of disabled children and that the limitations of the buildings are such that it is not possible to bring them up to this standard whilst maintaining economic viability. The recommendation has taken into account the availability of provision within the external provider market.

11 Legal implications

- 11.1 The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011 place a duty on local authorities to provide a range of services for disabled children and their families which includes “overnight care in the homes of disabled children or elsewhere.” These overnight breaks can be provided to children under Section 17 or Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- 11.2 Local authorities have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 section 149 to have due regard to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	No
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	No
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	No

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Executive Member for Children's Services		
Short Breaks for Disabled Children Grant Awards for 2014-15	5195	22 January 2014
Short Breaks Statement: Service Statement review 2014-15	5580	26 March 2014
Children with Disabilities Public Consultation	5933	25 July 2014
Revenue Budget report for Children's Services for 2015/16	6286	21 January 2015
Short Breaks Grants Allocation for 2015/16	6447	23 March 2015
Transformation to 2017 - Revenue Savings Proposals	6889	16 September 2015
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2016/17	7131	20 January 2016
Short Breaks for Disabled Children Grants for 2016-17	7216	18 March 2016
Revenue budget report for Children's Services for 2017/18	8019	18 January 2017
Permission to consult on proposals to close two overnight respite residential homes for children with disabilities as the Council moves towards a wider range of overnight respite services		17 July 2017
Cabinet		
Cabinet: Revenue Budget and Precept 2015/16	6373	6 February 2015

Transformation to 2017: Consultation Outcomes	6942	21 September 2015
Medium Term Financial Strategy Update and Transformation to 2017 Savings Proposals	6920	5 October 2015
Children and Young People's Select Committee (ref: Respite Task and Finish Group)		
Short Breaks Task & Finish Group report	6003	23 July 2014
Consideration of Request to Exercise Call-in Powers	6083	12 September 2014

Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Children Act	1989
Local Government Act	1999
Equality Act	2010
Short Breaks: Statutory guidance on how to safeguard and promote the welfare of disabled children using Short Breaks	2010
The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations	2011
Children and Families Act	2014
Best Value Statutory Guidance (revised and updated)	2015

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

1.2. The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

1.3. Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

1.4. Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.5. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. A summary statement is available at section 9 of this report. The full assessment is available at: www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/about-cs/cs-equality-diversity.htm.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. There are not considered to be impacts on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

3.1. There are not considered to be impacts on climate change.

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Consultation on overnight respite for children with disabilities

Proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams overnight respite residential homes

Findings report



Contents

1. Introduction	2
Context	2
Consultation aims.....	3
2. Research approach	4
Open consultation	4
Responses to the consultation	5
Publication of data.....	6
3. Findings from the consultation	7
Key Findings	7
The proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams.....	8
The proposal to close Merrydale residential respite home.....	8
The proposal to close Sunbeams residential respite home.....	10
Important aspects of overnight respite to service users.....	12
Important aspects of respite care for parents/carers.....	18
The Impact of proposed closures on respondents.....	21
Transitioning to new care providers – concerns and questions.....	29
The wider service impact.....	32
Outstanding questions relating to proposed alternatives	34
Respondents’ own ideas for alternative service provision.....	37
4. Conclusions	39
Key Findings	39
Key messages from respondents to Hampshire County Council	39
What do respondents want to understand from the consultation?	40
5. Appendices	42
Appendix 1 - Responses received from outside the consultation questionnaire.....	42
Appendix 2 - Consultation Response Form (Standard Format)	44
Appendix 3 - List of organisations or groups which responded to the consultation	56
Appendix 4 - Consultation technical detail.....	57
Appendix 5 - Consultation participant profile	58
Appendix 6 - Coded responses to open questions	59
Appendix 7 - Data tables.....	61

1. Introduction

Context

The County Council is reviewing how it provides overnight respite to children with disabilities and their families. The Children's Services Department is developing a new offer, expanding the range of services available to give greater choice to current and future users of in-house residential respite.

The County Council is proposing to close Merrydale and Sunbeams for the following reasons:

- As a result of the feedback gained from children and young people and their families and carers on the type of overnight respite they would prefer to use. Feedback has shown a desire for wider choice of overnight respite which could include:
 - more opportunities for exciting and stimulating activities;
 - developing independent living skills;
 - solutions for underlying issues;
 - flexibility around length of stay;
 - combining a break for the whole family; and
 - a need for more age-appropriate overnight respite.
- Neither home is purpose-built, which presents a challenge for the County Council in caring for children with disabilities.
- Should the homes close, the County Council would be able to reduce costs by approximately £450,000 per year, on the upkeep of the buildings and facilities. Current funding could be used to purchase alternative care support and respite services, provided by other organisations, to meet assessed needs and preferences.

Consultation aims

The consultation sought to understand:

- The extent to which residents, parents, carers and other stakeholders, support the County Council's proposals to close the overnight respite homes at Merrydale and Sunbeams.
- What features of overnight respite are important to both children and parents or carers, in order to understand what residents, parents, carers and other stakeholders feel should be included in provision.

The County Council is committed to listening to the views of local residents and stakeholders before deciding which actions to take with regards to the proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams. The consultation findings set out in this report are intended to support the County Council's decision.

This report sets out a summary of the findings from the consultation. Detailed information is available in data tables in *Appendix seven*.

2. Research approach

Open consultation

The County Council carried out an open consultation to seek residents' and stakeholders' views on the proposals to close overnight respite homes at Merrydale in Winchester and Sunbeams in Aldershot. These two overnight residential respite children's homes are owned and run by Hampshire County Council and provide overnight respite for children with disabilities.

An eight-week consultation ran from 7 August 2017 to 2 October 2017.

A consultation Information Pack and Response Form were made available to view, print and download from the County Council's website. Responses could be submitted through an online questionnaire available at:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/aboutthecouncil/haveyoursay/consultations/sunbeamsandmerrydale>.

To aid participation, paper copies and alternative formats were available upon request. Easy Read versions of the documents were available online, or posted as paper forms on request. Easy Read paper copies were also provided directly to child social workers to distribute.

'Unstructured' responses that could be sent through via email or written letters, and those received by the consultation's close date were accepted.

In addition, the consultation was promoted through the County Council's social media channels, and released to local press.

To aid children and young people with disabilities, and their parents, who are directly impacted by the proposals, one-to-one meetings were arranged with child social workers and paper copies of the Information Pack and Response Form were sent to them by post. Meetings with child social workers were designed to enable those directly affected by the proposals to make an informed response to the consultation. The child social workers were able to discuss the proposals with children and parents, and with them, consider appropriate and available alternative services which would meet their respite needs, should the decision be made to close one or both residential respite homes.

A series of six drop-in consultation events were organised, enabling contact between parents and interested people to talk directly with County Council officers from the Children's Services department. The events were advertised on the County Council's consultation webpage, at Sunbeams and Merrydale, in local press and through the County Council's social media channels.

Providers of overnight respite and other stakeholders were directly contacted by the County Council about the consultation to make them aware of the proposals. A stakeholder information session was arranged during the consultation period.

This report considers the findings from the online and paper consultation questionnaires, as well as an overview of key themes arising from unstructured responses and drop-in sessions.

Responses to the consultation

As the consultation was an open exercise, its findings cannot be considered to be a 'sample' or representation of the Hampshire population. However, many parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities did respond, which gives the County Council an understanding of what families who are directly affected feel about the proposals. More detail about respondent types can be found in *Appendix four*, with a detailed breakdown of responses by key demographics.

There were 366 responses to the consultation questionnaire which breaks down as follows:

- 339 responses were received via the online response form, of which 336 were individual responses and three were from an organisation or group. Of the individual responses, 33 were submitted using the easy-read online version of the consultation questionnaire. Of the organisations or groups, a professional view from the Hampshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Child Health Department, Royal Hampshire County Hospital, was received.
- 27 responses were received via the paper response form; one from an organisation or group, 26 from individual responses.
- In addition, there were 12 'unstructured' responses (email, letter) received by the consultation deadline: nine were from members of the public; two responses from political representatives; and one from a stakeholder organisation. A list of organisations or groups (where names were provided) can be found in *Appendix one*.

85 responses were received from respondents that indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Merrydale or Sunbeams.

- **55** were from those who indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Merrydale.
- **30** were from those who indicated they were current users and/or family or carers of a child who currently uses Sunbeams.

Of these responses, two were received from young people who currently use the homes.

Publication of data

Data provided as part of this consultation will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal information will be used for analytical purposes only. Hampshire County Council will not share the information collected as part of this consultation with third parties. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared. Responses from groups or organisations may be published in full. Hampshire County Council will securely retain and store copies of the responses for one year after the end of the consultation process, and then delete the data.

More details on how the Hampshire County Council holds personal information can be found at: www.hants.gov.uk/privacy.

3. Findings from the consultation

Key Findings

The majority of respondents thought that the most important aspect of overnight respite for children with disabilities was that they feel happy, secure and safe. For parents/carers, the most important benefits of overnight respite are a break from caring and time to spend with other family members.

There was strong concern amongst respondents about the proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams. Although there is recognition that the homes are dated and need maintenance, almost 9 out of 10 (87%) would prefer them to remain open.

Disagreement with the proposed closures was widespread across respondent groups, with parents/carers of current service users joined by respite staff, support workers and informed members of the public in disapproving of the proposal to close the homes.

The impact of closure would resonate widely, with children, carers, siblings and wider family members all negatively affected. A common theme among respondents was that closures were a short term fix that would lead to bigger problems in the longer term.

If the decision is made to close the homes, respondents want to be assured that a comparable level of support would be available. Questions regarding transport arrangements, comparability of alternatives and emergency care provision need to be answered to help them make an informed choice about future arrangements.

There is uncertainty as to how proposed alternatives would meet the needs of existing respite users. Availability, suitability and ensuring the child retains some independence are key concerns.

There are calls to re-think the proposals, re-provision the homes or build a new residential respite home to ensure continuity of existing provision. These are options which have already been considered and rejected, suggesting that the rationale for the proposals could be clarified further.

The proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams

Respondents were asked to what extent they supported the County Council's proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams overnight residential respite homes. Information regarding the consultation was included in the Information Pack

(<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/consultation/overnight-respite-consultation-online.pdf>)

outlining the reasons for the proposed closures.

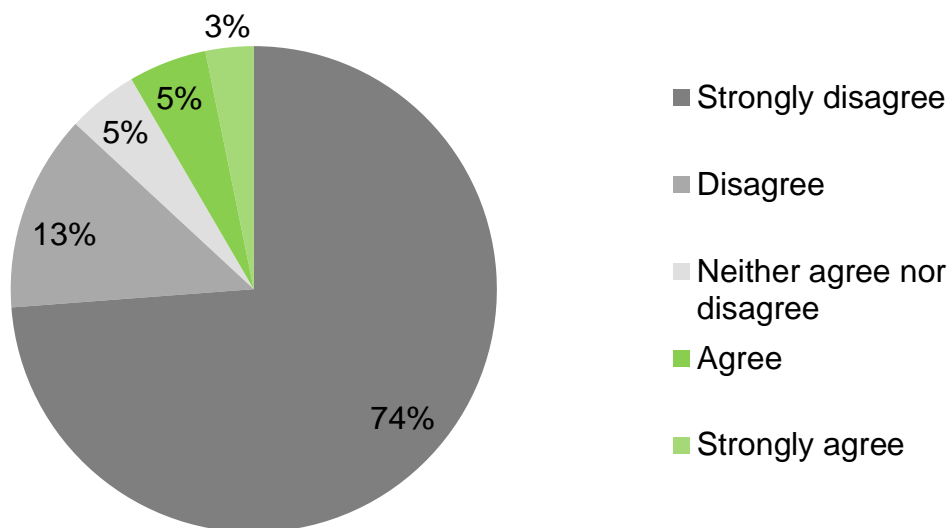
The level of disagreement to close both residential respite homes was identical, showing that both homes are equally as important to respondents.

The proposal to close Merrydale residential respite home

Respondents were asked, 'To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Merrydale?' The pie chart below shows the level of overall agreement.

Respondents have a strong concern about the proposal to close Merrydale, with 87% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Almost 9 out of 10 respondents would like Merrydale to remain open.

To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Merrydale? (Base: 344)

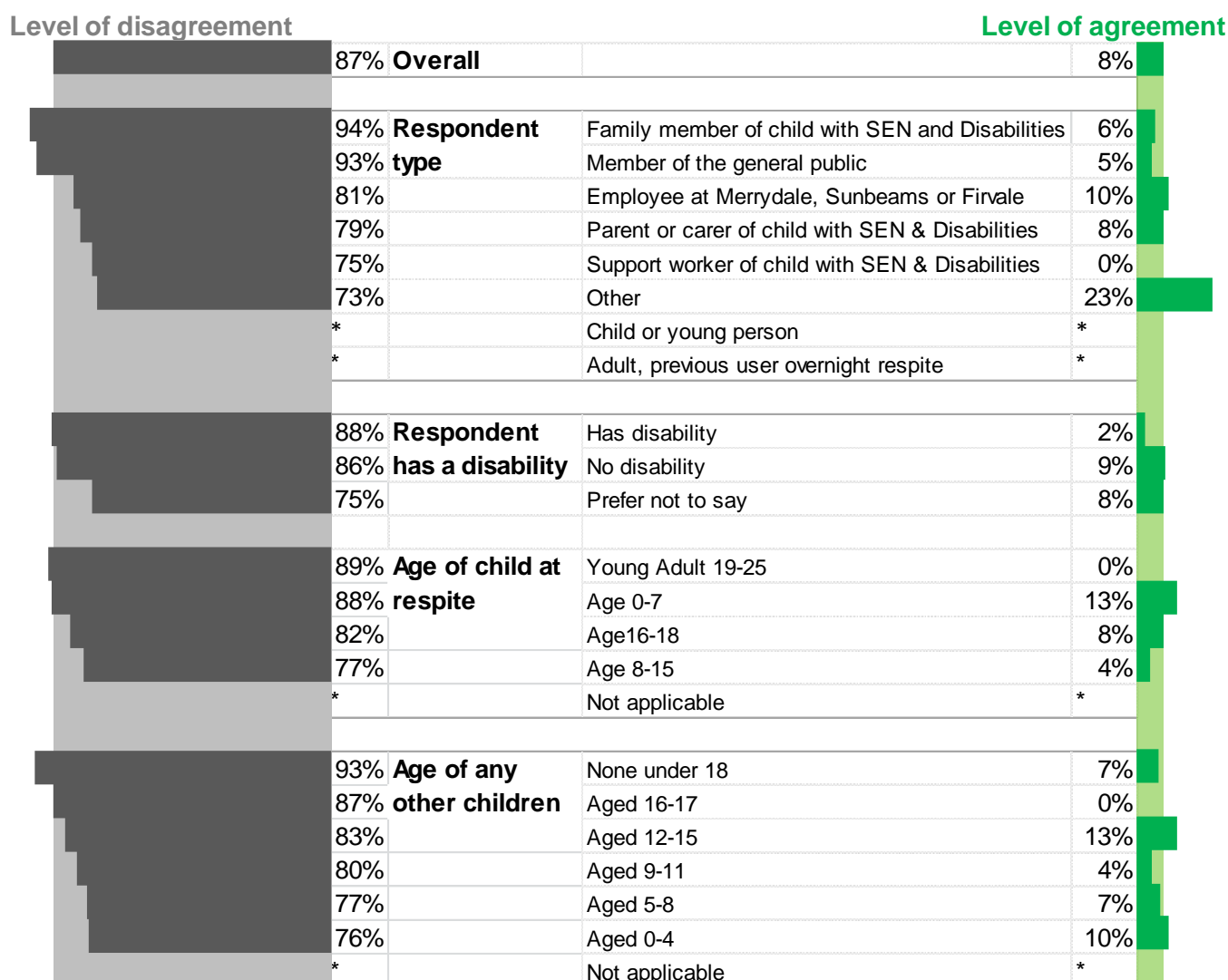


What do different groups think about the proposal to close Merrydale?

