

# CHILDREN'S CENTRE REVIEW

January 10<sup>th</sup> - March 1<sup>st</sup> **2020**

CONSULTATION INFORMATION



# Introduction

---

Suffolk County Council's aim is to make a positive difference for families in Suffolk. We are committed to working together with families and communities to improve and secure the best possible services.

We believe that all children and families in Suffolk should have the right and opportunity to:

- Feel safe
- Access the best education
- Have good physical and emotional health
- Be fully prepared for adulthood and employment

We have a duty to provide families with access to Children's Centre services. We want to ensure that any future provision should:

- Strengthen the services we provide through Children's Centres in Suffolk and develop a range of focused family services to meet the needs of a wider age range than at present
- Ensure the service is flexible, offers efficiencies and provides future sustainability
- Build on what currently works well and has the biggest positive impact helping families to achieve successful outcomes
- Any efficiencies or savings made will be reinvested into further enhancing the service

## Children's Centres in Suffolk

- The Children's Centre service operates throughout the whole of Suffolk. This is delivered through a network of 38 sites and Outreach activities which are delivered through 50 health clinics and groups from a variety of community buildings. Children's Centres range from an office space in a school, co-located spaces within a community centre to shared spaces within Suffolk Libraries. There are also some large stand-alone centres such as Tree House in Ipswich.
- Services are also delivered across 12 Suffolk Libraries with a further 32 libraries providing information, advice and guidance and group activities for under 5's aligned with our Health and Children's Centre services.

