



**Nottinghamshire
County Council**

Beeston North Children's Centre Community Consultation – Main Report

Written for: Sure Start Children's Centre Team
Nottinghamshire County Council

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August 2006

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Main Report

1. Background to the Research

- In line with the Government's current initiative to introduce Children's Centres into communities which fall within the top 20% of disadvantaged wards nationally, Nottinghamshire was given the go-ahead for 21 centres to be completed by March 2006, with 3 more to be started in Round One, but completed in Round Two by 2007. A further 25 were planned for Round 2, which is now underway.
- Children's Centres are intended to provide services and support to children, aged from 0-5 years, their parents and carers, based on partnerships between statutory, voluntary and private organisations and the local authority.
- It is the government's policy to develop Children's Centres within partnerships. Some may be based on a 'strong link' partnership, bringing together existing facilities (e.g. neighbourhood nursery, infants and junior schools, family centre, library, health centre, community centre). Some may involve a new building, creating a one-stop centre attached to or on a school site. Even with a new 'one stop building', there will be a need for sound partnerships with other providers throughout the area.
- All Children's Centres will provide day-care, with a qualified Early Years teacher leading the curriculum. Some day care places in each centre will be reserved for families in the immediate locality.
- Work in conjunction with existing Sure Start programmes is in hand, both to learn from their experience and ensure that remaining capital is spent in a timely and cohesive manner.
- Depending on the variable position in childcare, education and other support in local communities, parents/carers and other residents are likely to have different experiences, and therefore will have variable views and feelings about the advent of a Children's Centre in their community.
- Understanding the views of both users and providers, who may be affected in the short and longer term by the implementation of the programme, is vital to ensure that the rollout of Children's Centres is successful and well received within communities.
- Central to the development of Children's Centres is parental involvement and participation, leading to parental involvement in the management and governance of the centres, as appropriate structures emerge.
- Development of the Children's Centres is for families with children under 5; the centres have the potential for wider community use however and could develop into 'community centres for children' serving a wider age-range and incorporating, for example, after school care, holiday clubs etc.
- The interviews and the focus group were conducted in an inclusive manner, to enable any parent, worker or member of the community who wished to take part in the consultation to do so. The team aimed to comply with equal opportunities policies and principles throughout the consultation.
- Where possible, hard-to-reach families have been included, where service providers or other agencies were able to give contact details and encourage participation.

2. Aim and Objectives of the Consultation

- Overall Aim:
 - to find out parents' and carers' views and opinions of services on offer for families and young children in their area and how best their requirements can be met in the future with the development of Children's Centres.
 - to involve community members and partners in planning together to develop the optimal Children's Centre services for the community.

Specific objectives are:

- i. To identify current provision of child care, education, health services, family support, leisure facilities and other services relevant to young children and their families, through existing sources where these exist, such as Children's Information Service (CIS), databases or local knowledge
- ii. To identify gaps in the current provision of these services through the involvement and knowledge of service providers, and through discussion with local parents and the community
- iii. To determine which known services on offer are used by parents/carers
- iv. To determine levels of use of services amongst local parents/carers
- v. To gather information on how parents/carers rate the current services used and to seek views on how service delivery could be improved locally
- vi. To understand the likely take-up amongst local parents/carers of the proposed Children's Centre
- vii. To determine an appropriate mechanism for receiving and disseminating information from different local groups
- viii. To identify local anxieties/perceptions/expectations and potential problems for a new Children's Centre amongst parents/carers and partners
- ix. To establish appropriate benchmarks for future research and evaluation
- x. To conduct communications with parents in such a way that future involvement and participation in Children's Centres is encouraged and promoted
- xi. To use the information gathered in the consultation to help create the delivery plan

3. Methodology

- The consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents, through completion of a questionnaire; a questionnaire distributed to service providers and key stakeholders in the area, who were also invited to include a list of services in the area; one focus group with parents recruited via the questionnaire, who also completed a mapping exercise.
- As a joined-up approach between Nottinghamshire County Council, Broxtowe and Hucknall PCT (the commissioned accountable body for Children's Centres in the Broxtowe district) and Nottingham City Council, consultations were completed in Beeston North and Lenton Abbey with parents from both areas using the same core questionnaire. In addition Lenton Abbey residents were interviewed with an additional set of questions as part of the specific objectives of Nottingham City Council's consultation. A separate report for the Lenton Abbey interviews has been produced by the TANC consultancy.

3.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- The initial phase of the consultation consisted of face-to-face interviews with parents. It was planned to include:
 - Parents/carers with children at local schools
 - Parents/carers who are users of local pre-school and other sessions for parents and young children
 - Parents/carers living locally
- During the consultation the following locations were used to help target parents and carers from the local area.
 - Beeston Fields School and Nursery
 - Round Hill School and Nursery
 - Bounders Toy Library (opposite Beeston Fields School)
 - Beeston North Shops
 - Lenton Abbey Shops
 - Beeston Library (opposite Round Hill School)
 - Lenton Abbey Fun Day
 - Beeston Baby Clinics
- Most interviews were conducted on Thursday 13th July 2006 by a team of interviewers located outside the local schools - Beeston Fields Primary School and Round Hill Primary School. Both these schools have morning and afternoon nursery sessions and are the main catchment schools for Beeston North and Lenton Abbey.
- Parents/carers living in Beeston North or Lenton Abbey who have children aged 8 and below were invited to take part in the interview which took about 10 minutes. A list of postcodes was used to help determine in which ward respondents lived.
- The interviewer team included workers from the Children's Centre team, staff from Sure Start Eastwood and Chilwell, a volunteer from Nottingham University and researchers from Silver Dialogue and also the TANC consultancy.
- Interviews with Lenton Abbey parents were also carried out at the Lenton Abbey Fun Day event on July 8th 2006 by the TANC consultancy on behalf of Nottingham City Council.
- Interviews were conducted at baby clinics in the area by a student health visitor throughout week commencing July 10th 2006.

- Further interviews with Beeston North parents were made on the day of the focus group, July 19th 2006, outside Beeston North shops.
- To further supplement interview numbers for Beeston North parents, the Toy Library coordinator kindly contacted members living in the area to gain their permission to take part in interviews over the telephone. Postcodes were used to target those living in Beeston North. Five interviews were conducted in this way.
- As the main interviewing day was held on a Thursday, also the day of the Toy library and Toddlers Group at Bounders Community Centre, interviewers also stood outside this Centre (opposite Beeston Fields School's gates). Only one family was seen and were interviewed as they left the Community Centre. They were new to the area and had visited the toy library to find out what was going on. Unfortunately although they had entered the community building they had not been able to locate the room with the toy library nor had they found anybody to ask.
- The questionnaire included an incentive prize draw for a Child's Arts & Crafts set, and an invitation to take part in the planned focus group. Permission was asked of respondents to allow their contact details to be included on the Children's Centre database. Contact detail sheets were kept separately from completed questionnaires to ensure confidentiality of responses. The prize draw was drawn at the focus group the following week.

3.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- Partners, key stakeholders and service providers from Beeston North and Lenton Abbey were invited along to an open information session, held at Beeston Fields School on 28th June 2006. They were informed about the planned consultations in Beeston North to be carried out on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council by Silver Dialogue and in Lenton Abbey for Nottingham City Council through the TANC consultancy. Presentations were made at this meeting by Sure Start, Silver Dialogue and TANC.
- Attendees were given a self-completion questionnaire to take away with them and invitees that couldn't attend were sent a questionnaire by post or e-mail with a covering letter encouraging them to return this.
- Other service providers, including 61 registered childminders, within the area were also sent the questionnaire, with a covering letter, leaflet about Children's Centres and a reply paid envelope.
- They were also asked to complete a mapping exercise, giving details of the services they were aware of in the Beeston North and Lenton Abbey areas, with times and contact details.
- The mapping exercise would be used to develop a map of services available in the area to identify any service provision gaps or overlaps, for future planning.
- The opportunity to give contact details was provided so that the team could make contact in the future, and all but one of the respondents completed this section.
- By the date that the survey was required to be completed only 4 surveys had been returned. Email and telephone reminders were made. To speed up response times, the Email reminder message contained two ways for respondents to fill out the survey - a WORD version as an attached file and a link to a web survey version. One questionnaire was in fact completed over the phone.