There was a negative response regarding the closure of Merrydale from all response groups. However, some groups were more concerned than others. A breakdown of responses by group is shown on the next page. Key headlines are:

- Respondents that indicated they were a family member of a child with disabilities were more likely to disagree with the proposals than any other group (94%).
- Respondents that indicated they had a health or disability issue were more likely to disagree (88%) with the proposals than those without health or disability issues (86%).
- Parents or carers with older children (ages 16-25) who currently use respite homes, are less likely to agree with the proposals (88%) in comparison to parents or carers with younger children (ages 0-15) who use respite homes (83%).

To what extent do you agree with the closure of Merrydale?



Overall base: 344

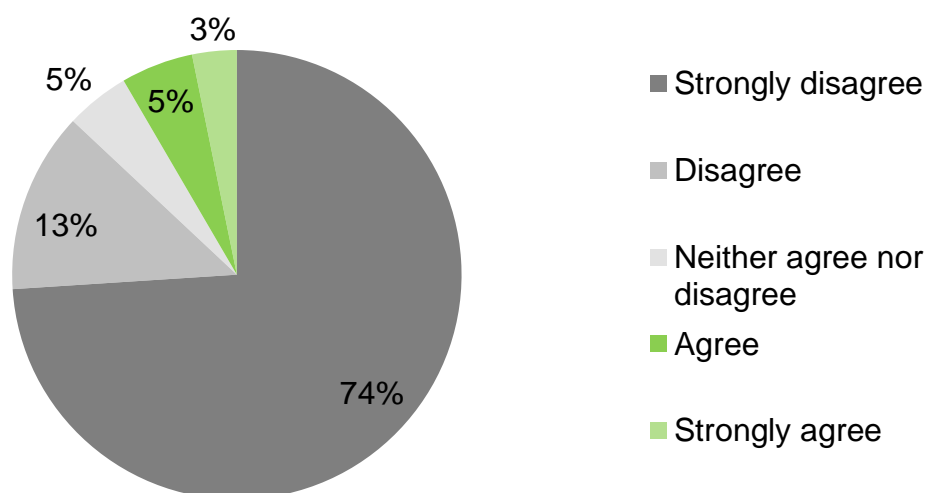
Notes: * Where there are fewer than ten responses in a category, this category has not been included in this chart due to poor levels of data accuracy of small sample sizes.

The proposal to close Sunbeams residential respite home

Respondents were asked, 'to what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Sunbeams?'. The pie chart below shows the level of overall agreement.

Respondents have a strong concern about the proposals to close Sunbeams, with 87% of respondents either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Almost 9 out of 10 respondents would like the residential respite homes to remain open.

To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Sunbeams? (Base: 345)

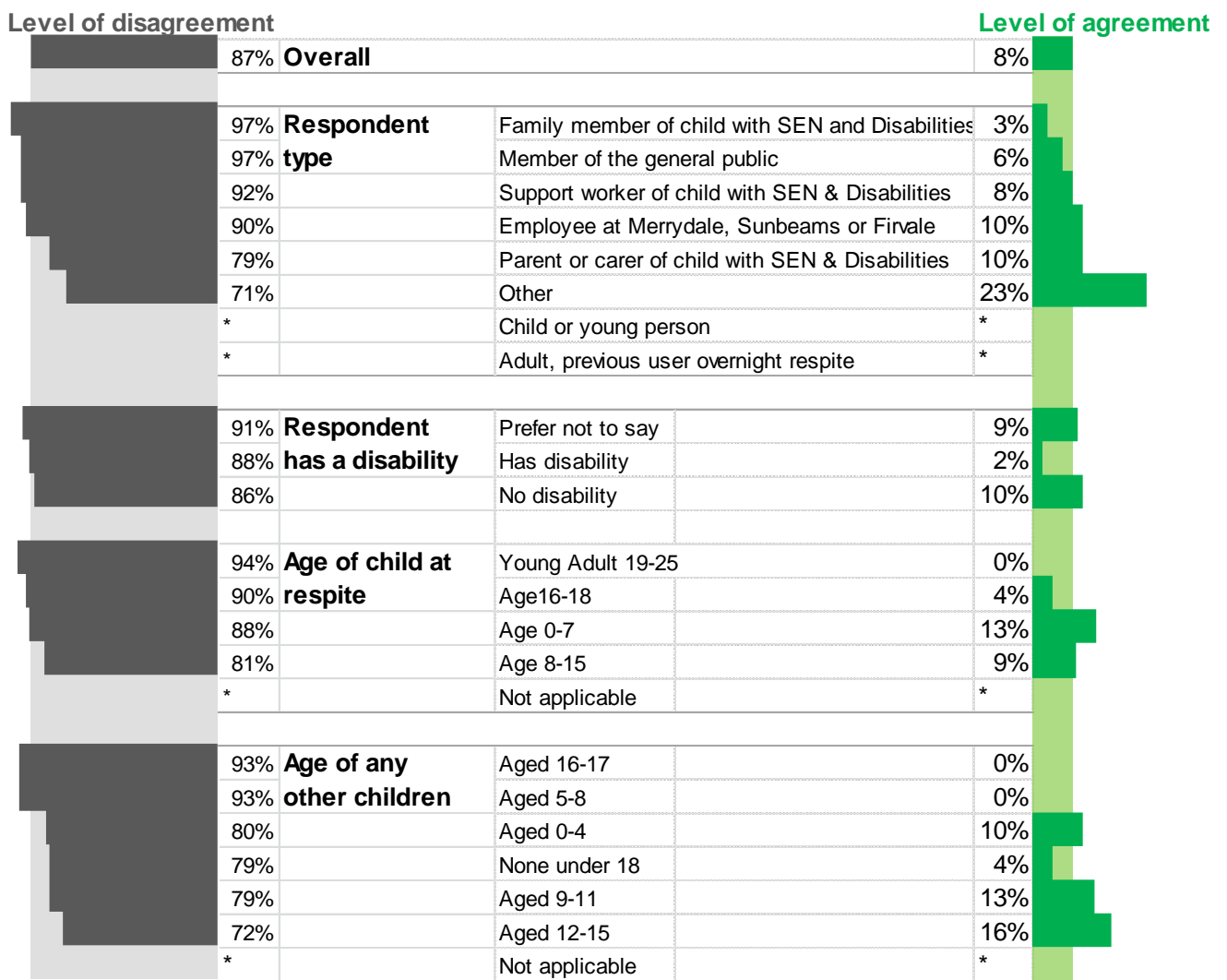


What do different groups think about the proposal to close Sunbeams?

There was a negative response regarding the closure of Sunbeams from all response groups, however some groups were more concerned than others. A break down of responses by group is shown on the next page. Headline findings are summarised as follows:

- Respondents that indicated they were a family member of a child with disabilities were more likely to disagree with the proposals than any other group (97%).
- Respondents that indicated they had a health or disability issue were more likely to disagree (88%) with the proposals than those without health or disability issues (86%).
- Parents or carers with older children (ages 16-25) who currently use respite homes, are less likely to agree with the proposals (92%) in comparison to parents or carers with younger children (ages 0-15) who use respite homes (84%).

To what extent do you agree with the closure of Sunbeams?



Overall base 345

Notes: * Where there are fewer than ten responses in a category, this category has not been included in this chart due to poor levels of data accuracy and small sample sizes

Important aspects of overnight respite to service users

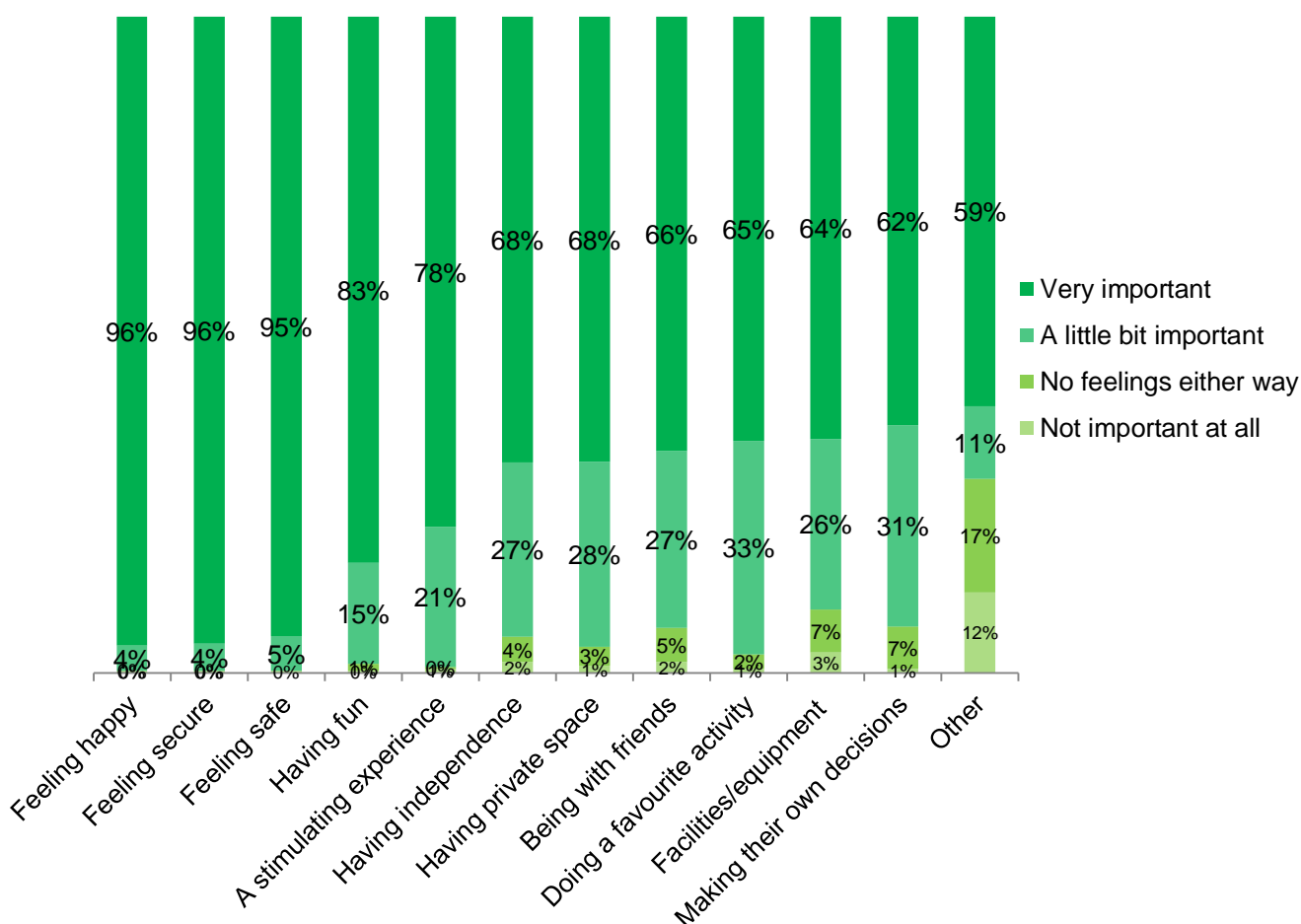
All respondents were asked what the most important benefits of overnight respite were for both children with disabilities receiving overnight respite and parents/carers accessing overnight respite for their child/children.

The most important aspects of respite for children with disabilities

Almost all respondents felt that it was very important that children using overnight respite felt, 'happy' (96%), 'secure' (96%) and 'safe' (95%).

Although still viewed as important by the majority, a smaller proportion of respondents felt that 'making their own decisions' (62%) and 'having access to facilities and equipment not available at home' (64%) were very important aspects of respite for children.

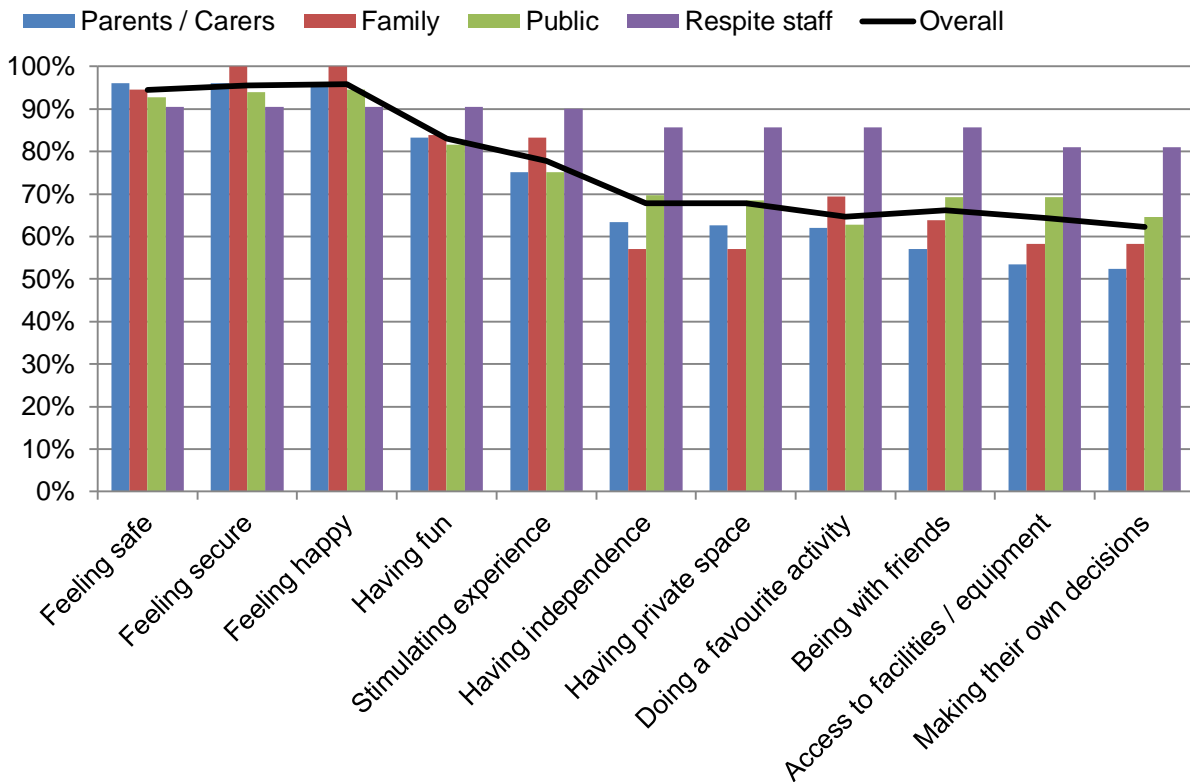
Importance of key aspects of respite care (all respondents). (Base: 336)



The level of importance given to each aspect of respite care varied slightly across the core respondent groups, as can be seen in the chart below.