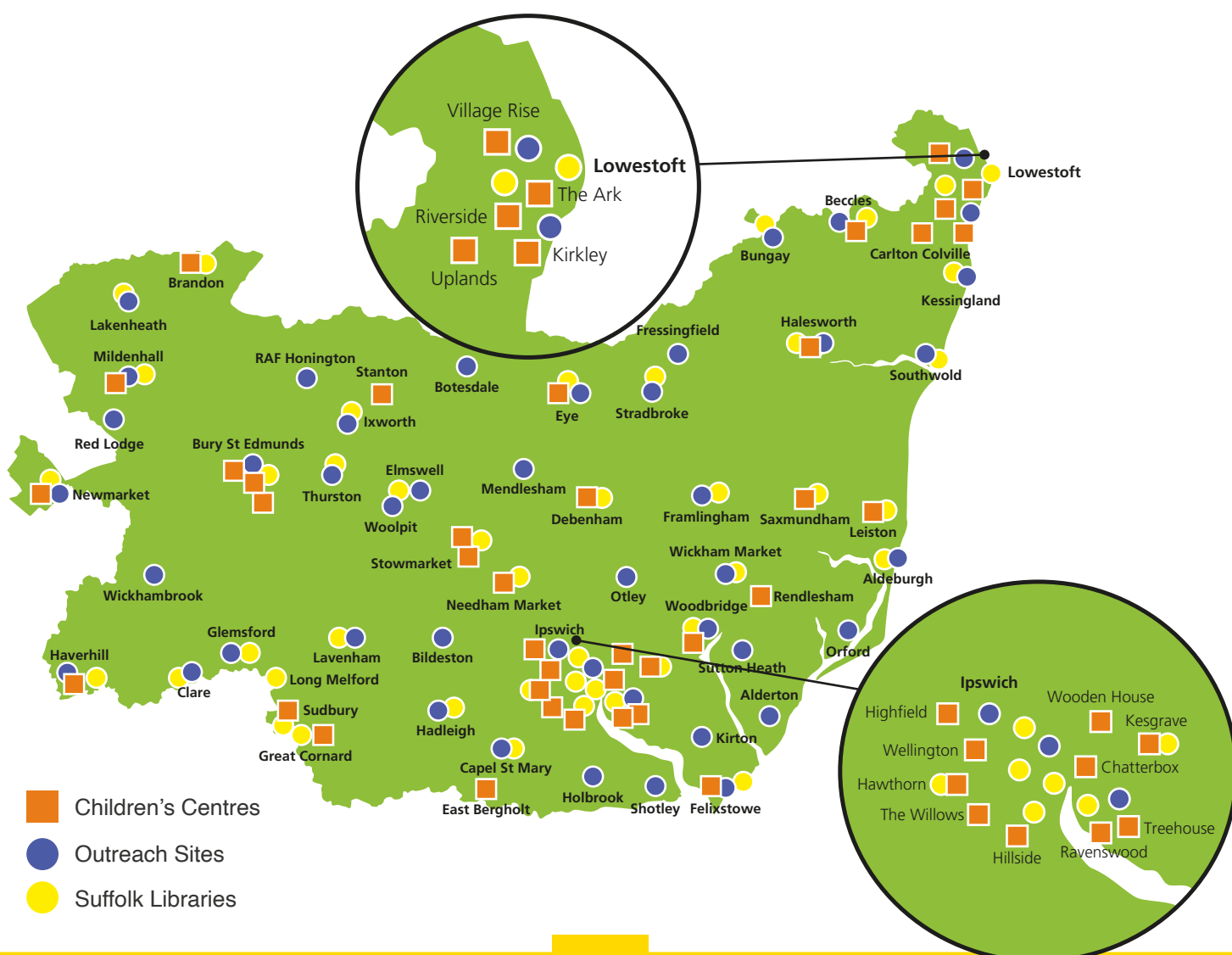


## Children's Centres deliver:

- A range of parenting, health and support services as well as targeted services for those with increased need
- Services are delivered by practitioners who provide individual and group support, information and advice, and intervention programmes. These services aim to ensure every child gets the best start in life and are ready for school
- Specialist support is provided alongside Early Help teams and Social Care colleagues as part of a family's care plan
- An opportunity for communities to meet and space that can be used by our partners in health to co-deliver services
- Opportunity groups for under fives with SEND

## How Children's Centre services are currently being used

- Families are mostly using Children's Centres for group sessions e.g. Stay and Play and parents/carers seeking help and advice about their children
- Families are already accessing Children's Centre services from a range of other community sites e.g. libraries, community centres and churches
- Families are increasingly using social media and digital resources for advice, guidance and information away from their local Children's Centre



# Why are we consulting now?

---

**Social and cultural changes within Suffolk suggest we need to re-design how traditional Children's Centre services are delivered.**

It is very important that we (Suffolk County Council) make sure we are making a real and positive difference to children, young people and families in Suffolk. We also need to ensure we are making the best use of the public money we are given to provide services. To do this, we need to review the services we provide and look at how effective they are.

We have taken a rigorous approach to review the current Children's Centre service. This includes the feedback we receive from families who use Children's Centres and how they want to receive and access information and advice that will help them to make good choices for their family.

## Your Views

You told us that you value the Children's Centre service and that what you appreciate most is the helpful friendly staff who you find easy to talk to and support you when you need help. You also said that you would like to be able to get hold of more information out of working hours and on your phone and that getting to Children's Centres can be an issue if you don't have a car or access to public transport. This was especially an issue for those of you who live in a very rural area.

More information on the research and user feedback is available on the consultation home page.

## Suffolk has changed significantly since Children's Centres were first introduced:

- Some are no longer situated in the areas where they are most needed
- Some are too small and others are very expensive to run
- Some rural areas currently receive little or no service
- Some Centres are used better than others
- Some are able to offer a variety of services provided by other organisations such as the NHS and voluntary groups which you find helpful



Suffolk County Council now has a responsibility to ensure we have enough nursery places for all eligible 2 and 3 year olds, and we know that many areas do not currently have enough nursery places. This means some children are missing out and makes it difficult for some parents to continue working or find work. We know that good early education has a positive impact on preparing children for school, their learning and their long-term future. It is also important for those parents who want to continue working or take up opportunities to work which suit their family circumstances.

