

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 25 February 2025

By: Director of Adult Social Care and Health

Title: Proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service

Purpose: To consider the outcome of the public consultation and to make a decision on the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for adults with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Agree the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability in Eastbourne;
 - 2) Agree to reprovise the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a learning disability in Bexhill and to revise the days of opening and opening hours, as set out in paragraphs 5.13 to 5.15 of this report;
 - 3) Agree to establish a satellite day service in Eastbourne as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, to be provided two days per week and to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision; and
 - 4) Delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the above recommendations.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed on 26 September 2024 to launch a consultation exercise relating to the potential closure of Linden Court Day service in Eastbourne, which provides services for adults with a Learning Disability, and to merge this with the existing Beeching Park Day Service in Bexhill (the papers are available: [here](#)). By expanding Beeching Park to open five days a week, and through maximising its current capacity, all adults who attend Linden Court Day service could be offered their day service provision at Beeching Park where this meets their assessed needs; or at alternative provision elsewhere where necessary. This proposal, as well as other potential service changes being explored by Adult Social Care and Health, is to help close the Council's funding gap.
- 1.2 The consultation ran between 3 October and 28 November 2024. The impact of the new funding settlement for the Council has been taken into account when making the proposals in this report.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Linden Court Day Service is run by the Council and it is based in one of our buildings in Eastbourne. The service currently has 19 members of staff, although there are some vacant posts. The staff are all employed by the Council.
- 2.2 The service delivers support to people with a learning disability and has several aims including to:
 - prevent social isolation;
 - enable vulnerable adults to learn and maintain skills; and
 - provide respite for parent/carers.
- 2.3 There are two sessions a day based in the building, from 9am to 12pm (known as 'AM sessions') and from 12.30pm to 3.30pm (known as 'PM sessions') on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, as well as a community based session from 4pm to 7pm on Thursdays (known as 'the twilight session'). The service has capacity to provide space for up to 45 people at each of the sessions. The service is closed on a Tuesday.
- 2.4 The building-based daytime sessions include art, cookery, music, sport, multimedia, and gardening with some community sessions utilising the local library. Community sessions include exploring the local area on public transport.
- 2.5 There are currently 44 people regularly attending the day service, with around 60% of available spaces filled during day time sessions. The twilight session has low attendance, with approximately 10% of available spaces filled. Some adults require a smaller, quieter setting as they struggle with large groups and noise, and Linden Court has been used to meet the support needs of such people.
- 2.6 The majority of people who attend the day service at Linden Court live at home with their family. Most of them live in Eastbourne or the surrounding area.
- 2.7 If the proposal to close Linden Court Day Service is agreed, the Council will still have a duty to meet the assessed needs of adults that use the service. The Council will support all affected adults to access alternative day service provision. The proposal is, wherever possible, to support the adults attending Linden Court to access another Council Day Service, Beeching Park, in Bexhill, where they wish to do so.
- 2.8 Beeching Park day service is run by the Council and is based in Bexhill. It has a satellite provision, Working Wonders, in Hastings. The service currently has 32 staff with few vacancies. All staff are employed by the Council.
- 2.9 Beeching Park has sessions across AM, PM and seven twilight sessions a week and community based sessions utilising Working Wonders as their starting point. The service is currently closed on a Wednesday.
- 2.10 The service at Beeching Park has the capacity in the building to support 85 adults a day. There is an average attendance of 56 people a day and a total of 75 adults attending each week. By expanding Beeching Park to open five days a week, and through maximising its current capacity, all adults who attend Linden Court Day service could be offered their day service provision at Beeching Park.
- 2.11 Appendix 3 shows where the adults currently attending Linden Court live in East Sussex. Noting that this shows data for 47 adults, 44 of which are regular attendees.

3. The Proposal consulted on

- 3.1 The proposal consulted on was to close the Linden Court Day service for people with a learning disability, and to merge with the Beeching Park day service, or to support people to access alternative services in the community.
- 3.2 The estimated annual revenue savings for a full year for this proposal are £327,000.
- 3.3 To determine the potential savings we took the overall gross budget for the service and subtracted any ongoing costs of providing alternative services. One-off costs, including the costs of restructuring staff, have been considered in the context of the ongoing saving but not included in the figures presented.

4. Insight

- 4.1 An eight-week public consultation on the proposal ran from 3 October to 28 November 2024. We asked people for their views on the proposal and how they would be affected if it went ahead.
- 4.2 All the feedback received during the consultation is available within the Members' and Cabinet Rooms for Members' consideration.
- 4.3 373 responses were received across the survey, consultation meetings and other feedback methods.

Respondent method	Total
Survey	203
Email and letters	16
Consultation meetings (attendees)	154

- 4.4 The majority of respondents across all response methods disagreed with the proposal to close the day service at Linden Court and find people places in alternative services. The table below shows how much survey respondents agreed or disagreed with the proposal:

Answer	Number	Percentage
Strongly agree	8	4%
Agree	5	2%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	4%
Disagree	9	4%
Strongly disagree	164	81%
Not sure	7	3%
Didn't answer	2	1%

- 4.5 The full consultation results report can be found in Appendix 1, but the key messages included the following themes:
- Linden Court is a vital service, and people are full of praise for the service and its staff. It provides a safe environment and opportunity to socialise;
 - Those who attend love seeing their friends and taking part in activities, while it allows families and carers to continue in their caring role and to maintain their employment;

- Family and carers are angry and worried by the proposal, which they feel targets vulnerable people. It would be devastating if Linden Court closed and they want to know why Beeching Park isn't being proposed for closure as there are alternative services in that area;
- Linden Court is a nicer building than Beeching Park and it is local to where people live. It is also better able to support those who need a quieter service;
- Families and carers feel that Beeching Park isn't a realistic alternative, with the biggest concern being the journey, which would be much longer and more complicated;
- People who attend the service are particularly concerned about being able to: attend on the same days for the same sessions, and continue taking part in the activities they like and see their friends;
- The routine change would be very disruptive for people who attend the service, as well as increasing the burden on families and carers. It would lead to poorer mental health for those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour;
- People's needs wouldn't be met and their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to;
- Family and carers challenged the Council to provide detailed figures setting out how the savings would be achieved and questioned how much would actually be saved due to the cost of providing alternative support, transporting people further to access support and the risk that people may have to go into residential care if there is no day service for them;
- People said the proposal should not go ahead and instead the service at Linden Court should be enhanced and more widely promoted.

Equalities Considerations

- 4.6 In considering these proposals, Cabinet must have due regard to the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it,
- as required under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.7 To better understand the likely impacts of the Proposal on those who have one or more protected characteristics, an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out, a copy of which can be found out in Appendix 2.
- 4.8 The responses from the consultation were used to inform the analysis carried out in the EqIA. Cabinet members must read and have regard to the EqIA when making the decision about this Proposal.
- 4.9 The Equality Impact Assessment told us that all of the people accessing the services included in the original proposals have a learning disability or have recognised additional needs. Some people may have other complexities such as sensory impairment, physical disabilities and other health conditions which may impact on them further. A change in routine may cause adults anxiety and provide less opportunity for social interaction/ ongoing skills development.

- 4.10 Carers of working age who are employed may be negatively impacted if they have structured their working hours around day services at Linden Court. This may result in carers not being able to maintain their current employment and potentially experience a reduction to their income. There could be a financial impact in terms of increased travel costs to Bexhill (although noting that where people attending Linden Court moved to alternative services, transport arrangements, where necessary, would be part of the Adult Social Care and Health support planning process).
- 4.11 All people who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package continues to meet their assessed needs. Considering carers' respite will be part of these reviews.
- 4.12 The full equality impact assessment can be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

5. Revised Proposal

- 5.1 Our priority in Adult Social Care and Health is to meet our legal duties under the Care Act. To help us to do this, we have identified funding areas that we think need to be protected when we are looking at savings options.
- 5.2 These priority areas are the community care budget, carers support services, funding for the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, and funding for staffing frontline and care market roles.
- 5.3 While we recognise the importance of these services, the budget pressures we face mean that we have to make difficult decisions about how we spend our money.
- 5.4 The pandemic reduced the number of people attending learning disability day services. Since the pandemic ended, attendance has returned to previous levels at most of our day services. Linden Court is the exception, where attendance levels remain relatively low. For example, we currently have 44 adults using the service, but before the pandemic we generally had more than 60 people using the service. The service has therefore been used to provide a day service to adults who need a quieter environment.
- 5.5 Given the financial pressures we face it is important to get the best value from the services we run. The fact that we can potentially accommodate everyone from Linden Court at Beeching Park means we can make savings by reducing both staff costs and building-based costs, whilst continuing to fulfil our statutory duties and meet people's assessed needs.
- 5.6 For those who do not wish to move to Beeching Park, Bexhill, there are also alternative day services in Eastbourne and other parts of the County that people could attend, please see appendix 4. This provision may be especially useful for those adults requiring a quieter environment.
- 5.7 The need to deliver day service provision whilst making significant savings informed the proposals to reduce from the current four Learning Disability day services in the County. With this in mind, Beeching Park in Bexhill offers a better location for a day service serving the east of the county, with the location of adults covering not only Eastbourne and Bexhill but spanning as far as Lydd in the east and Wadhurst in the North. In addition, Beeching Park has the capacity, along with Working Wonders, to provide a service for all adults attending Linden Court, should they wish to attend.
- 5.8 Nevertheless, the consultation responses have highlighted a number of potential impacts for those currently attending Linden Court, and a number of alternative options were proposed. Details of the alternatives proposed are including in the Consultation Summary in Appendix 1. Following the consultation, the Council has considered whether there is scope to retain day service provision in the Eastbourne area.

- 5.9 Unfortunately, it is not possible to retain Linden Court as-is, or with reduced capacity and/ or reduced hours of operation, and still achieve the required level of savings.
- 5.10 However, the savings can be achieved by having Beeching Park as the main day-service provision offered to people living in the East of the County, but with sessions also being delivered from Working Wonders in Hastings (as is currently the case) as well as an additional location in Eastbourne.
- 5.11 The Eastbourne location has not yet been confirmed. As a temporary measure the existing building at Linden Court may be used as a smaller satellite centre, pending a long term base being established and whilst the future use of the Linden Court premises is being finalised.
- 5.12 Within the proposed staffing model and budget for Beeching Park, it would be possible to deliver a service in Eastbourne two days a week, initially for up to 15 adults. Whilst this wouldn't accommodate all adults who are currently at Linden Court, this would reduce the potential disruption for some adults currently using Linden Court.
- 5.13 To ensure sufficient capacity at Beeching Park, if the proposal to close Linden Court is agreed, it is proposed that the opening hours for Beeching Park be extended, returning it to a five-day a week service (Monday to Friday). This would increase the number of adults who could be supported at the service by 25% (increasing the number of sessions available by 200). This would allow us to offer a place at the day service to everyone currently attending Linden Court, if the service can meet their assessed care needs.
- 5.14 Beeching Park would continue to offer three sessions a day. However, the timings of those sessions would need to change to manage the increase in adult numbers. Changing the times of the sessions would ensure people have the support they need over lunchtime, as well as providing enough non-contact time for staff to do admin tasks and attend team meetings. We would continue to have a standard adult to staff ratio of five-to-one and provide one-to-one support to adults where they are assessed as needing this. Transport to the day service would continue to be provided by ASCH, as part of the adult's support plan, where required.
- 5.15 The table below sets out the proposed changes to session times at Beeching Park:

Session name	Current times	Proposed new times
AM session	9am to 12pm	9.30am to 12pm
PM session	12.30pm to 3.30pm	1pm to 3.30pm
Twilight session	4pm to 7pm	4pm to 6.30pm

Adults attending Beeching Park would still be able to arrive from 08:30.

6. Impacts and risks

6.1 This section explores the impacts and risks of going ahead with the proposal, including those outlined in the EqIA.

6.2 Financial implications:

	Current Budget	Revised Budget		Total Savings
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Expenditure budget	692	482	355	
Income budget	(40)	(30)	(30)	
Net budget	652	452	325	
Net savings	0	200	127	327

The calculation of the revised budget assumes that:

- Services will be provided at Beeching Park with an additional day of operation, which form the basis of the revised budget;
- One-off costs to remodel the service will be absorbed in current ESCC budgets or met corporately.