For example, compared to the average, respondents who worked in respite care were more likely to see all aspects of respite provision as similarly important, whereas parents and carers placed much greater emphasis on the safety and care of their child, than their need for equipment or developing independence.

Level of Importance of key aspects of respite care, by respondent group



(Base: 311)

The table below shows the same information, but this time in order of priority for each group.

This highlights that the aspects of most importance are similar for all respondent types – the four groups all broadly agree on their top three and top five priorities.

However, there is greater variance in the ‘less important’ aspects of overnight respite care. Independence, for example, is felt to be more of a priority by parents/carers and the public, than by other family members of children with disabilities.

Base sizes are low, but this appears to suggest that differing proximity to overnight respite brings different perspectives on the benefits that the service provides.

Key aspects of overnight respite in priority order, by respondent group

Order of importance	Parents/ Carers	Family	Public	Staff
1	Feeling safe	Feeling happy	Feeling happy	Feeling happy
2	Feeling secure	Feeling secure	Feeling secure	Feeling safe
3	Feeling happy	Feeling safe	Feeling safe	Feeling secure
4	Having fun	Having fun	Having fun	Having fun
5	Stimulating experience	Stimulating experience	Stimulating experience	Stimulating experience
6	Having independence	Doing a favourite activity	Having independence	Being with friends
7	Having private space	Being with friends	Being with friends	Doing a favourite activity
8	Doing a favourite activity	Access to facilities / equipment	Access to facilities / equipment	Having independence
9	Being with friends	Making their own decisions	Having private space	Having private space
10	Access to facilities / equipment	Having independence	Making their own decisions	Access to facilities / equipment
11	Making their own decisions	Having private space	Doing a favourite activity	Making their own decisions

(Base: 311)

Most important aspects of respite for children, by age of child and disabilities

A further factor that impacted on the perceived importance of different aspects of respite was the age of the child with disabilities.

Respondents that identified that they were a parent or carer were asked how old the child is/children are who have a disability. This information can be used to see whether children of different age groups want different things from their respite care.

Across all age groups for children with disabilities, there was a general consensus about the level of importance for the following aspects of respite care:

- Having fun.
- Doing a favourite activity.
- Feeling happy.
- Having private space.
- Feeling safe.
- Having independence.
- Feeling secure.
- Having a stimulating experience.

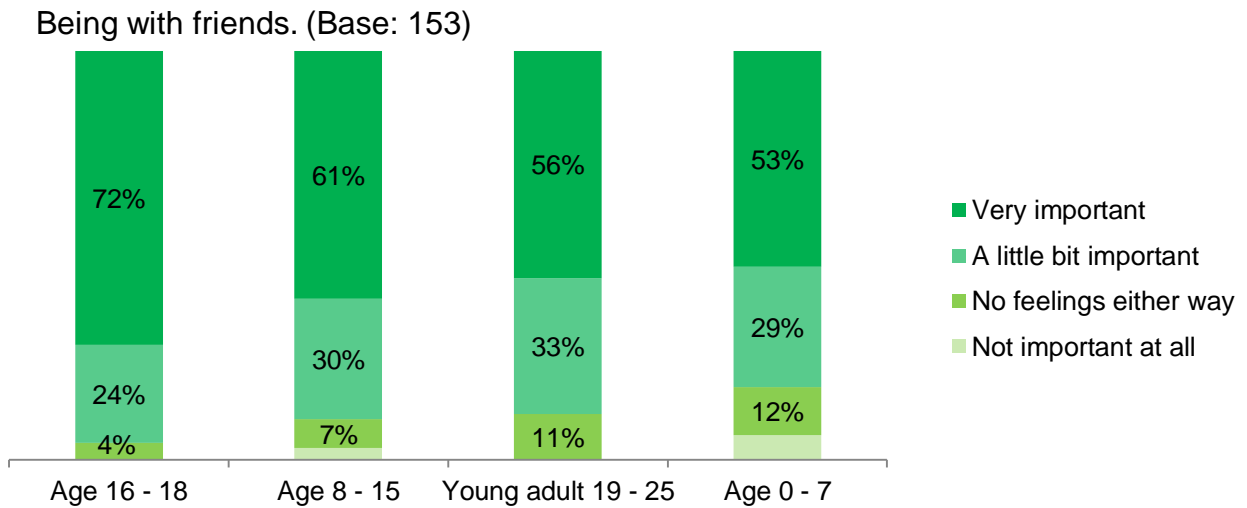
However, three aspects of respite care indicate a difference between age groups:

- Being with friends
- Having access to facilities/equipment that is not available at home
- Making their own decisions

Being with friends

The chart below shows the 'being with friends' aspect of respite care, broken down by age of child/children with disabilities.

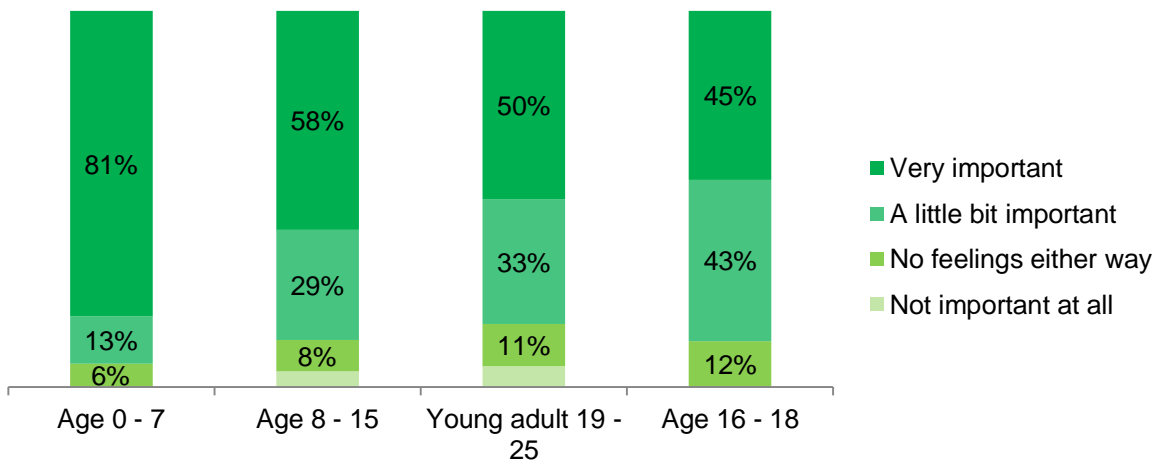
The chart suggests that for children who are between the ages of 8-18, being with friends is relatively more important than for younger children (0-7) and young adults (19-25). This perhaps suggests that children in this age bracket are settled, having used the homes for a number of years, and therefore developed relationships as a result.



Having access to facilities/equipment that is not available at home

The chart below shows responses to the 'having access to facilities/equipment that is not available at home' aspect of respite care, broken down by age of child/children with disabilities.

Having access to facilities/ equipment that is not available at home (Base: 153)

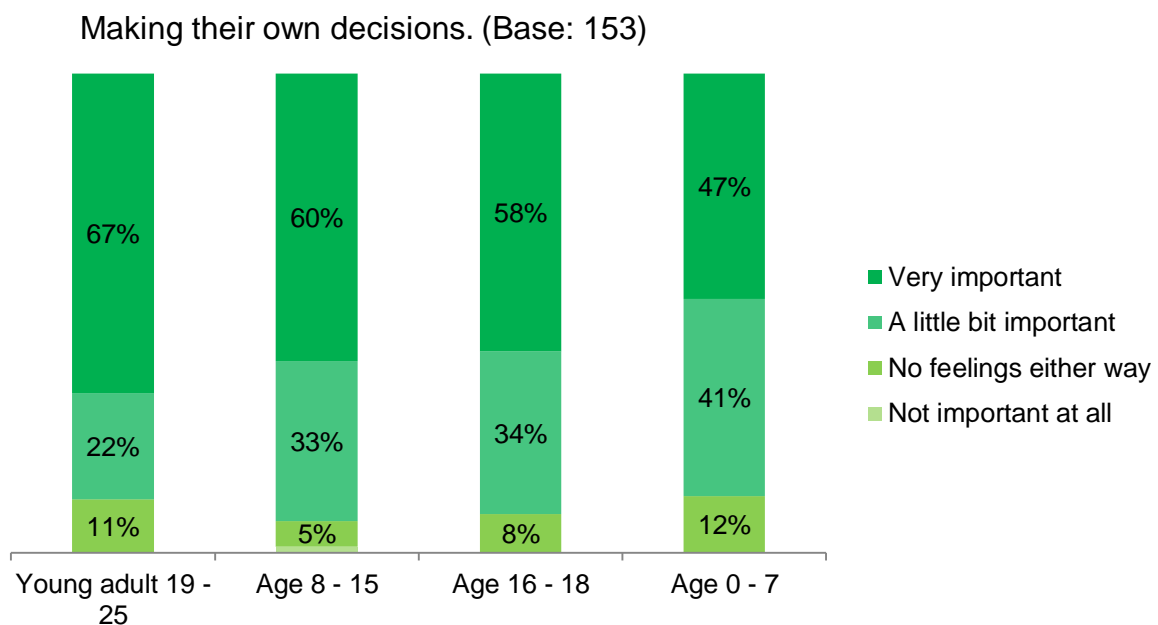


The chart indicates that for children who are between the ages of 0-7, having access to facilities or equipment is relatively more important at this early stage of life, when compared with any other age group.

Making their own decisions

The chart below shows 'making their own decisions' aspect of respite care, broken down by the age of the child/children with disabilities.

The chart suggests that for younger children (0-7 age bracket), being able to make their own decisions is not as important when compared to children that are in the older age brackets (age 8+), and especially so for those that are young adults (19-25 age bracket).

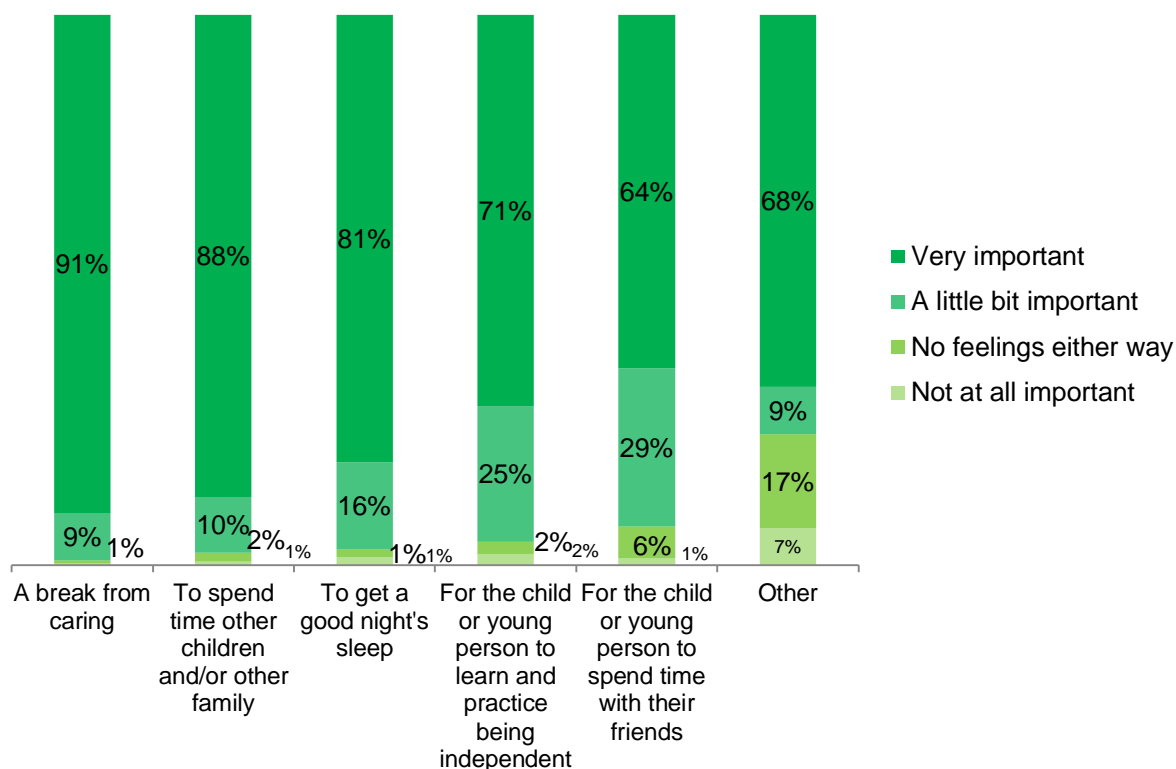


The general trend suggests that this feature of respite becomes more important as the child reaches adulthood.

Important aspects of respite care for parents/carers

All respondents were asked to choose what they thought the most important aspects of overnight respite are for parents or carers with children with disabilities. 'A break from caring' (91%) and 'time spent with other family members' (88%) were considered to be the most important aspects of overnight respite by the majority of respondents.