3.3 Focus Group

- Parents taking part in the survey at the Lenton Abbey Fun Day on July 8th 2006 and during the main interviewing day at Beeston Fields School and Round Hill School on 13th July were asked whether they would be interested in attending the focus group to be held on 19th July between 1.30 and 3.15 at Beeston Fields School. A good response was received with 23 parents from Lenton Abbey and 11 from Beeston North showing an interest in attending the focus group.
- Respondents were recruited randomly by telephone from the list of interested respondents. Four respondents from Beeston North and nine from Lenton Abbey were recruited. Confirmation letters were sent out on Saturday 15th July.
- In addition focus group invitation letters were sent to three Beeston North parents who were interested but had not provided telephone contact numbers. None of these letter invitees phoned to confirm their attendance nor did they attend the focus group.
- The afternoon/evening before the focus group the respondents were phoned again (as pre-arranged) to check their attendance and crèche requirements. Four respondents from Lenton Abbey dropped out of the focus group at this stage.
- Three confirmed attendees did not turn up for the focus group.
- The focus group finally consisted of three parents from Beeston North and three from Lenton Abbey.
- A free crèche provided by Sure Start Eastwood and Chilwell was available in the school for those parents who wished to use it. Three children were booked into these crèche facilities. A six-week-old baby stayed with its Mother during the group.
- A mapping exercise was conducted as part of the focus group to gather parents' perceptions about existing services in the area for them and their children.
- As part of the introduction to the group, an explanation about Children's Centres was given by a local Sure Start representative. This was seen as a good way of enabling a wider understanding of the concept by parents before the discussion started.
- All attendees were given a £10 Boots voucher as a thank you gift for their help.

4. Observations on the Samples

4.1 Parent's Questionnaire

- 49 interviews were completed for Beeston North parents and 30 for Lenton Abbey parents. The analyses of the Lenton Abbey surveys are reported elsewhere, in the TANC Consultancy report. Sure Start data for these neighbourhoods show that there are 278 children under 5 living in Beeston North and 170 in Lenton Abbey. The 49 parents interviewed from Beeston North accounted for 49 or 18% of the under 5s living in Beeston North. This was less than the desired total of 70 (25% of the target group), but nevertheless was a useful level of response.
- 39 or 80% of the respondents were female, while only 10 (20%) were male.
- Close to half (47%) of the respondents were aged 30-39. There were no under 20s interviewed. 27% were aged 20-29, 18% were 40-49 and 8% were aged 50 or more.
- The parents interviewed accounted for 103 children living in Beeston North of the following ages: 49 under 5s, 50 aged 5 to 16 and 4 aged 16 plus.
- The average number of children per family was 2.2.
- On average the respondents had 1 child aged under 5 and 1 aged 5 to 16. Most people (90%) were reported as having no children over 16. There were only three households with children aged over 16 and over.
- Just over half (53%) of the respondents had one child under 5. One in five (20%) had two children aged under 5 and one parent had three under 5. One in five had no children under 5 (n.b. parents with children aged 8 and below were targeted for the interviews).
- Only 1 person of those who responded revealed that they were expecting a baby, with 5 not responding to this question. The vast majority (88%) were not pregnant at this time.
- Most households (33 or 67%) had two adults aged 18 or more living together, whilst 11 or 22% lived in households with only one adult. 8% reported having three or more adults in the household. The average was 1.9 adults (18 and above) per household.
- 20% of the respondents were single, 73% were married or partnered. One respondent described themselves as 'other', such as widowed.
- The number of adults working per household was quite evenly split between no adults working (31%), one adult working (29%) and a slightly higher proportion with two adults working (39% or two out of five).
- A third of the respondents (16 or 33%) were working part-time. 16% worked full time. 6% described themselves as unemployed whilst 43% were parent/carers/grandparents. 2% were other relative or friends.
- 88% of respondents were white, 1 was black African, 4 (8%) were Asian - Pakistani and 1 was mixed race.
- An analysis of postcodes showed that 84% or 41 out of the 49 respondents lived in Beeston North ward. One lived in Bilborough and seven lived in Beeston West. Although interviewers had maps and postcodes for the ward, it was not always possible with the rush of parents at school end and start times to check these. Quicker filter statements were used instead such as: "Do you live in Beeston North?" or "Is your bin black (County boundary) or green (City boundary)?" or

“Do you live the other side of the Wollaton Road?”. These statements were not always accurate in selecting the correct respondents. The decision however was taken to incorporate all of the respondents into the analysis because they use facilities for under 5s within the Beeston North area.

- 59% of the respondents described themselves as living in, or near to, the centre of Beeston. 35% described themselves as living on the edge/outskirts of Beeston.
- The main Doctor's surgeries which the respondents attended were: Abbey Medical Centre (41%), Oaks Medical Centre (24%), Manor Surgery (12%), West End Surgery (8%) and Valley Surgery (6%). In addition 1 respondent was registered at Bramcote surgery. Three were not yet registered with a doctor.
- Over half (51%) of the respondents had children at Beeston Fields Nursery/Primary school in Beeston North, 29% at Round Hill Nursery/Primary School in Beeston West and 6% at the Orchard Day Nursery in Beeston Central. One parent used Church House Nursery in Beeston Central and one used Alderman Pounder Pre-School in Chilwell West.

4.2 Partners' Questionnaire

- 10 completed questionnaires were received (6 paper versions, 1 WORD electronic file by e-mail, 1 via the web survey version and 1 by telephone interview).
- Only 3 registered childminders completed a survey out of the 61 who were sent the questionnaire.
- All but one of the 10 respondents gave contact details.
- Between them the service providers had clocked-up around 90 years of working in this community. On average, they had each been in their current role for 9 years, with a range from 0.5 up to 21 years.

Table 1 - Partners' Disciplines

Discipline	Number of Responses
Healthcare	1
Community Development	3
National Childminding Association	3
Education	1
Local Councillor	1
Midwife	1

Table 2 - Partners' Roles

Role	Number of Responses
Community Nursery Nurse	1
Head Teacher	1
Registered Childminder	3
Support in the community	3
Representation of Residents	1
Midwife	1

Table 3 - Areas of Responsibility

Area of Responsibility	Number of Responses
Beeston North	6
Lenton Abbey	3
Unknown	1

4.3 Focus Group

- Only six parents attended the focus group out of the thirteen who had agreed to come along.
- Three attendees lived in Beeston North and three in Lenton Abbey.
- All attendees were female and had children who either attended Beeston Fields School nursery sessions or the school itself.
- Between them, respondents had 13 children aged under 11, ten of whom were under 5 and three aged 5 to 11.
- One respondent had only one child; all other respondents had at least two children.
- Four attendees had two children aged under 5.

5. Main Findings

5.1 Parents' Questionnaire

- 49 questionnaires for Beeston North were completed which was lower than the target of 70, which would have been more representative of the children aged under 5 in the area, but still a useful level of response.
- With only 49 surveys completed some questions were only answered by a small number of respondents, in particular those referring to services used, so care must be taken when comparing percentages.
- Some 67% of respondents were aware of Sure Start. 29% had not heard anything about Sure Start and 2% were not sure or didn't respond. There was no difference in awareness of Sure Start across gender, age group or location.
- 39% of those who knew about Sure Start were also aware of the planned Children's Centre for Beeston North. Around half (52%) of those who knew about Sure Start were unaware of the local development plans. 6% of those who were aware were not sure if they had heard anything regarding these local developments. One respondent who had not heard about Sure Start was aware of the plans for a Children's Centre.
- Those who described themselves as living on the outskirts of Beeston were less likely (18%) to have heard about the Children's Centre development plans for Beeston North than those living more centrally located in and around Beeston (35%). (Those living more centrally to Beeston would have had a greater chance of hearing about the activities at the Chilwell Children's Centre).
- Only around 1 in 10 of the younger age group (20-29) were aware of the Children's Centre plans for Beeston North compared with 4 in 10 of those aged 30 and above.

5.1.1. Services Ever Used

- Respondents were asked which local services they or their family had ever used, by means of a Showcard (Appendix 2). Responses in Table 5.1.1 are shown for all respondents. Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.
- As might be expected those services which are seen as a necessity i.e. GP (73%), Health visitor (71%), and Midwife (67%), were used by over two thirds of respondents.
- Services used by around a half of respondents included: the Children's Library Service (55%), Toddler groups (47%) and Antenatal services (45%).
- None of the respondents had ever used parenting advice and guidance or welfare rights sessions.
- Respondents who were aware of Sure Start were those who also used the lesser used services such as Homestart, the Breastfeeding Group, Crèches and Childminders. Either these were respondents who have been personally interested to increase their awareness of local services or they have used services which have informed them of other relevant activities/services in the local area.

- Two thirds of respondents who used the following services were not aware of Sure Start: GPs, Midwife, Health Visitors, Home Visits. To increase awareness of the plans for the Children's Centre users of these most used services should be targeted.
- One out of the three respondents who used Independent Schools was also not aware of Sure Start.