**An analysis of all sites has been undertaken alongside the user survey, looking at the following areas of focus:**

- The need for nursery provision in the area
- The level of deprivation
- The Outreach provision offer
- The proximity of libraries or options for Outreach in the local area
- The cost of running the Children's Centre
- Usage of the buildings by partners e.g. Health
- The attendance of vulnerable families in areas where Children's Centre buildings have previously closed

During a five-month period we considered current delivery of services through Children's Centres, evidence which supports the benefits of a Family Hub Service Model, data demonstrating the use of services in Suffolk, analysis of local deprivation and need and a full assessments of buildings.

We also visited families and children at Children's Centres and gathered information from our partners on the approach and support needed.

We have taken into account what you told us you want from your Children's Centre service and what we know about the services you use. We have used this feedback to develop a proposal that we think will strengthen services for the whole family and will be provided in places near to where you live. This will ensure Suffolk County Council meets its obligation to all children and families in Suffolk.

We would like you to tell us what you think about this proposal, how you think it will work and whether you have some ideas we haven't considered already.



# What are we proposing



# What are we proposing?

---

- Develop 16 full time Family Hubs
- Develop 11 part time Family Hubs
- Re-purpose 9 sites for nursery provision or school provision that do not offer suitable accommodation for a Family Hub or where there are not enough nursery places
- Increase our Outreach service offer across Suffolk
- Close 2 buildings that cannot be re-purposed due to their unsuitability for use as nursery or school provision and do not offer suitable accommodation for a Family Hub
- Retain and improve the existing service offer through use of Suffolk Libraries
- Reinvest any savings made back into the service



# What is a Family Hub?

Family Hubs will be at the heart of our service and will provide the location from where we can deliver and coordinate services. The proposal is to have at least one main Family Hub in each area and provide services from other community sites which may be closer to your family home and more convenient to access. Using a range of community sites will allow us to provide services and information to you where you live or spend time.

A Family Hub offers a range of services to families for all children and young people aged 0-19 and carers, with a particular focus on supporting the most vulnerable. In Suffolk this could result in expanding the current offer from our Children's Centres into Family Hub sites for 0-19.

As part of this, Suffolk County Council will help other organisations and communities run services and activities from Family Hubs which may include...

- Mental Health Support • Parenting Skills • Healthy Lifestyles • Reducing Parental Conflict
- Communication and Language Support • Employment and Progression Support for Young People
- Work Well Suffolk



The diagram shows the potential of the wide-ranging offer that could be provided through this proposal



## Recommendations for 16 full-time Family Hubs

Family Hubs	Location
Lark	Mildenhall
Cartwheels	Haverhill
Carousel	Bury St Edmunds
Acorns	Stowmarket
Eye	Eye
The Phoenix	Sudbury
Wellington	West Ipswich
Willows	South Ipswich
Treehouse	East Ipswich
Ravenswood	East Ipswich
The Oaks	Felixstowe
Leiston	Leiston
Kirkley	South Lowestoft
Butterflies	Beccles
Riverside	South Lowestoft
The Ark	North Lowestoft

## Recommendations for 11 part-time Family Hubs

Part-time Family Hubs will be smaller sites incorporating a number of services e.g. Midwifery, Speech and Language, Child Health Clinics and Group Work delivered by us or our partners.

Part-time Family Hubs allow staff to provide Outreach services at other venues in nearby rural communities.

When the part-time Family Hub is not in use for the services mentioned above, the building can be used by our partners to maximise usage.