Important aspects of respite for parents/carers. (Base: 311)



Most important aspects of respite, broken down by age of child at home

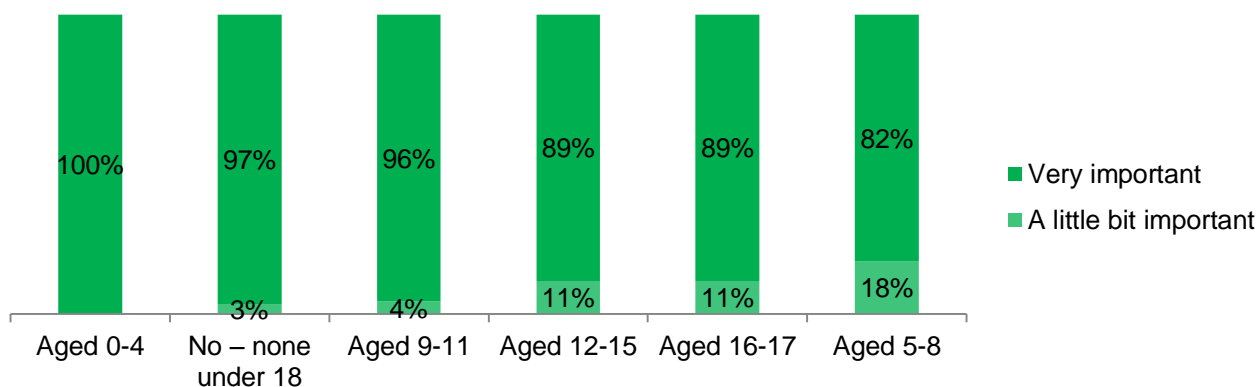
To explore what parents and carers want from respite, understanding their circumstances at home in terms of having other dependants can help identify if there are different aspects of care that are more important to some groups than others.

Overall, a break from caring and spending time with other family members were indicated as the most important things about accessing respite.

A break from caring

The chart below shows how a break from caring is an important aspect of respite to all groups with children at home. Those with very young children at home (ages 0-4) identify this as the most important aspect (100%) above any other group, reflecting the level of dependency of young children on their parents/carers.

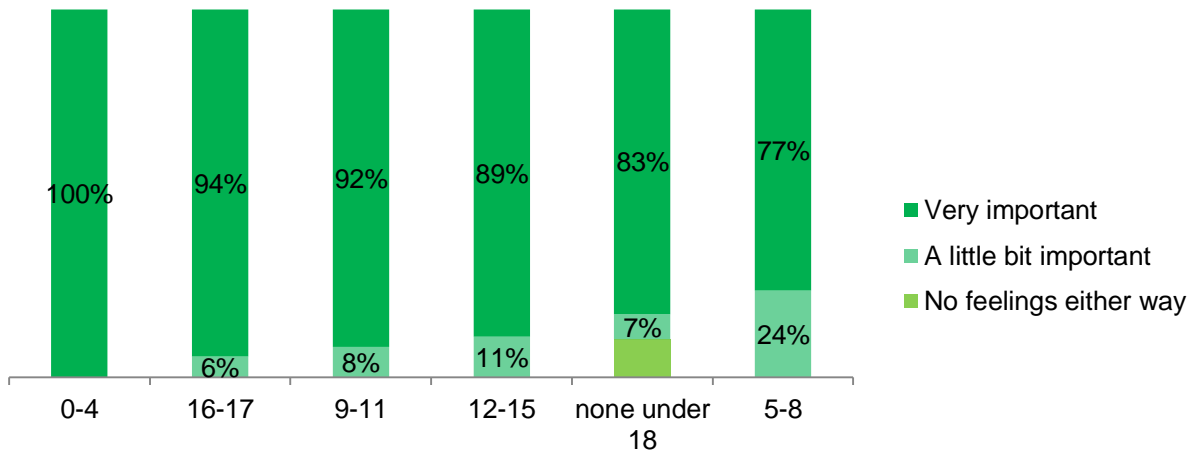
A break from caring by age group. (Base: 127)



Spending time with other children and family

The chart below suggests that parents or carers with children at home think that spending time with family is an important aspect of respite care. In addition, the chart suggests that those with children in the 0-4 age bracket identify this as the most important aspect above any other group. Again this may be because younger children are more dependent at this stage in life.

To spend time other children and/or other family. (Base: 127)



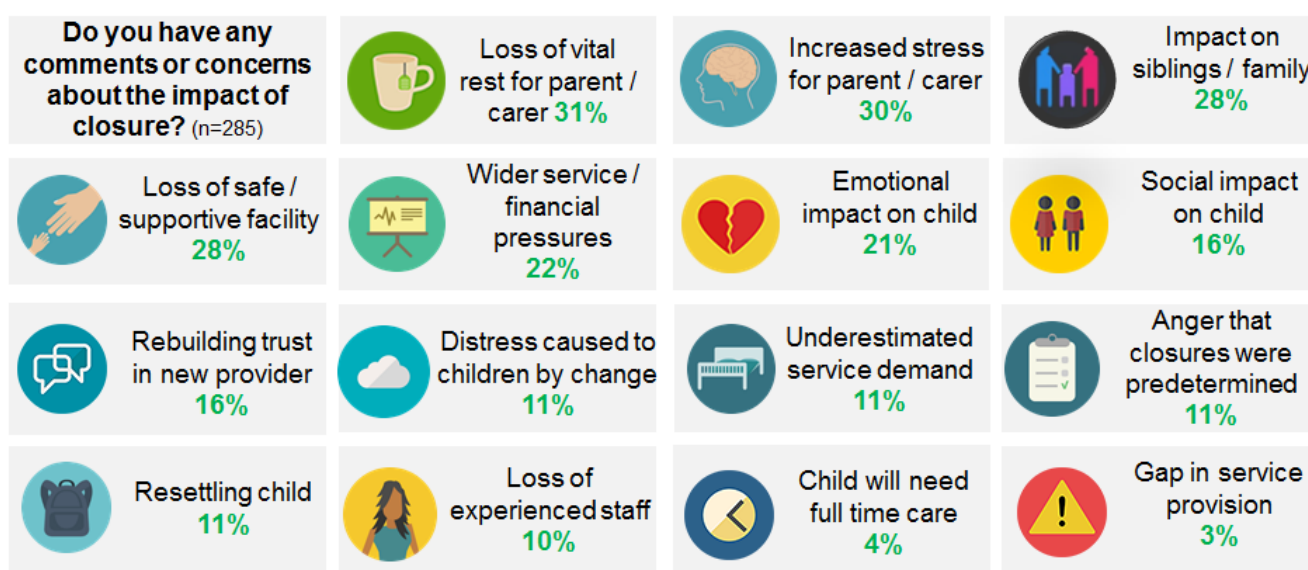
The Impact of proposed closures on respondents

An important consideration for the County Council in determining its approach to changes to services is the impact of proposals on service users, their families and other stakeholders.

As part of the consultation, respondents were asked:

- For their comments on the proposals, and the alternative options which have been considered or rejected.
- To describe what impact, if any, the proposed closures would have on them, their family, people they know or work with, or their group or organisation.

Of the 285 comments provided, the most common themes reported are shown below:



Respondents also had a number of concerns which they felt remained unanswered, including:

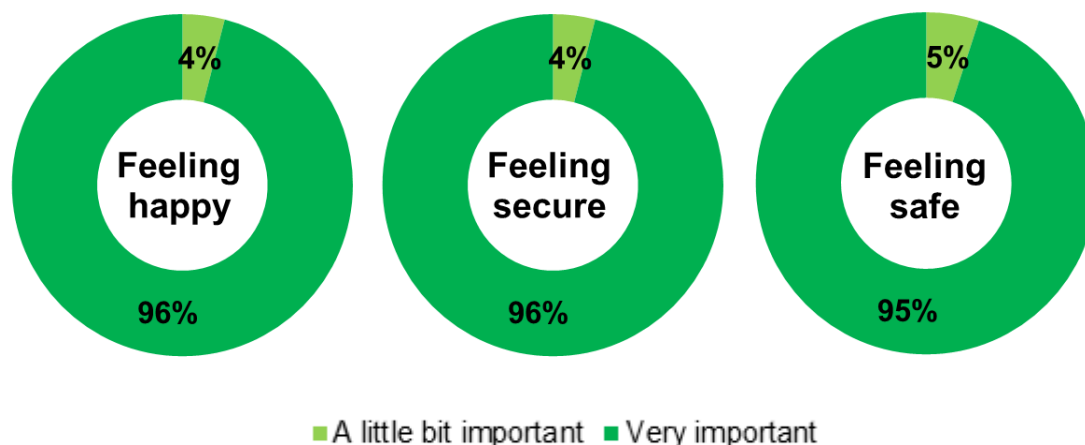


The following sections provide more detail on the impacts and concerns raised by respondents during the consultation. Please note that comments have been adapted where appropriate to protect anonymity.

Understanding the impact on children and young people with disabilities

When asked ‘what was most important about overnight respite for children and young people’, there was universal agreement that respite homes needed to provide an environment in which the child felt happy, safe and secure.

What is most important about overnight respite for the child/young person? (Base: 361)



For many families, the journey to achieving this outcome has been an extended one. Respondents spoke of the difficult decision to place their children into overnight respite, the long process of trialling and rejecting alternatives, the time taken to build sufficient trust in staff and the difficult adjustment that comes from introducing change into the life of a child with disabilities. Therefore the proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams – and the prospect of starting the journey again – have been met with disappointment.



“The decision to send a child into respite care is absolutely agonising, as there is a great sense of anxiety over whether your child truly will be safe and looked after with the same level of care compassion and love that they receive at home, there is also a great sense of guilt that comes with sending your child into overnight care. Sunbeams is a lifeline for us. We know that our child will be looked after with love, care and compassion by experienced and qualified staff who will keep them safe and give them a nice experience... We get to just be, recharge, reset, knowing that our child is safe and will be home in the morning. The proposal to close this service creates a whole new level of anxiety.”
(Family member)



“Merrydale staff have been the only respite team to work hard to meet my child’s complex needs so stays are enjoyable and offer a safe environment which focuses on preventing/minimising risk of becoming very unwell. My child also attends another respite provision and even after a year of going (with us there too) we are not confident to leave our child there on their own. It takes years to understand how to meet our child’s needs effectively - by removing this we will have no adequate respite provision.” (Parent/carer)

With the safety and happiness of the children a key priority, respondents were particularly concerned about the emotional impact of change that could be caused by removing the children from familiar settings and the breakdown of relationships with both staff and other children at the homes.



“I have friends who use Merrydale and they are very concerned on the proposed closure. Their children love going and it's a familiar place, staff know the kids so well, to start over again somewhere new, probably twice if not more the distance away is terrible. The children will be unsettled by the change. Parents that have children with additional needs have enough to deal with on a daily basis this will just add more stress and upset to their lives.” (Parent/carer)



“Our children love coming to Sunbeams, they love the consistency of the same staff, the endless activities we provide, the important relationships they have built. They love that they can be involved in choices in all aspects of their care. They love the food that is catered to their specific needs and choices. For that to be taken away will be devastating to a child with special needs.” (Staff)

In the cases of children whose disability meant they were generally more resistant to change and thrive on routine, respondents felt that the impact could potentially go beyond the emotional to negatively manifest as changes in the child's condition.



“The staff know my child's ways and how best to manage them. My child feels comfortable with the familiarity of the surroundings – they are happy and safe there. To move my child now would not be practical due to their inability to easily accept change and the relatively short time left in children's services.” (Parent/carer)

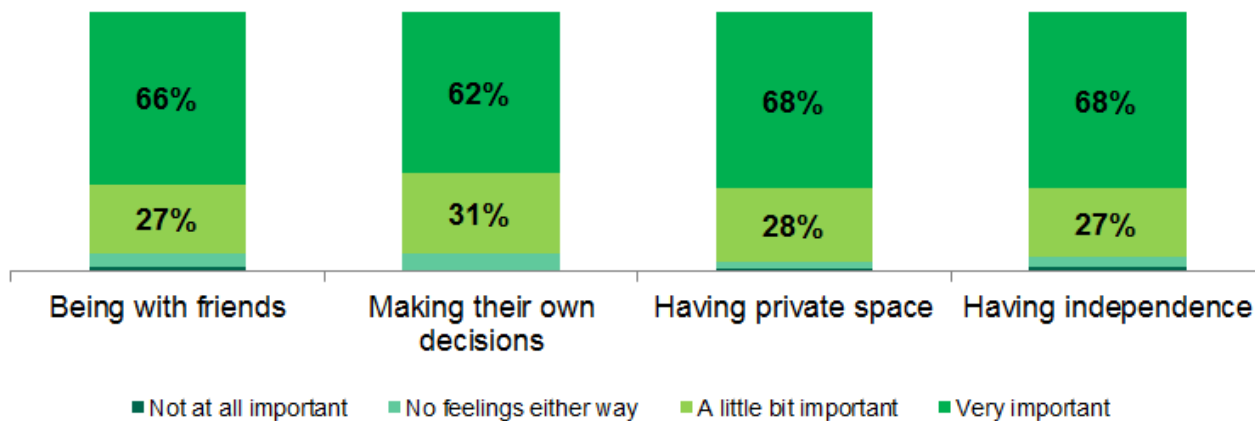


“It would have a terrible effect on my autistic grandchild who looks forward to respite and cannot stand any changes of routine.” (Family member)

Beyond these immediate emotional and physical effects, respondents also felt that the proposed closures would have a longer term consequences for the children's social development.

The majority of those who responded to the consultation felt that a major benefit of overnight respite was the opportunity for the child to be with friends and to be independent.

What is most important about overnight respite for the child/young person? (Base: 361)



Respondents noted that children with disabilities have the same right as other children to make friends, make their own decisions and have some privacy when required – but they needed the support offered by homes like Merrydale and Sunbeams to enable this. Although respondents recognised that the alternative respite opportunities outlined in the Information Pack might enable independence for some children, these would not be appropriate for all, and should therefore be offered in addition to, rather than at the expense of, overnight respite care.



“My child has recently begun to form friendships with other young people, which has taken time. This is only one of few opportunities to socialise with other people their age away from home and is an important part of growing up and developing independence, just like other young people. Developing independence is not just about dressing, making toast and getting the bus. Children will also miss out on 'sleepovers' and opportunities to socialise away from home like other 'normal' children do.” (Parent/carer)



“We don't know what the future holds for our child and there is the possibility that they may need to be in supported living and the fact that they have had this opportunity to be with others away from home means that it may be easier for them in the future to adapt to being away from home in another setting. If Merrydale was to close... our child would have lost the opportunity to be alongside peers in a local situation and all those relationships they have built up would be lost.” (Parent/carer)

Ultimately, be it due to additional stress, behavioural changes, or a failure to develop sufficient social skills to maintain a degree of independence into adulthood, respondents feared that the proposed closure of the two homes would mean that many of these children would need to be placed into full time care. This, they felt, would cause further anxiety and negate the cost savings that the home closures would effect, if agreed..



