

## Little Owls Nurseries Review - Appendix 1

### Engagement Sessions, Compendium of Comments/Queries/Questions

Setting	Comment/Query
Burley Park	What does it mean short and long term if another provider takes over, does the council still have some form of involvement?
	What are the financial implications for parents, would the fees stay the same?
	When will parents be notified of closures/timeline?
	More concerns from parents regarding financial implications if another provider takes over.
	Concern of the word use 'alternative', as parents feel it is not an alternative option for them as the costs are not the same.
	What will happen if no providers show interest to take on the provision?
	Timing of the session is difficult for working parents and to have another session booked in.
	Parents would like to work together with LA to find solutions. Suggested a 'working together' approach which will include an independent survey to present an impact report to decision makers.
	To delay timeframe until a new government is in place at the end of the year.
	Parents have a steering group 'savelittleowls@gmail.com'.
	To provide the links to those (review) and to make them easy to find on LCC website i.e. linked from the FAQ pages.
Chapel Allerton	Daughter due to start at Little Owls CA at end of May. They now have less than 2 months to find a nursery place. Enquired at other Little Owls settings and was told no places are available until September.
	Actual savings to be achieved are lower than the £900k, as informed by an FOI response. Could LCC use reserves or money saved elsewhere to prevent closure of nurseries.
	Process seems very untransparent without financial and other data on which the proposals are based being made public. Will the full assessment be provided so that stakeholders can make an informed response? Made another point that lower income families may be priced out of childcare by the closure of Little Owls.
	Queries the sufficiency argument - price of PVI is an issue and ring round undertaken showed no places available. What are LCC doing about lobbying at a national level re: funding?
	Sufficiency argument – parent was originally with a private provider but moved to Chapel Allerton Little Owls due to convenient location next to CA school. This currently involves a 2.2 mile commute. Little Owls offers a superior service

	to private provision and at a lower cost. There is no other Little Owls in North Leeds closer and Chapel town is further away for this parent. They state that we should consider what choices we are making, and that North Leeds is more expensive than South Leeds. Is closing the best option when looking at the options appraisal - have we not considered increasing prices instead?
	Parent has one child in the nursery and another on the waiting list to start in January. What is the timing if the proposal goes ahead? How and when will we know that we have another place at an alternative LO if closure goes ahead.
	Everyone objects and comms has been terrible - Has an assessment of long-term impact of proposal on families being carried out? More info should have been shared with families (rather than via FOIs) and initial comms were not good.
	Will a £500k saving actually be achieved by closure of the three or not
	Why are we retaining the 9?
	Found out I owed LO £2000 and have found out other parents also owe thousands as well. FAMILY has been introduced but has not had chance to bed in
	Will the engagement session be recorded?
	Related to this question, you've made it very clear in the 19 minutes of the engagement session that this is just a proposal. Why then has the waiting list already been dissolved?
	Why has this decision be made now and not after the review?
	Given you are offloading loss-making nurseries, how much do you realistically expect to achieve by selling Nurseries to the private sector?
	If you can't break even how do they make a profit?
	in the letter we received it stated that there is sufficient alternative nursery places in the local area, we had our daughter on the waiting list for several other nurseries including Chapel Town little owls since May last year. Chapel Allerton was the only one that had a space for us to start at the end of Feb. where are the other spaces that are available?
	parents get a maximum of 1 year leave if they are lucky, why are you starting with 2 year olds?
	Child minders in the area don't work on Fridays in the region which is a real issue.
	Our childminder in Chapel Allerton is retiring in September
	You said that you have staffing issues at little owls. Do you have data about the staffing levels private providers have, and whether they are reliant on agency staff? Have you factored this into the sufficiency analysis?
	I've been unable to find a childminder for my required days. Other nurseries haven't even responded to by emails.
	can you provide the research to show the spaces available at the other nurseries, including which nurseries you looked at. This isn't my experience.
	What is the plan with the Meanwood little owls?
	Many parents at CA little owls (myself included) walk to nursery. Chapel town would be a further 15 mins walk each way in the wrong direction for me from home where I work
	Will you be recording individual objections here? - please record us as two strong objections. Maybe if everyone records here whether they support or oppose the proposals, you'll get a clear idea of the strength of opinion on this?
	I also strongly object. Chapel Allerton Little Owls service and staff are absolutely amazing. Have the council considered other options e.g. increasing fees, improving marketing to increase intake?

