

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: The Children's Centre Buildings Consultation.
Service/s: Children's Commissioning, Children's Services and Corporate Estates.

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Date of sign off by Head of Service/s: 6th August 2024

Assessment carried out by: Children's Commissioning and Corporate Estates officers.

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

This assessment explores the impact of proposals being made as part of a public consultation to change the use of the current Children Centre buildings going forward.

In 2017, the Council agreed to award a contract for the delivery of a Children Centre model which would provide targeted intervention to identified families meeting the [level 3 threshold of needs \(Devon Levels of Need\)](#) with children aged 0-8 years as part of our early help offer. The Council awarded this contract to the provider Action for Children to deliver. This contract was taken to its full contract term and extended for a further year. This contract will be coming to an end on the 31st of March 2024. Devon have decided to develop a family hub model in line with the national direction of travel.

Legislation relevant to the delivery of a Children Centre model are primarily contained within the Childcare Act (2006) and this has implications for any buildings which have been used to support Children Centre services.

Since 2022, the development of family hub approaches and networks have been led initially through a [national programme for family hubs](#) by the Department for Education and the Department for Health and Social Care with other local authorities. The aim of family hubs nationally is to assist with information, advice and support being offered at the earliest opportunity to local families in local communities. With a particular focus on increasing access for families; building connections between practitioners and with families and putting our relationships with families at the heart of what we do.

Whilst the Council is not currently a part of the nationally funded Family Hubs and Start for Life programme, we are committed to developing family hubs in Devon for our families. During the financial year 2024 to 2025 we will be working with Action for Children and our partners to start our journey towards developing family hub approaches and networks in local communities which will expand support to all families with children aged 0-19 (25 with SEND). This reflects decisions agreed by the Council Cabinet in October 2023. To achieve this, we have reviewed the current Children's Centre buildings. Some of these will be used as Family Hub bases moving forward but some are not suitable as Family Hubs, as a result, alternative arrangements

are being proposed.

This proposal also forms part of the Council's wider 'Climate Change, Innovation and Infrastructure' change programme priority, to support a Sustainable and Stronger Council approach which was endorsed by [Cabinet](#) in September 2023, and to which updates are being provided throughout 2024.

2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review.

The move to Family Hubs will be gradual, based on the needs of each community. The buildings we use need to be able to meet the needs of the whole family in a coordinated way, be somewhere we can co-locate services, be easily accessible to families and well used.

A Family Hub is a place where families can go (either in person, digitally or via telephone,) to access the support they need to manage the issues they may be experiencing. The hubs will contain a network of practitioners and organisations who will come together in local communities with families offering:

- Greater access to advice and information linked to a range of services, interventions, and local opportunities.
- Supporting an early response for families, co-ordinating an Early Help assessment, where needed, as part of the wider Early Help offer.
- Welcoming virtual and physical spaces which will grow and develop, forming part of the family hub network in your local area, which families can visit or contact to access the support they need. Enabling support to be offered at the point of need, as far as possible. This will include outreach hubs developed alongside those community hubs in existing in areas and created where they don't exist.
- Supporting families to connect with opportunities in their local communities supporting needs. Including enabling families to get involved with supporting other families in the communities.
- Supporting families to navigate pathways to higher level and specialist intervention which may be needed and keeping in contact with families while they gain access to these pathways.
- Forming partnerships in communities, increasing connections between organisations working within the same community.
- Enabling, growing, and linking opportunities and activities available in a local community to best support families.
- Promoting learning and upskilling local communities to support families. For example, understanding parental wellbeing; early brain development, attachment, and child development; promoting home learning environments and preparation for school.
- Offering intervention to families in need of specific support to manage their situation.
- Ensuring best value and quality services to families, in partnership with the current community-based offer and within the resources available.
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The following could form part of a local family hub network and offer in a local community:

- Early Help services.
- Wider early years services and early education support.
- Public Health services.
- Public Health Nursing.

