

THE EXECUTIVE

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**Agenda Item 12a Strategic Proposal for the Development of
Children's Centres (Pages 1 - 10)**

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THE EXECUTIVE**3 AUGUST 2004****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND LIBRARIES**

SOCIAL REGENERATION: STRATEGIC PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S CENTRES		FOR DECISION
<p><i>This report is submitted to seek the Executive's approval for the strategic proposal for the development of children's centres throughout the Borough in 2004-2006.</i></p> <p><u>Summary</u></p> <p>The Early Years and Childcare Service plans to create a children's centre network in the most disadvantaged wards by incorporating and expanding the four Sure Start local programmes and by building four new children's centres. The development of children's centres is an important aspect of the Community, the Regeneration and the Children's Strategies. The Sure Start Unit at central government has given approval to proceed with the proposals subject to Executive approval.</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Executive is recommended to approve the strategic proposal for the first phase of the development of children's centres throughout the Borough in 2004-2006. The proposal aligns the capital projects previously approved by the Executive as part of the Sure Start and Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiatives. A copy of the full report is attached at Appendix 1. Further detailed reports on the Phase 2 proposals will be made to the Executive as they proceed. 2. The Executive is recommended to approve the expenditure of additional funding at John Perry Primary School to allow the current planned neighbourhood nursery to gain full children's centre status. £800,000 from the DEAL wrap-around childcare budget has already been approved for the neighbourhood nursery. It is requested that a further £97,600 is approved to be funded from the earmarked allocation for wrap around childcare within the 2005/2006 capital programme. 		
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1. The Role of the Local Authority

- 1.1. The Early Years and Childcare Service, located in the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries is the nominated agency for delivering the children's centre and the Sure Start agendas. The Local Authority is the Accountable Body for each of the four Sure Start local programmes.

- 1.2. The provision of high quality, integrated early years education and childcare is critical to raising educational standards and ensuring social inclusion. The provision of affordable childcare is fundamental to social regeneration and to the ending of child poverty. By providing training linked to childcare the opportunity to raise the basic skills levels and qualifications of the local community is provided. This enables local people to access work. Only by enabling parents to access work through training and support will the cycle of poverty, which impacts on children's ability to thrive, be broken

2. National Priorities

- 2.1. The Government's Green Paper, "Every Child Matters" and the subsequent publication "The Next Steps" set out the Government's proposals for reforming the delivery of services for children, young people and families. The five key outcomes are:
- being healthy;
 - staying safe;
 - enjoying and achieving;
 - making a positive contribution;
 - economic well-being.

3. Consultation

- 3.1. The children's centre strategy has been prepared following extensive discussion and consultation with the Social Services Department, the Primary Care Trust, the Health Authority, school governing bodies, parents, private, voluntary and maintained early education providers. DEAL, Regeneration and Corporate Finance departments have been consulted on the financial implications.

4. Funding Streams

- 4.1. The total capital cost of Phase 1 for Children's Centres is approximately £10.8 million. The funding of these costs comes from a number of sources both internal and external and is fully detailed in Appendix 2.
- 4.2. The estimated revenue costs of the children's centres for 2004-05 and 2005-06 are set out below and are fully covered by DfES funding.

Centre	2004-05 £'000	2005-06 £'000
Thames View Sure Start	80	150
Marks Gate Sure Start	115	150
Abbey Sure Start	40	150
Gascoigne Sure Start	20	20
Jo Richardson	0	40
Becontree	0	0 (Not open until 2006)
William Bellamy	0	0 (Not open until 2006)
John Perry	0	40
Total	255	550

- 4.3. Details of ongoing revenue funding from the DfES from 2006-07 onwards are still awaited. However the following statement was included within the recent Government Spending Review.

“In addition the 2004 Spending Review confirms additional resources for childcare and services for disadvantaged children of £769m by 2007-08 compared with 2004-05. This will deliver 2,500 Children’s Centres by 2008, going beyond the Government’s commitment to a Children’s Centre in each of the 20 per cent most disadvantaged wards in England. We anticipate allocating revenue funding to Local Authorities for 2006-08 for the centres currently being planned but figures per Local Authority have not been calculated yet. We appreciate that Local Authorities require this information to aid their forward planning and will inform them as soon as possible.”

- 4.4. The ongoing revenue costs of those children’s centres which have been developed as part of Sure Start programmes will continue beyond 2010. It is likely that the ongoing revenue costs for all other children’s centres for 2006-08 will be covered in full by DfES funding. Many of the children’s centre services will result from a re-configuration of mainstream services and will not therefore require additional revenue funding. However any shortfall will need to be met by those agencies involved in delivering the services. Discussions are currently taking place to decide how these costs will be under-written in the future.
- 4.5. Subject to the Executive’s approval, details of the revenue costs and funding arrangements will be incorporated into the Council’s budget setting process. Further work is required in examining the revenue costs in detail and this will be undertaken through the Capital Programme Management Office approval process.

