

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE (TANDRIDGE)**

**DATE: 26 June 2015**

**SUBJECT: Formal Public Question – Possible Closure of Hurst Green Children’s Centre**

**DIVISION: OXTED**



Sue Batley asks on behalf of ‘Parents’ Campaign Against Closure of Hurst Green Children’s Centre’ :

Would the committee please give its full support to maintaining Hurst Green & Holland Children’s Centre for the following reasons: It is a thriving and busy centre with over 7,000 visits a year. Footfall is heavier than the other centres in Tandridge and it is ideally located in the centre of the district. The centre was purpose built in 2010 at a cost to the taxpayer of a quarter of a million pounds. With running costs of £115,000 per year it is a very inexpensive way of providing preventative services in an area of need.

Given that the county is obliged to provide Early Years services anyway, surely any other way of delivering them would be either more costly or less effective. Can we have your assurance that you will oppose any closure and the centre will continue to be the hub delivering services for Tandridge?

**Response:**

Surrey County Council has to make £62 million of savings in the next year while at the same time demand for our services continues to increase. We are looking at a number of ways we can do this. One proposal is to consider the rationalisation of the 58 children’s centres operating across Surrey.

A proposal for a formal public consultation on the future of the Sure Start children’s centres was being developed for the county council’s Cabinet to consider on 26 May 2015. This work is still ongoing but officers were asked to provide further information on the impact of potential closures before Cabinet is asked to make a decision to consult. This affected the original timescales planned for any consultation and as a result the decision to consult did not go to Cabinet on 26 May.

Officers are continuing to develop the option of other children’s centres offering services to affected families if a decision to close centres is made. The Early Years and Childcare Service continues to engage with children’s centres and health partners that could be affected, as well as the schools and organisations that manage the children’s centres.

No further timings of any potential consultation have been confirmed.

As per the Council’s Constitution, Surrey’s County Councillors have a role to represent their local communities and bring their views into the Council’s decision-making process. On the 15 April 2015, the Chairman of Tandridge Local Committee wrote to the Cabinet to express concerns over this matter and ask for further consideration before any action is taken.