TABLE 5.1.1. Services Ever Used	Numbers using service	Percent who have ever used
Total	49	100%
GP practice	36	73%
Health Visitor	35	71%
Midwife	33	67%
Children's Library Service	27	55%
Toddler Group	23	47%
Antenatal sessions	22	45%
Nursery in a school	19	39%
Day nursery	18	37%
Friends	15	31%
Family member	14	29%
Home visits	10	20%
Toy library	10	20%
After school club	9	18%
Pre-school playgroup	8	16%
Job Centres	8	16%
Speech/Speech Therapist	7	14%
Story Time Sessions	7	14%
Childminder	5	10%
Further Education	5	10%
Breakfast club	4	8%
Children's Information Service	4	8%
Family Centre	4	8%
Breast feeding group*	3	6%
Independent School	3	6%
Crèche	3	6%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	2%
Home Safety Equipment*	1	2%
Homestart	1	2%
Parenting advice & guidance	0	0%
Welfare rights sessions	0	0%

**Home Safety Equipment and Breast Feeding Groups are offered by Sure Start in Chilwell and others areas within Nottinghamshire.*

- Where respondents live seems to affect the services they have used.
 - On average each respondent has used seven services on the list of 30. Those living more centrally towards Beeston have used an average

of eight whilst those living on the outskirts have used less with an average of six.

- All those using the Family Centre, Childminders, Crèches, Dieticians, Home safety equipment, Homestart and Independent Schools lived more centrally towards Beeston.
- Those who describe themselves as living centrally within Beeston are more likely than those living on the outskirts of Beeston to have used: Health Visitors (8 in 10 respondents versus 6 in 10), Friends (4 in 10 versus 2 in 10), Afterschool clubs (2 in 10 versus 1 in 10), Pre-school playgroup (2 in 10 versus 1 in 10) and Story Time Sessions (2 in 10 versus less than 1 in 10).
- Those living on the outskirts of Beeston were more likely than those living centrally to use Family (4 in 10 versus 2 in 10), the Job Centre (2 in 10 versus 1 in 10) and to have attended a Breastfeeding Group (1 in 10 versus less than 1 in 10).
- There were no differences in usage between those living centrally or those living on the outskirts of Beeston for: GPs, Midwife, Children's Library Service, Toddlers group, Antenatal sessions, Day Nursery, Home Visits, Toy library, Speech therapists and Further Education.

5.1.2. Usefulness of Services

- Respondents were then asked how useful they had found those services that they'd mentioned, for both themselves and their family. They scored usefulness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very useful to 5 = very useful. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.2.
- Most services score well with at least half of the users scoring them as quite (4) or very useful (5).
- The average (mean) score indicates the level of usefulness found by respondents, and the closeness to 5.0 indicates the level of satisfaction.
- The top three services with a reasonable number of responses and the highest mean score of 4.7 were GP, Day Nursery and Midwife. 4 out of 5 users of these services scored them as either quite or very useful.
- Many of the least used services were rated highly by the few respondents that used these including: Family Centre, Breastfeeding group, Home Safety Equipment, Dietician/Nutritionist and Breakfast Club. Care must be taken in interpreting these results however as they may not reflect the satisfaction level of all users of these services.
- Services scored highly by less than half the users were only used by a small number of respondents i.e. Speech Therapist, Independent School and Crèche.
- Job Centre with a mean score of 2.5 was rated as the least useful service overall and was rated by 5 out of its 8 users as being either not very or not at all useful.
- Some services with a reasonable number of users had depressed mean usefulness scores because at least 1 in 20 users had rated them as being either not very or not at all useful. These services included: Nursery in School (4.6), Antenatal sessions (4.0), Children's Library Services (4.0), Health Visitors (4.0), and Toddler Group (3.8).

Table 5.1.2 Usefulness of Services	Numbers using service	Percent Scoring Very (5) or Quite Useful (4)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)	Average Score
GP practice	36	92%	0%	4.7
Health Visitor	35	69%	14%	4.0
Midwife	33	82%	0%	4.7
Children's Library Service	27	70%	4%	4.0
Toddler Group	23	57%	17%	3.8
Antenatal sessions	22	64%	9%	4.0
Nursery in a school	19	74%	5%	4.6
Day nursery	18	89%	0%	4.7
Friends	15	73%	7%	4.3
Family member	14	71%	0%	4.4
Toy library	10	70%	20%	3.9
Home visits	10	80%	10%	4.5
After school club	9	78%	0%	4.4
Pre-school playgroup	8	63%	0%	4.3
Job Centres	8	38%	63%	2.5
Story Time Sessions	7	57%	0%	4.2
Speech/Speech Therapist	7	43%	14%	3.8
Further Education	5	80%	0%	4.4
Childminder	5	80%	0%	4.6
Family Centre	4	100%	0%	4.5
Children's Information Service	4	50%	0%	3.8
Breakfast club	4	100%	0%	4.8
Independent School	3	33%	33%	3.3
Crèche	3	33%	0%	4.0
Breast feeding group	3	100%	0%	4.7
Homestart	1	0%	0%	3.0
Home Safety Equipment	1	100%	0%	5.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	100%	0%	5.0
Welfare rights sessions	0	-	-	-
Parenting advice & guidance	0	-	-	-

Table Note:

i) An average score for usefulness was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very useful, 4 to quite useful, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to useful and 1 to not at all useful. 'Don't know' or no responses were excluded from this analysis.

ii) Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

5.1.3. Reasons given for services mentioned as being not useful

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all useful or 2 = not useful and why this was. Results are shown in Table 5.1.3.
- 24 ratings were given to services as being not very or not useful. This is quite a high level of dissatisfaction overall representing 7% of all the possible scores (335) allocated for service use.

Table 5.1.3 Services scored as not being useful	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not useful (1)	Percent Scoring Not very (2) or Not Useful (1)
Job Centres	8	5	63%
Independent School	3	1	33%
Toy library	10	2	20%
Toddler Group	23	4	17%
Health Visitor	35	5	14%
Speech/Speech Therapist	7	1	14%
Home visits	10	1	10%
Antenatal sessions	22	2	9%
Friends	15	1	7%
Nursery in a school	19	1	5%
Children's Library Service	27	1	4%

- Only 15 reasons were given for scoring services as not being useful.
 - 4 responses related to health visitors, particularly that they were not flexible in their approach or that they were not wanted or not needed.
 - 2 responses were about receiving poor information/advice.
 - 2 responses were concerned with the difficulty of booking sessions that were convenient for them or that they had to wait a long time for appointments.
 - 1 felt that they had received no benefit from the particular service.
 - 1 felt that the service was open at the wrong time to fit with their part-time work patterns.
 - 5 didn't know or were unwilling to provide a reason as to why they had given low scores.

5.1.4. Child-Friendliness of Services

- By service used, respondents were then asked how child-friendly they had found the services.
- They scored child-friendliness of the services on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 = not very child-friendly to 5 = very child-friendly. Responses are shown in Table 5.1.4.
- The service with a reasonable number of users and the highest child-friendliness scale was Nursery in a School with a score of 4.7.
- Other services with a reasonable number of users and high child-friendliness scores included: Day Nursery (4.7), After School Club (4.7), Toy library (4.6), Family member (4.6) and Home visits (4.6).

- The highest child-friendliness scores with a maximum of 5 were shown by a group of services that had less than 5 users i.e. Breastfeeding group, Dietician/Nutritionist, Home Safety Equipment and Breakfast club. Although all these users rated them highly - because of the low number of users the view may not reflect that of all users of these services.

Table 5.1.4. Child-friendliness of services	Numbers using service	Percent Very (5) or Quite (4) Child Friendly	Percent Not very (2) or Not (1) child friendly	Average Score
GP practice	36	69%	3%	4.3
Health Visitor	35	66%	9%	4.2
Midwife	33	64%	0%	4.5
Children's Library Service	27	74%	4%	4.2
Toddler Group	23	70%	9%	4.2
Antenatal sessions	22	45%	9%	4.0
Nursery in a school	19	79%	0%	4.9
Day nursery	18	89%	0%	4.7
Friends	15	60%	0%	4.4
Family member	14	86%	0%	4.6
Home visits	10	60%	0%	4.6
Toy library	10	80%	0%	4.6
After school club	9	67%	0%	4.7
Pre-school playgroup	8	75%	0%	4.4
Job Centres	8	13%	50%	2.0
Speech/Speech Therapist	7	0%	0%	3.0
Story Time Sessions	7	86%	0%	4.5
Childminder	5	80%	0%	4.4
Further Education	5	20%	40%	2.0
Breakfast club	4	75%	0%	5.0
Children's Information Service	4	25%	0%	3.7
Family centre	4	75%	0%	4.5
Breast feeding group	3	100%	0%	5.0
Independent school	3	33%	0%	4.0
Crèche	3	67%	0%	4.3
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	100%	0%	5.0
Home Safety Equipment	1	100%	0%	5.0
Homestart	1	0%	0%	0.0
Parenting advice & guidance	0	0%	0%	0.0
Welfare rights sessions	0	0%	0%	0.0

Table Note:

- An average score for child-friendliness was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very child-friendly, 4 to quite child-friendly, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to not very child-friendly and 1 to not at all child-friendly. "Don't know" or no responses were excluded from this analysis.
- Care should be taken in interpreting the data when numbers using the services are low, as these may not typically reflect the views of all local people.