6.3 The table below explores the potential impacts the proposal would have on the health and care system, organisations, services and residents.

Health and care system	All adults who attend Linden Court have an assessed eligible Care Act need and whilst the proposals are not a reduction in services, there would be a change to how services are provided. This would have an impact on Adult Social Care and Health which will need to review all of the adults, alongside offering a carers assessment or review to unpaid carers. The change in service delivery could impact on some adults' emotional wellbeing and there is a possibility this could increase demand on health settings, particularly specialist provision such as the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust Community Learning Disability Team.
Organisations and services	As above, the proposal could generate an increase in demand for health input. If adults currently attending Linden Court choose to have their day service provision met somewhere other than Beeching Park, there could be an increase in demand for independent day service provision or for Personal Assistants. ASCH would work with adults and carers to identify Personal Assistants where possible. It is anticipated that it would be possible to find personal assistants for the number of adults who choose that option. However, where it is not possible to find a suitable Personal Assistant, ASCH would secure alternative provision to meet the adult's assessed eligible needs (this is a statutory duty under the Care Act). Some contributions to the consultation have indicated the closure of Linden Court could result in the need for alternative residential or supported living placements – were this to be the case there would be increased demand for social care providers who deliver those types of service.
Residents	The adults who attend Linden Court, and their parent/carers, are East Sussex residents. This proposal has caused a degree of anxiety already and, if agreed, could cause further anxiety and disruption as the service provision would change. This change could put additional stress on adults receiving a service and unpaid carers, for example: • By impacting on their ability to maintain existing routines and work; • Increasing travel time to an alternative day service; • The emotional impact of managing this proposed change; • The potential that adults attending Linden Court are no longer able to stay in their family home and require an alternative place to live; • Adults who require a smaller, quieter day provision may not have their needs met.

6.4 The main risks of going ahead with the proposal are:

- The alternative options for day provision do not meet the needs of adults attending Linden Court due to location or the set-up of the service;
- For those choosing to attend Beeching Park there could be further disruption through changes to the pattern of attendance. This can be a pressure for adults who may find change difficult, and parent/carers who may have pre-existing commitments;
- The pressure on unpaid carers could mean that some adults could not remain in their family home. In this instance Adult Social Care and Health may need to provide a 24/7 service to meet these people's needs;
- For some adults and their families there would be an increased journey time where they choose to access Beeching Park;
- The estimated cost savings are not achieved as the result of the above.

Mitigation

6.5 To mitigate the risks identified above:

- The Day Service at Beeching Park is a good provision. The management teams of Linden Court and Beeching Park work closely together, and they are confident they can meet the needs of adults attending Linden Court at Beeching Park;
- If agreed, the revised delivery model at Beeching Park, i.e. the satellite provision in Eastbourne, will mean it is possible to reduce the need for a number of adults (approximately 15 adults) currently at Linden Court to travel to Bexhill, thereby reducing some of the stress the original proposal could cause;
- Through having a bespoke service to support the transition of adults with more complex needs we can ensure they receive the level of service that they require;
- If the proposal is agreed, the staff at Beeching Park are committed to minimising the disruption caused by a change of day service and would aspire to offer a like for like service where possible.

6.6 Even under the revised proposal, it is acknowledged that there will still be disruption for people currently using the day services at Linden Court and Beeching Park. To minimise this, the Council will put a team together for one year to support people in adjusting and/or finding alternative independent provision if they either chose not to move to Beeching Park, or opt to move but the service provided is unsuitable for them.

7 Outline implementation plan

7.1 If the revised Proposal is agreed, as set out in section 5, the implementation plan will look as follows:

- 25 Feb 2025 – Cabinet Decision.
- March 2025 - Adults reviews will commence and take place over a 4-week period.
- April 2025 - As reviews identify alternative provision, adults will be supported in the transition to their new service, either Beeching Park or an alternative service.
- June 2025 - Linden Court closes.

7.2 In addition, the property department will lead on identifying proposals for an alternative use, or disposal, of the building.

- 7.3 To ensure the timescales for delivering savings can be met, we have taken steps to begin consulting staff affected by the proposed closure of Linden Court and the merger with Beeching Park; however, the final proposals for staff consultation won't be known until after Cabinet have made a decision on the future of both Linden Court and Beeching Park.

8 Conclusions and reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 The Council is required to set a balanced budget. The 'State of the County' report presented to Cabinet in June 2024 set out a projected £55m deficit on the 2025/26 budget. Savings proposals requiring public consultation that would help to close this gap were presented to Cabinet in September 2024.
- 8.2 The total savings proposals for the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26-2027/28 set out in November 2024 were £20.628m, across all Council departments. The Adult Social Care & Health (ASCH) contribution to the savings total is £11.455m. In addition to these savings proposals, in order to achieve a balanced budget, the Council is also drawing on its financial reserves.
- 8.3 The original proposals put forward were designed to contribute to the savings required for the County Council. It is clear from the contributions to the consultation that the proposal for Linden Court and Beeching Park is not welcomed, with the vast majority of respondents disagreeing. We have considered all the feedback to the consultation and explored how we can modify and mitigate the proposal where possible to address the concerns raised.
- 8.4 Whilst it is recognised that closing Linden Court would cause an element of disruption and potentially increase travel times for some adults that attend the service, and the parent/carers involved, the alternative provision at Beeching Park would be able to meet the needs of most adults, with alternative options to Beeching Park being available where required.
- 8.5 As set out above, the Council will take steps to mitigate any adverse impacts of the proposal, by offering bespoke support to adults with more complex needs to help them manage this transition. This is designed to meet the specific needs of adults who would need additional support to access an alternative provision.
- 8.6 Cabinet are therefore recommended to agree to close Linden Court Day Service in Eastbourne for Adults with Learning Disabilities. Cabinet are also recommended to agree to merge the existing Linden Court Day Service with the Beeching Park Day Service for people with a Learning Disability in Bexhill, and to revise the days of opening and opening hours of Beeching Park, to operate five days per week (Monday to Friday) between the hours of 09:00 and 18:30.
- 8.7 Cabinet are also recommended to agree to the establishment of a satellite service in Eastbourne, which will operate as part of the Beeching Park Day Service offer, two days a week. It is anticipated that this will initially have capacity to support up to 15 adults per week. If agreed, this would ease the impact for several adults and parent/carers, offering a flexibility to how their day service provision could be provided. In the interim, this satellite provision will be offered from the existing Linden Court site, but Cabinet are recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, to determine the final location for this satellite provision.
- 8.8 Cabinet are recommended to delegate to the Director of Adult Social Care and Health authority to take all necessary actions to give effect to the recommendations set out in this report and in order to deliver Adult Social Care and Health Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) requirements.

8.9 Cabinet members must read and have regard to the EqIA when making decisions related to this proposal.

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Local members

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Background Documents

Consultation responses

Appendices

Appendix 1: Consultation Report

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Map of Linden Court Attendees Locations

Appendix 4: Map of Alternative Day Service Provision

Appendix 1: Consultation results report

Linden Court and Beeching Park day services

About this consultation

This consultation is about the proposal to close the day service at Linden Court and find people places in alternative services. It started on 3 October and closed on 28 November 2024.

Taking part in the consultation

The consultation survey was available to complete online and people could download printable versions of the standard and easy read surveys too. Emails, letters and feedback in phone calls were also accepted.

All of the consultations were promoted in our newsletters for residents, providers and staff. We also shared news stories with partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to include in their newsletters for residents, organisations and staff.

General posters were shared with library teams and each affected service had a dedicated poster to put up in their service or building. Consultation meetings with those who use the service and their families and carers also took place.

The consultations were widely promoted in the local media and consultation leads talked about the proposals at relevant stakeholder meetings.

Who took part in the consultation

We received 373 responses to this consultation. The table below shows the different ways in which people took part. We also had 1 late email response received after the consultation closed.

Respondent method	Total
Survey	203
Email and letters	16
Consultation meetings (attendees)	154

There were also 10 responses submitted by email or letter that addressed all of the consultations more generally. A general petition opposing the funding gap proposals for adult social care in the Lewes district was submitted by Lewes Liberal Democrats. It was signed by 100 people. This means it does not meet the threshold of 5000 signatures which is required for the petition to be considered by Full Council. We are also aware of a specific petition about this proposal, although it hasn't been

submitted to us. This had over 1,300 signatures when this report was finalised in January 2025.

People were given the option of answering ‘about you’ equality questions in the survey, with 57% of respondents choosing to do so.

- We had the most survey responses from people who attend Linden Court and their families and carers (38%). Residents of East Sussex was the next biggest respondent group (25%), while Beeching Park attendees and their families and carers accounted for 4%.
- The age range of 45 to 54 years old was the top respondent group (12%), followed by age 65+ (9%), although we had responses from most age groups.
- More women than men took part in the survey - 41% compared to 12%, although 43% didn’t answer the question.
- 18% of respondents have a physical or mental health condition or long-term illness.
- The proportion of carers taking part (26%) reflected the fact that the family and carers of people using the services was the top respondent group.
- It is notable that 14% of respondents provide 50 or more hours of care per week and 5% provide 9 or fewer hours.

Key messages

These key messages reflect the feedback received from organisations, groups and individuals across surveys, meetings and other feedback such as emails and letters.

- Most people strongly disagree with the proposal to close Linden Court and find people places in alternative services, with only 6% agreeing.
- People are angry, upset and worried about the proposal, which they said targets vulnerable people.
- People say it is a vital service and people say they will fight to save it.
- People are full of praise for the service and the staff, which they say provides a safe environment and the opportunity to socialise.
- Linden Court is seen as being a nicer building than Beeching Park and the service as being better able to support those who need a quieter service. Crucially, it is also local to where people live.
- Those who attend the service love seeing their friends and taking part in activities. Families and carers say it is a lifeline, that allows them to continue in their caring role, and to maintain their employment if they have a job.
- There was a strong feeling that closing the service wouldn’t lead to savings, partly because of the cost of travelling to Beeching Park and because it is likely that some would end up in residential care if their local

day service closed. This would be much more expensive than keeping Linden Court open.

- People said more detailed financial information should be provided about how the proposal was arrived at. They asked why Beeching Park wasn't being proposed for closure as there are alternative services in that area.
- It would be devastating if the service closed and people feel that Beeching Park isn't a realistic alternative for them.
- The biggest concern with Beeching Park is the journey. People say that it would be a much longer and more complicated commute, with many saying that it just wouldn't work for their family. Some had already tried it out to confirm this.
- Change is hard for people who use the service, and if the proposal went ahead the alteration to routine would be very disruptive for them. It would also increase the burden on families and carers, some of whom said they wouldn't be able to cope if Linden Court closed.
- People who attend the service say that they would have to attend on the same days and times at another service as they have other commitments they can't move. They are also keen to continue taking part in the activities they like and are worried they wouldn't see their friends at a new service.
- Closing the service would lead to poorer mental health for those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour. Even without the travel issues, Beeching Park will be a busy service and won't be suitable for everyone.
- People's needs wouldn't be met and their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to.
- The main suggestion was not to go ahead with closing the service and instead enhance it and do a better job of promoting it.
- People said the money to save the service should be found by selling unused buildings and cutting the number of service managers. They also suggested using volunteers to deliver the service.

Sample quotes

These comments are a small selection of the responses we received in the consultation. They reflect the key themes or offer a specific suggestion.

Organisation comments:

- **Healthwatch East Sussex:** "There is some inconsistency between the proposals seeking to reduce the cost of home-to-school transport, whilst simultaneously transporting adults with learning disabilities from...Linden Court to alternative day services. Whilst it is important for people to have

choices about their care and support, this should ideally be provided in the communities where they live.”

