

Councillor Call for Action on the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Units Closure Draft Key Lines of Enquiry

The Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Board is being requested to consider asking officers to write a report on the on the decision regarding the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Units. Should Members accept this the following recommendation has been suggested:

That the Director of Children's Services be requested to prepare a full report on the service changes at the St Margarets and Spires Hearing Units and submit it to a future meeting of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board, with key lines of enquiry to include:

1. Please provide details of the consultation that took place in the formative stage prior to the decision being made by the Council.
2. What were the results of this consultation for Torbay children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) carried out by the Council and did it change the proposed decision taken forward?
3. Please provide details of any consultation which took place following this decision being made public and any action taken as a result.
4. What alternative options were proposed to Torbay parents for their child's Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision if they did not agree with the Council's proposed EHCP delivery from September? Where would the nearest Hearing Impairment Units be if they wished their child to attend a dedicated Hearing Impairment Unit?
5. Did the local authority consider the impact of this decision beyond children under their statutory care with an EHCP?
6. How many children from Torbay are currently receiving some form of support from the hearing unit both with and without an EHCP, and how are these predicted to change over the coming 5 years?
7. What assurance can be provided that future needs of all children in Torbay who need support with their hearing, including those with an EHCP and those without and an EHCP, will continue to be reviewed and met?
8. Was any external advice or support sought on the proposal, if so who from and how did this inform the process?
9. Why was the option to reduce the size of the units further or to close one and move the support to a single unit not considered as alternative options?
10. What lessons have been learned from this process?