- Many of the services which are most used scored comparatively low on child-friendliness these included: GP practices (4.3), the Children's Library Service (4.2), Toddler Groups (4.2), Health Visitors (4.2) and Antenatal sessions (4.0). All the scores for these services were depressed by at least 3% of users rating them as either not very or not at all child-friendly. In the case of Toddler groups, Health Visitors and Antenatal sessions the proportion of users giving these a low rating was higher - at 9%.
- The least child friendly services were rated as Further Education and Job Centres where at least 2 in 5 users rated them as not very or not at all child friendly.

5.1.5. Reasons Given for Services Mentioned as Being Not Child-Friendly

- Respondents were then asked about any services they had mentioned, which they had scored as being 1 = not at all child-friendly or 2 = not child-friendly and why this was.
- 15 low scores for child friendliness were given out of the total of 335 possible scores. This represents a total of 5% of total scores given. This is slightly lower than the lower scores given for usefulness - suggesting that the usefulness of services in the area are currently more of a concern than the child friendliness.

Table 5.1.5 Services Scored as not being Child-friendly	Numbers using service	Numbers scoring as not very (2) or not at all child-friendly (1)	Percent Not very (2) or not at all child- friendly (1)
Job Centres	8	4	50%
Further Education	5	2	40%
Antenatal sessions	22	2	9%
Toddler Group	23	2	9%
Health Visitor	35	3	9%
Children's Library Service	27	1	4%
GP practice	36	1	3%

- Eleven responses were given for the reason why they had given lower scores for child-friendliness and these were:
 - 4 felt the service was not appropriate or not suitable for children.
 - 3 just didn't know or were unable to say.
 - 2 responses were that there was no play area and/or no toys.
 - 1 respondent felt that it was difficult to talk and that there was a need for a separate room for children.
 - 1 mentioned an 'other' reason.

5.1.6. Comparisons of Usefulness and Child-Friendliness

- Looking at both sets of data - usefulness and child-friendliness - and comparing the average scores of respondents' views of parents and child's needs, table 5.1.6 shows the difference in views held.

- The closer to an average score of 5, the more useful or child-friendly the service is perceived to be. The gap is shown in bold when the service is more child-friendly than useful.

Table 5.1.6 Score Comparisons	Numbers using Services	Usefulness Score*	Child Friendliness Score*	Gap
Toy library	10	3.9	4.6	0.7
Independent school	3	3.3	4.0	0.7
Toddler Group	23	3.8	4.2	0.4
Story Time Sessions	7	4.2	4.5	0.3
Breast feeding group	3	4.7	5.0	0.3
Crèche	3	4.0	4.3	0.3
Nursery in a school	19	4.6	4.9	0.3
After school club	9	4.4	4.7	0.3
Family member	14	4.4	4.6	0.3
Breakfast club	4	4.8	5.0	0.3
Children's Library Service	27	4.0	4.2	0.2
Health Visitor	35	4.0	4.2	0.2
Friends	15	4.3	4.4	0.2
Pre-school playgroup	8	4.3	4.4	0.1
Home visits	10	4.5	4.6	0.1
Day nursery	18	4.7	4.7	0.0
Family centre	4	4.5	4.5	0.0
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	5.0	5.0	0.0
Home Safety Equipment	1	5.0	5.0	0.0
Antenatal sessions	22	4.0	4.0	0.0
Children's Information Service	4	3.8	3.7	-0.1
Midwife	33	4.7	4.5	-0.2
Childminder	5	4.6	4.4	-0.2
GP practice	36	4.7	4.3	-0.4
Job Centres	8	2.5	2.0	-0.5
Speech/Speech Therapist	7	3.8	3.0	-0.8
Further Education	5	4.4	2.0	-2.4

**An average score was calculated by assigning a score of 5 for very useful/child friendly, 4 to quite useful/child friendly, 3 to neither/nor, 2 to useful/child friendly and 1 to not at all useful/child friendly. "Don't know" or no responses were excluded from this analysis.*

- Overall, 15 services are seen as being more child-friendly than useful and 7 services as more useful than child-friendly. 5 services are equally balanced on usefulness and child-friendliness.
- The Toy Library is the most child friendly service showing the biggest difference with usefulness from the parents' view. The Toddler Group scores show a similar trend, amongst high usage services.
- Further Education is one of the most useful services from the parents' viewpoint however it has the biggest gap between usefulness and child-friendliness.
- The Job Centre is scoring lowest on both usefulness and child friendliness albeit from a low base.

- The Speech/Speech therapist is also seen to be quite low on child friendliness compared to usefulness; again this has a low base.
- The GP practices were viewed as more useful than child friendly.
- Day nurseries are perceived to be equally high on usefulness and child-friendliness.

5.1.7. Most Helpful Service to Parents

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to them, as a parent. The following table 5.1.7a shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top three helpful services for parents mentioned by over 10% of respondents were GP practice (18%), Day Nursery (16%) and Health Visitors (14%). Two of these services provide healthcare and the other day care facilities.
- Many respondents found it difficult to chose just once service.

Table 5.1.7a Service most helpful to you as a parent	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
GP practice	9	18%
Day Nursery	8	16%
Health visitors	7	14%
Nursery in a school	3	6%
Family member	3	6%
Midwife	2	4%
After School Club	2	4%
Pre-school playgroup	2	4%
Toddler group	2	4%
Antenatal sessions	1	2%
Breakfast Club	1	2%
Friends	1	2%
Toy Library	1	2%
Don't Know	8	16%

- The analysis shown in table 5.1.7a shows the overall level of helpfulness across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.7b.
- The top 5 most helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - GP Practice
 - Day Nursery
 - Health Visitors
 - Nursery in a school
 - Family member
- The top 5 most helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Day Nursery
 - Pre-School Playgroup
 - GP Practice
 - Breakfast Club
 - After-School Club

Table 5.1.7b Service most helpful to you as a parent for users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Day Nursery	8	18	44%
Pre-school playgroup	2	8	25%
GP practice	9	36	25%
Breakfast Club	1	4	25%
After School Club	2	9	22%
Family member	3	14	21%
Health visitors	7	35	20%
Nursery in a school	3	19	16%
Toy Library	1	10	10%
Toddler group	2	23	9%
Friends	1	15	7%
Midwife	2	33	6%
Antenatal sessions	1	22	5%

- Table 5.1.7c summarises how the position of the perceived parent-helpfulness of the services changes between the two analyses.
- In this case Breakfast Club and Pre-School playgroup move to a higher position on helpfulness because a quarter of their users (albeit a small number of respondents) chose them as the most helpful service. These services can be considered to be helpful emerging services that are not yet used by a large number of parents.
- Midwife, Health Visitors, Nursery in a school, Toddler Group and Antenatal Sessions all traditional services used by a relatively large number of respondents drop to much lower relative positions. There is scope for these services to increase their perceived level of parent-helpfulness amongst users.

Table 5.1.7c Helpfulness of the services for parents - changes in rank position	Relative Position on Helpfulness All Respondents	Relative Position on Helpfulness Users Only	Change in Position
Midwife	6 th	12 th	-6
Health visitors	3 rd	7 th	-4
Nursery in a school	4 th	8 th	-4
Toddler group	6 th	10 th	-4
Antenatal sessions	10 th	13 th	-3
Family member	4 th	6 th	-2
GP practice	1 st	2 nd	-1
Friends	10 th	11 th	-1
Day Nursery	2 nd	1 st	1
After School Club	6 th	5 th	1
Toy Library	10 th	9 th	1
Pre-school playgroup	6 th	2 nd	4
Breakfast Club	10 th	2 nd	8

5.1.8. Most Helpful Service to Children

- Respondents were asked to say which one out of the services they had used was the most helpful to their child/children. The following table 5.1.8a shows the services that were mentioned.
- Overall the top three helpful services for children and mentioned by at least 10% of respondents were Day Nursery (18%), Nursery in a school (18%) and Pre-school playgroup (10%). All of these activities being largely concerned with the child's social and educational development.