“It is the use of Merrydale which has kept our child at home. The reason Merrydale works is because it is such a bespoke setting... None of the other listed options would be suitable because of the high level of need. Without Merrydale, our child would be unable to be cared for at home, which is not what we want and not in their best interest.” (Parent/carer)



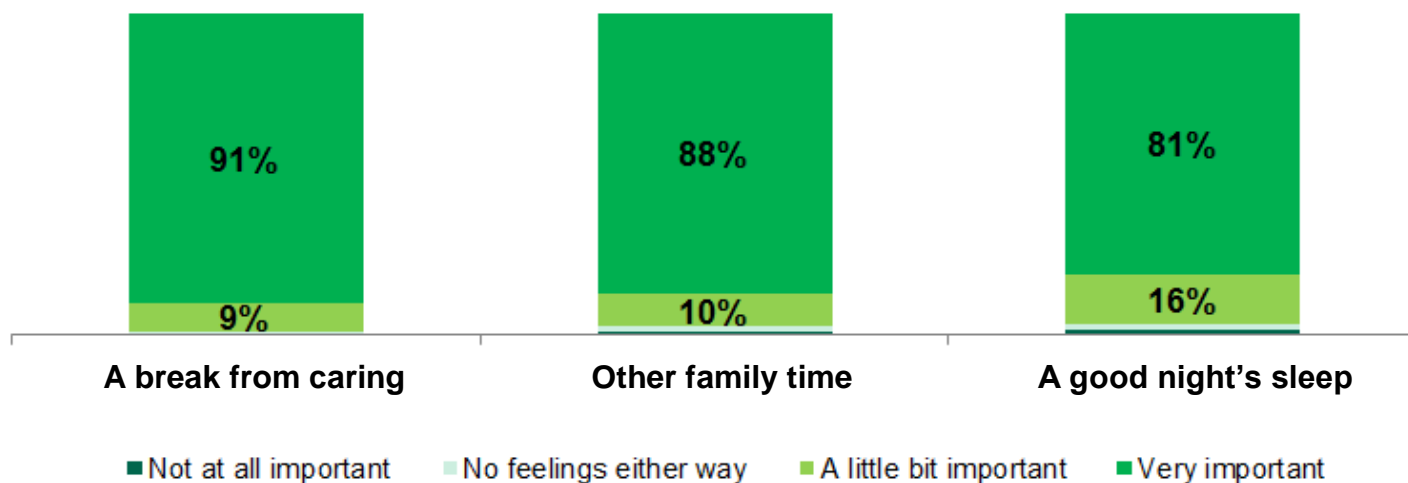
“Routine is very important to our child and for this reason a fixed service meets their needs more than a changing variety of services. The reduction or complete removal of respite units is incredibly short-sighted. Families and carers will suffer burn out, won't be able to cope and more children will end up requiring residential care. Not a cost saving for anyone.” (Parent/carer)

The potential impacts of the proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams on children with disabilities were put forward by a group of medical professionals from the Child Health Department, Royal Hampshire County Hospital (Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust) in their collective response to the consultation. The group noted the context of advances in healthcare and changes in societal attitudes leading to increased survival among children with disabilities and children with long term conditions. The group highlighted three potential impacts of the proposed closures: increased attendance for mental health related issues in siblings; an increased length of stays in hospitals, as often if a child is recovering from an illness, the discharge from hospital to a respite setting can be facilitated earlier than discharge to home; and the potential increase in demand from parents asking to support Education Health and Care Plan requests for out of county placements.

Understanding the impact on parents/carers and the wider family

For parents/carers, the most important aspect of overnight respite was the chance to have a break from caring – giving them time to spend with other members of the family and to catch up on some vital sleep.

What is most important about overnight respite for parents/carers? (Base: 360)



Respondents spoke passionately about the need for a break away from caring, and the crucial role that trusted, reliable and regular respite provision played in enabling them to 'switch off' from the role of carer.



"Knowing that there is the phenomenal care, compassion and, crucially, experience of the staff has been a lifeline for their parents, other child and wider family. Without the regular and reliable support offered by the amazing staff at Merrydale, their parents and other child would not have been able to have any semblance of normality." (Family member)



"To get some 'Me' time. To realise you are not insane and what you say is true about your child. Another human being is witnessing and dealing with the same behaviour and can give you support. They understand, they get what you're going through and you know there, at respite, your child is safe and well cared for and for once you don't have to do it yourself." (Parent/carer)

In many comments, often from those looking in on the situation, there were strong underlying concerns that should the homes close without suitable alternatives in place, it would cause irreparable damage to the family unit.



"Parents and siblings are allowed some time away from their usual 24 hour caring enabling activities, holidays and a time to recharge, beneficial for all involved. This respite care is so important and mustn't be eradicated or else

serious problems associated with family stress and an unworkable balance will begin to arise.” (Member of the public)



“Caring for children with complex needs is exhausting and while giving parents a break is expensive, it is less expensive than family break-up and having to take the child into residential care. Even the most loving and caring parents have a point when they cannot cope 24 hours a day every day.” (Family member)

Time was seen as a key component in avoiding this outcome. Many respondents spoke of the need for ‘normality’ and the benefits of just having time out on their own to relax, which they felt would be under threat if they lost their overnight respite.



“To provide an opportunity for the family to participate in some activities that would be considered a standard part of a normal family life had the attention and care required for a child with special needs not been involved.” (Family member)



“It is recognised that parents of all children need some 'me' time and 'couples' time. This is possibly even more acutely necessary for parents of children using the facilities as their children often do need to be looked after or watched every minute of the day. As well as the need for a break from the emotional and mental effort to care for your child at home, as your child and parents get older they need a rest from the physical demands that caring for their child at home can bring. I suspect you might also need a rest from the responsibility of looking after your children. This is the same for any parent or carer. Just having some time away to take yourself outside of your every day is essential for your own wellbeing and enables much better caring in the long term.” (Family member)

A good night's sleep was another crucial need highlighted by parents and carers. The opportunity that overnight residential respite gave for recuperation was something that respondents saw as vital to enabling them to care for a child at home. Without it, there was concern that mental and physical health would suffer, and parents/carers would be unable to cope.



“We are also able to get some quality sleep to recharge our batteries – it may sound simple but it is vital to our health and wellbeing and ultimately to that of our whole family.” (Parent/carer)



“Our exhaustion levels would increase as sleep is affected and this would have a knock on effect for everyone. The constant caring can become a real struggle and knowing that there is some time out that allows us a break is so helpful. It means that when our child comes back we are more refreshed and able to carry on caring for them with more energy.” (Parent/carer)

The comments received highlighted the importance of the entirety of the break in mitigating stress and enabling parents/carers time to recharge their batteries. It was felt by many respondents that the alternatives outlined in the Information Pack would not provide the same opportunity as overnight residential respite to switch off and relax, and in some cases may in fact eat into important respite time.



“Your alternatives are simplistic and not realistic. It is not a break if the family has to either leave the home to allow someone else to sleepover with their child or to provide somewhere for a carer to sleep. That just adds to the stress... It may sound good to suggest having weekend breaks, or short breaks with different community groups but it doesn't work for the most severely disabled or autistic children.” (Parent/carer)



“One nights respite can mean a break from caring for two whole days if the child is transported to and from respite from school, for the family. If the parent is made to do the transport then this means they only get literally the night only. As they would have to either wait for the child to come home from school and then take them to respite or collect them from school and take them to respite. Either way this is putting immense pressure on the parent and causing them to "waste" the valuable time being on the road.” (Parent/carer)

In addition to concerns relating directly to parents and carers, respondents were also keen to emphasise the needs of the wider family group - in particular, the right of other siblings to have a share of their parents attention and to learn and develop alongside their peers. They noted the importance of respite in enabling siblings of service users to have dedicated time with their parents – improving their wellbeing.



“The impact on my family on this closure of Merrydale is that me and my sibling will not be able to spend more time with our parents and do activities that we could have done with just as us four.” (Family member)



“Getting 2 nights together is an important time to concentrate on our other children. We use this time to do different activities with them that our child may not tolerate. We usually plan specific activities while our child is away and recharge ourselves before they return.” (Parent/carer)

Respondents also highlighted that, should the homes close, siblings of children with disabilities would potentially miss out on opportunities for social development. Owing to the unique requirements of looking after children with disabilities, siblings were often unable to spend time with friends, or take part in age-appropriate activities.



“Our other child suffered also from never having two parents attend any school events. They did not achieve the academic results they should have and rarely had friends for tea/overnight stays due to their sibling’s needs.” (Parent/carer)



“Our other child lived for the respite weekends, wheelchairs can't go to castles, forests, beaches or fossilising. They were desperate for weekends when we could be like 'normal' people and do 'normal' things - a real treat is just to go out for a meal without being stared at, to be able to have friends round to play, to make noise and to have the run of the house without strict restrictions and rules.” (Parent/carer)

Transitioning to new care providers – concerns and questions

As respondents were broadly opposed to the closure of both Merrydale and Sunbeams, and worried about the impact on service users, it is not unsurprising that there was also reticence about transitioning to alternative care providers.

Whilst respondents recognised that the actual buildings may not be ideal, they emphasised that the homes’ value was about more than just bricks and mortar. In particular, there was deep concern about losing trusted relationships that had been built up with the staff. Often these had developed over many years, and respondents were wary of the process of rebuilding that trust with other staff.



“Loss of jobs; loss of a safe, caring environment for children; loss of sanity for parents; more work thinking 'who do I trust now with my child?' Merrydale has a good reputation. Parents are happy; parents trust them. The parent now has to look for carers, interview, manage money, deal with someone not turning up, train a carer, hope they like your child/child likes them. It’s endless...”
(Parent/carer)



“The staff members have provided consistency over time, which is imperative for young people in respite. Staff turnover is low. They get to know the young people and families over time and provide emotional support and advice. By contrast the staff turnover in private run homes is high. The average length of staff stay is 2/3/4 years. The staff will therefore lack the knowledge that comes with experience. Young people accessing respite a few weekends a year will not have the chance to build relationships with carers.” (Respondent associated with a special school)

Their concern encompassed the children too. Parents’/carers’ fear of leaving their children with staff they did not know was further increased by the potential impact this could have on the children’s developmental progress.



“The children who attend both centres would have to again change their routine which is impossible for some autistic people. All the progress made by the children could be put at risk by the changes.” (Member of the public)



“It would be hard to get them used to a new place and new staff. My child’s OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) would regress and my other child would suffer with anxiety. Their behaviour would decline.” (Parent/carer)

In some cases respondents noted that older users may be asked to transition twice in a short period of time, potentially causing additional distress.



“Hampshire’s respite homes only last until the children are 18 so our child would have to have a change now when Sunbeams closes, then another at 18 in to adult respite, and then a move onto residential college at 19. This will be 3 moves for them in 2 years which for a child with autism and severe learning disabilities is in my opinion not putting their needs and wellbeing first. This will impact severely on their anxiety and mental health, causing more challenging behaviour and more seizures which are triggered by anxiety.” (Parent/carer)

Respondents’ reticence towards alternative care packages was intensified by what they felt was a lack of clarity about the proposed alternative options outlined during the consultation. Few respondents referred to the pilot project that had been used to trial these options with potentially affected families, suggesting that more could be done to raise awareness of how and who these could benefit. Consequently, respondents still had a long list of unanswered questions and their subsequent concern about being left without appropriate respite further increased their anxiety.



“The thought of any 'break in transmission' with respite is truly distressing to us as a family. We can just about cope with the stresses of living with our child (whom we love beyond measure) but knowing we have respite coming up is what keeps us sane.” (Parent/carer)



“I feel that before anywhere is closed in whichever area, a lot of work needs to be carried out with the families including making sure there is definitely a replacement or a temporary overnight respite provision provided, while a new purpose built centre is built. This must include a well thought out and planned transition for everyone. The Consultation booklet looks good, but the reality is that once the centre/home is closed those families that have not had a replacement respite package set up will not get a replacement. Then their family will fall into a deeper need and that will then cost more in the long run.” (Parent/carer)

In particular, respondents would like to know more about the practicalities of the alternative options – such as their capacity to support additional users, the range of needs supported, the facilities offered, and balancing demand over fewer overnight respite care providers.



“The respite offered by other organisations does not cover all disabilities so many children will be disadvantaged by not having appropriate respite facilities close to home.” (Respondent associated with a special school)



“Forgive my cynicism but as budgets are cut and respite places close where exactly are these overnight beds going to be found? I have asked the question of my child’s social worker but can’t seem to get a firm answer. We apparently need to source a new respite facility and only if they have spaces could our child possibly be placed there but nothing is definite. If respite centres are closing around Hampshire therefore these other places (wherever they are) will surely be filling up and it will be harder and harder to find a place.”
(Parent/carer)

Respondents reflected on their relative proximity to the current overnight respite homes. Both users of Merrydale and Sunbeams mentioned the negative impacts of needing to travel further to access alternative provision if the homes close. Concerns were also expressed around whether transport would be available to cover the anticipated longer journeys to other overnight respite homes.



“My primary concern if the two units were to close and for those that need it respite care be transferred to Firvale would be the issue of transporting the children to schools across county following their stay. Firvale have very limited numbers of staff who are minibus drivers and if alternative transport was provided - they would need to supply escorts which would place high demand on staffing levels at very particular times of the day which may not fit with rotas.”
(Respite/support worker)



“If this service is taken away it would mean a 40 minute journey to the nearest alternative respite and minimum 1hr and a quarter to others based mainly in Southampton, Portsmouth and Fareham. This is unrealistic to expect a SEND [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities] child to travel out of area these distances and if transport isn't provided then parents will be dropping off with a potential 2 and a half hour round trip. (Parent/carer)

Local care is important to parents/carers, particularly so in the case of emergencies, and there was specific concern about the support available in emergency situations, if the two homes close.



“I know for a fact that Merrydale are regularly given 'emergency' placement children to provide temporary support to, because there is where no where else

for them to go, and no one with the facilities or resources to look after them! Where would they go if Merrydale is closed?" (Respondent associated with a special school)



"Over the years we have had many emergency placements and we were told there was simply no other option of where to send them and we were the last resort. What happens when the next cases like those we have had in the past come up? Where will they get sent then if we were the only option?"
(Respite/support staff)

The wider service impact

Respondents were concerned that, should Merrydale and Sunbeams close, the alternative options available will not provide the same level of respite provision, resulting in more extensive problems.

Many respondents commented that parents or carers would require more extensive support such as full time care for the child or young person, if they are unable to access similar standards of respite care. Respondents felt that this will have a longer term financial impact across other local authority services.



"If these two respite centres are closed and affected families are not offered matching overnight respite care elsewhere, then the Council should expect that a good chunk of the proposed £450k savings would instead have to be allocated to the funding of more residential school placements and sadly, to families in crisis." (Parent/carer)



"Cost as ratepayer higher as full time provision will be needed if local respite care not available. Cost as a taxpayer higher as carers will have to stop work as they will not be able to cope. Look at the big picture HCC." (Member of public)

Respondents commented that the closures would also mean the loss of experienced, trained and highly skilled respite staff which would be a great loss to the care sector and residents of Hampshire.