	Let's not forget that F1 is only from 3 years and term time, school hours only- not suitable for many working parents
	I would like to echo xxxx's views on the quality of the Little Owls provision and I strongly object to the proposed closures and as a parent I would be open to an increase in fees.
	I want to publicly thank the Little Owls Staff Chapel Allerton who are excellent
	100% agree with xxxxx
	The council needs to make this data available for public scrutiny. Within the council's duty to consult is the requirement for the council to provide sufficient information to allow intelligent consideration. The info must also be made available with adequate time given for consideration and response. You have not met these requirements and could invite judicial review
	Meanwood was also an option for moving children although that is further disruption and uncertainty as that is in the explore bracket
	We're in the same position - it would have a massively negative impact on us. Also trying to pay attention to this very important session with two small children at bedtime is extremely difficult - doesn't feel like a well thought through consultation
	I agree about the poor comms as this proposal was announced
	But contingency measures could have been conveyed in the original communication
	How are you recording the points and objections tonight? Through chat, or are you using the transcript tool in Teams?
	The baby group is staying open is it not?
	I understand that it is a proposal, but that doesn't prevent contingency measures to be put in place. No attempt to do this makes the decision to close a children's centre seems dispassionate and out of touch
	When you close Chapel Allerton Little Owls, will you put Fudge down? (Fudge is the nursery's rabbit)
	Is there not a better solution to retaining staff e.g. better pay and council benefits? Surely poor staff retention should have been looked at prior to this proposal to close nurseries
	Just to add the Council's sufficiency assessment that underpinned this decision was requested under FOI a month ago. What I got was one line in a table. I have now had to follow up and complain as what I was asking for was the statistical analysis performed in full not a sentence summary I have to wait another month for this to be responded to which will likely be too late for the Council's decision. As the official reason given for the closure is Sufficiency (despite financial challenges) I would hope the conversation today will have flagged important factors that need to be considered alongside the Councils data and the decisions taken thereon. Can you commit to providing the methodology and calculation publicly in line with the FOI request so you can demonstrate that the local knowledge and differing perspectives of current service users can be considered in making the decision alongside the data.
City and Holbeck	If a private section provider was to take over, will it be part of requirements that they need to match Ofsted rating?
	If it was private provider that took over, does that mean prices will increase?
	Will a private provider accept the free hours scheme offered by the government?
	Will a provider aim to keep as many of the existing staff as possible as this is better for the children?

	<p>If there are no new buyers and there are mergers and City and Holbeck closed, would it be your responsibility to ensure there is a place somewhere else for a child?</p> <p>In terms of guaranteeing places, can we ensure that the same schedule would be covered by a new provider?</p>
Meanwood	<p>When will parents on waiting list be consulted?</p> <p>What assessment has been undertaken about other provision ie. Fees, hours, age availability, standard &amp; quality?</p> <p>Why have waiting lists been closed?</p> <p>What has been done over the years to address financial shortfall?</p> <p>Given the recruitment issues, will there be enough staff to keep nurseries open?</p> <p>Is there a list of providers lined up for the MSE?</p> <p>What is the timescale for MSE? Will Parents be able to join the MSE engagement process?</p> <p>Will the sufficiency review be put in the public domain?</p> <p>Will there be any mop up engagement sessions for those who could not attend today? Some parents had log in issues &amp; the timing made it inaccessible to others.</p> <p>Is this a one-year fix? If the MSE does not identify any providers, will the review be an on-going yearly process?</p> <p>Parents wanted it noting that they strongly object to the proposals &amp; want the Council to protect the Little Owls provision across the city.</p> <p>Feel that the communication to date has been assumptive but after today's session, they feel their views will be taken into account &amp; feel more reassured</p> <p>Worries that this process will disrupt the pipeline for the future of Little Owls ie, reputational damage, staff leaving, parents leaving as threat of closure continues</p> <p>Praise for the staff team who have remained professional throughout &amp; hope the workforce are being supported</p>
Gipton North	<p>If the problem is hiring enough staff, won't private providers have that problem as well? Cutting early years is a poor idea due to established research, and asking if it's the best possible decision right now?</p> <p>Very unhappy with the engagement session, the timing, and the handling of it, and feeling that the letter struck the wrong tone. Felt there was no warning. Only reason there was engagement now, is because parents kicked up a fuss.</p> <p>Feeling there's a lack of engagement, unhappy with the letter, little faith it has any impact &amp; it's just a tick-box exercise. wants to know about the cost alternatives, wants to know who did the alternatives, and asking about the £2m overspend and how will closing 3 approach that if we keep the same staff.</p>