Table 5.1.8a Service most helpful to your child across all respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent Mentions All Respondents
Day Nursery	9	18%
Nursery in a school	9	18%
Pre-school playgroup	5	10%
Toddler group	4	8%
Health visitors	3	6%
Children's Library Service	2	4%
After School Club	2	4%
GP practice	2	4%
Childminder	1	2%
Family member	1	2%
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	2%
Speech Therapists	1	2%
Story Time Sessions	1	2%
Don't Know	8	16%

- The analysis shown in table 5.1.8a shows the overall level of the services' helpfulness to children across all respondents - it is therefore biased towards services that are used by a greater number of respondents i.e. they had a greater chance to be chosen as the best service by more respondents. Another analysis was undertaken to reduce this bias by calculating the percentage of users who saw this service as their most child-helpful service. The results of this analysis are shown in table 5.1.8b.
- The top 5 most child-helpful services in the ALL respondent analysis are:
 - Day Nursery
 - Nursery in a school
 - Pre-School playgroup
 - Toddler group
 - Health visitors
- The top 5 child-helpful services in the USER analysis are:
 - Dietician/Nutritionist
 - Pre-school playgroup
 - Day Nursery
 - Nursery in a school
 - After School Club

Table 5.1.8b Service most helpful to your child by users only	Number of Mentions	Number of Users	Percent Users
Dietician/Nutritionist	1	1	100%
Pre-school playgroup	5	8	63%
Day Nursery	9	18	50%
Nursery in a school	9	19	47%
After School Club	2	9	22%
Childminder	1	5	20%
Toddler group	4	23	17%
Speech Therapists	1	7	14%
Story Time Sessions	1	7	14%
Health visitors	3	35	9%
Children's Library Service	2	27	7%
Family member	1	14	7%
GP practice	2	36	6%

- Table 5.1.8c summarises how the position of the perceived child-helpfulness of the services changes between the two analyses.
- In this case Dietician/Nutritionist and Childminder move to a higher position on child-helpfulness. In the case of Dietician/Nutritionist one respondent used this service and rated it as the most child-helpful service overall. Childminder, a service used by only 5 respondents was chosen as most child-helpful by one of the users. These services can be considered to be child-helpful services that are not used by a large number of parents.
- GP Practice, Health Visitors, Children's Library Service, Nursery in a school and Toddler Group are all traditional services used by a relatively large number of respondents; these services drop to much lower relative positions. There is scope for these services to increase their perceived level of child-helpfulness.

Table 5.1.8c Helpfulness of the services for children - changes in rank position	Relative Position on Helpfulness to Children All Respondents	Relative Position on Helpfulness to Children Users Only	Change in Position
GP practice	6 th	13 th	-7
Health visitors	5 th	10 th	-5
Children's Library Service	6 th	11 th	-5
Nursery in a school	1 st	4 th	-3
Toddler group	4 th	7 th	-3
Day Nursery	1 st	3 rd	-2
Family member	9 th	11 th	-2
Pre-school playgroup	3 rd	2 nd	1
After School Club	6 th	5 th	1
Speech Therapists	9 th	8 th	1
Story Time Sessions	9 th	8 th	1
Childminder	9 th	6 th	3
Dietician/Nutritionist	9 th	1 st	8

5.1.9. Help to Use Services More Often

- A list of suggestions that might help parents to use services more often or more easily was shown to respondents. See Showcard 2 (Appendix 2). They were asked which of those listed might help them.
- In Table 5.1.9 below, it can be seen that two items were mentioned the most and by just over a quarter (27%) of respondents - these were 'different times of events' and 'better price'.
- 'Someone to go with' at 6% was the least mentioned item.
- Due to the relative small number of responses it was not possible to make any conclusions about possible differences between responses by gender, age and location within Beeston.

Table 5.1.9 Help to use services more often	Numbers	Percent Agreeing
Different times of events	13	27%
Better price	13	27%
Better public transport	11	22%
Childcare	11	22%
Someone to go with	3	6%
None of these	14	29%

5.1.10. Preferences in Receiving Information

- Respondents were shown a list of possible ways of receiving information about activities and services for children. Respondents were asked to say which they would prefer. Results are shown in table 5.1.10 below.
- The most popular way was clearly a newsletter which close to three quarters (73%) of respondents prefer.
- The second most preferred communication routes (with less than half the preference rating compared to the newsletter in first position) are jointly at 31%, flyer/information sheet and word-of-mouth via service providers.
- The least preferred option with only 14% of respondents preferring this route are articles in local newspapers.

Table 5.1.10 Preferences in Receiving Information	Numbers	Percent Preferring
Newsletter	36	73%
Flyer/information sheet	15	31%
Word of mouth (health visitor/nursery staff/GP)	15	31%
Word of mouth (friends/family/other parents)	12	24%
Information session at nursery/clinic/Sure Start	10	20%
Article in local paper	7	14%
None of these	3	6%

- 8 in 10 who are aware of Sure Start preferred the idea of a newsletter compared to only 6 in 10 who were not previously aware.
- 9 in 10 respondents living on the edge of Beeston preferred a newsletter compared with only 7 in 10 living in Central Beeston.

- 4 in 10 who are aware of Sure Start preferred a flyer/information sheet compared with only 1 in 10 who were not previously aware.
- More women (4 in 10) liked the idea of a flyer/information sheet, compared to 0 in 10 men.
- More women (3 in 10) liked the idea of an information session, compared to 0 in 10 men.

5.1.11. Three Things Beeston North Needs

- When asked what 3 other things Beeston North needs to make it better for parents with young children, respondents came up with a list of suggestions as shown in Table 5.1.11 below.

Table 5.1.11 Suggestions from Respondents	Number of Mentions	Percent of Respondents
Swimming Pool/Leisure Facilities/Sports Facilities	8	16%
Mother & Baby/Toddler Groups/Playgroups/Toddler activities	6	12%
Better/Safer/Cleaner Playground/Park	5	10%
More/Better child care/nurseries/Crèches	5	10%
More/Cheap/Affordable activities	5	10%
More/Better information	4	8%
Youth club/Activities for older children	4	8%
Before and after school activities/clubs	4	8%
More/Better buses/Better Transport	4	8%
Road safety/speed bumps/School Crossing Patrol etc	3	6%
More/Better facilities for smaller children	2	4%
Drop in sessions/drop in centre	2	4%
Place to meet/Groups for mums to meet	1	2%
Indoor/Safe/Soft play area	1	2%
Outdoor/More/better play areas/Somewhere to play/More activities	1	2%
Holiday activities/care for children	1	2%
Days out/Trips/Organised Outings	1	2%
Village Hall	1	2%
Doctor/Health Visitor	1	2%
Other	10	20%
Don't Know/No Response	9	18%

- The top five suggestions mentioned by at least 5 or 10% of respondents were: Swimming Pool Leisure/Sports Facilities (16%), Mother and Baby Playgroups/Activities (12%), Better/Safer/Cleaner Playgrounds/Parks (10%), More/Better Childcare/Nurseries/Crèches (10%) and More/Cheap/Affordable activities (10%).
- Four of the most frequently suggested ideas focus on play/leisure activities and one relates to improving child care facilities locally.

- The most number of mentions accounted for was for swimming/leisure sports facilities in the local area. The nearest public swimming and leisure centre is in Bramcote which requires a car/bus journey.
- 'Other' mentions which related to current activities in the area included:
 - Reducing the "cliqueness" of some of the current groups
 - Flexible timings of weekly mother and toddler events to enable those who work part-time to attend.
 - Improving the child-friendliness of the surroundings where some of the current activities take place.

5.1.12. Thoughts on the Arrival of the Children's Centre

- Finally, respondents were asked whether they had anything to say about the arrival of the Children's Centre in the area, which was difficult for the majority who had not been aware of the plans.
- 18 people or 36% of the respondents commented. 15 of these respondents had already been aware of Sure Start prior to taking part in the interview.
- 18% thought it was 'a good idea', 'great', 'brilliant', 'excellent' or a 'positive thing'.
- 4% that there needed to be more information targeted to the right people.
- 4% thought that it was not targeted for them and felt that it was for lone parents/ disadvantaged families.
- 8% mentioned 'other' reasons such as a need to involve parents for the longer term and to target the right people.

5.2 Partners' questionnaire

- Partner's responses varied depending on their role and experience in the area. Anonymous responses in alphabetical order are shown in Appendix 6, and a summary of responses to each question is given below.
- For each of the questions asked responses were very much focused on their own personal involvement in the community although some clear community wide issues were also raised.
- Responses were more focused on improving problems in the community and tailoring current support services to help rather than defining specific gaps in current service provision.

5.2.1. Current Problems

Q1. What do you think are the current problems, or gaps in current services, for parents and young families in Beeston North/Lenton Abbey?