- Midwifery services.
- Partners supporting as part of the Best Start in Life national initiative.
- Charity, voluntary and third sector partners including Faith groups offering opportunities for families in their local communities.
- Partners supporting drug, alcohol and domestic abuse or violence support.
- Partners supporting wider community health and wellbeing support for children and young people.
- The Council led Disabled Children's Services.
- Partners supporting delivery of youth services.
- Schools, colleges, and Devon Schools Leadership Services (DSLs).
- Social care services delivered by the Council directly (Integrated Adult Social Care and Children).
- Childcare settings, for example, childminders; nurseries and pre-school settings.
- Partners providing careers and employability services in Devon to children, adults, and families.
- Partners delivering libraries.
- Education support teams.
- Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Citizens Advice and welfare support teams working with families in local communities.
- District Councils.
- Partners supporting children and young people with SEND and their families.
- Safeguarding teams e.g., Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for children and young people (MASH).
- Social prescribing teams, wellbeing co-ordinators, community connectors and builders.

The Children's Centre Buildings Consultation (hereafter referred to as the consultation) took place between 8th May 2024 and 3rd July 2024. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views from families and professionals on proposed changes to our current Children's Centre buildings and the services we offer within them, as the journey towards the development of Family Hubs continues.

There are currently 27 Children Centre buildings which form part of the proposals being taken through a formal consultation with the public. 4 of these buildings are located in Exeter; 8 are located in East and Mid Devon localities (e.g., Exmouth, Honiton, Sidmouth, Seaton, Crediton and Tiverton); 8 are located in South and West Devon localities (e.g., Newton Abbot, Hatherleigh, Totnes, Dartmouth, Tavistock) and 7 are located across the North Devon localities (e.g., Barnstaple, Bideford, Torrington, Holsworthy, Ilfracombe).

Changes proposed for the buildings are summarised below:-

Change included within the proposal for consultation	Number of Children Centre buildings being proposed for this change.
a) <u>Building will be repurposed to become part of a family hubs approach and network(s) developing locally.</u> The sites will provide space as either a main hub building, or an outreach building ¹ within that local	5

¹it is proposed that there will be at least one hub in each district area (ten in total across Devon). These buildings will be places where staff can come together, and families can access support. There will be some meeting rooms and space for staff to come

family hub network.	
b) <u>Building will be repurposed to support other functions, services and/ or partners.</u> For example, many of the current buildings are located on school sites and schools have expressed an interest in using these spaces to develop their provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) or to develop more childcare provision in Devon for families. This has been considered as part of the proposals.	3
c) <u>A combination of changes described under a) and b) above.</u> For example, the centre is to be repurposed with other partners or use for other services, with the option that there could also be space to use for outreach on the site.	18
d) <u>Buildings will be closed.</u> All buildings included here within the proposal will have been discussed with partners to explore if there is any appetite to repurpose these buildings.	1

Please see the consultation pack on the [Devon family hubs - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(devonscp.org.uk\)](https://devonscp.org.uk) for further information on the proposal for individual buildings included.

These changes and proposals are needed because:-

- Developing Family Hub approaches and networks in Devon represents a new direction of travel for families and the Council. As well as a change to and move away from the previous use of the buildings to deliver Children Centre services.
- They reflect and have been shaped by recent engagement activity where families and professionals have told us what would be important for the future in developing family hubs. Please see section 7 for a summary of relevant engagement outcomes and activity.
- Section 5 of the [Childcare Act \(2006\)](#), in particular 5D places a legal duty on local authorities to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to Children's Centre provision in their area.
- The Council is committed to hearing the views of our public, our families and other key stakeholders. The outcomes of which will be important for us and will contribute towards shaping the future.
- The Council will be meeting statutory duties described, for example within the [Childcare Act \(2006\)](#) and these proposals will also be a part of contributing towards the delivery of strategic priorities outlined within the [Devon County Council Strategic Plan 2021-2025](#); [Devon's Early Help Strategy](#) and [Devon's SEND Strategy 2021-2024](#), for example.
- It forms part of the Council's corporate priorities and contributes towards one of the change programme priorities for 'Climate change, Innovation and Infrastructure' within

together to learn and develop their skills, as well as some group delivery space. The outreach hub spaces will provide options for families to access various services and guidance in their own community. These will be linked to existing community services in different locations (such as schools, libraries, community hospitals and community centres) .

which the 'Property Change Programme' is being managed.

The Council's Property Change Programme.