"The staff who have been working for these organisations and built a great rapport with the families will in effect be a lost cause. All the hard work, training and career driven employees will be left just as devastated as the service users themselves." (Member of the public)



"Several staff have stated that they cannot find comparable work and are considering changing career. It would be a shame to lose their expertise in HCC." (Respite/support staff)

Some respondents are suspicious that both homes have been recently under-utilised. There was a strong feeling amongst some respondents that the closures have been pre-determined, and therefore their views would not be properly considered.



“It is clear that the County Council has earmarked the site for redevelopment for some time, since the care home opposite was closed several years back, and it appears to have been reluctant since that time to place new children in Merrydale. If it is absolutely essential to sell the site, we strongly believe the funds should be reused to provide a replacement provision in the Winchester area.” (Parent/carer)



“Numbers using Merrydale have gone down because families have increasingly not been given it as an option as the council have been trying to wind it down and prove that it is not needed.” (Parent/carer)

There is also concern among some respondents that accessing respite services has been made too difficult for many families due to restrictive criteria, with many respondents strongly suggesting the demand for the service is underestimated.



“The service is only available to the most difficult situations and the criteria for agreement to use the respite care is far from transparent. Parents have access to personal budgets, but are told they cannot use them for this purpose. It appears as if the service has been denied to potential families for a while now which makes it seem as if there is no demand. Parents I meet would like more regular respite and may be able to pay for it, thus improving the financial viability of the sites.” (Member of the public)



“We tried to get overnight respite with our social worker for such a long time and it was too much of a fight and we gave up. If Merrydale is not justifiable financially because it has only been 50% full, then maybe the council should rather put its efforts in to social services allowing needy families to have respite.” (Parent/carer)

Outstanding questions relating to proposed alternatives

Levels of uncertainty amongst respondents about how proposed alternatives would meet local need suggest that further information is needed to enable informed decisions about future choices to be made.



“Having read the supporting information I am disappointed to not see information that enabled me to compare current overnight provisions that are provided. There was no detailed description for Merrydale or detail about the facilities it provides, specialist services or information about its staff. Equally, there was no cost information for the 'other current overnight respite providers'. How can people make an informed conclusion based on this?... I understand the desire to improve the type of care provided in relation to developing children's skills and experiences but would be interested to know how else the children might gain this... I do not feel confident that what you are currently proposing will cover the seventeen beds that will be lost and therefore do not support the closure of the facilities.” (Family member)

Specific concerns relating to the proposed alternative overnight respite provision are:

Places at other overnight respite homes

(11% of respondent comments related to this)

- Respondents feel there is a limited range of options for their specific needs. In particular, respondents thought that the alternative homes do not cater for the same range of disabilities – including providing for shared needs and end of life care – where their children would not meet the criteria.
- Respondents were unclear on the available capacity at other respite homes and questioned how places would be found for their children when demand was already high.
- There were concerns that other local provision did not offer the same standards of care and had lower Ofsted ratings than Merrydale and Sunbeams.
- Respondents were unclear on the facilities provided by other homes, and whether these were comparable to those available at Merrydale and Sunbeams.
- Distance and transport were key concerns. Respondents were concerned about losing valuable respite time due to the additional journey length and were unclear as to whether existing supported travel provision would remain in place over the longer distances.
- There were concerns that private homes had higher staff turnover and that the Council would be less able to influence the quality of this provision.
- Respondents questioned whether other homes were sustainable and were worried about the County Council's over-reliance on private provision over which they had limited control with regards to fees, standards, staffing or sustainability. What would happen to the children if the other homes close?

Specialist Respite Care (*formerly Family Link*)

(7% of respondent comments related to this)

- Much of the concern about specialist respite was based on pre-conceived knowledge of the service – and in particular on past failures to meet required need.
- Respondents noted that there was limited availability of specialist respite carers in the area – particularly for children with more complex needs. There was a perception that service capacity was being limited by an onerous assessment process, which deterred prospective carers.
- They were also concerned about the reliability of specialist respite care. For some, this stemmed from being let down by carers (often at short notice) in the past, for others the concern was about difficulties ensuring the fixed and regular respite that worked best for them.
- Respondents felt that they needed specialist respite provided by professional carers in a professional purpose built environment.
- There were two questions about suitability: whether the type of care was right for the individual based on their physical and developmental needs; and whether the carers could provide the suitable equipment and environment required.
- There was concern that social progress would be more limited through this option, with fewer opportunities for activities and contact with peers.
- Some respondents were anxious about getting a ‘match’ with a carer who would suit both child and parent/carer.

Care Support

(5% of respondent comments related to this)

- Respondents spoke of the difficulties in recruiting and retaining carers for Care Support – particularly for children with the most complex needs.
- They also commented on the additional burden of hospitality that this option would place on the host family, who would be sharing their personal space and feel obliged to socialise.
- Some families noted that they simply wouldn’t have the space to accommodate a carer in their home, particularly for overnight support where a spare bedroom was required.
- There was strong feedback that Care Support would not offer a break for the family, as it would be very difficult to ‘switch off’ their role of carer if their child was nearby and needed support. Similarly, that it would be confusing and distressing for a child should their parent not respond.
- Similarly to Specialist Respite Care, respondents felt that Care Support would be socially isolating for the child and not enable them to make friends or develop their independence.
- Some respondents were already using Care Support but appreciated it as part of a wider care package that included overnight residential respite, and did not feel it should be used as a replacement service.

Family Breaks

(2% of respondent comments related to this)

- Similarly to Care Support, respondents felt that Family Breaks would not offer a break for the family, as they would still need to care for their child – just in another setting. In fact some commented it would be more difficult as they would need to adapt to different equipment and surroundings so small tasks would become more difficult to accomplish.
- Respondents noted that Family Breaks would be difficult for families whose children struggled to adjust to change.
- A key benefit of overnight respite was the regularity of the break it provided. Respondents felt that Family Breaks would offer longer breaks, but less frequently, when what they needed was little breaks more often.
- It was felt that opportunities for independent development and social progression would be limited with Family Breaks in comparison to overnight respite care.

Respondents' own ideas for alternative service provision

Given their concerns about alternative provision, some respondents made other suggestions about how respite services could be adapted to meet the needs of both service users and the County Council.

14% of respondents felt that if the homes were to close and the land sold, that the proceeds and developer contributions could be used to provide a new purpose built facility.



“This proposal would be better taken were the saved funds put towards a replacement centre or 1 improved centre, located between the 2 originals.”
(Member of the public)



“I would like to see a full evaluation of the option of using some of the money from the sale of the land to build a new home on less expensive land further out.” (Member of the public)

A further 8% of respondents thought that the County Council should re-imagine the use of their overnight respite homes to make the facilities more sustainable by investigating options for mixed use or extending the range of services provided. Respondents saw the potential for the homes to be used as a 'hub' from which other forms of respite could be administered. This could help towards the cost of refurbishment of an existing home, or the ongoing running of a new purpose-built facility.



“A different model seems not to have been considered at all... why not retain the building and staff team and transform the service into something more like a resource base that has some limited overnight stays; but the main focus moves to outreach working.” (Member of the public)



“Merrydale, either refurbished and extended or rebuilt/equipped, could offer a range of services such as holiday care, evening care. If more young people were allowed access, age appropriate weekends could and should be organised. Facilities could be hired out during the school day to adult day care, either supported 1:1 or small groups. It could become a hub offering a range of support. I appreciate Merrydale is expensive to run, if better used/flexible it could provide more value.” (Respondent associated with a special school)

In their collective response to the consultation, the Child Health Department, Royal Hampshire County Hospital (Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), proposed either using the homes for another purpose, for example exploring the development of Merrydale without health input (as with Firvale), or creating a new facility in mid part/south of Hampshire on the basis that there could be significant impact on families' travel needs.

6% of respondents felt that any decision to close should be postponed to enable a smooth transition for existing users. This was considered to be particularly pertinent for older users, who would soon be transferring to adult care. Respondents also wanted reassurance that nothing would close until alternative care plans were in place.



“They shouldn't be closed unless an alternative better support is running and immediately transferable. Puts pressure on the family and the child.”
(Respite/Support staff)



“For some with just one or two years of the service to go, they will have to change service then change again; perhaps these are the most affected young people and families and many will not cope with change.” (Member of the public)

There is a perception that there are a number of families in the areas who would benefit from overnight respite, but who don't quite meet the existing criteria. 6% of respondents suggested that the County Council could re-assess access criteria to increase service user numbers which would make the homes more viable and enable them to continue operating.



“I am concerned for new families who may not ever get the option of respite because of all the budgets cuts who a few years ago would have been offered a package of care. This in the long run will prove more expensive as they are more likely to reach breaking point without support.” (Parent/carer)



“How bad does it need to be before these services are offered? Does it take for a mother and father to experience a breakdown before it's realised something must be done to help them!!??!! These centres are vital to those that use them and would be vital to many more if they could get accepted to be able to use them.” (Member of the public)

Other suggestions included looking for savings in other areas, such as 'better' social work assessment, or even savings from other County Council service areas. Updates to expensive historical care packages were also put forward as a potential option.

A number of the suggestions made by respondents reflected ideas which had already been outlined as rejected in the consultation Information Pack. This indicates that clarity is required on the rationale for the proposals to close the two respite homes.

4. Conclusions

Key Findings

The majority of respondents thought that the most important aspect of overnight respite for children with disabilities was that they feel happy, secure and safe. For parents/carers, the most important benefits of overnight respite are a break from caring and time to spend with other family members.

There was strong concern amongst respondents about the proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams. Although there is recognition that the homes are dated and need maintenance, almost 9 out of 10 (87%) would prefer them to remain open.

Disagreement with the proposed closures was widespread across respondent groups, with parents/carers of current service users joined by respite staff, support workers and informed members of the public in disapproving of the proposal to close the homes.

The impact of closure would resonate widely, with children, carers, siblings and wider family members all negatively affected. A common theme among respondents was that closures were a short term fix that would lead to bigger problems in the longer term.

If the decision is made to close the homes, respondents want to be assured that a comparable level of support would be available. Questions regarding transport arrangements, comparability of alternatives and emergency care provision need to be answered to help them make an informed choice about future arrangements.

There is uncertainty as to how proposed alternatives would meet the needs of existing respite users. Availability, suitability and ensuring the child retains some independence are key concerns.

There are calls to re-think the proposals, re-provision the homes or build a new residential respite home to ensure continuity of existing provision. These are options which have already been rejected, suggesting that the rationale for the proposals could be clarified further.

Key messages from respondents to Hampshire County Council

- There is strong concern about the proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams. Whilst the buildings may be unfit for purpose, the service remains very necessary.
- It is very important that children feel safe and secure in overnight respite care. There are emotional ties between children/families and Merrydale and Sunbeams, and levels of trust which respondent's worry could take years to rebuild with other providers.
- Ideally, respite care should provide the opportunity for children to develop their social skills and independence, particularly older children/young adults.

- It is vitally important to parents/carers that they get complete and regular respite breaks, in order to maintain their own wellbeing and enable them to provide the best level of care to their child/children.
- Reassurance is needed that, if the two homes close, that closures would not be implemented until existing service users have full and suitable transition plans/care packages in place.
- Any potential transition from Merrydale and Sunbeams to other providers is highly likely to cause stress and anxiety to both children and families. There are risks around families not coping and children being placed in full-time care, or family breakdowns leading to further support being required.
- Merrydale and Sunbeams staff are highly valued. Respondents are concerned about both the impact on individual staff members, and the loss of skills in the care sector.
- There are concerns that the closures would provide a short-term financial fix, but could have unintended long-term consequences.
- There needs to be further public understanding about how the proposal to close the homes was reached; there is concern that closures have been pre-determined.
- There is a range of existing issues that would prevent the uptake of some alternative options proposed during the consultation, particularly:
 - The potential for multiple transitions of older children/young adults over a short period of time.
 - Specialist Respite Care.
 - Care Support.
 - Family Breaks.

Specific questions respondents want to understand from the consultation

- What does the Information Pack mean when it mentions 'institutionalisation'?
- Can the County Council provide reassurance that no one currently receiving overnight respite care will be left without it if the two homes close?
- Will reassessments of respite care be required?
- How will alternative care plans be put in place?
- Can the County Council offer opportunities to trial alternative provision?
- What support does the County Council offer to young carers/siblings of children with disabilities? Are there potential service providers to support them?

- How was the proposal to close the two homes reached?
- What will happen to existing staff? Can the County Council share a summary of the results of the staff consultation and the options available to those staff?
- Could there be a potential displacement of the financial problem to Adult Services ('a short term fix creating a longer term problem')?
- How will gaps in the alternative provision be managed?
- Is the range of choices available expandable?
- Can the residential respite market cope with the demand?
- How reliable and sustainable is the residential respite market?
- How will level of care/suitability of the care in alternative services be comparable to care at Merrydale and Sunbeams?
- How will facilities be comparable? How will 'soft' outcomes (helping children feel safe and secure) be achieved by the proposed alternative provision?
- Can the County Council clarify the opportunities for children's independent development which might be offered by the alternative provision?
- Could the County Council consider tailored transition pathways for children with similar disabilities?
- Will monitoring following transition be in place to ensure that the new programme of respite care is working?
- What transport options will be available?
- Will existing entitlements to transport still apply?
- Can concerns regarding travel to access residential respite be addressed?
- How will staff or providers of alternative provision be encouraged to make bonds with the children?
- Can the County Council build a new facility?
- Can existing services/facilities offered in Merrydale and Sunbeams buildings be changed, or could the buildings be used for another, similar purpose?
- Is there a way children aged 16/17 can be managed through the transition to Adult Services differently, or the homes kept open long enough to facilitate this transition?
- Should access/eligibility criteria be applied to the use of overnight respite?

5. Appendices

Appendix 1 - Responses received from outside the consultation questionnaire

Unstructured responses

The County Council received 12 responses through channels other than the consultation questionnaire. Of these 12 responses, five were from parents, carers or family members of a child with disabilities. Four were from members of the general public; two political representatives responded; and there was one response from an organisation or group. These responses raised similar concerns to those highlighted via the consultation questionnaire. The most frequent themes raised in these responses were:

- The County Council should not close Merrydale and Sunbeams as alternative provision would not be acceptable (six comments).
- The impact of the closure will be felt by the wider family and the wellbeing of the wider family may be compromised if respite is taken away (six comments).
- There is an underestimated demand for the respite services (five comments).
- Concerns about the consultation process and a lack of transparency (four comments).
- Concerns around the distance to other respite locations (three comments).
- Savings should be made elsewhere and not to the detriment of these services (two comments).
- Concerns that the alternative options are not suitable: personal budgets are hard to spend and end up being taken away, and Specialist Respite Care is not appropriate (three comments).

Drop-in events for parents and carers

In addition to the consultation questionnaire, six drop in events were held across Hampshire, in order to help parents and carers take part in the consultation. In total, the drop-in events engaged with 21 parents and carers of a child with disabilities, as well as five members of the general public (including one councillor). Much of what was expressed in the sessions again reflects the results from the consultation questionnaire.