- The overall view is that there is a need to improve the services and activities that are available for children and parents in the area, to reduce the significant environmental barriers that exist and to prioritise the provision of services to those that need them most:

- Better Services for Children and Parents

- Making child care accessible to all

"There are definitely not enough childminders in Beeston and not enough before and after school clubs or care."

- Increasing awareness of local services amongst parents
 - Motivating parents and keeping them involved for the longer term
 - Focusing on increasing the level of child health and on reducing child poverty
 - Providing parenting advice, information and skills for parents of 3-16 year olds
- Reducing Environmental Barriers
- Reducing isolation in the community
"Problems are around outskirts of Beeston i.e. Beeston North and Lenton Abbey. These include: isolation, no heart of community/ limited places to meet."
 - Better integration of City and County Services
"Improving the County and City boundaries - therefore reducing differences in services."
- Prioritisation of Service Provision
- Over-Stretched Services
"Due to historical reasons e.g. historical way of working and increased workload - families are not getting an individualised service - "one size fits-all" and therefore difficult to afford more time to the vulnerable families."

5.2.2. Possible Changes

Q 2. In what way do you think the advent of the Children's Centre will change the way services are delivered in Beeston North/ Lenton Abbey?

- Most of the views held by the respondents showed that they felt the Children's Centre would start to address some of the concerns and issues that they had outlined in Q1:
- Better Services for Children and Parents
- Better, integration and targeting of services
"Target needs, more choice, increased access and flexibility."
 - More engagement with parents
"A focal point for parents (one stop)."
- Reducing Environmental Barriers
- Cross Boundary
"It will mean that services have to consider and deliver cross boundary to accommodate the needs of natural communities rather than the geographical boundaries."
- Not Sure
- Three of the respondents were not able to think of any changes that the Children's Centre development might bring to the area. These

uncertain responses suggest that there is not yet enough awareness or understanding of what a Children's Centre is and what and how it delivers.

"Not sure - will be interesting to see the development."

"It depends on what it delivers!"

5.2.3. Biggest Challenge

Q3. What do you think is going to be the biggest challenge locally in developing the Children's Centre in Beeston North/ Lenton Abbey?

- The responses provided fit under 5 main headings - i) Gaining involvement of parents/ carers, ii) Running a successful virtual organisation, iii) Accurate targeting of services, iv) Adequate budget allocation and support and v) Managing change with over-stretched services:

- Gaining Involvement of Parents/Carers

"Encouraging people to come along - showing single parents, parents, grandparents and carers etc that your centre is friendly and accepting of all."

"Keeping people involved on a regular basis."

- Running a Successful Virtual Organisation

- Obtaining Buy-in for a Virtual System

"Selling the formation of a Children's Centre as a virtual concept rather than being able to provide a new building."

- Successfully Operating a Virtual Organisation

"Ensuring that the service is accessible physically and socially by having a core centre with satellite services in Lenton Abbey."

- Accurate Targeting of Services

"Getting the relevant information to those who need it most."

- Adequate Budget Allocation and Support

"Ensuring that the City continues to support this venture as it should."

- Managing Change With Over-Stretched Services

"Time:- many services are already having to keep up with ever demanding workloads, with major changes taking place in organisation coupled with no flexibility with staffing."

"Change is always difficult to implement - thus biggest challenge is agreement and signing up to change from all - especially GPs! Also resources!"

5.2.4. Effectiveness of Meetings

Q4. If workers from different settings / services have regular meetings to discuss local issues, how useful are these? Are parents invited to these? [Please indicate how often these are held, if at all].

- Two types of local meetings were mentioned: neighbourhood/community meetings and service provider meetings. Two respondents also mentioned their views on frequency of relevant meetings and the inclusion of parents.
- Neighbourhood/Community Meetings include:
 - Bi-monthly Meetings
Lenton Abbey
 - Area 7 Committee meets every two months as does its Educational Health and Employment sub-committee.
"All are welcome to attend. These do not attract local people as they should, but without them there would be no local initiatives at all."
 - Neighbourhood meetings for Wollaton/ Lenton Abbey
 - Quarterly Meetings
Beeston North
 - Beeston Fields Community Action Team
 - Beeston North Neighbourhood Group
 - Lenton Abbey
 - Lenton Abbey Residents Association
"Lenton Abbey Residents Association is a nascent organisation which, hopefully, will eventually hold more appeal for local people and encourage their active participation."
- Specific Meetings for Service Providers include:
 - Health Visitors: Health visitors meet every 6-8 weeks in Beeston to discuss current issues and workload.
 - Registered Childminders: There used to be a registered childminders group in central Beeston but the timing of this did not fit well with childminding hours. One of the respondents felt that such a group would be beneficial in the Beeston North area however the timing would need to suit those with flexible working hours.
- General Views About Meetings Involving Parents:
"Monthly - Parents should be included."
"All meetings are useful - it is good for parents to be invited sometimes."

5.2.5. Partners' Priorities

Q5. What are your top three priorities for developing services or facilities or resources for parents and young children in Beeston North/Lenton Abbey?

- Respondents were asked to list three things they thought would be beneficial for the area for parents and young children, which when grouped suggested the following priorities, in order of number of comments:
 - i) Supporting parents and carers
 - ii) Better targeting of services to those that need help
 - iii) Affordable childcare facilities
 - iv) Supporting 0 to 18 years olds
 - v) Putting into place the new integrated working process
 - vi) Improving the social/ community infrastructure

- Examples of each of the priority requirements are highlighted below:

- i) Supporting Parents and Carers

- A Need to Set-Up Forums and Specific Activities

"A more permanent drop-in centre where children can play and parents can relax/mix e.g. like the toy library."

"A forum where parents of young children can meet and discuss problems."

"More child focused activities in same area with support for parents i.e stay and play sessions/behaviour management."

"Support to parents with older children (this area is a "hot Spot" for anti-social behaviour)."

"Health and child development advice/support to families."

"Special sessions for single parents, parents, grandparents and carers."

- Increasing Awareness of and Access to Services

"Promotion of the Boundary Community Centre as a community venue/one-stop shop."

"Health visitors - making them more accessible and available locally i.e. at toddler groups not only in Dovecote House."

- Skill Acquisition

"Access to training information and opportunities."

- ii) Better Targeting of Services to Those that Need Them

- In particular the following were mentioned:

- Increase breast feeding rate
- Decrease smoking in pregnancy
- Decrease teenage pregnancy rate
- Decrease number of low birth rate babies

- iii) Affordable Childcare facilities

"Affordable childcare facilities within Beeston North/ Lenton Abbey area so parents have time to themselves."

- iv) Supporting Children and Young People (0 to 18 years olds)
 - Helping our under 5s become better over 8s and teenagers.
 - "Affordable nursery facilities where the under 5s can develop social skills."*
 - "I feel strongly that we need more facilities for 0-18 year olds - not just under 5s."*

- v) Putting into Place the New Integrated Working Process
 - Partnership Working
 - "Integrated partnership working across the statutory and voluntary sectors."*
 - "Maintaining our expertise in the area of safeguarding children and how this links to the Children's Centre agenda."*

- vi) Improving the Social/ Community Infrastructure
 - "Better housing - many council properties damp/in need of repair."*
 - "Respite care."*
 - "Sports centre - swimming."*
 - "A local dispensary."*
 - "Increasing the safety of local parks (especially Central Park - drugs and cans)."*

5.3 Focus Group

- The discussion guide used in the focus group will be found in Appendix 3. This included areas which reflected the main sections of the parent's questionnaire:
 - Knowledge of services in the area
 - Strengths and weaknesses of current services
 - Gaps in current provision
 - Good things to come from the arrival of the Children's Centre
 - Areas for improvement in the local area
- Focus group respondents were initially invited to undertake a mapping exercise, to gather information about services and activities in the area that they know about. This can be seen in Appendix 7. This was similar to the exercise undertaken by the service providers. In the case of parents however this was to help gain an understanding of their level of awareness of local services so that this could be compared with the map of actual services offered in the area from the service provider responses.
- Additionally, as a means of asking parents for their awareness of services, after they had undertaken an initial top-of-mind mapping of local services, the services mentioned by service providers in their responses were shared with them to gauge their awareness and views.

5.3.1. Knowledge of Services in the Areas

- The three Lenton Abbey and three Beeston North parents worked separately to map services and activities that they were aware of for under 5s in their local area. The results from this can be seen in Appendix 7.
- The Beeston North group were aware of Bounders Toy library on Thursday afternoons, the Bounders after-school club (both at the Boundary Community Centre), the drop in health visitor sessions at Beeston Health Centre/Dovecote House on Thursday mornings and the weekly Toddlers' group at St Barnabas in Lenton Abbey.
- The Lenton Abbey group were also aware of the Toddlers' group at St Barnabas but found it more difficult to think of other top-of-mind activities in their local area. With further probed discussion they also thought of the Health Visitors' session at Dovecote House in Beeston and the Children's club at the Lenton Abbey Neighbourhood Centre, off-Baslow Drive. This club is primarily for 8 to 14 year olds but also includes under 8s (and under 5s) provided that a parent is present with them. The group also goes out on one-off trips to places such as Waterworld and the Sealife Centre.