- **NHS Sussex:** “Consideration should be given to what services there would be for people who need a quieter environment due to other diagnoses and sensory sensitivities...Issues which may result in a service user requiring a quieter service, such as sensory sensitivities, can overwhelm and lead to difficulties with social communication and/or interaction, requiring appropriate support and provision. If these needs are not met, it could lead to increasing instances of behaviours that challenge services, and require more resource-intensive, higher-cost, multi-agency input in the medium and longer term.”
- **Wealden Citizens Advice:** “Change is unsettling for clients. Linden Court users have been used to having a quieter environment which will then become busier. They may not cope and a drop in attendance may be seen.”

Individual comments:

- “It is taking us away from our friends, a building we know and staff who know us. That makes me sad. It works here. I have been coming here for ten years.”
- “The individuals who access Linden Court are vulnerable adults who rely on the service to not only keep them safe but support them with social interactions and meaningful activities. Without the service there would be more carer breakdowns, resulting in more people being placed in residential care (costing the council more money in the long term), an increase in social isolation and reduced independence.”
- “It's taking away services for vulnerable people who are less likely [to be] able to advocate for themselves. This should be the last resort, not the first.”
- “People get settled in one place and feel safe. They get used to being helped and looked after regularly by the same person. They make friends with others using the same facilities.”
- “People need continuity of care. Uprooting people with disabilities causes them distress. Overloading another service with users means that individual needs may not be met if staff have too many users to look after.”
- “These options are not safe. The prolonged journey to Beeching Park would exacerbate behaviours and could also lead to medical emergencies that could put clients and staff at risk.”
- “I was really concerned to see that the underuse of Linden Court was being used as a reason to close it - I'm not aware of it being offered to the people I work with, many of whom would probably gain a lot from it, if it was offered...Fill the empty spaces by offering it to people and you will cut the money you spend on unstructured personal assistant support etc.”
- “Placing more people at Beeching Park will likely lead to the social exclusion of clients who struggle with noise or crowding, clients...who rely upon structure and routine the most, so would suffer most from losing a regular service.”

- "Linden Court has better resources and capacity than either of the alternatives. The road and rail connections to either Lewes or Bexhill are poor and neither are close to the stations. Clients will end up needing private personal care as they won't be able to get to the alternatives, and the council will have to pay for this, so real savings will be below what is expected anyway. You will also lose highly experienced and motivated staff, who will be difficult to replace, leading to staff shortages."
- "This service gives me respite and gives [named person] independence. We cannot afford £25 each way taxis to Bexhill twice a week. [Named person] will have to stop coming as my health affects my driving a lot."
- "The added pressure and expense on travelling to Bexhill, and possibly losing friendships which my son has had since he started school...will [have] a very detrimental effect on his anxiety and mental health. The times on offer at Inspire are less than already received and it is in a church, which possibly is echoey, which my son cannot cope with."
- "It will make me very sad. I do not want to lose my friends and I feel safe with the staff. I like doing lots of things."
- "I rely on the service to look after my daughter whilst I am at work. There is no way I would have the time to take her to Bexhill in the morning and then get back to work in Eastbourne by 9am. The same applies at the end of the day. I feel that my daughter would become socially isolated, withdrawn and depressed if I had to have her at home permanently. This would also mean that I would have to give up work which would have a negative impact on my family generally. My daughter is very happy at Linden Court and for everything to change in her world would exacerbate her already challenging behaviour and negatively affect the whole family."
- "It would be a nightmare, upset to all routine, a stagnation of learning/education. Going on the minibus, which is much loved, would be non-existent. The sensory room for moments of calm would not be available. Making sense of the world around us, the change of the seasons & things that would not have any meaning."
- "I would be prepared for the client contributions to be increased if it means Linden Court could be kept open, if we all did this (increased a little for all service users, according to individual circumstances)."
- "Where would all the vulnerable people go? Are there enough placements for them to move onto? What would they cost? Would they be appropriate placements of the individuals? Will they be local? Private venues will be more costly, providing less hours and days of care. This will lead to even more family breakdowns, leading to these vulnerable people needing full-time care in residential settings, costing ESCC a hell of a lot more, over time, than the gap which has already been created."
- "We disagree [with] the proposed closing of Linden Court as it will affect the lives of the vulnerable adults we have in Eastbourne. Linden Court is needed for those adults with additional needs and in the future for those coming of age with additional needs. Please can the council continue to support our

vulnerable adults in Eastbourne. The council is in charge of our services and monies - please do not let us down."

Results summary across all methods

Views on the proposal

Survey: 85% of respondents disagree with the proposal, with the majority choosing strongly disagree (81%). Only 6% said they agree or strongly agree.

The top comment themes for why people agree or disagree were:

- Views: Commute to services would be more complex (44 comments)
- Service: Service is vital (42)
- Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support (35)
- Impact: Socialisations (26)
- Impact: Increased burden on family/carer (22)
- Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable (22)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (18)
- Views: Disagree with proposal (18)
- Service: Lifeline to people (17)
- Impact: People's needs won't be met (14)

Emails etc: Again, people disagreed with the proposal (3) and said the service shouldn't be closed (3), although the same number did recognise the need to make savings (3).

People said the services provide an opportunity to socialise (5) and are a lifeline to people (4). They also praised the staff (3) and the person-centred support they provide (3).

The commute to the service was the main issue, with people pointing out it would be more complex (7) and that the cost of travel makes the cut harder to justify (4). People feel the cuts target the most vulnerable (3).

Meetings: There is strong opposition to the proposal and people are disgusted it has even been proposed, as it targets vulnerable people. People are worried, upset and angry and some said they will fight it.

People said it isn't clear how the proposal was arrived at, and believed more detail is needed about the finances and how the savings were calculated. They felt the closure wouldn't save money in the long run, as support needs would still need to be paid for, and there would be extra costs from transporting people further. In addition, the cost impact could be massive if more people can't live at home any more due to the service closing.

People love Linden Court and the staff. They are happily settled there and have made lots of friends. Linden Court is seen as being a better building, and the quieter nature of the service suits people.

Those who attend Linden Court don't want it to close and they are worried they won't see their friends if it does. Some said they would move to Beeching Park, but a lot of people said it wouldn't work for them because of the travel.

People who use both services are concerned about their sessions. They want to be able to go on the same day/times as they do now due to other commitments. People are also keen to know if they would still be able to do their favourite activities and take part in community sessions.

Change is hard for this group of people and there is already a lot of anxiety about the proposal, although a few people did say they were looking forward to making new friends if the services merged.

Potential impacts of the proposal

Survey: The top comment themes for how people would be affected are:

- Views: Commute to services would be more complex (40 comments)
- Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support (36)
- Impact: Increased burden on family/carer (32)
- Impact: Socialisations (25)
- Comment about personal circumstances (20)
- Impact: Poorer mental health (20)
- Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify (18)
- Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities (16)
- Impact: Cause upset to people who access support (16)
- Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support (12)
- Impact: People's needs won't be met (12)

Emails etc: People said closing the service would increase the burden on families and carers (6) and lead to poorer physical and mental health for everyone affected (4 each).

The routine change would be disruptive for people (4) and destroy their stability and support structure (3). This could lead to more challenging behaviour (3).

They also said it would add more costs in the long run (3).

Meetings: Beeching Park would not provide the local service that people need and value. The journey there would take a lot longer and lots of people said the journey wouldn't work for their family.

Beeching Park is a busier service and that won't suit everyone. The change would be difficult for people and could affect everyone's mental/physical health and the behaviour of people who attend the service.

The service allows people to stay living at home, so closing it could push people into residential care, which would be a lot more expensive. The longer journey and shorter sessions would also affect some people's ability to maintain their employment, and future school/college leavers locally wouldn't have a nearby service they could transition to.

Suggestions

Survey: General suggestions are covered in the background report on the funding gap consultations, while service-specific ones are included here.

The top theme was that the service shouldn't be cut (29). The other themes were:

- Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it (6)
- Suggestion: Review number of service managers (6)
- Suggestion: Use volunteers (6)
- Suggestion: Charge for some usage (5)
- Suggestion: Cut operational costs (5)
- Suggestion: Liaise with community sector about service provision (5)
- Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens (4)
- Suggestion: Make access to services means tested (4)
- Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services (4)
- Suggestion: Cut non-essential parts of the service (3)
- Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum (3)
- Suggestion: More joint working (3)
- Suggestion: Charge people more to use services (2)
- Suggestion: Reduce on-site support hours (2)
- Suggestion: Reduce public transport costs (2)
- Suggestion: Streamline current roles (2)
- Suggestion: Utilise staff skills better (2)
- Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact (1)
- Suggestion: Calculate the cost for other services that this proposal will cause (1)
- Suggestion: Close other buildings instead (1)
- Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions (1)
- Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it (1)

- Suggestion: Offer smaller blocks of respite (1)
- Suggestion: Reduce use of external private services (1)
- Suggestion: Use empty buildings for the service (1)
- Suggestion: Use funding generated from other sales or sources (1)
- Suggestion: Use learning from current service to develop new model (1)

Emails etc: The top suggestions were to look for private investors/business to run the service (3) and to do more joint working (3).

The other suggestions were:

- Suggestion: Keep parts of the service running (2)
- Suggestion: Provide transport to services (2)
- Suggestion: Cut operational costs (1)
- Suggestion: Explore alternative solutions with partners/other providers (1)
- Suggestion: Joint transport between services (1)
- Suggestion: Listen to the consultation feedback (1)
- Suggestion: Locate any replacement in the same area (1)
- Suggestion: Make income by selling spaces to other local authorities (1)
- Suggestion: Partnerships with transport providers to help with cost (1)
- Suggestion: Use church buildings to limit costs of day services (1)

Meetings: Suggestions included closing Beeching Park instead, selling unused council property to use the money to save Linden Court, and cutting management roles to save money.

Other topics

Survey: The top comment themes are that the cuts target the most vulnerable (12), and that the proposal would increase the burden on family/carers (11).

Other common themes included:

- Service: Service is vital (8)
- Other: Criticism of council (6)
- Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular (6)
- Impact: Loss to the community (5)
- Views: Commute to services more complex (5)

Emails etc: People criticised the Council and the consultation process/information (2 each). They said the Council must provide detailed financial information on the savings (2) and more information about the alternative services and what capacity they have (2).

Many of those affected don't have a voice or can't communicate (2). There also needs to be clarity about how parents of adults with Special Educational Needs will be consulted with (2).

Meetings: The Council wastes a large amount of money. People need to be kept updated about the proposals, and to know that the decision is transparent and fair.

Charts and tables

Survey responses including about you information

1) Are you completing the survey as:

There were 197 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Someone who uses/has used the Linden Court day service	21	10.34%
The family or carer of someone who uses/has used the Linden Court day service	56	27.59%
Someone who uses/has used the Beeching Park day service	1	0.49%
The family or carer of someone who uses/has used the Beeching Park day service	7	3.45%
Someone who works for the Linden Court or Beeching Park day services	20	9.85%
Someone who lives in East Sussex	51	25.12%
Someone who works in health or social care in East Sussex	26	12.81%
Someone who works in housing in East Sussex	0	0.00%
Someone who works in the voluntary or community sector	2	0.99%
Other (please provide details below)	13	6.40%
Not Answered	6	2.96%

Responses to "Other"

There were 18 responses to this part of the question. Some responses fitted into more than one of the following groups:

- User or potential user of service or their family (9 responses)

- Comment on professional role/former role (7)
- Expressed a view about the service/proposal (3)
- Described where they lived (2)

2) How much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close the Linden Court day service and move people to either Beeching Park day service or an alternative service?