The aim of this project is to reduce the Council's property portfolio without detriment to services or the local community. The vision is to 'Reduce, Dispose, Repurpose and Transform' the Council's property portfolio to provide a sustainable estate which promotes and facilitates agile and integrated service delivery.

The key elements of the estate strategy are: -

- Identifying properties that are no longer required or are not cost effective.
- Identifying the potential for co-location of services within DCC sites or public sector.
- Opportunities for better use of assets through repurposing to meet key strategic needs.
- Improving the energy efficiency of assets and reducing our carbon.

3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

Overall, the proposal being made has the potential to support positive social, environmental, and economic impacts. A summary of the potential positive impacts are below: -

Social impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repurposing buildings to be part of Family Hub approaches and networks locally could positively impact the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of families, as they can better access the advice, support and help they need, in one place and in ways they feel are best for them, with a range of practitioners co-located and working better together. Physical space and buildings for the family hub network will only form one part of the approach, virtual offers and options will also be developed so families are enabled to have several options available to them to access the information, advice and support they need when they need it. • Access to advice, information, and support available would be improved through repurposing buildings to be part of family hub approaches for families with children and young people 0-19 years and up to 25 for young people with SEND. This expands use of the buildings which are currently restricted to parents with children aged 0-8 years only, for targeted offers of support. • Repurposing buildings to support development of more childcare provision for families would have positive benefits. For example, parents may be able to either return to work and/ or increase the working hours they can undertake; this may improve their financial situation at a time when cost of living is high and is creating pressure for families. More children would have access to childcare environments which could positively impact their development, learning and school readiness. This will also support the Council in meeting statutory duties for families in supporting childcare sufficiency locally. • Repurposing buildings to support the development of SEND provision for families would have positive benefits. It could mean schools and partners develop provision in these buildings which can better meet the needs of children and young people, supporting them to learn effectively, and achieve positive outcomes. In some cases, potentially remaining in mainstream education settings with their peers.
Environmental impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals are based on supporting as much co-location as possible amongst practitioners, partners, and organisations, as locally as possible through the buildings available. Basing more teams in one place and

	<p>locally is likely to mean a more effective and efficient use of energy, resources and costs associated with running any building. It could mean reduced travel time and emissions as a result. There is the opportunity for furniture and equipment to re-used and re-located where any building closure has been recommended.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green spaces which are part of buildings are likely to be maintained. These have the potential to support conservation and biodiversity, whilst also offering benefits to parents and children and young people who may continue to have access to them when visiting a building.
Economic impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-locating as many practitioners, partners, and organisations as locally as possible and in buildings put forward for repurposing, increases opportunities for knowledge, learning, skills and expertise to be shared across service areas and teams. It could improve partnership working, join up and integration across staff teams, which would also benefit families they are working with. • Job opportunities may become available within the local economy, where repurposed buildings are being proposed to potentially develop more childcare and/ or SEND provision. As this develops over time, schools and/ or organisations are likely to need additional staff to support services to be delivered in these spaces for children, young people, and their families. • If more childcare provision can be supported through repurposing of buildings, this could enable more parents to increase working hours and/ or return to work benefiting local businesses and the local economy. • Proposals promote efficient use of public money and resources in ways which support sustainability and continued support for families in local communities.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs.

The following groups of people are likely to be affected by the proposals: -

- Families with children and young people aged 0-8 years, this may include families with children and young people who may have Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities (SEND).
- Families with children and young people aged 0-19 years, 25 with SEND

Reach

Recommendations summarised have been informed by looking at:-

- Deprivation indices using both The Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) and the [Indices of Multiple Deprivation \(IMD\)](#).
- Population size (see JSNA above) and child population 0-17 years as a percentage of total population.
- Travel links.
- Mapping of services available in each area (statutory and community based).
- Local knowledge of partners.
- Feedback from our families.

The Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA) for Devon 2023 states: -

- Devon is the third largest county in England covering 2,534 square miles, with a total

population of 814,440 people (395,689 male and 418,751 female).

