Appendix D: Besson Street Gardens Consultation Paper

Public Consultation
Proposal to de-register Besson Street Community Garden as a Children’s Centre

London Borough of Lewisham is currently undertaking an overarching consultation on the way in which Children’s Centres in Lewisham are managed. Their consultation is available on the London Borough of Lewisham website, and ends on 11th January 2015.

At present, Besson Street is a registered Children’s Centre, and is included within this consultation. As a registered Children’s Centre, we are subject to same regulatory framework as other Children’s Centres in Lewisham, such as Ofsted inspection. As part of LB Lewisham’s proposals of how to commission Children’s Centre services in the future, they have asked the New Cross Gate Trust to consult its users on the option to de-register Besson Street Community Garden as a Children’s Centre.

This is on account of Besson Street being set up quite differently from other Children’s Centres. The New Cross Gate Trust holds the lease for Besson Street Gardens, and delivers a wide range of community services according to the needs we observe within the local area. Children’s Services (specifically our 3 stay and play sessions per week) comprise only one element of our work, for which we currently receive some funding towards the cost of these sessions from LB Lewisham via The Children’s Society. We do not deliver the full range of services which might be expected of a Children’s Centre, but we do deliver a wide range of services to the whole of the community.

Reasons for de-registering:
- Besson Street Community Garden was not designed as a Children’s Centre, and lacks some of the facilities that would be expected of a Children’s Centre.
- As a registered Children’s Centre, we are currently subject to Ofsted inspections, as part of the Area 1 Children’s Centres group. The regulatory burden of this status is disproportionate to the level of under 5s provision we actually provide (this being 3 stay and play sessions per week).
- The targets set by LB Lewisham, in respect of the number of new registrations, attendance and case studies of our client base, and subsequent reporting requirements are also disproportionate to our size and staffing capacity of a small local charity.

Implications of de-registration:
If we de-register Besson Street, we would continue to deliver the same services that we do at present (subject to continuing funding). However, we would not be subject to the same level of administrative requirement as we are at present. This would free up staffing time to focus on continuing to improve the service delivery.
Funding for these sessions will be subject to the wider funding cuts that are happening in Lewisham. However, we will continue to talk to Lewisham about
what funding is available, and to seek additional sources of funding wherever possible to maintain the service that we currently deliver.

**Feedback:**
It is important that we consult our users on these proposed changes. You can respond in the following ways:
- Answer the paper consultation available in Besson Street, and hand in to a member of staff.
- Answer an online questionnaire, available here: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CP79P6F](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CP79P6F)

The consultation is open between 5th – 19th January.

**What will happen next:**
At the end of the consultation period we will collate the responses and provide these to the London Borough of Lewisham for consideration at their next Mayor and Cabinet meeting.
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Feedback form:

1. Do you currently attend our stay and play sessions? (please tick)
   - Yes  □  No  □

2. If yes, how often do you attend? (please tick)
   - More than once a week  □
   - Once a week  □
   - Once or twice a month  □
   - Less than once a month  □

3. Do you think that Besson Street should de-register as a Children’s Centre?
   - Yes  □
   - No  □
   - Don’t Know  □

4. What Children’s Centre services do you think it is important to have available in the local area (please tick all that apply):
   - Stay and play sessions  □
   - Individual family support  □
   - Health visitor clinics  □
   - Adult education  □
   - Employment support  □
   - General information, advice and guidance  □
   - Other services: Please give details below:  □

5. What other views, thoughts or suggestions do you have on the proposed change?

The following questions are to enable us to check if this consultation is fair and inclusive. Any information that you choose to provide will be treated confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.
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1. **Age:**
   - Under 18 □
   - 18-64 □
   - 65+ □

2. **Gender**
   - Male □
   - Female □
   - I’d rather not say □

3. **Ethnicity**
   **White**
   - White British □
   - White Irish □
   - White other □

   **Mixed**
   - White and Asian □
   - White and Black African □
   - White and Black Caribbean □
   - Any other mixed background □

   **Asian/Asian British**
   - Chinese □
   - Bangladeshi □
   - Pakistani □
   - Indian □
   - Any other Asian background □

   **Black/Black British**
   - African □
   - Caribbean □
   - Any other black background □

   **Other**
   - Other ethnic group □
   - I’d rather not say □

4. **Disability - Do you consider yourself to have a disability?**
   - Yes □
   - No □

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Please return it to a member of Besson Street Staff. We will publish on our website a summary of the responses to the consultation once this is complete.