There were 201 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Strongly agree	8	3.94%
Agree	5	2.46%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	3.94%
Disagree	9	4.43%
Strongly disagree	164	80.79%
Not sure	7	3.45%
Not Answered	2	0.99%

Please use the box below to tell us why you agree or disagree:

There were 175 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services more complex	44
Service: Service is vital	42
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	35
Impact: Socialisations	26
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	22
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	22
Impact: Poorer mental health	18
Views: Disagree with proposal	18
Service: Lifeline to people	17
Impact: People's needs won't be met	14
Service: Safe environment	13
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	12
Impact: Cause upset to people who access support	11
Service: Service is beneficial	11

Views: Don't close service	11
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	11
Comment about personal circumstances	10
Impact: Poorer physical health	9
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	9
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	8
Service: Only service of its sort	8
Service: Immensely valued	8
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	7
Impact: Isolation	7
Service: Praise of staff	7
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	7
Views: Costs will increase not go down	7
Views: Service has already suffered from cuts	7
Impact: Less independence	6
Impact: Lower quality of life	6
Impact: People would have to go into care	6
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	6
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	6
Impact: More people in crisis	6
Impact: Strain on remaining staff	6
Service is a community benefit	5
Impact: Loss to the community	5
Impact: Staff	5
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	5
Other: Criticism of council	5
Service: Current service location is good	5
Service: Praise of service	5
Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it	5
Views: Alternative services not adequate	5
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	5
Impact: Negative on carers	4
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	4

Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	4
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	4
Views: Recognise need to make savings	4
Views: Services already limited	4
Views: East Sussex County Council are responsible for looking after vulnerable people	4
Views: Morally wrong	4
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	3
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	3
Impact: Poorer access to support	3
Views: There is no other support like this	3
Service: High quality	3
Service: Service well run	3
Views: Unhappy with proposal	3
Views: Agree with proposal	3
Views: Loss of jobs	3
Views: Need for this service is increasing	3
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	3
Views: Shameful proposal	3
Service offers help with life skills	2
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	2
Impact: Confidence will be lost	2
Impact: Expensive home care packages	2
Impact: Boredom	2
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	2
Other: Unsure why East Sussex County Council cannot afford budget gap	2
Service helps with people skills	2
Service offers practical skills like cooking	2
Service: Very accessible	2
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	2
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	2
Views: Already fought for service before	2
Views: Short sighted	2

Views: People who access support may lack advocacy and representation	2
Views: Proposals could/do break discrimination laws	2
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	2
Views: Services already limited	2
Service helps with mental health	1
Impact: Ability to care for child	1
Impact: Carers' ability to have longer breaks	1
Impact: Family member would need more support from them	1
Impact: Feeling less safe	1
Impact: Lower quality of service	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Cuts would reduce costs	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Even more limited services	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: People discouraged from seeking help	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: Risk of East Sussex County Council not meeting statutory duties	1
Impact: Undo what staff have worked hard to build	1
Other: Allow redundancy requests	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment on other council spending	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to explain why saving proposals were made	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	1
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	1
Other: Money recently spent on the building	1
Service provides peace of mind	1
Service: Service offers respite	1
Service: Efficient	1
Service: Criticism of service efficiency	1
Service: Current service works well	1

Service: Service built trust with people who access it	1
Service: Service key to wellbeing	1
Service stopped people who accessed it going into residential care	1
Suggestion: Cut general carers services as these are not useful	1
Suggestion: Better monitoring of service performance	1
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Encourage more people to use service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Improve quality of care	1
Suggestion: Invest in upskilling staff	1
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	1
Service: Tailored support	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Agree with proposal	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Already fought for service before	1
Views: An alternative exists	1
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1
Views: Hopefully capacity exists at other service	1
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	1
Views: New times or hours are concerning	1
Views: Poor management treatment of both staff and people who access support	1
Views: Service is cost effective	1

3) How would the proposal to close Linden Court affect you or someone you care for?

There were 167 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services would be more complex	40
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	36
Impact: Increased burden on family/carers	32
Impact: Socialisations	25

Comment about personal circumstances	20
Impact: Poorer mental health	20
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	18
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	16
Impact: Cause upset to people who access support	16
Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	12
Impact: People's needs won't be met	12
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	10
Impact: Poorer physical health	9
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	9
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	8
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	8
Service: Service is vital	8
Impact: Isolation	7
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	7
Impact: Lower quality of life	6
Impact: People would have to go into care	6
Service: Current service location is good	6
Service: Lifeline to people	6
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	6
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	5
Impact: Financial hardship	5
Impact: More inconvenient for people who access support	5
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	5
Impact: Poorer access to support	5
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	5
Service: Praise of staff	5
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	5
It does not affect me	4
Service: Service is beneficial	4
Views: Don't close service	4
Views: New times or hours are concerning	4
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	4

Service offers help with life skills	3
Impact: Less independence	3
Impact: Loss to the community	3
Impact: Staff	3
Impact: Boredom	3
Impact: Lose my job	3
Impact: More pressure on the police	3
Impact: NHS	3
Impact: Would no longer be able to attend	3
Service: Praise of service	3
Views: Alternative services not adequate	3
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	3
Views: Person accessing the support wouldn't want to go into residential care	3
Impact: Ability to care for child	2
Impact: Expensive home care packages	2
Impact: Loss to the community	2
Impact: Lower quality of life	2
Impact: Undo what staff have worked hard to build	2
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	2
Other: Criticism of council	2
Service: Services offers practical skills like cooking	2
Service: Service provides a safe environment	2
Service: Immensely valued	2
Service: Service is vital	2
Service: Well used	2
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	2
Views: Care at home is not a substitute	2
Views: East Sussex County Council is responsible for looking after vulnerable people	2
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	2
Views: Need for this service is increasing	2
Views: Services already limited	2
Views: Shameful proposal	2
Impact: Confidence will be lost	1

Impact: Will take a long time for people who access support to adjust to changes	1
Impact: Ability to find work	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: Lack of hope for those needing support	1
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	1
Impact: Poorer access to other services as a knock-on effect	1
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	1
Impact: Service won't be replaced if cut	1
Views: No other support like this	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	1
Service: Service helps with people skills	1
Service: Service helps with practical living skills	1
Service: High quality	1
Service: Service built trust with people who access it	1
Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact	1
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	1
Suggestion: Restructure hours	1
Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions	1
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	1
Suggestion: Encourage more people to use service	1
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Unhappy with proposal	1
Views: Costs will increase not go down	1
Views: Proposals could/do break discrimination laws	1
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	1
Views: Short sighted	1

4) Do you have any other suggestions or comments you would like to make?

There were 177 responses to this part of the question.

Comment theme	Total
Suggestion: Don't cut service	29
Suggestion: Cut elsewhere	12
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	12
Impact: Increased burden on family/carers	11
Service: Service is vital	8
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	7
Other: Criticism of council	6
Suggestion: Enhance the service rather than reduce it	6
Suggestion: Review number of service managers	6
Suggestion: Sell buildings to make money	6
Suggestion: Use volunteers	6
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	6
Impact: Loss to the community	5
Suggestion: Cut non-emergency services (other Council spend)	5
Suggestion: Charge for some usage	5
Suggestion: Cut operational costs	5
Suggestion: Liaise with community sector about service provision	5
Views: Commute to services more complex	5
Views: Service has already suffered from cuts	5
Views: Shameful proposal	5
Comment about personal circumstances	4
Impact: People would have to go into care	4
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	4
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	4
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	4
Other: Unsure why East Sussex County Council cannot afford budget gap	4
Service: Praise of staff	4
Service attendance has a social aspect	4
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before any change happens	4

Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	4
Suggestion: Fundraise locally	4
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	4
Suggestion: Make access to services means tested	4
Views: Find an alternative way to save money	4
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	4
Views: Service is not cost effective	4
Views: Services already limited	4
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure of people who access support	3
Impact: People would have to go into care	3
Service: Immensely valued	3
Service: Lifeline to people	3
Service: Service is vital	3
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	3
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	3
Suggestion: Cut non-essential parts of the service	3
Suggestion: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Remove and condense office buildings	3
Views: Recognise need to make savings	3
Views: Commuting cost to services harder to justify	3
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	3
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	3
Impact: Even more limited services	2
Impact: Relationships built between staff and people who access support may end	2
Impact: Without this support people will need higher-cost services	2
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	2
Impact: People's needs won't be met	2
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	2
Views: No similar services exist	2
Other: Criticism of councillor	2
Other: Comment on other council spending	2
Other: Criticism of council	2

Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	2
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	2
Suggestion: Bring in income from unused properties	2
Suggestion: Charge people more to use services	2
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should lobby government	2
Suggestion: Careful planning/assessments needed before happens	2
Suggestion: Consider system budget issues	2
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	2
Suggestion: Merge or reorganise services	2
Suggestion: Reduce on-site support hours	2
Suggestion: Reduce public transport costs	2
Suggestion: Streamline current roles	2
Suggestion: Utilise staff skills better	2
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	2
Views: Unclear what savings will result	2
Impact: Already have to battle for services	1
Impact: Carers' ability to have longer breaks	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Increase homelessness if cut	1
Impact: Increased support needs	1
Impact: Less independence	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: Ability to care for child	1
Impact: Cause distress for people who access support	1
Impact: Effect on environment and climate	1
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: Poorer access to other services as a knock-on effect	1
Impact: Poorer mental health	1
Impact: Poorer physical health	1
Impact: Private support more expensive	1
Impact: Service won't be replaced if cut	1
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment re government spending	1

Other: Criticism of government	1
Other: Difficult for people who access support to understand	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to explain why saving proposals were made	1
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	1
Other: How are parents of special education needs adults consulted with?	1
Other: Reduce councillors' pay	1
Service: Current service works well	1
Service: Safe environment	1
Service: Very accessible	1
Service: Service stopped the person going into residential care	1
Suggestion: Be mindful of the impact	1
Suggestion: Better use of funding	1
Suggestion: Consider system budget issues	1
Suggestion: Fundraise nationally	1
Suggestion: Increase council tax	1
Suggestion: Offer smaller blocks of respite	1
Suggestion: Calculate the cost for other services that this proposal would cause	1
Suggestion: Close other buildings instead	1
Suggestion: Consider wider impact of decisions	1
Suggestion: Cut East Sussex County Council staff pay	1
Suggestion: Increase service rather than cut it	1
Suggestion: Reduce use of external private services	1
Suggestion: Review remote working	1
Suggestion: Use empty buildings for the service	1
Suggestion: Use funding generated from other sales or sources	1
Suggestion: Use learning from current service to develop new model	1
Unspecific/unclear comment	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Disagree with proposal	1
Views: Poor decision	1
Views: Costs will increase not go down	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1

Views: Need for this service is increasing	1
Views: New times or hours are concerning	1
Views: Priorities are wrong	1
Views: Service is cost effective	1
Views: Service vital for young people and their prosperity	1
Views: Short sighted	1

About You equality questions

People were given the option of answering these questions, with 115 choosing to take part and 88 choosing not to answer these questions.

What age are you?

Age	Total	Percentage of all 203 respondents
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	5	2%
25-34	10	5%
35-44	11	5%
45-54	25	12%
55-59	10	5%
60-64	11	5%
65+	19	9%

What is your gender?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Female	83	40.89%
Male	24	11.82%
Non-binary	3	1.48%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	6	2.96%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Self-described gender:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	111	54.68%
No (please write in your gender identity below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	5	2.46%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Gender identity:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

What is your ethnic group?

There were 116 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
White English/Welsh/Scottish /Northern Irish/British	104	51.23%
White Irish	2	0.99%
White Gypsy/Irish Traveller	0	0.00%
White Roma	0	0.00%
Any other White background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Black African	0	0.00%
Mixed White and Asian	1	0.49%
Any other Mixed or Multiple background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0.00%
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0	0.00%
Any other Asian background (please write in below)	0	0.00%

Black or Black British Caribbean	0	0.00%
Black or Black British African background (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Any other Black, Black British or Caribbean background (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Arab	0	0.00%
Any other ethnic group (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	8	3.94%
Not Answered	87	42.86%

Other:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

There were 114 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
'Straight' / Heterosexual	99	48.77%
Gay or Lesbian	2	0.99%
Bisexual	1	0.49%
Prefer to self-describe (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	12	5.91%
Not Answered	89	43.84%

Self-described sexual orientation:

There was 1 response to this part of the question.

What is your religion or belief?

There were 114 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
No religion	43	21.18%
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	62	30.54%

Buddhist	2	0.99%
Hindu	0	0.00%
Jewish	0	0.00%
Muslim	0	0.00%
Sikh	0	0.00%
Any other religion (please write in below)	0	0.00%
Philosophical belief (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Prefer not to say	6	2.96%
Not Answered	89	43.84%

Other religion:

There were 3 responses to this part of the question covering spiritualism, paganism, and Christianity.

Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 115 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes (please answer part B below)	37	18.23%
No (go to the next question)	64	31.53%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	14	6.90%
Not Answered	88	43.35%

Do any of your conditions or illnesses reduce your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?

There were 81 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes, a lot (please answer part C below)	19	9.36%
Yes, a little (please answer part C below)	13	6.40%
Not at all (go to the next question)	34	16.75%
Prefer not to say (go to the next question)	15	7.39%

Not Answered	122	60.10%
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Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting or expected to last 12 months or more?

There were 46 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Physical Impairment	14	6.90%
Sensory Impairment	6	2.96%
Learning Disability/Difficulty	20	9.85%
Long-standing illness	10	4.93%
Mental Health condition	7	3.45%
Neurodivergent condition	9	4.43%
Other Developmental Condition	0	0.00%
Other (please write in below)	1	0.49%
Prefer not to say	8	3.94%
Not Answered	157	77.34%

Other:

There were 6 responses to this part of the question covering mental health issues, Diabetes, ability to speak, and learning disabilities.

Are you currently pregnant or did you give birth in the last twelve months?

There were 100 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	0.49%
No	95	46.80%
Prefer not to say	4	1.97%
Not Answered	103	50.74%

Do you look after, or give any help or support to, anyone because they have long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses, or problems related to old age?

There were 113 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	52	25.62%
No (go to next question)	52	25.62%
Prefer not to say	9	4.43%
Not Answered	90	44.33%

Hours of care given a week

There were 58 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
9 hours a week or less	11	5.42%
10 to 19 hours a week	3	1.48%
20 to 34 hours a week	4	1.97%
35 to 49 hours a week	4	1.97%
50 hours or more a week	29	14.29%
Prefer not to say	7	3.45%
Not Answered	145	71.43%

Who you care for

There were 57 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Parent	15	7.39%
Partner/spouse	6	2.96%
Child with special needs	20	9.85%
Other family member	14	6.90%
Friend	1	0.49%
Other (please give details)	8	3.94%
Prefer not to say	4	1.97%
Not Answered	146	71.92%

If you answered 'other', please explain here:

There were 11 responses to this part of the question. Two cared for more than one person. Seven clarified the nature of their relationship to the cared for (for example, as a partner or a parent). One mentioned the needs of the cared-for, and two described a job role, while one noted that they did not look after anyone.

Armed Forces Service: Are you currently serving, or have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces (this includes Reservists or part-time service)?

There were 109 responses to this part of the question.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	5	2.46%
No	103	50.74%
Prefer not to say	1	0.49%
Not Answered	94	46.31%

Are you in a household or family where someone is currently or was previously serving in the UK Armed Forces?

There were 107 responses to this part of the question.

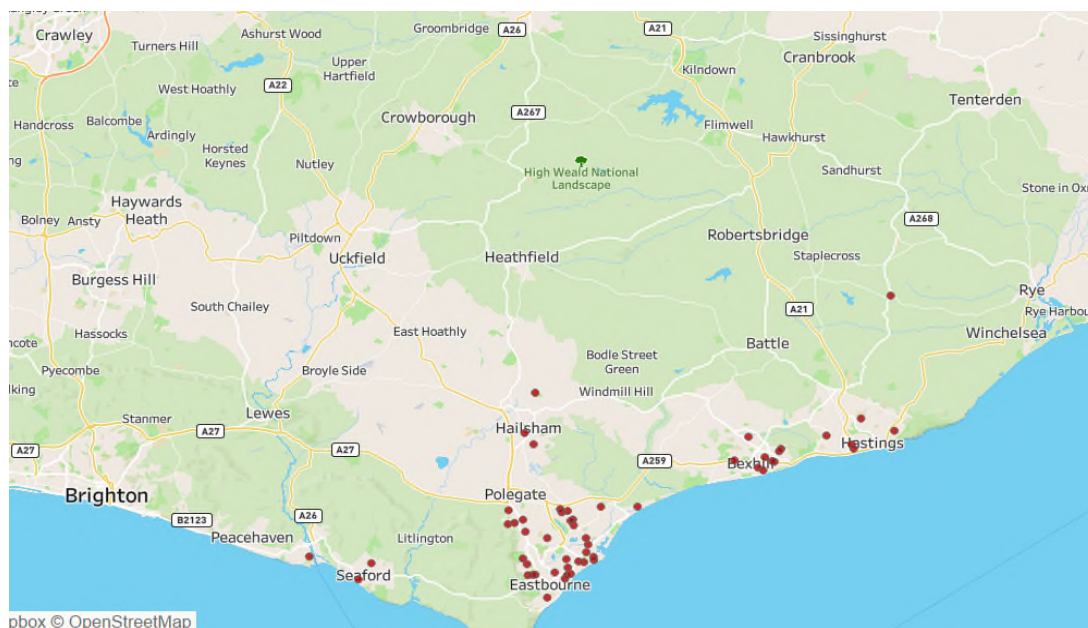
Option	Total	Percent
Yes	13	6.40%
No	93	45.81%
Prefer not to say	1	0.49%
Not Answered	96	47.29%

Please tell us your postcode:

There were 69 responses to this part of the question and 44 chose prefer not to say.

Postcode area	Total	Percentage of all 203 respondents
Eastbourne	36	18%
Wealden	12	6%
Lewes	1	Less than 1%
Rother	11	5%
Hastings	8	4%

1 postcodes (under 1%) provided outside of East Sussex.



Other feedback by email etc

Linden Court and Beeching Park consultation responses

There were 16 responses to the Linden Court and Beeching Park consultation by other feedback methods. The majority were submitted by email (14 responses) and the rest by letter (2).

The top respondent groups were family and carers (5 people) and organisations (5 responses). There were also responses from residents of East Sussex (3), a former worker and a member of parliament. One respondent did not say in which context they were responding as.

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- Healthwatch East Sussex
- Heartwood Project
- Ideal Complex Care
- NHS Sussex
- Wealden Citizens Advice

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment theme	Total
Views: Commute to services would be more complex	7
Views: Commuting cost to services would be harder to justify	4
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	3
Views: Disagree	3

Views: Don't close service	3
Views: Recognise need to make savings	3
Views: Alternative services are too far away	2
Views: Alternative services not suitable	2
Views: Care at home is not a substitute	2
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	2
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	2
Views: Shameful proposal	2
Service: Service is vital	1
Views: Agree in theory but travel issues make it unworkable	1
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Concerned where else people who access support would get it	1
Views: Concerned where families will get support instead	1
Views: Detrimental to disabled people in particular	1
Views: Disagree with using private organisations	1
Views: Don't cut and replace with substandard service	1
Views: Money won't be saved	1
Views: Proposal is morally wrong	1
Views: Need for this service is increasing	1
Views: Priorities are wrong	1
Views: Private support too expensive	1
Views: Proposal might work if there is support with transport and travel	1
Views: Shocked/saddened by proposal	1
Views: Short sighted	1

Service

Comment theme	Total
Service: Opportunity to socialise	5
Service: Lifeline to people	4
Service: Praise of staff	3
Service: Provides support centred on people who access it	3
Service: Safe environment	3
Service: High quality	2

Service: Only service of its sort	2
Service: Provides respite for family/carers	2
Service: Service key to wellbeing	2
Service offers help with life skills	1
Service: Achieved good outcomes	1
Service: Consistency of staffing is a positive	1
Service: Day services offers safeguarding opportunities	1
Service: Facilitates improved outcomes for people who access support, via family engagement	1
Service: Helps people to regain independence	1
Service: Immensely valued	1
Service: Praise of service	1
Service: Service built trust with people who access support	1
Service: Service is vital	1
Service: Supports family/friends of people who access support	1
Service: Value of day services generally	1
Service: Well integrated into local communities	1

Impact

Comment theme	Total
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	6
Impact: Poorer mental health	4
Impact: Poorer physical health	4
Impact: Routine change disruptive for people who access support	4
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	3
Impact: Destroy stability/support structure for people who access support	3
Impact: More challenging behaviour from people who access support	3
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	2
Impact: Even more limited services	2
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	2
Impact: Isolation	2

Impact: Loss of jobs	2
Impact: NHS	2
Impact: People's needs won't be met	2
Impact: Poorer access to support	2
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	2
Impact: Travel and parking would be worse	2
Views: Cause distress for people who access support	2
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: Couldn't cope without service	1
Impact: Cuts create inequality	1
Impact: Demoralise frontline staff affected by cut	1
Impact: Disruption to people's support	1
Impact: Financial hardship	1
Impact: Increase in crime	1
Impact: Less tailored or bespoke support	1
Impact: Lose connections built with people who access support and with colleagues	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: More pressure on the police	1
Impact: People will die	1
Impact: People would have to go into care	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Risk of East Sussex County Council not meeting statutory duties	1
Impact: Savings so small they won't justify impact on people who access support	1
Views: Service already under pressure with capacity	1

Suggestions

Comment theme	Total
Suggestion: Look for private investors/business to run it	3

Suggestions: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Keep parts of the service running	2
Suggestion: Provide transport to services	2
Suggestion: Cut operational costs	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Encourage alternative support - e.g., religious groups or wellbeing services	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should lobby government	1
Suggestion: Explore alternative solutions with partners/other providers	1
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	1
Suggestion: Joint transport between services	1
Suggestion: Listen to the consultation feedback	1
Suggestion: Locate any replacement in the same area	1
Suggestion: Make income by selling spaces to other local authorities	1
Suggestion: Partnerships with transport providers to help with cost	1
Suggestion: Use church buildings to limit costs of day services	1

Other comments

Comment theme	Total
Comment about personal circumstances	2
Other: Comment on consultation process or information	2
Other: Criticism of council	2
Other: Criticism of government	2
Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	2
Other: East Sussex County Council needs to provide detailed financial info on savings	2
Other: How are parents of special education needs adults consulted with?	2
Other: Many don't have a voice/can't communicate	2
Other: Question about staffing under the proposals	2

East Sussex County Council must be accountable for any consequential suicides or harm to people who access support	1
Other: ASC is poorly run	1
Other: Comment on other council spending	1
Other: Comment re consultation financial figures	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Question about attendance numbers under the proposals	1
Other: VCSE need services to signpost to	1
Other: Want to see the Equality Impact Assessment and proposed mitigations	1
Other: What assessments are required when changing special education needs services?	1
Other: What routes of appeal are there for challenging the decision?	1
Suggestion: Keep disruption to a minimum	1

Overall consultation responses

Responses addressing all 11 consultations combined

There were 10 responses addressing all 11 consultations at once by letter and email. These were from both organisations (5), residents (4) and a member of parliament (1).

The organisations who submitted a response are:

- Rother District Council
- Lewes Liberal Democrats
- Care for the Carers
- East Sussex VCSE Alliance
- East Sussex Seniors Associations

The tables below cover the comment themes for all the respondents.