- Devon has proportionally fewer younger people in Devon compared to the national average. There are 164,258 children and young people living in Devon aged between 0-19 years (84,308 male and 79,950 female).
- People living in poorer neighbourhoods tend on average to die 5 to 7 years earlier than people living in more affluent neighbourhoods. Life expectancy is starker in Devon in smaller areas of central Ilfracombe and Liverton in Exmouth. People in poorer areas also spend more of their shorter lives with a disability and/ or in poorer health.
- Outcomes for children and young people across Devon are variable and mixed.
- Focus on improving behavioural risk factors for children and young people around diet and physical activity is required to reduce dental decay in younger children and obesity in primary and secondary school aged children.
- Around a quarter of pupils in Devon are not achieving a good level of development by the end of reception and a gap in school readiness is considerably wider for disadvantaged children.
- Hospital admissions in children and young people are considerably higher in Devon for mental health conditions, self-harm and injuries. This gap is even wider for disadvantaged children.
- Devon has proportionality fewer working age people compared to the England average, particularly in persons aged 16-49 years.
- There is significant variation between areas within Devon in relation to economic landscape. Average earnings overall in Devon are well below the England average. Housing across Devon is expensive making it a challenge for some lower income households to get on the property ladder. Those living in rural communities are impacted even more by low wages, lack of access to affordable housing, public transport and digital connections.
- Behavioural risk factors such as smoking, alcohol, poor diet and lack of activity are the leading influences of ill health and premature mortality both nationally and locally.

At 24th March 2024, over the last 6 months there were 3,303 Children in Need. 2558 Children in Need with an open episode of need, 52% are males and 48% are females. 439 of these children (17%) have a disability. The 3 highest primary need areas included: - abuse or neglect; family in acute stress; family dysfunction.

At 24th March 2024, over the last 6 months there were 2,348 early help common/ targeted assessments being supported for children, young people and their families. 1201 of these assessments included a child or young person who was male aged 0-17 years (51%) and 1122 for a child or young person who was female (48%).

In 2023, there were 5.4% of all pupils in Devon with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and a statutory Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) across all schools. There were 14.8% of all pupils in Devon with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support across all schools.

A summary has been provided below acknowledging the number of parents who have used the current children centre buildings over the last year (2023): -

District area in which Children centres are located.	Number of parents who have used the Children Centre buildings in this locality over the last year.
Exeter	449
Mid Devon	407
East Devon	684

Newton Abbot and Teignbridge	642
South Hams	370
West Devon	304
Barnstaple, North Devon	480
Ilfracombe, North Devon	242
Torridge	351
All centres total	3,929

Experience

The Council is committed to supporting families to have their voices heard. This can include any feedback on their experiences of the different support available, aspects of their daily lived experience which they feel able to share with us and their say on any plans being developed to provide support to children and young people. Examples of where parents, children and young people are encouraged to share their views with us includes: -

- Have your Say website. Used to host details of our formal consultations all aiming to help shape services across Devon.
- Parent Carer Forum. This group is supported independently. This group of parent carers work closely with Devon County Council to help us to grow and improve our offer of support for parents and carers of disabled children and children and young people with SEND.
- Bright Spots Survey and the Devon Mind of My Own App. These tools help us to hear the views of care experienced children and young people in Devon.
- Advisory groups and boards supported by parents and/or practitioners working with families.
- Virtual and face to face focus sessions and/or coffee mornings hosted locally.
- As part of any service assessments and support being provided to families.
- Through our central Customer Service Centre and central service contact routes [Contact us - Devon County Council](#)

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

In addition to families and children and young people highlighted above, below are a list of key stakeholders who are likely to be interested in and impacted by the recommended proposal being explored in this assessment: -

Stakeholder Group	Interest and potential impacts.
Practitioners across our systems of services including for example: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action for Children, developing family hubs core staffing team. • Early Help services. • Wider early years services and early education support. • Public Health services. • Public Health Nursing. • Midwifery services. • Partners supporting as part of the Best Start in Life national initiative. 	The outcomes of the proposal being taken through to public consultation will impact where staffing teams can be based and will provide some of the space and infrastructure from which to create and develop Family Hub networks and approaches in local communities and to support reach to and access for families. Several teams, practitioners, partners and organisations will form the family hub networks in local communities and these spaces will provide locations where they can link and work together with families. Moreover, all will need to have an awareness of the proposal for the buildings and be provided