	Follow up question around how will this specifically work?
	There was a follow up specific question around finance.
	Impact upon working parents and knock on impact for the economy if the parents must look after the children's they're not in work and not paying tax. Are LCC making the argument about economic damage. Echoed the decision feels like it's already been made.
	Query around FEEE and what the impact might be, are LCC working differently to national government?
	There's a national shortage of places.
	Should timing of local elections and general elections should be factored in?
	Clarity on timescales needed.
Kentmere	For Parents who don't drive, the nearest Little Owls is over a mile away
	Parents prefer Little Owls in comparison to private due to the quality of care provided.
	How much is being saved by closing Kentmere?
	What is the likelihood of more nurseries closing next year?
	Timing of the session is difficult for parents.
	When looking at sufficiency, have you considered affordability? Parents cannot afford private providers.
	To date, Parents have not felt consulted & it felt like a done deal until Parents started to challenge the proposals
	Unsure if places at alternative Little Owls had been confirmed.
Osmondthorpe	No Questions
Parklands	What the Council is doing around financial challenge (i.e. other areas making savings).
	Government requirement to have reserves – how much are they made to reserve? What is the ratio that Parklands currently have?
	Distance only 5 minutes. Can't go anywhere else.
	Are there any local councillors involved in decision making?
	Is the wellbeing of staff being considered?
Quarry Mount	Parents are concerned as Little Owls offers high quality service with a fantastic workforce at an affordable rate, especially in Quarry Mount which is an area of deprivation. Don't want to see childcare as a market, it should be sustainable for children's future. Issues with staff retention where staff is not appreciated enough. The apprentice at Quarry Mount is brilliant. Little Owls is an amazing childcare provider and it should be a commitment to keep this high quality care, to ensure staff members stay in the environment, as they bond with children. How is affordability and the protection of staff's job prioritised in this period?
	If the nursery is taken on in the private sector, would the staff stay on with the new provider or would the staff be relocated within the council?
	Has there been other things looked at... eg like increasing little owls increasing the price? Is there a particular reason why parents didn't have a decision before the letters were sent out? Engagement sessions have only been set up as parents had voiced their concerns
St Mary's Hunslet	If another provider took over from the Little Owls nursery what would this mean for the children who are already in their care?
	If we have any comments and questions later, do we send emails to <a href="mailto:LittleOwlsReview@leeds.gov.uk">LittleOwlsReview@leeds.gov.uk</a> ?