Views

Comment themes	Total
Views: Cuts target the most vulnerable	6
Views: Recognise need to make savings	5
Views: Disagree	3
Views: Already housing crisis in East Sussex	2

Views: Concerned about impact of proposal	2
Views: Don't close service	2
Views: Limited capacity for VCSE sector to provide the support instead	2
Views: Morally wrong	2
Views: Proposal adds more cost in the long term	2
Views: Will shift cost onto districts and boroughs	2
Views: Angry with proposal	1
Views: Carers of people who access support care for multiple people already	1
Views: Carers vital for health and social care economy	1
Views: Concern about impact on level of support services can provide post-cuts	1
Views: Concern re timeframe for cuts	1
Views: Concerned where people would go instead	1
Views: Cuts unfair/unequal	1
Views: Detrimental to the elderly in particular	1
Views: Disagree with using private organisations	1
Views: East Sussex County Council wastes money	1
Views: Homelessness prevention statutory under the Homeless Reduction Act	1
Views: Impacts will be immediate for people who access support and for statutory services	1
Views: Insufficient time for other organisations to respond/mitigate risks	1
Views: Knows disabled people who could work but don't	1
Views: Must prioritise the most vulnerable	1
Views: Other services already struggling	1
Views: Private support too expensive	1
Views: Service vital for safeguarding people who access support and/or people around them	1
Views: Shameful proposal	1

Service

Comment themes	Total
Service: Prevents homelessness	1

Impact

Comment themes	Total
Impact: Increased pressure on other services	3
Impact: Poorer mental health	3
Impact: Financial hardship	2
Impact: Increased cost for other organisations	2
Impact: Poorer physical health	2
Impact: Increased burden on family/carer	1
Impact: Ability to maintain work and carer responsibilities	1
Impact: Add more costs in the long term	1
Impact: At risk of suicide	1
Impact: Carers will have less of a break	1
Impact: People who access support would be at increased risk	1
Impact: Community at increased risk	1
Impact: Encourages negative attitude towards people who need support	1
Impact: Hardship and poverty	1
Impact: Homelessness	1
Impact: Isolation	1
Impact: Loss of staff results in loss of tax revenue	1
Impact: Loss to the community	1
Impact: Lower quality of life	1
Impact: More people who access support would be in out-of-area accommodation	1
Impact: More hospital admissions	1
Impact: More people in crisis	1
Impact: Negative impact (unspecified)	1
Impact: Negative on carers	1
Impact: NHS	1
Impact: Poorer access to support	1
Impact: Reduce carers' wellbeing	1
Impact: Reduce wellbeing of people who access support	1
Impact: Risk of abuse/domestic abuse	1
Impact: Significant increase in people living in temporary accommodation	1

Impact: Unsuitable housing detrimental to child development	1
Impact: Use of alcohol and/or drugs	1

Suggestions

Comment themes	Total
Suggestion: Focus on prevention	3
Suggestion: Utilise existing and effective volunteer/charity support services	3
Suggestions: More joint working	3
Suggestion: Continue to support the most vulnerable	2
Suggestion: Allow VCSE partners to reduce rental outgoings	1
Suggestion: Build accommodation under a Community Land Trust	1
Suggestion: Consider impact of loss of winter fuel allowance	1
Suggestion: Cut management salaries	1
Suggestion: Do things differently and innovate	1
Suggestion: Don't cut prevention services	1
Suggestion: Don't cut service	1
Suggestion: East Sussex County Council should manage resources better	1
Suggestion: Prioritise support for young people coming out of care	1
Suggestion: Run accommodation/care homes as a business to generate profit	1
Suggestion: Signpost charities to other sources of funding	1
Suggestion: Transfer assets to voluntary sector	1
Suggestion: Work with partners to develop new model	1

Other comments

Other: Supporting and working with VCSE sector vital for improved outcomes	2
Other: Appreciation of East Sussex County Council's acknowledgement of impacts and commitment to co-production	1
Other: Care for the Carers must represent carers in design of alternative support	1

Other: Comment on consultation process or information	1
Other: Comment on government policy and country-wide issues not specific to consultations	1
Other: Comment re government funding	1
Other: Cost of temporary accommodation is driving financial instability in local authorities	1
Other: Districts and boroughs not in a financial position to cope with impacts of cuts	1
Other: East Sussex County Council must provide more information about alternatives and capacity	1
Other: Provide information on proposed alternatives/mitigations	1
Other: Question re raising awareness of consultations with public	1
Other: Want to see the Equality Impact Assessments and proposed mitigations	1
Other: Will this be all the cuts or is more needed?	1
Other: Would NHS & ASCH save by working together?	1

Consultation meetings

Consultation meetings were held at the day services for people who attend them and their parents and carers. Where needed a virtual meeting was also held. Lots of questions were asked at the meetings and [answers to these can be found in the frequently asked questions section](#) of the consultation webpage.

Date	Service	Meeting type	Number of attendees
14 October	Linden Court	In-person for people who attend the service	34
		In-person for parents and carers	51
17 October	Beeching Park	In-person for people who attend the service	45
		In-person for parents and carers	21
31 October	Beeching Park	Online for people who attend the service and parents/carers	3

Linden Court themes from adults who access the service

- **Views:** People are worried, upset and sad about the proposal and some said they don't like change. They love it at Linden Court and are settled there. They don't want the service to close and they are afraid they won't see their friends if it does.

People said it is unfair that the service could close because there isn't enough money. They are sad that the service could be taken away and they are worried about what it would mean for them.

Some said they would move to Beeching Park, but a few people said they would stay at home if Linden Court closed.

- **Service:** People said they like going to Linden Court and have made lots of friends. They wanted to know what the proposal would mean for the days/sessions they attend and if they would still be able to take part in the same activities.
- **Impact:** People talked about travel and how it would be harder to get to Beeching Park, as well as making their day much longer. Those living in supported living said the timing wouldn't work with staff shifts.

They were also worried about what the change would mean for their days/sessions and their other outside commitments. Some people said they would need to stick to their current days/sessions.

Some people are worried that a busier service won't suit them and others are worried about not knowing anyone. There are also concerns about how the change could affect people's health, and college leavers in the future.

- **Other comments:** A few people wanted more information about Beeching Park and the activities that would be on offer, including community sessions.

Linden Court themes from parent/carers

- **Views:** Everyone who spoke stated their strong opposition to the proposal. People said it is disgusting that closure of the service is even being considered, and added that they would be heartbroken if it closed.

People said they would fight the closure of the service, and that more money is needed from the government to fund essential services like this. Eastbourne has already lost services and they were determined that it should not lose another.

Many people said that Beeching Park wouldn't work for them or their family member. Bexhill is too far away and it is not practical to send people by bus or taxi. Travel times would be much longer and the journey is impossible for them and their family.

People said they hadn't seen a sound financial basis for closing the building. They felt the closure wouldn't save any money, as support still has to be paid for and transport and escort costs would be higher. There would also be a greater risk that people might not be able to remain at home if they couldn't attend a day service.

When other day services have closed the buildings have just been left to sit empty, and the same will happen if Linden Court closes.

- **Service:** People praised the service and the staff who work there. The people who attend the service are like family to each other.

Linden Court has a lovely big kitchen and garden, as well as offering a quieter service for those who wouldn't cope with a busier one.

People talked about how the service provides a lifeline to them. For some it has allowed the family to stay together.

Some people said the revised session times wouldn't work for them, as they need to be at work before then. One person challenged the rationale for changing the sessions being based on staff feedback.

- **Impact:** Simply hearing about the proposals has created a lot of worry. Change is difficult for people who use this service, and more of it would affect their life and wellbeing.

Meeting new people is hard and the stress of the change could affect people's behaviour. Parents and carers need the quality of life the service provides to allow them to keep looking after their family member.

If the proposal went ahead, people who attend the service would be negatively affected. It would also mean huge changes for parents and carers, as well as affecting their mental health. Many people have been coming to Linden Court for several years and some wouldn't understand the need to move.

People felt that Beeching Park wouldn't be suitable for them, because travelling there would be hard, or impossible, for their family member. Even if they could do the journey, it would take a lot longer.

For this reason, if Linden Court closed they would have limited options. This is because the service helps them to keep their family member at home. Meeting attendees said that it would push people into moving into supported living and residential care much sooner than needed. These services are more expensive so it would cost the Council more in the long term.

For some people the proposal would affect their ability to maintain their employment. Older parents and carers were also worried for the future and what it would mean for their family member.

- **Suggestions:** There is an alternative service in Bexhill, so why not close Beeching Park instead. Promote Linden Court and get more people using it so it is viable to keep it open.

Find the savings elsewhere and don't cut services for the vulnerable. Sell underused buildings and use that money to save Linden Court.

- **Other comments:** The Council wastes so much money and everyone knows that. People need to know that the decision is transparent and fair. The Council admits that there is more demand for services, but is still proposing to close Linden Court.

A few people said they hadn't had an assessment for years, so they didn't see how everyone could be assessed in time before the proposed closure of the service.

Beeching Park themes from adults who access the service

- **Sessions:** The top comment theme was about the sessions and the changes that would happen if the proposal went ahead. People said they enjoy their sessions and don't want them to change. They were also keen to know whether particular activities that they enjoy would still be offered.
- **Views:** Lots of people shared their views on the proposed change. Some thought it was a good idea and were looking forward to making new friends, but others were worried about it, particularly the fact that the service would be busier.
- **Impact:** Most of the comments about impact focused on what the change would mean for the days they attend the service, with most people keen to stick with their current days. Some also asked if it would affect the money they pay for the service. A couple of people wanted to know what the change would mean for their bus journey.
- **Other comments:** People asked questions about Linden Court and how many people/staff would move to Beeching Park, as well as asking about what the change would mean for them and their days/sessions/activities.

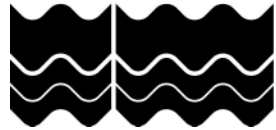
Beeching Park themes from parent/carers

- **Views:** Attendees were concerned about the implications of the proposal for people who attend the service and their families, particularly in relation to the disruption to the service and the impact on timetabling.

People felt it wasn't clear how the proposal had been arrived at, and that more information was needed on that. They also felt the proposal seems to target vulnerable people and said that councillors should spend a day in their shoes.

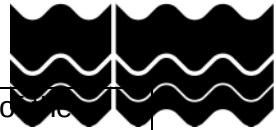
People said that the priority should be to maintain people's existing provision for those already attending Beeching Park. They also said the cost of transport would reduce the amount of savings that can be made.

- **Service:** One attendee said that the person they care for loves the service and doesn't talk about anything else.
- **Impact:** The reduction in session hours would affect everyone at both services. Attendees had concerns about changes to session times and the disruption that would cause, particularly if the person had other existing commitments.
- **Suggestions:** Suggestions included cutting management roles to save money and focusing on individual need, as not everyone will understand the reason for making the change.
- **Other comments:** It will be important to keep people updated about what is being proposed and when changes would happen.



Appendix 2 – Linden Court Day Services Equality Impact Analysis

Title of Project/Service/Policy	Linden Court day services in Eastbourne
Team/Department	Learning Disability Directly Provided Services
Directorate	Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)
Provide a comprehensive description of your Project (Service/Policy, etc.) including its Purpose and Scope	Summary of changes to original proposal The main body of this EqlA is for the original proposal to close Linden Court. Following the consultation process and equality impact analysis the proposal remains to close Linden Court but it is now recommended that the impact of this can be partly mitigated for some of the people who use the service, by another directly provided service, Beeching Park, running a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days per week. A small team would be available for one year to support people who would find the transition to Beeching Park or alternative independent options particularly difficult. Whilst there would still be some negative impact and disruption to adults attending Linden Court and their families, the revised recommendation would reduce this. Original proposal East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is facing a financial gap of £55million next year. This is the difference between the funding available and the cost of keeping services at their present level. We have developed a savings plan that sets out how we will close the funding gap. Where the proposals include significant changes to services there has been a public consultation on the area. The services that are managed within Learning Disability Directly Provided Services support over 500 adults across East Sussex. This support is offered in a number of different service areas: day services, community support services, respite services, Shared Lives and supported accommodation. As part of the savings plan a proposal was made to close the service at Linden Court in Eastbourne and instead find adults places in alternative services run by ASCH or other providers. As above, this now includes a



	proposal for a satellite service in Eastbourne to help reduce the impact of the closure for some of the people using the service. Linden Court is a day service for people with learning disabilities and it is based in Eastbourne, the service is operational four days a week (closed on Tuesdays) between the hours of 08:30 to 16:30 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 08:30 to 19:00 on Thursday. Sessions are offered throughout this time from 09:00 –12:00; 12:30 – 15:30 and 16:00 to 19:00 on Thursday in the community. The building-based daytime sessions include art, cookery, music, sport, multimedia, and gardening. The service is used by 46 adults accessing the day service, mostly within the building and a small amount of community activity. Some adults require a smaller, quieter setting as they struggle with large groups and noise. The day service in Eastbourne has had low occupancy since the pandemic where, unlike other day services, attendance failed to pick up. It will be possible to offer the same quantity of provision at Beeching Park in Bexhill which would extend its opening to five days a week, increasing its current building-based provision by 25%, and maintain the offer of 3 sessions a day: morning, afternoon and twilight. Beeching Park, as with all our day services, has a standard attendee to staff ratio of 5:1 and provides 1:1 support to attendees where required. To enable us to provide a day service option for the adults who use Linden Court at Beeching Park, we would need to increase its staffing capacity and open for an additional day each week. Therefore, the saving is calculated as the budget of Linden Court less the cost of increased provision at Beeching Park. Adults with Learning Disabilities and their Carers will be affected by this proposal. Staff affected by this proposal are outside the scope of this EqIA and the change process will be managed in conjunction with Human Resources.
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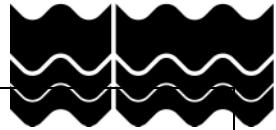
1. Update on previous EqlAs and outcomes of previous actions (if applicable)

What actions did you plan last time? (List them from the previous EqlA)	What improved as a result? What outcomes have these actions achieved?	What <u>further</u> actions do you need to take? (add these to the Action Plan below)
When savings had to be made in 2018, the EIA action plan included: • adult and carer individual reviews • providing information taking communication needs into account • putting transition plans in place • support in finding alternative services	The changes allowed us to focus support on those who needed it most. Alternative support provisions were arranged by Care Management.	None. Actions for the current proposal are set out for each section below.