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charity, voluntary and third sector partners including Faith groups offering opportunities for families in their local communities. • Partners supporting drug, alcohol and domestic abuse or violence support. • Partners supporting wider community health and wellbeing support for children and young people. • The Council led Disabled Children’s Services. • Partners supporting delivery of youth services. • Schools, colleges, and Devon Schools Leadership Services (DSLS). • Social care services delivered by the Council directly (Integrated Adult Social Care and Children). • Childcare settings, for example, childminders; nurseries and pre-school settings. • Partners providing careers and employability services in Devon to children, adults, and families. • Partners delivering libraries. • Education support teams. • Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership. • Citizens Advice and welfare support teams working with families in local communities. • District Councils. • Partners supporting children and young people with SEND and their families. • Safeguarding teams e.g., Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub for children and young people (MASH). • Social prescribing teams, wellbeing co-ordinators, community connectors and builders. 	<p>with the opportunity to share their views as part of the public consultation process.</p>
<p>Elected Members.</p>	<p>Overall decision-making lies with this group. Elected Members will be making decisions that represent and respond to the needs and interests of Devon communities based on the information and evidence provided to them. Elected Members also need to be assured in their decision making that the Council are meeting their legal responsibilities and making the best use of public funds.</p>

6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment.

- [Devon Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#).
- Children's services Analysis Tool (ChAT) 24th March 2024.
- [Local Authority Interactive Tool](#).
- Children Centre services contract monitoring data.
- Engagement feedback and outcomes from professionals, partners and families.
- Consultation Report

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

The proposal described in section 2 above, reflects the proposal being made for current Children Centre buildings. The proposal was open for formal consultation from 8th May 2024 to midnight on 3rd July 2024 and hosted through the [Devon family hubs - Devon Safeguarding Children Partnership \(devonscp.org.uk\)](#) Alongside the consultation, 14 face to face engagement sessions were carried out to gather feedback directly from stakeholders. Please see summary of consultation feedback below;

The proposals in the consultation were formed through engagement events and meetings carried out with staff, partners and members to gather their thoughts regarding the development of Family Hubs and the most appropriate use of existing and potential venues to deliver from.

The proposals described and being assessed in this impact assessment were influenced by a previous Family Hubs Engagement questionnaire. 697 responses to this questionnaire have been provided between 23rd February 2024 up to 22nd March 2024 closing date.

Initial findings highlight that families and professionals in Devon can often find it difficult to access services due to the rurality of Devon, the availability of transport and location of support for example. Families have told us that they want to be able to access support in friendly, welcoming, non-judgemental, open and safe spaces on a drop-in basis, without appointment, criteria or waiting lists and which can be suitable for the whole family. Families would like multi-functional spaces which can support them to meet with their peers, as well as a range of practitioners who are all working together. Spaces where they can access more face-to-face advice, information and support if preferred and which also enable families to learn more about what support is out there and is available locally to them in their communities.

Practitioners have told us they would also like to be able to use shared, local, multi-functional spaces with good access to IT and WIFI; which are well connected; affordable; sustainable; friendly, welcoming and safe spaces supporting relationships with families; and which provide a platform for shared learning and efficient use of resources for all.

It is also intended there will be an ongoing programme of engagement supported with partners and communities to continue to support, influence, shape, develop and improve any developing family hubs and networks in local communities. Details of any engagement events being supported will be made available on the main [Family Hubs website](#).

The recommendations from the consultation can be found in the [Children Centre Buildings Consultation Recommendations report](#). As a result of the consultation proposals have been adjusted and a phased approach implemented to ensure the views expressed have influenced the recommendations and actions moving forward to be agreed by Cabinet.