	<p>Would the same staff still stay caring for the children already in their care? With the new provider?</p>
	<p>I feel it is very important for the children already there that they have people around them who they are comfortable with as this can be very distressing for young children. I am sure you agree but I think this is a huge factor.</p>
	<p>If the nursery was to merge with another Little Owls nursery, would this mean that the location would change i.e if Hunslet merged with Middleton as I believe this one has confirmed it is staying open would that mean the children from Hunslet would have to go to the Middleton location?</p>
Rothwell	<p>Worry expressed that if there's a merger, or take-over of provision, what would happen to the staff? Would it be run in the same way? With the same Quality?</p>
	<p>Same question as above but about MSE?,</p>
	<p>How would LCC enforce the rights of staff, clauses that private or whomever would have to adhere to?</p>
	<p>Is there a guarantee around children's stays and opening hours?</p>
	<p>Query on transition period</p>
	<p>Was there more information about how amalgamations etc would work, wanted more data at this stage, and was generally confused about exactly what stage we're at right now.</p>
	<p>Around post-august what happens, can we make it much clearer on the FAQ or etc. that it will take a lengthy period of time?</p>
	<p>Statement rather than question, very surprised that Rothwell doesn't bring in money, that it can't break even.</p>
	<p>People are now unsure about Little Owls and worried that it's going to close, and the uncertainty is going to drive customers away</p>
	<p>Why push it onto the private sector when LCC have the issues with the funding, why not lobby national government and campaign with the parents for change?</p>
	<p>Query on sufficiency data</p>
	<p>Query of ability to maintain provision as it is</p>
	<p>What other nurseries are there in Rothwell?</p>
<p>Why is recruitment so difficult?</p>	
Shepherd's Lane	<p>Particularly interested in Harehills as a sufficiency area, take-up of places in the area is low, for the Harehills' are take-up could be as low as 50, what would Shepherds Lane parents do if it closes? worried essentially that if they also need to go to Harehills, isn't it going to undermine the target for uptake of 50%.?</p>
	<p>Query around quality of the provision, but it seemed as if the decisions had already been taken with the short timeline of decision making appearing as if Parents have few options to raise concerns. Asked how can LCC maintain quality if we amalgamate settings - are there any lessons learned from the previous mergers?</p>
	<p>The difference between settings is very important. There is a different community around Shepherds Lane than Harehills and parents are worried about going between centres. Still a little confused around what is being put into the public domain. Lack of confidence in the process and some doubts over the council's information.</p>
	<p>Queries on birthrate data in particular.</p>

	How is LCC dealing with accessibility issues, how are LCC reaching everyone who needs to be reached, not just website, engagement sessions, letters and such?
	Will the MSE documents be shared with parents on the website given we've asked for parental comments to shape the process?
<b>Bramley</b>	If the Council have difficulty recruiting, why do you think the private sector who may have worse conditions, may be better to recruit?
	Comment about time of sessions not being convenient.
	Why are LCC not consulting with prospective parents as required under the Children Act?
	Childcare is a positive equity multiplier, why are council looking to cut it?
	What other savings have been done?
	How can you maintain specialist SEND provision if the management is out of your control?
	Equality Impact Assessment – has this been done and will it be shared?
	Why have you identified Bramley as part of MSE?
	How much have the governments free hours impacted decision to cut Little Owls?
	The Council increased its reserves in last 12 months by £3 million, why not use this instead of cutting childcare?
	Has the specific impact on children with SEND been considered?
	Would questions to providers come from parents themselves?
	Does that mean if enough people come forward and share concerns about private provider, it would stop and not happen?
	Regarding merging seems natural to merge with Burley or Armley, it would be hard to move from Bramley to Burley or to Armley however, so don't see how that will work in reality because parents won't actually be able to go. This is something that should be considered
	Leeds is apparently a child friendly city. How does cutting early years fit into this?
<b>Hunslet Rylestone</b>	If new provider takes over, can LCC impose a price cap for fees & insist on a set number of FEEE places? Little Owls offer excellent value for money
	How as a child friendly city can Leeds City Council justify this. Especially as Marmot City, why are you not protecting services for under 5's?
	How will Leeds City Council ensure the new provider can staff the nursery if recruitment is an issue.
	Private sector isn't comparable to Little Owls so will the council be able to ensure there is no drop in level of service provided
	What is the Market Sounding Exercise timeline?
	Why has the detail about the review being shared in the public domain? How can we access the business reviews?