Parents and carers shared similar concerns. Some of the main issues that were mentioned are:

- Concerns that there is underestimated demand for overnight respite and that the homes have been consciously under-utilised (seven comments).
- Increased distance to travel to alternative provision will mean less respite time and may cause distress (six comments).
- Concerns about emergency care for children (four comments).
- If provision is taken away, the child may be placed in full-time care as parents will struggle to cope (two comments).
- Lack of clarity concerning the alternatives (two comments).
- Concerns about whether they will receive the same level of service provided by an alternative provider (two comments).
- Consultation process, communication of processes and accessibility (two comments).

Members of the public were:

- Concerned about the consultation process and the online questionnaire in terms of its accessibility and how widely it was published (three comments).
- Worried about the distance to other alternatives and how transport will be arranged (two comments).
- Concerned about emergency care (two comments).
- Nervous that demand for overnight respite services had been underestimated (two comments).

Consultation on overnight respite for children with disabilities

Proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams overnight residential respite homes

Response Form



Consultation on overnight respite for children with disabilities

Proposed closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams overnight residential respite homes

Response Form

Hampshire County Council is seeking residents' and stakeholders' views on proposals to close overnight respite services at Merrydale in Winchester, and Sunbeams in Aldershot. These are two residential respite children's homes owned and run by Hampshire County Council. Please read the accompanying Information Pack before completing this questionnaire, available from: www.hants.gov.uk/consultations

This consultation closes at 11.59pm on **2 October 2017**.

It should take you between 10 to 15 minutes to answer the questions, depending on how much you wish to write.

Your feedback will help to inform a decision, later in the year, on whether or not to close Merrydale and Sunbeams.

Thank you for taking part in this consultation.

Privacy notice

If you provide personal information, this will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Personal information will be used for analytical purposes only. Hampshire County Council will not share the information collected as part of this consultation with third parties. All individuals' responses will be kept confidential and will not be shared. Responses from groups or organisations may be published in full. Hampshire County Council will securely retain and store copies of the responses for one year after the end of the consultation process, and then delete the data.

More details on how the Hampshire County Council holds personal information can be found at: www.hants.gov.uk/privacy. Should you require any further information about how your details will be used or stored, please contact the Data Protection Team at data.protection@hants.gov.uk

Q.1 Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation or group? Please ✓ *one box only.*

I am providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group **Go to Q2**

I am providing my own response **Go to Q6**

Q.2 Which of these best describes the primary function of your group or organisation? Please ✓ *one box only.*

Charity / non-government organisation

School / college / place of education

Local public sector organisation, e.g. district or borough council, emergency services, health services

Parish or Town Council

Local community or voluntary group

Local business

Social enterprise

Other
If 'other', please specify:

Q.3 Does your group / organisation provide any of the following services? Please ✓ *all that apply.*

Overnight respite for children or young people

Activities for children or young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

No / not applicable

Q.4 What is your job position / role and the name and address of the organisation or group on whose behalf you are submitting this response?

The name and details of your organisation or group may appear in the consultation findings report.

Job position / role:

Name of organisation or group:

Address of organisation or group:

Q.5 Please tell us how the views of your organisation's members were collated:

Please now go to Q.10

Q.6 Who are you? Please ✓ one box only.

I am a parent or carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

I am a family member of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (e.g. brother, sister, grandparent)

I am an adult who has previously used overnight respite myself

I work at Merrydale or Sunbeams

I am a paid or voluntary support worker for a family or a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

I am a member of the general public

Other

If 'other', please explain:

Q.7 How old is the child / are the children with disabilities that you care for? Please ✓ one box only.

- Age 0 - 7
- Age 8 - 15
- Age 16 - 18
- Young adult 19 - 25
- Not applicable

Q.8 Does your child, or the child / children that you care for, or a family member, currently use overnight respite?

Please ✓ one box only.

- Yes – **Go to Q.9**
- No – **Go to Q.10**

Q.9 Which overnight respite home does your child, or the child / children that you care for, or a family member, currently use?

Please ✓ one box only.

- Merrydale
- Sunbeams
- Firvale
- Other

If 'other', what is the name of the overnight respite home they use?

Q.10 In your view, what are the most important things for children with disabilities when receiving overnight respite?

Please ✓ all that apply.

	Not at all important	No feelings either way	A little bit important	Very important
Having fun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Being with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doing a favourite activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making their own decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling happy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having private space	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling secure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having a stimulating experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having access to facilities / equipment that is not available at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'other', please provide details:				

Q.11 In your view, what are the most important reasons for parents / carers to access overnight respite for their child/children?

Please ✓ all that apply.

	Not at all important	No feelings either way	A little bit important	Very important
A break from caring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To spend time with other children and/or other family members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To get a good night's sleep	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For the child or young person to learn and practice being independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
For the child or young person to spend time with their friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If 'other', please provide details:				

Proposals to close Merrydale and Sunbeams

Please refer to the Information Pack, pages 5 – 6.

The County Council is proposing to close Merrydale and Sunbeams for the following reasons:

- To respond to feedback from children and young people and their families and carers on the type of overnight respite they would prefer to use.
- Neither home is a purpose-built care facility for children with disabilities. In their current form, the layout is not considered to be user-friendly in terms of accessibility. This presents challenges for the County Council in caring for children with disabilities, particularly in responding to the changing expectations and preferences of children and their families. To undertake further adaptations would require redesign and rebuild, and would come at considerable cost.
- Should the two homes close, the County Council would be able to reduce costs by approximately £450,000 per year, on the upkeep of buildings and facilities. Furthermore, some of the current funding used to provide care services at the two homes could be spent on purchasing alternative care support and respite services, provided by other organisations, to meet assessed care needs and preferences.

Q.12 To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Merrydale? *Please tick one box only.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Q.13 To what extent do you agree with the proposal to close Sunbeams? *Please tick one box only.*

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neither agree nor disagree

Agree

Strongly agree

Q.14 Do you have any comments on the proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams? This could include your views on alternative approaches to overnight respite which you would like the County Council to consider, or comments on the options which have been rejected (please see the Information Pack, page 6)

Please tell us what you think in the box below. If you would like to say more, please attach other pages to your response.

Q.15 Please describe what, if any, impact the proposal to close Merrydale and Sunbeams could have on you or your family, people you know or work with, or your group or organisation.

Please tell us what you think in the box below. If you would like to say more, please attach other pages to your response.

About you

If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of an organisation, you **do not** need to complete this section.

The information requested below is optional. Responses you provide here will be used for analytical purposes only and will be used for no other purpose.

Q.16 Please tell us the first part of your home postcode. This will help us to understand views in different areas.

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Q.17 Are you? Please ✓ one box only.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q.18 Do you have a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Please ✓ one box only.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Q.19 If you are a parent or carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, how many other children under the age of 18 live in your household? Please ✓ one box only.

- Yes – aged 0-4
- Yes – aged 5-8
- Yes – aged 9-11
- Yes – aged 12-15
- Yes – aged 16-17
- No – none under 18
- Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer

Q.20 Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?

Please ✓ one box only.

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other white background

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Nepalese
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other black background

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other mixed background

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group

- Prefer not to say

Thank you

Thank you for taking part in this consultation. Feedback will help to inform any decision by the County Council on the proposed closure of overnight respite services at Merrydale and Sunbeams later in the year.

Please return paper Response Forms in the Freepost envelope provided. If you do not have a Freepost envelope, please post your response to: **Freepost HAMPSHIRE**

If you have any queries about this consultation or the information provided, please email overnight.respite@hants.gov.uk or call **0300 555 1384**.*

**Calls from a landline will be charged at the local rate, although mobile phone charges may vary*

Appendix 3 - List of organisations or groups which responded to the consultation

The consultation questionnaire asked whether the respondent was responding on behalf of an organisation or group. There were a total of four structured and four unstructured responses on behalf of an organisation, group or community representative body.

Organisations or groups who responded to the consultation:

- Norman Gate School.
- Icknield School.
- Henry Tyndale School.
- Hampshire Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Child Health Department, Royal Hampshire County Hospital.
- Aldershot Town Council.
- Itchen Valley Division and The Worthys Ward.
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- Sunbeams Respite Care Unit.

Appendix 4 - Consultation technical detail

Respondent classification

Respondents were asked to identify whether they were responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation or group. This question, as with all questions in the consultation questionnaire, was optional.

Where respondents identified themselves as individuals they were asked to provide more information about their demography, personal situation, and household composition.

Where respondents identified themselves as responding on behalf of an organisation or group they were asked to name the organisation or group, provide the address of the organisation or group, and to provide the name and position of the individual providing the response.

		Respondent type		
		Individual response	Organisation or group	Total
Response type	Online Questionnaire	336	3	339
	Paper Questionnaire	26	1	27
	<i>Consultation questionnaire total</i>	362	4	366
	Unstructured (non-questionnaire) correspondence	11	1	12
	Total	373	5	378

Appendix 5 - Consultation participant profile

The breakdown of respondents by category is shown below.

	Response Option	Count	Percentage
Gender			
	Female	268	79%
	Male	57	16%
	Prefer not to say	16	5%
Do you have a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?			
	No	274	80%
	Yes	43	13%
	Prefer not to say	24	7%
Which of these ethnic groups do you belong to?			
	White	316	93%
	Mixed / Multiple	4	1%
	Asian / Asian British	1	0%
	Other ethnic group	1	0%
	Prefer not to say	19	6%
Are you responding on your own behalf or on behalf of an organisation or group?			
	Own response	362	99%
	On behalf of a group / organisation	4	1%
Context for response			
	I am a member of the general public	150	42%
	I am a parent or carer of a child with SEN and Disabilities	103	29%
	I am a family member of a child with SEN and Disabilities	38	11%
	I work at Merrydale, Sunbeams or Firvale	22	6%
	I am a support worker for family /child with SEN and Disabilities	12	3%
	I am an adult who has previously used overnight respite myself	3	1%
	I am a child or young person	2	1%
	Other	31	9%
Is the child with SEN and Disabilities an overnight respite user?			
	Yes	98	64%
	No	55	36%
Which Home do they use? (multi-tick)			
	Merrydale	55	56%
	Sunbeams	30	30%
	Firvale	6	13%
	Other	13	6%
How old is(are) the child(ren) with SEN and Disabilities? (multi-tick)			
	Age 0 - 7	17	11%
	Age 8 - 15	75	49%
	Age 16 - 18	50	33%
	Young adult 19 - 25	18	12%
	Not applicable	7	5%
Are there any other children under the age of 18 living in the household? (multi-tick)			
	No – none under 18	29	28%
	Yes – aged 0-4	10	10%
	Yes – aged 5-8	17	17%
	Yes – aged 9-11	24	24%
	Yes – aged 12-15	27	27%
	Yes - aged 16-17	18	18%
	Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	2%
Where do respondents live - by postcode area			
	SO (Southampton) Postcode area	121	33%
	GU (Guildford) Postcode area	104	29%
	PO (Portsmouth) Postcode area	20	5%
	RG (Reading) Postcode area	14	4%
	SP (Salisbury) Postcode area	5	1%
	Other	28	8%
	Not provided	72	20%

Appendix 6 - Coded responses to open questions

285 people commented on the proposals to close the two homes or described the potential impact that the closures would have on them, their family, people they know or work with, or their group or organisation. These were read in full, then coded by theme. Each theme is listed below, alongside counts of the number of times they were mentioned:

Themes relating to Impacts	Number of mentions
Loss of vital rest for parent/carer	87
Increased pressure on parent/carer	85
Impact on wider family unit	80
Loss of safe/supportive facility	79
Financial/wider service impact	63
Emotional impact	60
Social impact on child	45
Rebuilding trust in staff/facility	45
Concerns about child's reaction to change	32
Underestimated demand	32
Concerns around consultation process	31
Re-settling child	31
Concern about existing staff	29
Children will end up in full time care	15
A gap in provision would be detrimental to family/child	8
No Impact	1
Themes relating to Alternatives	Number of mentions
Distance to alternatives/transport costs	55
Ensuring comparable facilities/alternatives	51
Use of other overnight respite homes	31
Build new purpose-built home	37
Use of Specialist Respite Care	19
Reassess criteria for overnight respite to make viable	18
Postpone closure	16
Use of Care Support	15
Re-think existing homes	23

Concerns about emergency placements	11
Other ideas suggested	9
Use of Family Breaks	6
Improved choice would be beneficial	4
Use of Independence Breaks	3
More children could benefit from improved facilities	3
Other provision could be more cost effective	1

Appendix 7 - Data tables

To what extent do you agree with the proposals to close Merrydale Respite Home?

The published format that was employed.	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	366	13	251	52	24	14	12
Web: Snap							
WebHost	128	8	72	24	10	10	4
Paper: Keyed	27	3	14	3	4	-	3
Web: Tablet	48	1	36	5	4	1	1
Web: Smartphone	163	1	129	20	6	3	4

Personal response or responding on behalf of organisation or group?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	366	13	251	52	24	14	12
I am providing my own response	362	12	248	52	24	14	12
On behalf of an organisation or group	4	1	3	-	-	-	-

Who are you?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	362	12	248	52	24	14	12
A child or young person	2	-	1	1	-	-	-
A parent or carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities	103	4	67	11	13	4	4
A family member of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (e.g. brother, sister, grandparent)	38	2	33	1	-	1	1
An adult who has previously used overnight respite myself	3	-	2	-	1	-	-
I work at Merrydale, Sunbeams or Firvale	22	1	12	5	2	-	2
A paid or voluntary support worker for a family or a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities	12	-	7	2	3	-	-
I am a member of the general public	150	3	107	29	4	4	3
Other	31	1	19	3	1	5	2
No reply	1	1					

How old is the child / are the children with disabilities?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	153	6	107	14	16	5	5
Age 0 - 7	17	1	12	2	-	2	-
Age 8 - 15	75	4	47	8	13	1	2
Age 16 - 18	50	1	39	1	5	1	3
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	13	3	2	-	-
Not applicable	7	-	6	-	-	1	-

Does your family member/child/ you use respite, which one?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	99	4	70	7	13	2	3
Merrydale	55	-	49	3	-	-	3
Sunbeams	30	4	14	2	10	-	-
Firvale	6	-	4	1	1	-	-
Other	13	-	8	1	2	2	-

Are you?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	359	11	247	51	24	14	12
Male	57	2	43	8	2	1	1
Female	268	7	181	38	20	11	11
Prefer not to say	16	-	9	4	1	2	-
No reply	18	2	14	1	1	-	-

Do you have a health problem or disability?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	359	13	247	51	24	14	12
Yes	43	2	31	5	4	1	-
No	274	7	188	42	14	11	12
Prefer not to say	24	-	15	3	4	2	-
No reply	18	2	13	1	2	-	-

What is your ethnic group?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	359	11	234	50	23	14	12
White	316	7	218	46	22	12	11
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	4	-	3	1	-	-	-
Asian / Asian British	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other ethnic group	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	19	1	12	2	1	2	1
No reply	18	3	13	1	1	-	-

For 'white', please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	311	7	214	46	21	12	11
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	303	7	208	44	21	12	11
Irish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other							
White background	8	-	6	2	-	-	-
No reply	5	-	4	-	1	-	-

For 'mixed' please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	4	-	3	1	-	-	-
White and Black Caribbean	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White and Black African	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White and Asian	3	-	2	1	-	-	-
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

For Asian or 'Asian British', please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Indian	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pakistani	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other Asian background	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

For 'any other ethnic group', please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other ethnic group	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Are there any other children under the age of 18 living in the household?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	103	8	85	13	13	4	4
Yes – aged 0-4	10	-	7	1	1	1	-
Yes – aged 5-8	17	3	12	1	-	-	1
Yes – aged 9-11	24	1	20	-	2	1	-
Yes – aged 12-15	27	3	18	2	1	2	1
Yes - aged 16-17	18	1	9	4	4	-	-
No – none under 18	29	-	17	5	5	-	2
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
No reply	1	-	1	-	-	-	-

To what extent do you agree with the proposals to close Sunbeams?