"They usually do arts and crafts but last week it was really hot so we went to the park." (Children's Club at Lenton Abbey Neighbourhood Centre).

- The Lenton Abbey participants also mentioned the increasing number of local events held in the park areas of Lenton Abbey.
- Park activities in Lenton Abbey include Fun Day's every couple of months and the Lenton Abbey "Parklife" event - a community activity day to be held later in July.

- Awareness of some of the other activities from the service providers' questionnaire was asked of the group of 6 respondents.
 - 5 were aware of the holiday clubs held at the Boundary Community Centre and the Bramcote Leisure Centre. They felt these services were expensive. They were also only for over 5s.
 - 4 were aware of the Child Health Clinic held at Abbey Medical Centre.
 - Only 2 were aware of the infant massage sessions (held by invitation only) at Beeston Health Centre.
 - 2 were aware of the Groupcare sessions held at Beeston Family Centre.
 - Only 1 was aware of the Beeston Fields Community Action Team and the Beeston North Neighbourhood Group. As discussions built during the course of the focus group it became clear that there were local issues and concerns held, particularly about road safety and park security, which need to be raised with these community groups.
 - None were aware of the toddlers group at the Bounders Centre which runs in parallel with the toy library.
 - Although all of the group were aware of the toy library - none of them had ever used it.
- Overall there was a lack of top-of mind awareness particularly within the Lenton Abbey group about activities and services that are available in the area for parents with under 5s. At the end of the group some of the attendees swapped addresses meaning to keep in contact and go along together to some of the local activities that they had now heard about. This is a good example of community connection and the supportive culture that underpins the whole Sure Start ethos.

5.3.2. Strengths and Weakness of Current Services

- The good things about current services were especially seen to be the health clinics because they provided easy access to health visitors who were otherwise perceived to be hard to contact.

"They provide access to health visitors - a lot of times it is hard to get hold of a health visitor"

- Mums and Toddler groups were valued as providing a connection to the community. Isolation in the community was a feeling that half of the group currently felt. Toddler groups were also a good source of activities for Mums and Toddlers. It was important that new Mums were made aware of these groups.

"If you move to the area - you get a list of baby/toddler groups from the health visitor."

"As a group we even went out for meals and had picnics in the parks."

"You can't connect to the community if you're not told about them - my health visitor didn't tell me about them."

- The Lenton Abbey and Beeston North areas have a number of park areas which are very much appreciated by the residents. Most of the parks have children's

play areas. It was felt that structured activities in the parks such as "Park Life" were a great way to bring children of all ages together.

"Parklife brings the little ones and the big ones together"

- There were however some mixed experiences with the safety of some of the parks for small children - for example: broken glass, teenagers ("yobs") and students.
- Highfields University Park was a particular concern and the park at Central Avenue did not feel at all safe for most of the group.

"The Highfield park used to be beautiful and now the students are trashing it - broken glass and cans."

- However, one of the group had not experienced any of these problems and often used the park for family activities such as picnics.
- The local library was mentioned to be a good local service providing activities for under 5s.
- Weaknesses of local services were seen to be a lack of general awareness of their existence. This was due mainly to there being no central information point and no access to a central list of activities.
- There was also concern that regular activities did not always take place as regularly as they should do, so parents would go along expecting an activity to be available and then find that it is not. This was off-putting, disappointing for the children and would prevent parents returning in the future.
- There was a concern that it can be difficult to find activities being held within a communal building such as the Boundary Centre. In these cases a more welcoming signposting would be appreciated. In some instances activities should have been held but parents could not locate them in the building - either because they were difficult to find, were not welcoming from the outside of the building, or that they were intermittently closed. Experiences such as these prevent parents from returning the next time.

"It was a Thursday and I thought we could just pop into the Toy Library for the last 10 minutes and see what was going on. I couldn't find anything happening."

"There are lots of rooms in there (the Boundary Centre where the toy library is held) and it's quite dark - not welcoming!"

- "Child friendly" was described by the group as services and activities that are safe, with people who are obviously interested in interacting with children. The surroundings would include things for children to do to keep themselves interested.
- An example of a non-child friendly service was described - the local Job Centre. As a single Mum, one of the respondents had attended for a single parent review. She had taken her children along. The Job Centre staff made her feel unwelcome because of the children being present. In the end she left without the interview and is now putting off her return to the Job Centre because of this bad experience.

"I think it's brilliant that they (Sure Start) will have a Job Centre advisor - because the last time I went to the Job Centre I had no choice but to take my children with me and the advisor told me to go away and come back when I had somebody to look after the children, I felt really belittled because I couldn't find anybody to look after the children. I daren't go back now! I said to them that they should have some toys or something to keep the kids occupied"

- "Parent friendly" services were described as places where parents have someone to talk to and have a chance to relax for 5 minutes knowing that their children are safe. Such services would also need to be affordable and accessible.
- An example of a good parent friendly activity was described as Tumbletown in Arnold (out of the Beeston/Lenton Abbey Area) - here children are supervised in a soft play area and parents can relax with a coffee.
- There was a concern raised in the focus group about the safety of the two main roads in the area. One road, the A6464 Woodside Road, isolates Lenton Abbey from Beeston North. The other road (A52, Derby Road) separates the northern part of Beeston North from the rest of the ward.
- Many parents living in Lenton Abbey or the northern part of Beeston North have to cross one of these roads twice a day with their under 5s in-order to use the facilities and school in Beeston North.
- Speeding lorries were seen to be a particular problem.
- Possible solutions to the problems were to have speed cameras and railings to enforce people to cross the road at the traffic lights.

"Woodside Road has one set of speed cameras - Derby Road has nothing!"

"On the Derby Road there are three lanes of traffic; walking your kid to school at 9 in the morning - you can just imagine what the traffic is like!"

"There is a Lollipop lady at school times 9 and 3 but not at nursery times 11.30 and 1.00."

"They should make people cross only at the lights by putting railings along the pavement and putting more sets of lights on the road."

- Focusing on Beeston Fields School itself, there was a positive feeling about the school. No one had heard anything bad about it. There was an awareness that it used to have a bad reputation in the past which like all bad reputations is difficult to shake off. The only main concern raised was the bad language used by some parents whilst collecting their children from school.

"The language being shouted down the street by the parents - I don't want my kids to hear it!"

- The issue of facilities for disabled children was discussed. No one at the focus group had any child with disabilities or had close links with any children with disabilities. They were not aware of any instances or concerns regarding disabled access to children's facilities.

5.3.3. Gaps in Current Provision

- These parents felt that there are not enough sports activities in the area. Most people go out of the area for sports and similar activities. For example, swimming at Bramcote Leisure Centre and Stagecoach dance and drama classes at Bramcote College. There is a tennis club at the University Boulevard but this is thought to be expensive.

"My little girl (3.5 years) has a trampoline in the back yard and spends hours on it - when she grows out of it what comes next?"

- Dancing classes for under 5s in Beeston North/ Lenton Abbey would be greatly appreciated (apparently dancing classes used to be available in the past at St Barnabas, Lenton Abbey).
- The respondents were interested in there being more clubs for children and better facilities available locally.

"When you are talking about children's clubs it should not be that the well off can afford it but that everyone can afford it. All children should benefit."

"I would like something like a nursery where there are things and toys to do inside and then you go outside and there is a massive play area."

- Many participants felt they needed a "voice" to help support parents with the important infrastructures of their daily family lives - for example to aid them in contacts with the Council and other bodies.

"There is no spokesperson or someone to go to with suggestions that can take your suggestion further."

"When I was looking to get my house there was help at the beginning but as soon as I'd got the house that was it, there was no help with money management or anything like that. It's just - "you've got your house now so it's sorted" - but it goes further than that."

"We need some care workers or something like youth workers to help us because the council just don't seem to listen."

5.3.4. Good Things to Come from the Arrival of the Children's Centre

- The group participants had heard lots of good things about the Children's Centre at Chilwell and how it had helped people they knew. They were extremely positive about the move to have a Children's Centre in Beeston North/Lenton Abbey.

"Brilliant!"

"No end of people in this area are telling me about Sure Start and how brilliant it is."

"I think it's brilliant that they will have a Job Centre advisor - because the last time I went to the Job Centre I had no choice but to take my children with me."