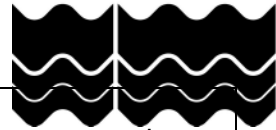
2. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Consider the actual or potential impact of your project (service, or policy) against each of the equality characteristics.

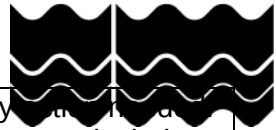
Protected characteristics groups under the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts identified from data and feedback (actual and potential)	What can you do? All potential actions to: • advance equality of opportunity, • eliminate discrimination, and • foster good relations										
Age	According to the 2021 Census, the proportion of the population of East Sussex aged 65 and over now stands at 26.1%, up from 22.7% in 2011. Proportion of Population by age range (%): <table> <tr> <td>East Sussex</td> <td>0-19</td> <td>20-44</td> <td>45-64</td> <td>65+</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>21</td> <td>25</td> <td>28</td> <td>26</td> </tr> </table>	East Sussex	0-19	20-44	45-64	65+		21	25	28	26	Within the consultation, the age range for 45 to 54 years old was the top respondent group (12%), followed by age 65+ (9%), although we had responses from most age groups.	There is a smaller proportion of those aged 65+ compared to the population of the county and ASCH adults receiving long term support overall. This is to be expected as life expectancy is considerably lower for people with a learning disability.	No specific mitigations required for this characteristic.
East Sussex	0-19	20-44	45-64	65+										
	21	25	28	26										



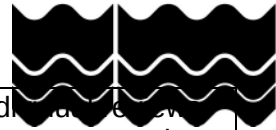
	England 23 33 26 18 <u>According to Age UK</u>, three out of ten people aged 65 to 74 and two-thirds of those aged 75 and over are not online. The age range of adults using this service is: • 18-30 24 • 30-40 6 • 40-50 8 • 50-60 5 • 60+ 5 The total number of young people who will be turning 18 and transitioning to ASC are: • this financial year (2024-2025): 10 (4 of these are 18 already, 6 are 17 years old), (2 of the 10 are external referrals so did not transfer from CDS) • 2025-2026: 14 • 2026-2027: 15			
Disability	In the 2021 census, 20.3% of East Sussex residents were living with a long-term physical or mental health condition or impairment that affected their ability to carry out day-to-day activities in 2021, the same proportion as in 2011 (compares to 18% for England & Wales).	The 2024 consultation told us that change is particularly unsettling to people using these services; Linden court users have been used to having a quieter environment and are likely to experience a busier environment in alternative service provision.	All adults accessing the services included in the proposals have a learning disability or have recognised additional needs. Some people may have further complexities such as sensory impairment or sensitivities, physical disabilities	All adults who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package, in light of service changes, continues to meet their assessed needs.



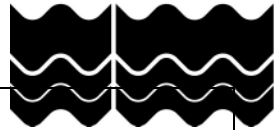
	34.8% of households in East Sussex had at least one member identifying as disabled under the Equality Act in 2021. The number of working age adults with a Primary Support Reason of Learning Disability Support receiving community based services during the year 2023/4 is 1068. According to Ofcom research, people with a learning disability are most likely to say that their use of TVs or computers is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition. Nearly two in ten (18%) said their use of TVs or computers was limited or prevented, while around one in ten said the same for the internet, landline, smartphones or simple mobile phones. All adults are being supported due to learning disability. In addition there are 9 adults with Autism (with one with additional physical needs), 5 with additional physical needs (one of these with an additional sensory impairment), and 4 with a neurological disability. - 18 adults in total. .	Some people may find this difficult. People with sensory conditions are particularly likely to be negatively impacted by this proposal. NHS Sussex told us that consideration should be given to what services there would be for people who need a quieter environment due to other diagnoses and sensory sensitivities. Sensory sensitivities, can lead to people feeling overwhelmed in noisy or busy environments and can lead to difficulties with social communication and/or interaction, requiring appropriate support and provision. If these needs are not met, it could lead to increasing instances of behaviours that challenge services, and require more resource intensive, higher cost, multi-agency input in the medium and longer term. Those responding to the consultation told us that closing the service would lead to poorer mental health for	and other health problems which may impact on them further. A change in routine may cause adults anxiety and less opportunity for social interaction and ongoing skills development. Any changes agreed may also cause adults increased emotional and/ or psychological distress. There may be an increased reliance on other services for example, health services.	There are several adults who attend Linden Court that would find moving to a full, busy day service challenging. We propose to have a small specific team to work with these adults for a year to either assist them to integrate into Beeching Park or, if their needs remain for a more bespoke provision, assist the transition to this when it is identified. Where ASCH directly provided services are not sufficient or appropriate to meet the assessed needs of individuals, Care Managers will seek alternative support solutions. We will communicate changes to adults and their parents/carers appropriately and will work with them to
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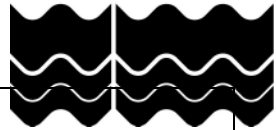
		those affected and could lead to more challenging behaviour. People who attend the service say that they would have to attend on the same days and times at another service as they have other commitments that cannot move. 18% of respondents have a physical or mental health condition or long-term illness.		identify and support them. Options may include information and advice about alternative services where available as well as referral to advocacy services. Communications' preferences will be met, for example, via Easy read Adult Consultation pack/ covering letter, Easy read leaflets relating to proposed changes in services, etc. Staff will provide additional support to help adults understand the changes being proposed. Information will be provided in an accessible format for those with sensory impairments.
Gender reassignment	The 2021 East Sussex Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer + (LGBTQ+) ¹ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be 5,572 Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD)	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	There are no adults with this protected characteristic.	If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during



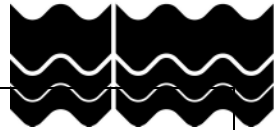
	people (1% of the population) living in East Sussex 2021 Census: 1640 residents declared their gender identity was different to that assigned at birth which is 0.4% of the population. Adult data tells us that there are no adults with this protected characteristic.			the individual review or assessment and appropriate support would be provided.
Pregnancy and maternity	There are just under 5,000 births per year in East Sussex. Hastings has the highest overall birth rate as well as for women aged 15-19 years. Lewes and then Rother have the highest birth rates for women aged 35-44 years. Adult data for the service tells us that there are no adults with this protected characteristic	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	There are no adults with this protected characteristic.	If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during the individual reviews or assessment and appropriate support would be provided
Race (ethnicity) Including migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	88.3% of usual residents of East Sussex said that they belonged to the White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British ethnic group. Black and minority ethnic groups including white minority groups (Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma, Other White) make up 11.7% of usual residents in East Sussex. This compares to 18.8% in England. In 2021, 93.9% (512,440) of usual residents in East Sussex identified their ethnic group within the high-level "White" category, a decrease from 96.0% (505,420) in the 2011 Census, but still significantly higher than the English national average (81.0%) and	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	The data indicates that the race and ethnicity of adults using the service is reflective of the County generally.	We will ensure access to translation and interpreting services if required; ensure staff are aware of the process and that the information translated is still in Easy Read. Culturally appropriate services to be considered as part of the individual review of needs as required.



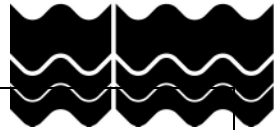
	also higher than the average for the South East region (86.6%). 4.6% were of another white background; 1.6% were Asian/ Asian British, 0.5% were Black/ Black British and 1.3.% were from other ethnic backgrounds. Those selecting a non-UK identity only accounted for 5.5% of the overall population (29,880 people), which is an increase from 4.3% of the population (23,090 people) in 2011. The most common non-UK identities are Polish, Irish, Romanian, Portuguese and Italian. A higher percentage of the population in East Sussex identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller than the national average (0.2% compared to 0.1%). Of adults using this service: • 37 White British • 1 Asian/ Asian British • 1 Black/Black British – African • 1 Mixed - White And Black Caribbean • 2 Any Other Ethnic Group • 2 White - Any Other Background • Ethnicity not recorded for 2 adults One adult speaks Italian and does not speak English.			
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Religion or belief	In 2021, 45.9% (250,330) of usual residents of East Sussex identified as Christian, down from 59.9% (315,650) in 2011. The second most common religion in East Sussex after Christianity is Islam. The proportion of the population stating they were Muslim increased from 0.8% of the usual resident population (4,200) in 2011 to 1.1% (6,190) in 2021. This is low compared to both the South East Regional and the English national averages, with 3.3% of residents in the South East specified their religion as Islam, and 6.7% across the whole of England. Details of the impact upon religion and belief on ASC: Religion and Belief in Health and Social Care Assessments -	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	We do not routinely collect this information. However, where an adult requests a specific need to be supported with their religion this is recorded on their support plan.	Ensure any support requirements relating to religion or belief are identified via the review process and recorded on support plans.
Sex	Of the population of East Sussex, 299,064 (52%) are female and 270,788 (48%) are male. Of adults attending Linden Court: 32 are female 14 are male	More women than men took part in the consultation survey – 41% compared to 12%, although 43% did not answer the question. No responses were received in terms of impact upon those	Compared to the population of the County, proportionately more women will be affected by this proposal.	Any support needs specifically based on a person's sex will be covered in the individual reviews.



		with this protected characteristic.		
Sexual orientation	The 2021 East Sussex LGBTQI+ Comprehensive Needs Assessment estimates that there may be between 17,273 and 39,004 LGB+ people living in East Sussex (between 3.1% and 7% of the population) According to the 2021 Census 3.3% of East Sussex residents declared themselves as LGB+. 11 adults recorded as heterosexual, data was not available for the remainder.	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	Data on this protected characteristic is limited and we cannot make an accurate assessment of dis/proportionate impact.	If there were adults with this protected characteristic, any support needs would be picked up during the individual reviews or assessment and appropriate support would be provided. Improve data collection on this characteristic.
Marriage and civil partnership	According to 2021 census data for East Sussex: • Single 29% • Married 46.5% • Civil Partnership 0.4% • Divorced 11% • Widowed 8% One adult is recorded as married.	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	One adult is married, the majority are single.	No specific mitigations required.
Armed Forces	There were 19,917 households (8.3% of all households) in East Sussex with at least one person who had served in the UK armed forces.	No responses were received in terms of impact upon those with this protected characteristic.	This does not affect any of the adults using this service.	N/A

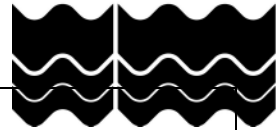


	Whilst adults will not have served in the Armed Forces, it is not known whether anyone in their households has.			
Impacts on community cohesion		Respondents to the consultation told us that socialisation is a key part of attending Linden Court and this will be lost if the service closes. People told us that their links with their local community would be lost. Future school/college leavers in the area wouldn't have a local service they could transition to.	Community connections built up around Linden Court, via for example the use of local venues or businesses, will be lost.	There are no identified specific mitigations.