The published format which was employed.	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	366	21	255	45	16	18	11
Web: Snap WebHost	128	14	69	21	7	14	3
Paper: Keyed	27	6	13	1	3	-	4
Web: Tablet	48	-	37	4	4	2	1
Web: Smartphone	163	1	136	19	2	2	3

Personal response/ organisation or group?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	366	21	255	45	16	18	11
providing my own response	362	20	253	45	16	17	11
Providing a response on behalf of an organisation or group	4	1	2	-	-	1	-

Who are you?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	362	20	253	45	16	17	11
A child or young person	2	1	1	-	-	-	-
A parent or carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities	103	9	66	8	11	5	4
A family member of a child with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (e.g. brother, sister, grandparent)	38	2	30	5	-	1	-
An adult who has previously used overnight respite myself	3	-	2	1	-	-	-
I work at Merrydale, Sunbeams or Firvale	22	1	18	1	-	1	1
A paid or voluntary support worker for a family or a child with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities	12	-	10	1	-	1	-
A member of the general public	150	6	106	27	3	5	3
Other	31	-	20	2	2	4	3
No reply	1	1					

Which respite home does your child/family member use?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	104	8	73	9	8	4	2
Merrydale	55	8	35	4	5	1	2
Sunbeams	30	-	26	3	1	-	-
Firvale	6	-	4	1	-	1	-
Other	13	-	8	1	2	2	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Are you?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	359	18	239	43	16	17	11
Male	57	1	43	9	2	1	1
Female	268	13	187	31	13	15	9
Prefer not to say	16	1	9	3	1	1	1
No reply	18	3	13	2	-	-	-

Do you have a health problem or disability?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	341	14	240	43	16	17	11
Yes	43	2	27	9	4	1	-
No	274	11	194	32	12	14	11
Prefer not to say	24	1	19	2	-	2	-
No reply	18	4	12	2	-	-	-

Ethnic group.	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	359	18	240	43	16	17	10
White	316	14	222	40	16	15	9
Mixed / Multiple ethnic groups	4	-	3	1	-	-	-
Asian / Asian British	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other ethnic group	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Prefer not to say	19	1	14	1	-	2	1
No reply	18	3	12	2	-	-	1

If chose 'white' please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	311	14	217	40	16	15	9
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	303	14	211	38	16	15	9
Irish	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other White background	8	-	6	2	-	-	-
No reply	5	-	5	-	-	-	-

If chose 'mixed multiple' please describe:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	4	-	3	1	-	-	-
White and Black Caribbean	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White and Black African	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White and Asian	3	-	2	1	-	-	-
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

If chose 'Asian, Asian British' please describe:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Indian	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Pakistani	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other Asian background	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

If chose 'other' please describe which:	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Arab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Any other ethnic group	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Are there any other children under the age of 18 living in the household?	Total	No reply	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Total	103	9	65	8	11	5	4
Yes – aged 0-4	10	-	7	1	1	1	-
Yes – aged 5-8	17	1	12	2	1	-	1
Yes – aged 9-11	24	-	19	-	2	2	1
Yes – aged 12-15	27	2	16	2	3	2	2
Yes - aged 16-17	18	3	11	3	1	-	-
No – none under 18	29	5	17	2	4	-	1
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	2	-	-	-	-
No reply	1	-	1	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'having fun' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	2	-	1	25	125
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	4	13
Age 8 - 15	75	1	-	-	9	65
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	1	7	42
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	-	6	12
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	2	4
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'being with friends' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	5	3	11	46	88
Age 0 - 7	17	-	1	2	5	9
Age 8 - 15	75	4	2	5	21	43
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	2	12	36
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	2	6	10
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	3	3
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'doing a favourite activity' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	2	-	9	53	103
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	1	9	7
Age 8 - 15	75	-	-	3	21	51
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	3	16	31
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	2	6	10
Not applicable	7	2	-	-	1	4
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'making their own decisions' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	2	1	12	54	84
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	2	7	8
Age 8 - 15	75	-	1	4	25	45
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	4	17	29
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	2	4	12
Not applicable	7	2	-	-	2	3
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'feeling happy' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	3	-	-	5	145
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	1	16
Age 8 - 15	75	1	-	-	2	72
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	-	1	49
Young adult 19 - 25	18	1	-	-	1	16
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	-	6
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'Having private space' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	4	2	7	46	94
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	6	11
Age 8 - 15	75	2	1	2	21	49
Age 16 - 18	50	1	-	5	13	31
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	1	-	6	11
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	2	4
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'feeling safe' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	1	-	-	7	145
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	1	16
Age 8 - 15	75	-	-	-	2	73
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	-	2	48
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	-	2	16
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	-	6
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'having independence' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	5	4	6	45	93
Age 0 - 7	17	1	-	-	5	11
Age 8 - 15	75	2	4	2	19	48
Age 16 - 18	50	1	-	2	16	31
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	2	5	11
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	3	3
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'feeling secure' aspect of respite care for children						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	4	-	-	5	144
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	1	16
Age 8 - 15	75	1	-	-	2	72
Age 16 - 18	50	-	-	-	-	50
Young adult 19 - 25	18	1	-	-	2	15
Not applicable	7	2	-	-	-	5
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'having a stimulating experience' aspect of respite care						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	4	-	-	34	115
Age 0 - 7	17	-	-	-	5	12
Age 8 - 15	75	2	-	-	11	62
Age 16 - 18	50	1	-	-	13	36
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	-	-	6	12
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	2	4
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'having access to facilities/ equipment that is not available at home' aspect of respite care						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	6	4	15	47	81
Age 0 - 7	17	1	-	1	2	13
Age 8 - 15	75	3	3	6	21	42
Age 16 - 18	50	1	-	6	21	22
Young adult 19 - 25	18	-	1	2	6	9
Not applicable	7	1	-	-	3	3
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for 'other' aspect of respite care						
Age of child at respite?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	153	89	6	10	7	41
Age 0 - 7	17	9	1	2	-	5
Age 8 - 15	75	44	2	6	4	19
Age 16 - 18	50	29	2	5	-	14
Young adult 19 - 25	18	6	1	2	3	6
Not applicable	7	3	-	1	-	3
No reply	-	-	-	-	-	-

Level of importance for ' a break for caring' aspect of respite care for parents/carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	-	-	-	7	96
Aged 0-4	10	-	-	-	-	10
Aged 5-8	17	-	-	-	3	14
Aged 9-11	24	-	-	-	1	23
Aged 12-15	27	-	-	-	3	24
Aged 16-17	18	-	-	-	2	16
No – none under 18	29	-	-	-	1	28
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	-	-	-	2
No reply	1	-	-	-	-	1

Level of importance for 'To spend time with other children and/or family' aspect of respite care for parents/carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	-	-	3	9	91
Aged 0-4	10	-	-	-	-	10
Aged 5-8	17	-	-	-	4	13
Aged 9-11	24	-	-	-	2	22
Aged 12-15	27	-	-	-	3	24
Aged 16-17	18	-	-	-	1	17
No – none under 18	29	-	-	3	2	24
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	-	-	-	2
No reply	1	-	-	-	-	1

Level of importance for 'to get a good night's sleep' aspect of respite care for parents/ carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	2	1	-	16	84
Aged 0-4	10	-	1	-	1	8
Aged 5-8	17	1	-	-	4	12
Aged 9-11	24	-	-	-	1	23
Aged 12-15	27	2	-	-	3	22
Aged 16-17	18	1	-	-	5	12
No – none under 18	29	-	-	-	4	25
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	-	-	-	2
No reply	1	-	-	-	-	1

Level of importance for 'the child or young person to learn and practice being independent' aspect of respite care for parents/carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	4	2	6	27	64
Aged 0-4	10	-	-	-	5	5
Aged 5-8	17	1	1	1	4	10
Aged 9-11	24	-	1	1	5	17
Aged 12-15	27	2	-	1	7	17
Aged 16-17	18	1	-	1	4	12
No – none under 18	29	1	1	3	5	19
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	-	-	-	2
No reply	1	-	-	-	1	-

Level of importance for 'the child or young person to spend time with their friends' aspect of respite care for parents/ carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	4	2	8	35	54
Aged 0-4	10	-	-	-	5	5
Aged 5-8	17	1	1	2	6	7
Aged 9-11	24	-	1	1	8	14
Aged 12-15	27	3	-	2	5	17
Aged 16-17	18	1	-	1	3	13
No – none under 18	29	-	1	3	11	14
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	-	-	-	1	1
No reply	1	-	-	-	1	-

Level of importance for 'other' aspect of respite care for parents/carers broken down by age of other children at home						
Age of other children at home?	Total	No reply	Not important	No feelings	A little bit important	Very important
Total	103	72	1	1	2	27
Aged 0-4	10	8	1	-	-	1
Aged 5-8	17	14	-	-	-	3
Aged 9-11	24	17	-	-	1	6
Aged 12-15	27	21	-	-	-	6
Aged 16-17	18	14	-	-	-	4
No – none under 18	29	16	-	1	1	11
Not applicable / I am not a parent or carer	2	1	-	-	-	1
No reply	1	-	-	-	-	1

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Call in of the Decision to close Merrydale and sunbeams in Spring 2018

We the undersigned wish to call in the Decision made by Cllr Adrian Mans on Monday 15th January 2018.

We would like the decision to be revisited in light of the responses to the consultation, the deputations made to the committee on Monday 15th January, and comments of others to councillors during the process.

Merrydale is part of a group of buildings on one site: the other is still occupied and so Merrydale is likely to sit idle until the site is clear for development. This is a wasteful use of resources whilst the situation remains unresolved for respite care and the change to an 'outsourced model' is being made.

Sunbeams is a building only part occupied by the Respite care facility.

Context of the Call In

We acknowledge that Cllr Mans added a third point in the decision: Cllr Mans wanted to receive a regular report from Children's Services Department to tell him whether or not alternative care and transport costs had been discussed and resolved with each parent.

However, this additional point did not address the issues raised by parents: the current decision to close the two respite care facilities *is not dependent* on receiving assurance that all current children attending would be happily *settled elsewhere first*, before the closure of Merrydale and Sunbeams takes place.

Parents even report that they are being told they have to re-apply for respite care which isn't guaranteed. Transport arrangements are not guaranteed either: many children are likely to have to travel significant distances to and from school. It is important that time and money costs are factored in to this decision.

Our reason for the Call In

In light of this, we would like the decision to be called in

- to review whether the change to new arrangements for each of the current users to respite care alternatives be fully explored and completely resolved before Merrydale and Sunbeams are closed.
- to assure the Executive Member and the Select committee that *no child who currently receives respite care* in this way will receive reduced respite care, be refused respite care, or have to re-apply to seek respite care, and that there will be no gap in the respite care provided.
- To ensure that transport arrangements and costs do not put any of the current users at a disadvantage.

This does not address future need but does, at least, clarify the position for current users.

The criteria for respite care remains unclear to parents. Clarity would be appreciated by parents and is something we will continue to explore with HPCN.

Called in by:

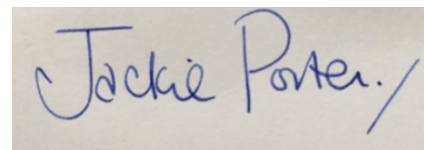
J A Porter

G James

W Irish

M Wade

M Westbrook



Dated: 18th January 2018

1.17 Call-in

- 1.17.1 Where a decision of the Executive has been made but not yet been implemented, a quorum of members of the relevant Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee(s) may require by way of notice in writing to the Chief Executive that a meeting of the Committee is held to consider whether or not to exercise the Committee's powers under Section 9 F (4) of Part 1A of the 2000 Act (referred to in this Constitution as 'call-in'). These powers are to arrange that the decision be reconsidered by the Executive, or arrange for its powers in respect of review or scrutiny of the decision to be exercised by the County Council. Where a decision materially affects more than one Select Committee (i.e. it is cross-cutting) a call-in must be made by at least two of the Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committees;
- 1.17.2 A decision can only be called-in within 5 clear working days of the date the decision was notified to all members of the appropriate Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee(s), in accordance with Part 3, Chapter 2, Paragraph 4.8 of the Constitution.
- 1.17.3 When a valid call-in request is made, the Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee(s) must meet to consider the request, make a decision and communicate to the Executive any recommendations it wishes to make within 14 clear calendar days of the request being made. When it meets the Committee(s) must consider whether or not to recommend;
- i) that the decision be reconsidered by the relevant decision making body who made the decision; or
 - ii) that the County Council consider whether the relevant decision making body should reconsider the decision (this recommendation shall not be made when the decision is in line with the budget, or the Policy Framework, or statutory requirements regarding notice procedures in respect of publicity for Key Decisions)
- 1.17.4 Any decision of the Executive which is not in line with the Budget or the Policy Framework, or the notice procedure in respect of Key Decisions as set out at Part 3 Chapter 2 Paragraph 3.2 of the Constitution, if called-in, shall not be implemented until the request has been disposed of by;
- i) The withdrawal of the request
 - ii) The rejection of the request by the Select (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee(s) or by the County Council
 - iii) The relevant decision-making body rejecting the recommendation for reconsideration or;
 - iv) The relevant decision-making body reconsidering and confirming the original decision.

- 1.17.5 Call-in shall not prevent the decision from being acted on where the decision is in line with the Policy Framework and other policies approved by the County Council but when the views of the Select Committee differ from, or are critical of, the Executive decision, the facts shall be reported to the next County Council meeting and be debated without changing the previous decision although the County Council may request the Cabinet or relevant Executive Member(s) to review the decision in question.