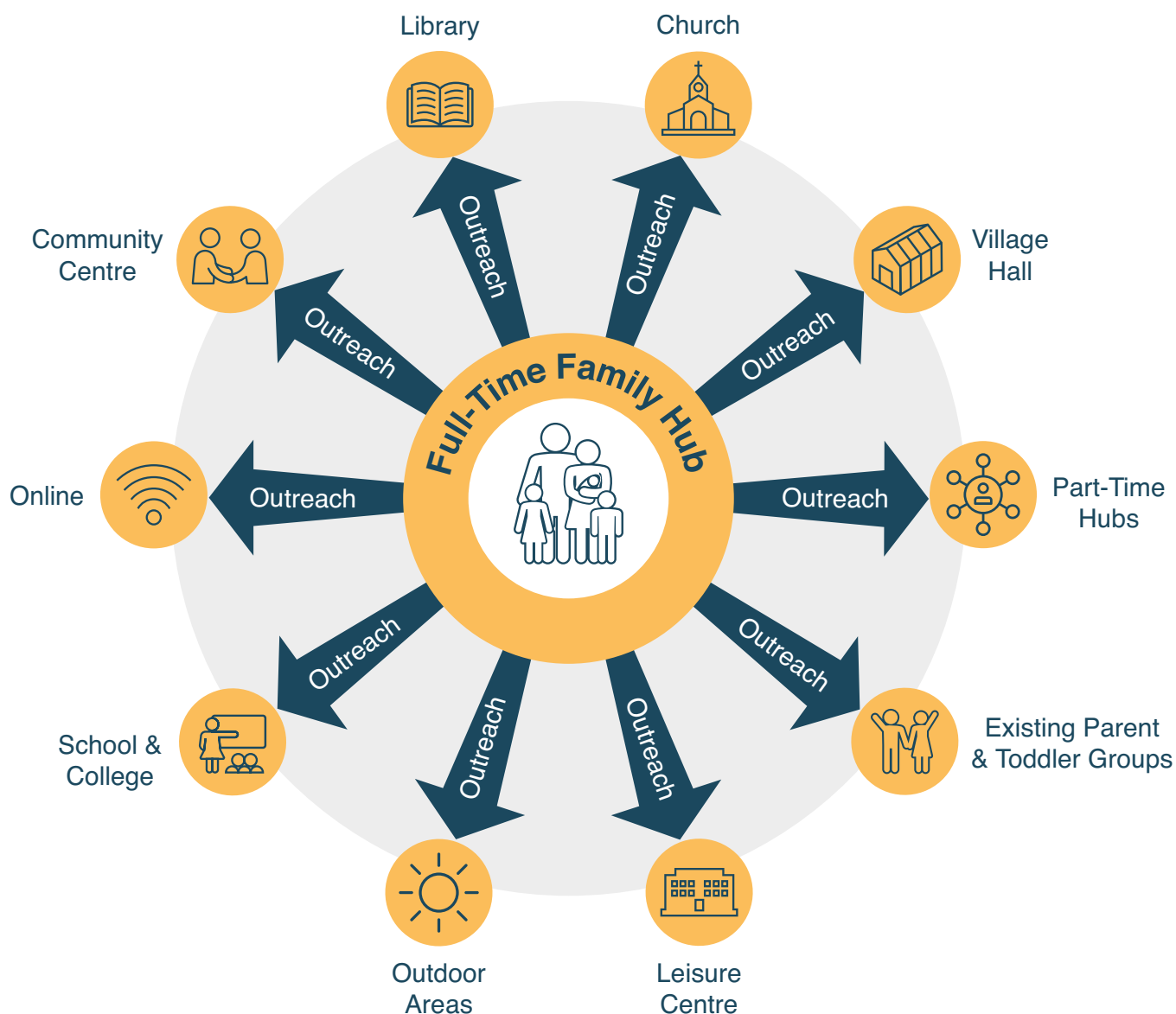
Part Time Family Hubs	Location	Rationale
Foley	Newmarket	<p>A part-time Family Hub will offer opportunities for our partners to deliver services within the current Children's Centre space. This also allows the ability to release Children's Centre staff to provide Outreach for under 5's at other venues in deprived/isolated communities.</p> <p>Outreach means services are mobile and can be provided in locations where they are most needed. This ensures that isolated and vulnerable families get the help, information, advice and guidance they need. Without this opportunity, they might not be able to access the dedicated Children's Centre building. Outreach ensures we continue to offer high quality and accessible services that support the health and wellbeing of children and their families.</p>
Brandon	Brandon	
Bury Library	Bury St Edmunds	
Bluebells	Stanton	
High Suffolk	Debenham	
Kesgrave	Kesgrave	
Hawthorn	South Ipswich	
Hillside	South Ipswich	
Wooden House	North Ipswich	
Sunshine	Stowmarket	
Dragonflies	Halesworth	

## Recommendations to deliver Outreach

We want to make sure families that need help can access it easily where they live. One way to achieve this is by bringing services to you, which we call Outreach. Outreach refers to services that we can deliver on a mobile basis, in locations where they are needed.