Background information

8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

All residents by geographic area

The proposals regarding a change of use for the current Children Centre buildings to be put out to public consultation have the potential for a positive impact for families in Devon. It is being proposed 25 of the current buildings be repurposed to support local communities. Those being repurposed to form part of the infrastructure for the development of family hub approaches and networks have the potential to positively impact access to information, advice and information for families. They will provide some physical locations which are welcoming, trusted and safe where all types of families will be able to drop into, meaning they will be able to access information, advice and support potentially more quickly. The aim is also to make these repurposed spaces available to a wealth of practitioners and partners who will all form part of the family hub networks we are looking to develop in local communities, supporting them to work better together and to be more integrated and co-located in communities. This has the potential to positively impact families as physical spaces through the network can be accessed and used to meet with other parents and families face to face as well as a range of partners and professionals which all types of families may need support from. This also responds to what families have told us they want and would make better for them. This has the potential to positively impact the physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing of families, as they can better access the advice, support and help they need, in ways they feel are best for them.

There is a potential negative emotional impact for families in local communities where they may perceive a long-standing Children Centre being repurposed for a different use or closing, and the perception that with this change, it means there will not be services or a Family Hub network in their area. This can be mitigated through effective engagement and communication with families and communities regularly. We will need to ensure there are communications providing clarity on sites that will be available in a local community and will be used to support the infrastructure for a local family hub network and approach for that community. Where buildings are not being repurposed for the family hub network or are closing, we need to be clear in our communications there are other spaces which have been mapped and which data and engagement have indicated to date would act as more appropriate locations and spaces to support family hub networks and approaches locally. Moreover, physical space and buildings for the family hub network will only form one part of the approach, virtual offers and options will also

be developed as part of family hub networks and approaches, families will have a number of options available to them to access information, advice and support they need when they need it.

Children Centre buildings being put forward for repurposing to support other functions, partners and services have an overall potential for a positive impact for families living in Devon. It is being proposed for consultation that 16 of the current Children's Centre buildings be returned to schools or other partners to repurpose as community spaces, childcare provision and/ or to provide space for SEND provision (7 of which would still provide space for outreach). If some of these spaces are used to develop and grow childcare provision, this will increase the number of places for childcare which are available to families and which may be able to provide more hours of free childcare for families as part of the national childcare initiatives being supported by the Government. This has the potential to positively impact parents, who may be able to either return to work and/ or increase the working hours they can undertake as they are able to access more hours and/ or spaces which may become available in local childcare settings. This could help to support them financially at a time when cost of living is high, positively impacting the health and wellbeing of families, reducing stress. Moreover, an increase in childcare provision will mean more children in Devon are able to access a setting where they can socialise with other children, make friends and have access to another environment which can help them to prepare for school and to develop socially, emotionally, cognitively etc. This will also support the Council in meeting their statutory duties for families in supporting childcare sufficiency locally.

Age

The proposed re-purposing of 9 of the current Children Centre buildings to become part of family hub networks and approaches locally has the potential for a positive impact for children and young people of all ages. Currently Children Centre buildings are focused on delivery supporting families with children aged between 0-8 years. Through repurposing these buildings will become available to families with children and young people aged from 0-19 years and for young people with SEND up to 25 years and their families. This will increase opportunities for families to seek advice, information and support in one place as their child or young person grows. Families will know where to go and be better supported to understand what support is available to them in their local communities. This has the potential to positively impact the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of parents and family members. As they have told us they often feel confused, unaware, and stressed as they are having to move from team to team and place to place. This also has the potential to positively benefit the development of children and young people as they are able to get the support, they need either from parents who have been supported and/ or as needed through more targeted and/ or statutory services such as social care.

Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people.

It is being proposed that 16 of the current children centre buildings are repurposed (with 7 still making space available for outreach), this could include some of these buildings being returned to schools (as many Children Centre buildings are situated on school sites), who can then use this space to potentially develop provision and space in their schools which can be used to support more children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/ or Disabilities. This has the potential to positively impact the lives of children, young people and families in these communities and it responds to what families have been sharing that they need e.g., more SEND provision locally. It also has the potential to mean more children with SEND can remain in mainstream settings depending on any additional provision schools may develop.

With different space and provision developed, it would mean schools can better support the needs of children and young people with SEND in their setting, promoting inclusion and supporting children and young people to learn as effectively as they can and to reach their potential.