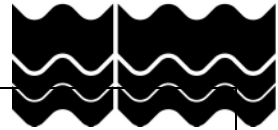
Additional categories

(identified locally as potentially causing / worsening inequality)

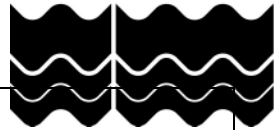
Characteristic	What do you know?	What do people tell you?	What does this mean?	What can you do?
Rurality	74% of the population in East Sussex lives in an urban area with the remaining 26% living in a rural area (2021 census). Adult data shows they live: • 26 in Eastbourne • 10 in Hailsham • 2 in Seaford, • 1 in Bexhill, • 1 in Hastings	Concern over transport was a recurring theme within the consultation although this was in terms of distance to Bexhill rather than specifically relating to those in rural areas.	Transport links and services are less available in some rural areas compared to larger towns, which may reduce the availability and choice of alternative services e.g. personal assistants, should these be required.	Transport requirements will be reviewed as part of an individual assessment. Transport to alternative service provision will be part of support plans.



	6 in the more rural areas - Westham, Polegate and Pevensey. Below is a map of adults' addresses.  LD%20Linden%20Map.docx			
Carers	There are over 10,000 persons claiming Carer's Allowance in East Sussex. (Source Department of Work and Pensions Feb 2020). Care for the Carers estimates that there are 69,241 unpaid carers in East Sussex, it is difficult to know the actual number of carers because many are hidden. There are 36 adults who live with family/ carers and have unpaid carers.	The number of carers taking part (26%) in the consultation reflected the fact that the family and carers of people using the services was the top respondent group; 14% of respondents provide 50 or more hours of care per week and 5% provide 9 or more hours. Carers told us that driving longer distances to reach another day centre would add extra pressure to their already difficult lives. Families and carers told us that Linden Court is a lifeline that allows them to continue in their caring role and to maintain their	Carers of working age who are employed may be negatively impacted if they have structured their working hours around day services at Linden Court. This may result in carers not being able to maintain their current employment and potentially experience a reduction to their income. The proposals may cause additional stress on family environments and family life as a whole. Carers may also have other caring responsibilities for other family members e.g. children or other relatives.	Carers will be offered assessments or reviews. Impact of the change and support will be considered as part of these reviews. This will include the benefits and timing of respite breaks. Continuing to provide a satellite day service in Eastbourne will mitigate this risk for those most impacted by the proposed change.



		employment if they have a job. The biggest concern with Beeching Park is the journey. People say that it would be a much longer and more complicated commute, with many saying that it just wouldn't work for their family; some had already tried it out to confirm that.		
Other groups that may be differently affected (including but not only: homeless people, substance users, care leavers)	East Sussex is fifth most deprived of 26 County Councils. 13% of people aged 60 plus were living in poverty in 2019 (source Joint Strategic Needs Assessment). 10.3% of households were in fuel poverty in 2019 compared to 9.3 % in England.	People told us that they cannot afford the taxi fare to Bexhill so will not be able to access services.	According to research by British Association of Social Workers (2023) people with a learning disability are likely to be at higher risk of the potential health risks and consequences of cold weather and fuel poverty than the general population. It was estimated that people with a learning disability spent far more on things like transport, medication and energy than someone without a disability. So the financial implications of additional transport costs are more likely to impact	Any transport requirements to alternative service provision will be considered as part of support planning and the person's package of care. Learning Disability England has been running a cost of living hub . There is information on resources, campaigns, advice on staying warm & financial help in there.



			people who use this service.	
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Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations - include assessment of cumulative impacts (where a change in one service/policy/project may have an impact on another)

We received 373 responses to the consultation. Most people strongly disagreed with the proposal to close Linden Court, with only 6% agreeing. The key issues raised within the consultation were that the commute to alternative provision in Bexhill is more complex/ expensive, a change in routine is disruptive for adults with learning disabilities, there will be an increased burden on family/carers and there will be an impact upon socialisation as well as mental health of adults and carers.

If the proposal is agreed, whilst alternative locations would be offered, meaning access to day services would remain, it is likely that there would still be a negative impact on adults with a learning disability.

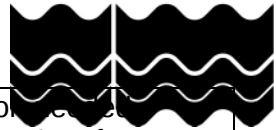
It is likely that adults and their families and carers would experience anxiety related to change.

Through consolidating two day services into one building it is likely that an environment will be created that will be busier than the current position at Linden Court which could be challenging for adults with who require a quiet environment. If the proposal is agreed we will offer a small specific team to work with these adults for a year to either assist them to integrate into Beeching Park or, if it is not a suitable placement after this input for a more bespoke provision, assist the transition to this when it is identified. We will also offer a satellite day service at Eastbourne which will mitigate the impact. Noting that there is likely to be a reduced overall provision of smaller, quieter day services in the county if Linden Court were to close.

If the proposals are agreed, all adults who are affected would be offered an individual review to consider whether their support package, in light of service changes, continues to meet their assessed needs. Where it is identified that the services directly provided by ASCH are not sufficient to meet the assessed needs of individuals, Care Managers will seek alternative support solutions.

The proposed reduction may also impact directly on carers' mental and physical health. As part of the individual service reviews mentioned above, carers would be offered a carer's assessment, or a review of their assessment, to determine whether support packages continue to meet their assessed need.

There will be as much notice as possible to allow consultation and time for adjustments to be made .



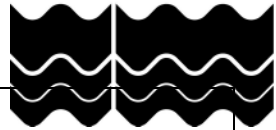
If the proposal is agreed, we will communicate changes to adults and their parents/carers appropriately and will work with them to identify action. Options may include information and advice about alternative services where available as well as referral to advocacy services. Communications' preferences will be met via the following options:

- All communication materials produced in 'Easy read' formats
- Any meetings about the changes for parents/carers will be scheduled to take place both during the day and in the evenings to provide flexibility for people who work during the day. Meetings will be held in a range of venues across the county.
- Easy read posters giving details of Advocacy support and scheduled Advocacy meetings
- Information in required, accessible formats for those with sensory impairments
- Information and advice translated into other languages, in easy read format, as required

To ensure existing and future service provision continues to meet the needs of those coming through from Children's Services, we will work closely with the Transitions team.

3. List detailed data and/or community feedback that informed your EqIA

Source and type of data (e.g. research, or direct engagement (interviews), responses to questionnaires, etc.)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
ESCC 2024 Consultation	Nov/ Dec 2024	N/A	N/A
East Sussex in Figures – Data Observatory – Welcome to East Sussex in Figures			

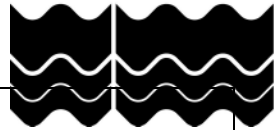


Await outcomes of Disability Rights Reference Group and Inclusion Advisory Group.			
Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services Research summary: Learning disability (Ofcom 2019)			
Learning Disability - Health Inequalities Research Mencap			
Stuck at home - the impact of day service cuts on people with a learning disability FINAL.doc (mencap.org.uk)			
Spotlight on Poverty: People with Learning Disabilities BASW			

4. Prioritised Action Plan

NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes identified.

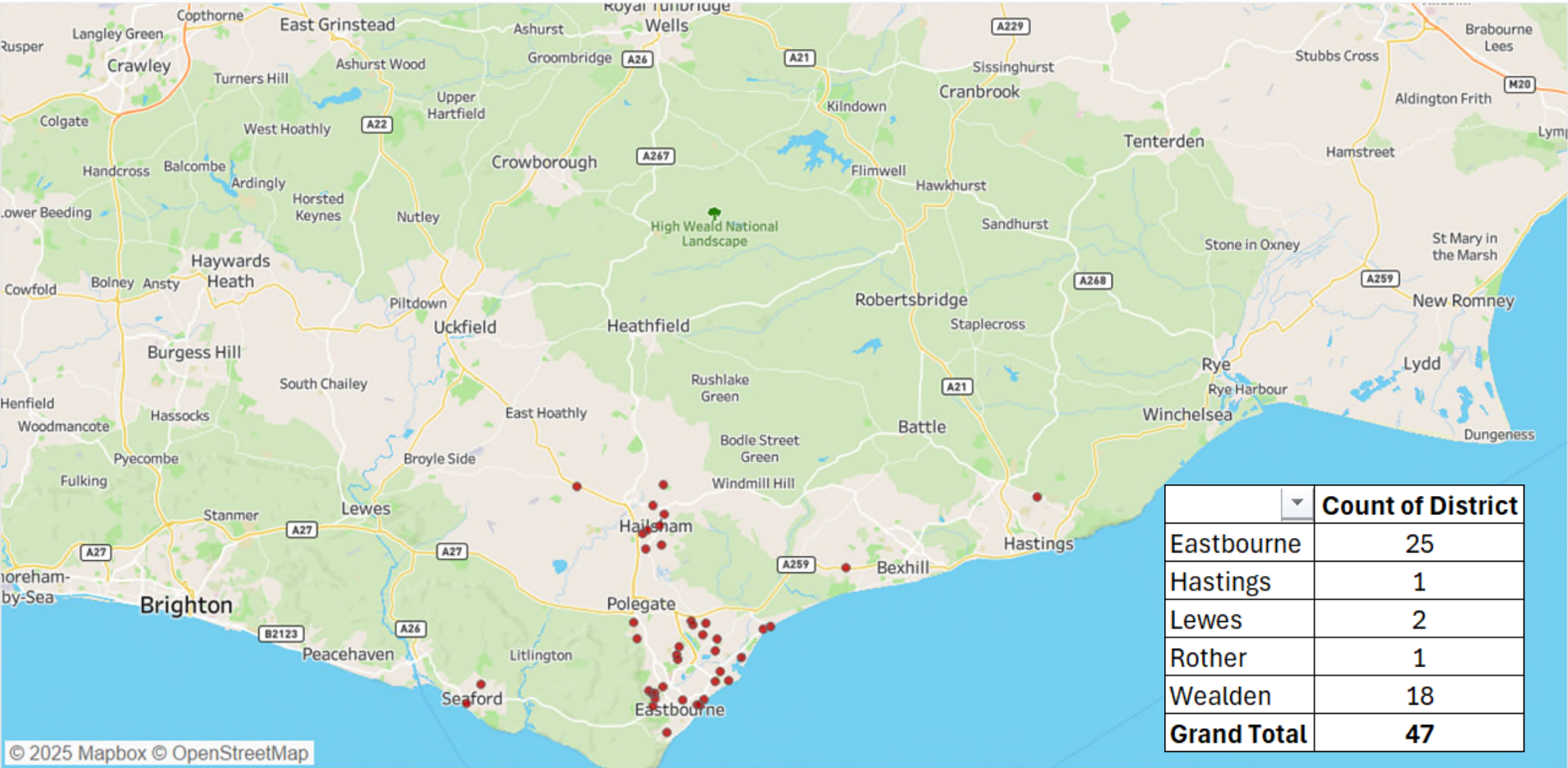
Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
All	Individual reviews of adult's support needs will be undertaken for everyone affected by a reduction in service. Care managers, adults and	Support plans updated to reflect changes in services.	Care and support needs continue to be met	To reflect implementation of savings' proposals (all actions).



	carers will have a discussion about the impact of the change and how best to support them through it.			
All	A transition plan is proposed to ensure that all adults experience a consistent level of support from at least one service.	As above.	As above.	
Disability	Consultation, information and guidance to be provided in accessible formats as required such as Easy Read. Additional help to understand the changes will be provided by staff.	Adults and carers have input into changes to services.	Care and support needs continue to be met.	
All	Where possible, new solutions would be sought through the use of Direct Payments which can be used flexibly and adults would be supported to make choices and decisions about available options.	Support plans updated to reflect changes.	As above.	
Carers	Carers' reviews will also be undertaken.	As above.	As above	
All	Beeching to set up a satellite service in Eastbourne on 2 days per week. A dedicated team will be set up to support those affected by the changes, to help them adjust and provide support in finding alternative options.	Support plans updated to reflect changes in services.	Care and support needs continue to be met .	
Sexual orientation	Improve data collection on sexuality	Better information on sexual orientation of people with a learning disability	Better dataset on this characteristic	From March 2025

Appendix 3 – Map showing where adults currently attending Linden Court reside

Linden Court



Map based on Longitude (generated) and Latitude (generated).The data is filtered on Service, which keeps Linden.

Appendix 4 – Map of alternative day service provision