We will support existing community activities such as parent and toddler groups and use some community venues such as community centres, village halls, sports centres to deliver Outreach services. Working with the community ensures we can deliver the right services for families; this could be providing a Stay and Play group, or offering tailored individual family support. This is an important way of supporting families and helping more children and young people get access to high quality play experiences while supporting their health and wellbeing.

Outreach provides help, information, advice and guidance to isolated families who without it, might not otherwise have access to such services.

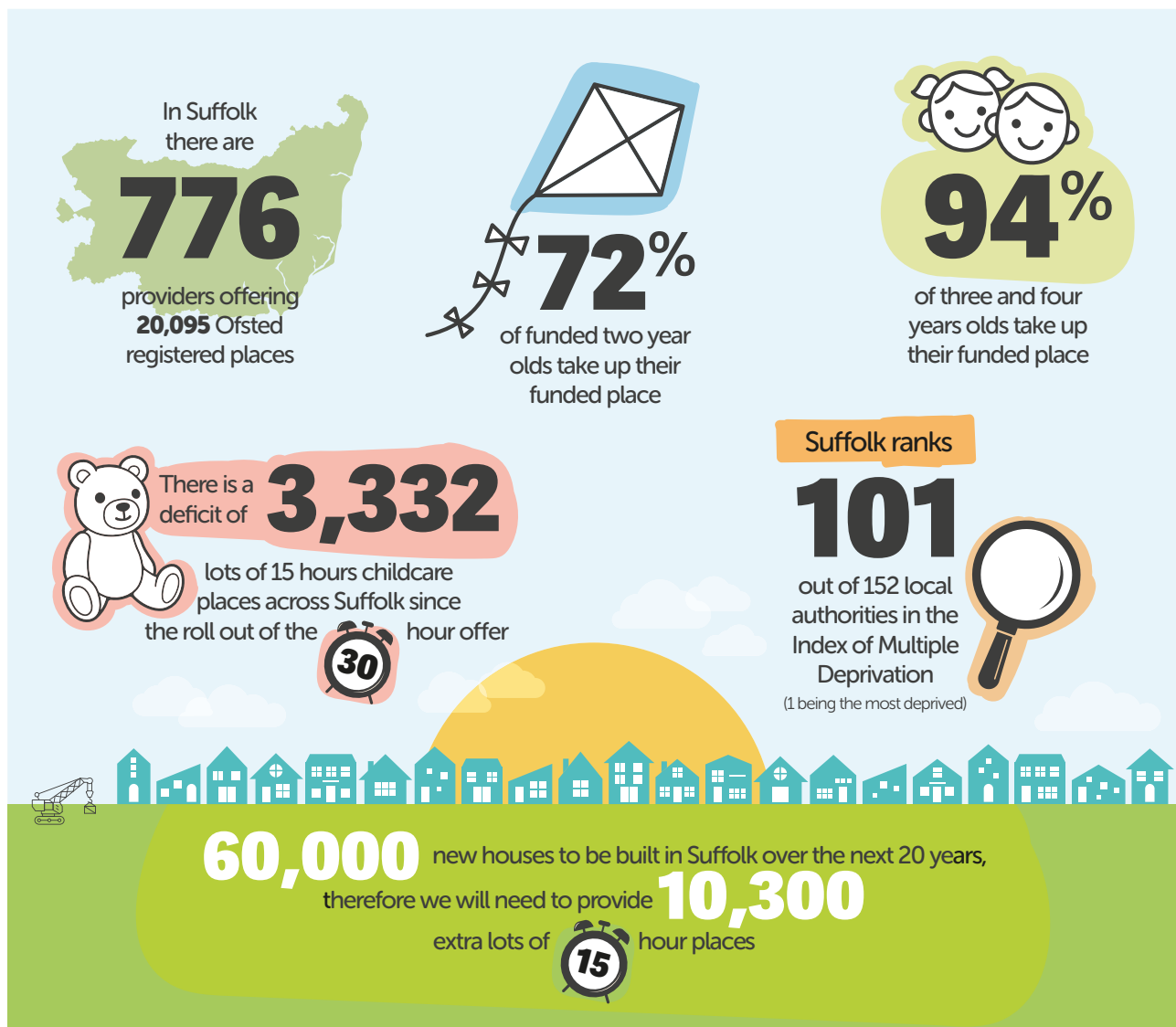


# What do we mean by ‘re-purposed’?

A number of our existing Children’s Centre buildings have been identified as potential sites to support the delivery of much needed additional nursery and school provision. This means that these sites will no longer be designated as Children Centres but may still provide some related services for families as Outreach.

## Nursery provision

Suffolk County Council has a responsibility to ensure we have enough nursery places for all eligible 2 and 3 year olds in Suffolk. We know that many areas do not have enough nursery places at present and this means that some children are missing out. We know that early education has a positive impact on preparing children for school, learning and their long-term future.



## Proposed re-purposed sites for nursery provision or schools provision

Re-purposed	Location	Proposed reprovision	Rationale
<b>Hardwick</b>	Bury St Edmunds	Nursery	<p>These Children Centre areas have on-site or nearby nursery's that do not have capacity to take additional families and we could provide between 10-20 additional nursery places at these sites.</p> <p>Having sufficient childcare promotes social mobility and improves education outcomes for children in Suffolk.</p>
<b>Cornfields</b>	Gt Cornard	Nursery	
<b>Cherry Blossom</b>	East Bergholt	Nursery	
<b>Highfield</b>	West Ipswich	Nursery	
<b>Meadows</b>	Saxmundham	Nursery	
<b>Village Rise</b>	North Lowestoft	Nursery	
<b>Uplands</b>	Carlton Colville	Nursery	<p>These Children Centres are both within school sites where there is a high demand for additional school places.</p>
<b>Robins</b>	Needham Market	School	
<b>Rendlesham</b>	Rendlesham	School	