The proposed re-purposing of 9 of the current Children's Centre buildings to become part of Family Hub networks and approached locally has the potential for a positive impact for children and young people with SEND and their families. Currently Children's Centre buildings are focused on supporting families with children aged between 0-8 years. If these buildings are repurposed to become part of infrastructure and space supporting family hub networks and approaches, they will be available to families with children and young people aged from 0-19 years and for young people with SEND up to 25 years. This will increase opportunities for families to seek advice, information, and support in one place as their child or young person grows. Families will know where to go and be better supported to understand what support is available to them in their local communities. This has the potential to positively impact the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of parents and family members who have told us they often feel confused, unaware, stressed as they are having to move from team to team and place to place. This also has the potential to positively benefit the development of children and young people as they can get the support, they need from parents who have been supported and/ or as needed through more targeted and/or statutory services such as social care.

Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs

Practitioners, partners, and any other organisations making use of any repurposed Children Centres summarised above, will be working in ways which promote a safe, welcoming, trusting, and open space for all types of families. This includes promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity practices within the buildings which make them accessible to all types of families and which respect and take account of protected characteristics such as race and culture for a family and in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)

Practitioners, partners and any other organisations making use of any repurposed Children Centres summarised above, will be working in ways which promote a safe, welcoming, trusting and open space for all types of families. This includes promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity practices within the buildings which make them accessible to all types of families and which respect and take account of protected characteristics such as sex, gender identity and reassignment for a family and in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related.

Practitioners, partners and any other organisations making use of any repurposed Children Centres summarised above, will be working in ways which promote a safe, welcoming, trusting and open space for all types of families. This includes promoting equality, diversity, and inclusivity practices within the buildings which make them accessible to all types of families and which respect and take account of protected characteristics such as sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership for a family and in line with the Equality Act (2010).

Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

When considering the options for repurposing Current Children centre buildings (as part of the proposal described in section 2), the recommended option for these buildings in communities has been considered against population data available. This is with the purpose and aim of

taking forward buildings which are best placed to meet the needs of families in their local communities, whilst also holding as much potential as possible to connect into and with families within our most deprived Devon communities, looking to reduce the impact of health inequalities for these families as far as possible, and supporting them to achieve the best outcomes they can.

As discussed above the option of repurposing current Children Centre buildings to potentially increase spaces and hours which may be available as childcare to families could positively impact the finances of families as they are enabled to take on more hours of work and/ or to return to work, where this may not have been a viable option for them previously. Potentially providing children and families with opportunities to engage in activities etc which they may not have been able to before. This will also support the Council in meeting their statutory duties for families regarding childcare sufficiency locally.

Having access to a wider range of advice and information and better join up between services in buildings used as family hub sites would be advantageous for our most vulnerable families in communities who may need support relating to employability, housing, benefits advice and welfare support.

9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

Practitioners, partners and any other organisations making use of any repurposed Children Centres summarised above, will be working in ways which promote the vision, values and principles of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children \(2010\)](#) and the [United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(2006\)](#) in their work with children, young people and families.

For any of the Children Centre buildings being repurposed to become part of Family Hub approaches and networks developed locally a key part of monitoring, auditing, evaluation, and improvement activity will be in considering how equality and diversity is being promoted and supported for children, young people and families. This will include evidence of adjustments which have been made and considering how aspects of the conventions are being supported appropriately as part of our aims, objectives, and vision.

10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	X
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost.

Repurposing the Children Centre buildings in the ways which has been described (in Section 2 above) has the potential for a positive impact. The options proposed are based on supporting as much co-location as possible amongst practitioners, partners and organisations and as locally as possible through the buildings available. Basing more teams in one place and locally is likely to mean a more effective and efficient use of energy, resources and costs associated with running any building. This will be more effective than all teams individually having their own spaces using energy and resources to run multiple buildings. There is also the potential to re-use and re-locate equipment and furniture from any buildings proposed for closure for example, into re-purposed spaces, ensuring equipment is being recycled and put to the best use.

Conserve and enhance wildlife.

Children Centre buildings which are being put forward for repurposing will aim to be re-purposed and updated in ways which maintain any existing green spaces the buildings may have and to promote positive opportunities for insects and wildlife and biodiversity appropriately. This has the potential for a positive impact. Any grassed and lawn areas can be maintained in ways which encourage longer and protected growth of plants in areas which are attractive to insects and wildlife, for example. Natural spaces being available and maintained would also have potential positive benefits for the physical and mental wellbeing of parents, children and young people using repurposed spaces in the future. For children and young people there is the opportunity to potentially contribute to their learning of the benefits of outdoor spaces and the importance of retaining these spaces for all appropriately in buildings put forward for re-proposing.

Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape.

None.

Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage.

None.

Minimise greenhouse gas emissions.

Repurposing the Children Centre buildings in the ways which has been described (in Section 2 above) has the potential for a positive impact. The options proposed are based on supporting as much co-location as possible amongst practitioners, partners and organisations and as locally as possible. Basing more teams in one place and locally could reduce the need for as much travel by car or public transport, thus having the potential to reduce emissions associated with travelling distances to access spaces. Moreover, those buildings put forward for repurposing to become part of Family Hub approaches and networks locally, will aim to provide access to families closer to their homes, within their local communities and those served by appropriate

public transport links. This approach should aim to reduce travel and keep as many families and practitioners as local to communities as possible.

Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)

Children Centre buildings which are being put forward for repurposing will aim to be re-purposed and updated in ways which will seek to reduce waste and make use or re-use of resources or equipment which may already be available. This has the potential for a positive impact. Anyone using the buildings will be encouraged to use resources economically and support energy saving measures as far as possible. For example, using energy efficient equipment and using equipment only when needed in any buildings, turning off lights when no longer needed. Materials could be made available to promote behaviours to support the effective use of utilities such as water and electricity by anyone accessing or using any buildings to deliver from. Facilities which encourage behaviours to recycle materials appropriately or reduce the use of materials e.g., paper, can be promoted through any sites used to provide support to families and practitioners going forward.

Contribute to reducing water consumption.

Children Centre buildings which are being put forward for repurposing will aim to be re-purposed and updated in ways which will seek to reduce waste and make use or re-use of resources or equipment which may already be available. This has the potential for a positive impact. Anyone using the buildings will be encouraged to use resources economically and support energy saving measures as far as possible. Materials could be made available to promote behaviours to support the effective use of utilities such as water.

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)

Maintaining any existing green spaces in buildings to be repurposed could be important, with any increased rainfall as a result of climate change, these spaces could soak up so much excess water, taking pressure away from waterfalls into the drains and sewers and any overflow. Buildings which may go on to become part of Family Hub networks, over time and once embedded within communities, could support planning, protocols and responses for emergency evacuation and flooding for example.

Other (please state below)

The proposal supports the releasing of buildings which are not affordable, sustainable and/ or have limited use within communities.

11. Economic analysis

Impact on knowledge and skills

Repurposing the current Children Centre buildings in the ways which have been described (see section 2) has the potential for a positive impact on knowledge and skills. The options proposed are based on supporting as much co-location as possible amongst practitioners, partners and organisations and as locally as possible through the buildings available. This increases the potential for sharing of knowledge, learning and upskill between different practitioners and service areas being represented and making use of these spaces. This will be positive for families are more likely to receive consistent knowledge and information from groups of practitioners and partners. This will be particularly important for those buildings the Council is intending to repurpose to support the development of Family Hub approaches and networks

locally. At the same time creating more opportunities and spaces for practitioners to co-locate has the potential to positively increase partnership working and integrated working between teams and with families responding to what families are telling us i.e., they would like more evidence of partnership working and join up across all services, meaning we are better able to meet their needs.

Impact on employment levels and local business

Repurposing the current Children Centre buildings in the ways which have been described (see section 2) has the potential for a neutral or positive impact on employment levels. The way the buildings are being repurposed should not result in any risk of job loss or redundancy to staff. There is the potential that job opportunities may become available within the local economy, where repurposed buildings are being proposed to potentially develop more childcare and/ or SEND provision. As this develops over time, schools and/ or organisations are likely to need additional staff to support services to be delivered in these spaces for children, young people and their families.

The proposal described in section 2 has the potential for a positive impact for the local Devon economy. Changes being proposed could enable more parents in the local economy to work more hours and/ or return to the workplace if some of the buildings are repurposed and can support more childcare provision going forward. The proposal looks to safeguard and reduce costs, and to promote efficient use of public money and resources available, supporting a Sustainable and Stronger Council approach whilst continuing to support families within their local communities.