"Having recently had a baby, a friend dragged me along to a breastfeeding support group session at Chilwell Sure Start because I had trouble breastfeeding my first baby and had no support whatsoever. It was fantastic! I only went to the one session and I came away feeling so empowered."

- Only one slight concern which was founded on a wrong perception of Sure Start, was put to rest when more information about Sure Start was provided to the group.

"I wasn't going to come today at first because I first thought it was about young Mums but now I realise that it isn't."

- Other positive views about Sure Start were that it will provide support in the areas of welfare and social services such as housing difficulties and will therefore allow parents to gain more confidence in their communications with authorities.
- A discussion developed about the costs of different types of childcare. Parents were unclear about the different services offered such as crèche, daycare etc. They also showed little awareness of the different funding mechanisms available to support childcare fees such as Care to Learn, Working Tax Credits. Only 2 out of the 6 respondents had ever used full childcare services such as daycare or a registered child minder when they were working/studying.

"I was paying £27.50 a day for childcare and I go to University everyday - I simply couldn't afford it. We pay £10,000 a year just for our University courses. It's difficult to earn money to cover it as you are only entitled to work part-time when you are in full-time education. There is no information about the comparative cost of the different services."

"When I needed to go to work, I managed to get in touch with the Children's Information Service and I was sent a list of childminders in the local area. My childminder was absolutely fantastic and charged £2.50 an hour and has now become a good friend."

- Parents were concerned about the perceived cost of childcare and were especially concerned that there seemed to be no central body that they could go to give them an idea of comparative childcare costs. The perceived cost was a mental barrier to consider returning to work.

"I can't even think of going back to work until January (when one of my children starts school) because I would have to pay two lots of childcare. Going to work is not just the financial side - it's self respect as well! I would prefer to be going out there and earning my own money and not relying on someone else!"

- A particular concern in the group was whether or not they would be charged if their child was unable to attend a childcare session because of illness.

"Even when my daughter was poorly and couldn't go we still had to pay the same."(Referring to a Day Care service).

- Parents were very positive that the Children's Centre would provide some childcare facilities (such as stay and play and crèche provision) free of charge.
- The group highlighted a need for a central body such as the Children's Centre to help parents gain an understanding of different childcare options available and also their comparative costs. As part of this parents also require help to access the childcare cost refunds that they might be entitled to.
- There is a strong feeling of isolation within this community and felt by half the respondents (3/6) attending the focus group. They feel that the Children's Centre will be able to play a significant role in breaking down some of the isolation in the community by enabling Mums to meet other Mums. Young Mums in particular often housed some distance from the rest of their family feel especially isolated in this area.

"It was very lonely for the first time we moved here - although my Mum's not far away she works all day and when she gets home she is too tired to see her grandchildren. She would love to see her grandkids but is too tired. Families are isolated not just by distance but also by time and tiredness."

"You don't seem to get a house close to the family - this is happening more and more. For 2 years I was so far from my parents and my sisters - it was a really bad time. I literally just sat in the house on my own with the kids. My partner and I had both moved into the area - we didn't know a soul and he worked all day."

5.3.5. Areas for Improvement in the Local Area

At this stage in the focus group discussion respondents were encouraged to "think outside the box" about new ideas for services and activities in the area that they felt would help them and also their under 5s. The following ideas were generated:

- A central point/ notice board at schools highlighting activities in the area.
- A drop-in centre for Mums and under 5s was felt to be a useful addition to the community. In particular a parent/ child friendly soft play area like "Tumbletown" was described as a good example where children have fun and learn whilst Mums can socialise with each other.
- Using local resources more effectively:
 - There was a suggestion that more could be made of the spare building space in Lenton Abbey especially Baslow Drive (Lenton Abbey Neighbourhood Centre).
 - It was felt that the local authority minibuses owned by the youth centre project at Lenton Abbey (and parked outside all the time) could be made available for local mother and toddler outings.

- More could be made of the parks in the area - they are unique to the area and a great asset. Additional special events in the Parks would help connect the community enabling children, families and parents to interact. They also felt that there needs to be better maintenance of the parks to increase the safety of play for children.
- There was a perceived need to focus on ways to reduce the feeling of isolation felt by many mothers and young families in the area - to develop events and services that would help them connect with each other.

"Picnics in the park! - I would go if I had somebody to go with."

- Bolt-on crèche services to activities that are already in existence were discussed. There are training sessions in English and Computing held at the Lenton Abbey Neighbourhood Centre on Tuesday's between 1 - 3pm and also Literacy/ Numeracy and Computer training activities for parents at Beeston Fields School. Many of the group were unaware of these activities but very interested when they heard about these from the others.
- Asked why those that knew about them didn't currently attend them - the reason given was that there are no crèche facilities running. They felt that these activities were suitable for parents with children at the school and who do not have any other children under 5 at home. They are not therefore activities for parents who still have under 5s at home.

NOTE:

- The Lenton Abbey Neighbourhood Centre does provide a crèche for its adult learning activities. However the focus group participants were unaware of this.
- Around two years ago, there was a crèche provided for the adult learning activities at Beeston Fields School - however a crèche service is no longer offered.

6. Key Messages for the Future

- The interviews with parents, the focus group and input from the partners show a high level of agreement about the needs of parents and young children in Beeston North/Lenton Abbey for the future. These include:
 - There are many activities for under 5s already taking place within the area. There is a need to raise awareness and increase the accessibility and visibility of these activities. For example:
 - Visible venues - physically welcoming e.g. more signage, notices, open doors.
 - Child-friendly surroundings - brighter colours with more toys and activities available.
 - Parent-friendly - socially more welcoming especially for newcomers.
 - Accessible - more flexible opening hours.
 - The main gaps of services in the area are for sports activities. Easier access to a swimming pool was mentioned by all groups in this study; however any form of exercise for under 5s is currently lacking in the area and would be appreciated by parents and children.

- The many public parks in the neighbourhood are a tremendous asset to the community and are much appreciated by parents with young children. Activities for families and young children in the area should continue to be developed to gain full benefit from these public spaces.
- In particular the following needs for parents with young children were highlighted in this consultation:
 - A central location where parents can obtain up-to-date information about services and activities to be available to parents in a format and location/s to be agreed, but somewhere accessible to the majority.
 - A central body such as the Children's Centre to help parents gain an understanding of different childcare options available and also their comparative costs. As part of this parents also require help to access the childcare cost refunds that they might be entitled to.
 - An informal drop-in centre for parents and toddlers which is open flexible hours to suit all parents was one of the main requests from the parents. This will be an important part of breaking down the high levels of isolation that young families living within this community currently feel.
- There are two main concerns about the safety of parts of the neighbourhood. The main anxieties are:
 - Litter in the parks, specifically cans and glass, is a major safety concern for parents with young children.
 - Many young families have to frequently cross the main roads which divide this community (the A52 and A6464). There are issues about the lack of organised crossing points on these roads and also the high speed and volume of traffic.
- There was a lack of awareness amongst many parents and some service providers about the Children's Centre. This should be addressed through specific communications covering the services that the Children's Centre will deliver within the community and how it plans to deliver them. It is recommended that information about the Children's Centre is made available through the high use service provider groups including GP Practices, Midwives and Health Visitors, and also via Home Visits.
- In particular there is a need to engage with registered childminders in the area. They will be key partners in the new organisation but due to a low response from them during this consultation exercise their views are currently underrepresented.
- The biggest challenge to the successful delivery of the Children's Centre services and ethos in Beeston North will be seamlessly joining-up the operation of service delivery across Beeston North and Lenton Abbey. This requires a flexible budgetary and management operation between Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. It also requires that the local parents and service providers both understand and accept the concept of a virtual cross-boundary Children's Centre.

- While the consultation necessarily had its limitations, due to lack of time and resource, the results are still felt to be representative of the community; it was always seen as a first conversation to provide a basis with which to build the future Children's Centre in Beeston North.
- There is the need to assure parents and partners that the Children's Centre is sustainable and that the involvement of all parties is crucial in its success, as well as allowing parents to take ownership of the Children's Centre, to be jointly engaged with professionals in the provision of services for them and their families.
- This consultation and the planned feedback session are the starting points from which services for children under 5 and their families will develop. There is every reason to think from responses that parents will become involved, so that the Children's Centre becomes their service, rather than something delivered to them.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 2 – Showcards

Appendix 3 – Questionnaire for Service Providers / Partners

Appendix 4 – Discussion Guide for Sure Start Children's Centres Focus Groups

Appendix 5 – 'Other' Responses from Parents' Questionnaire

Appendix 6 – Responses from Partners and Service Providers

Appendix 7 – Mapping Exercise: Current Services in Beeston North and Lenton Abbey from parents and partners