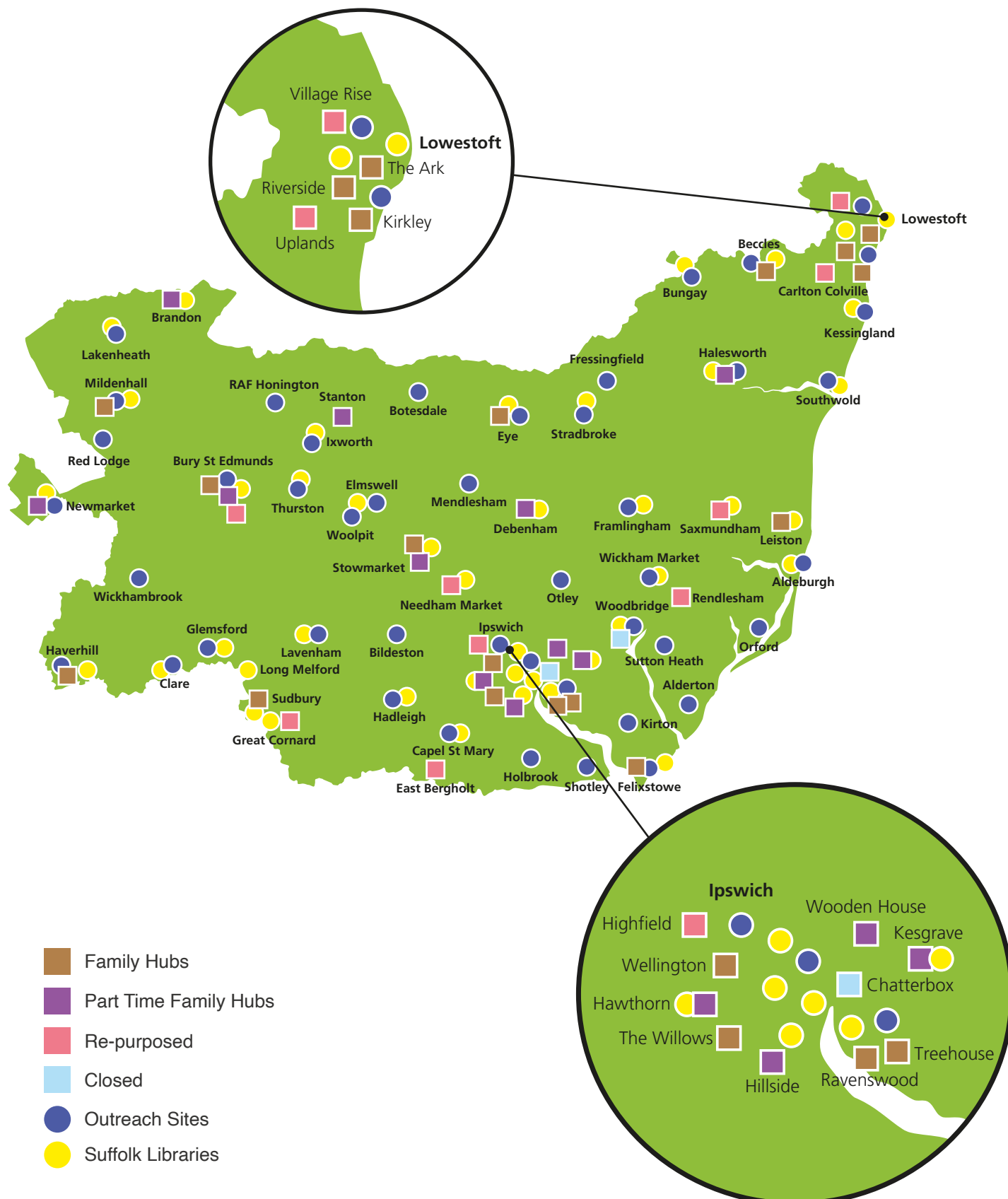
## Recommendations for closing two Children's Centres

We are proposing to close two buildings that cannot be re-purposed due to their unsuitability for nursery, or school use. Neither building offers suitable accommodation for a family hub.

Closed	Location	Rationale
<b>Chatterbox</b>	North Ipswich	This is a small site with restrictions on usage (no evenings or weekends). There is no parking available and no disabled access to the first floor. Outreach and nearby hubs will be available to support families.
<b>Caterpillar</b>	Woodbridge	This is a high cost building with no parking and the site cannot be adapted for a nursery provision. Outreach including services in Woodbridge Library will be available to support families.

# Proposal overview

The map below shows proposed delivery sites in Suffolk.



These proposals have been prepared by taking into account the following principles that underpin our approach towards delivering services in Suffolk.

- Support the most vulnerable families at the earliest opportunity
- Enable us to provide much needed sites for nursery provision
- Ensure information and advice is available to families locally in a suitably accessible format
- Ensure we can meet the needs of rural areas
- Support opportunities to work with health, the voluntary sector and local communities to deliver joined-up services
- Reinvest any savings back into the service

We welcome your ideas and views on this proposal towards developing a new model for delivering services for children, young people and families in Suffolk.

#### There are a variety of ways you can get involved:

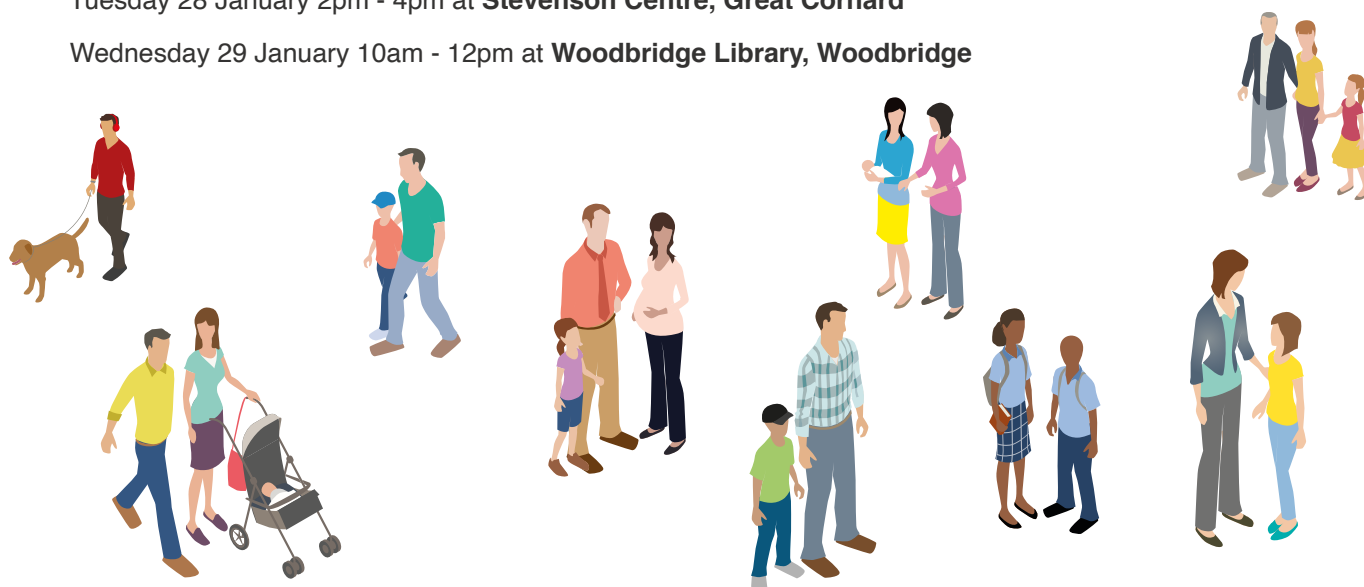
- Complete the online questionnaire – if you do not have internet access you can visit your local library where free internet access is available
- Complete an easy read version of the questionnaire online or request a hard copy: **0345 603 1842**
- Attend some drop-in sessions for families:

Tuesday 21 January 10am - 12pm at **St Marks Church Hall, Lowestoft**

Tuesday 28 January 10am - 12pm at **Whitton Clinic, Ipswich**

Tuesday 28 January 2pm - 4pm at **Stevenson Centre, Great Cornard**

Wednesday 29 January 10am - 12pm at **Woodbridge Library, Woodbridge**



For more information, please contact us in one of the following ways:



0345 6031842



CCconsultation@suffolk.gov.uk

If you need help to understand this information in another language please call 03456 066 067.

Se precisar de ajuda para ler estas informações em outra língua, por favor telefone para o número abaixo. 03456 066 067

Portuguese

Jeigu jums reikia šios informacijos kita kalba, paskambinkite 03456 066 067

Lithuanian

Jeżeli potrzebujesz pomocy w zrozumieniu tych informacji w swoim języku zadzwoń na podany poniżej numer. 03456 066 067

Polish

Dacă aveți nevoie de ajutor pentru a înțelege această informație într-o altă limbă, vă rugăm să telefonați la numărul 03456 066 067

Romanian

এই লেখাটি যদি অন্য ভাষাতে বুঝতে চান তাহলে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করুন 03456 066 067

Bengali

Если для того чтобы понять эту информацию Вам нужна помощь на другом языке, позвоните, пожалуйста, по телефону 03456 066 067

Russian

If you would like this information in another format, including audio or large print, please call **03456 066 067**.