5. Targets

- 5.1. Barking and Dagenham has been given the target of providing children’s centre services to 6,477 children by March 2006. The Local Authority has the target of creating 433 new centre-based, full day childcare places by April 2006 in those wards that fall into the 20% most disadvantaged in England. In addition we have the target of creating 434 new out of school childcare places in disadvantaged wards and 107 new places in non-disadvantaged wards by 2006.

Background Papers

Every Child Matters (2003)
Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006
Every Child Matters, The Next Steps (2004)
Children Bill (2004)

Strategic Proposal for Children's Centres in Barking and Dagenham April 2004-March 2006

Introduction

Local Authorities have been invited to work with the Sure Start Unit to develop the next phase of the Government's strategy to deliver better outcomes for children and families. This requires a huge commitment to improve the co-ordination, quantity and quality of services. However it provides an unprecedented opportunity to make life better for children, parents and the local community by bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support services. By learning from the experience of the Sure Start local programmes the Local Authority has the opportunity to develop better services for children in an integrated way.

Background

Barking and Dagenham currently has the lowest number of childcare places per head of population in England. Childcare helps to reduce child poverty by making available to parents opportunities for employment and training and is therefore fundamental to social regeneration. It enables teen parents to continue with their education. The Government's recent Inter-Departmental Childcare Review found that childcare can make a positive difference to children, parents and communities by:

- improving children's achievements at school;
- enabling parents to study and work;
- improving health;
- reducing crime.

The Review also found that children, parents and communities gain when childcare, early education, health and family support services are offered together. This provides significant benefits for disadvantaged young children. The concept of a children's centre was thus developed.

The Spending Review settlement 2002 allows for children's centres to be developed in half of the 20% most disadvantaged wards by March 2006, with the assumption that the spending review settlement 2006 would provide the rest.

Strategic Aims

The overall aim of the programme is to create an accessible children's centre network, benefiting disadvantaged communities through the delivery of integrated, prevention focused services for children under five years of age and their parents/carers.

Associated objectives include:

- the integration and re-shaping of early years services;
- the strengthening of preventive services;
- the identification and exploration of new models of delivery;
- an increase in the number of childcare places integrated with early education.

Children's Centre Services

The core services to be delivered from children's centres must include:

- early education integrated with childcare;
- family support and parental outreach;
- child and family health services;
- links to schools and the Children's Information Service;
- links with Job Centre Plus.

Existing Provision

From April 2004 the Local Authority must ensure that all three and four year olds will be able to access a free, part time early education place. This has to be funded from the Education budget. Currently every infant and primary school in the Borough has a nursery which offers part time early education places of two and a half hours. However this does not meet the needs of parents who wish to work or enter training. Free places can be provided in a variety of settings in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors.

Location

Arriving at proposals for children's centres has meant the consideration of a number of factors including:

- lack of existing services and childcare;
- suitability of venues;
- integration rather than competition with existing early education and childcare provision;
- population density of children aged 0-5;
- Government's coverage and childcare targets.

The development of children's centres in the Borough has been planned to integrate new childcare places with existing early education places in school nurseries. Apart from the obvious benefits to the children this policy aims to minimise any possible negative impact on school nursery rolls. The DfES Guidance describes the ideal children centre as "a single building on or close to a primary school site."

The location of children's centres on school sites also means that links can be made with the extended schools agenda. An extended school is one that provides a range of services and activities beyond the school day to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community. Childcare for children over five will be provided by before and after school clubs. In line with Government expectations, childcare staff working in each children's centre will also have input in terms of advice, support and guidance from a qualified teacher with an early years specialism. The co-location of services will lead in time to re-shaped integrated services with an overall management structure.

Catchment Areas

Catchments will be designed around parents' ease of access rather than administrative convenience. They will be based on parents' and carers' ability to reach the centre within a twenty minute "pram push." Given that venues are unlikely to always sit in the centre of wards, this inevitably means that catchment areas will span ward boundaries.

Management and Governance

The children's centres will be managed by the Department of Education, Arts and Libraries. The key principles of the management and governance will be:

- the need for both central and local decision making and management functions;
- the establishment of a core set of universal, inclusive services which will be uniform across the children's centres but delivered in a way that is responsive to local needs.

Proposed Capital Programme (Phase 1, 2004-06)

All the proposals for children's centres will provide facilities which will enable the core offer of services to be met. The strategy includes projects developed as part of the Sure Start local programmes and Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative which have previously been agreed by the Executive. The proposals in phase 1 include:

Abbey Sure Start

The construction of a children's centre on the site of Northbury Infant school is underway as part of the Sure Start programme previously agreed by the Executive. It will provide 52 new, full daycare places integrated with the school's existing early education places.

Thames View Sure Start

The construction of a new, integrated early education and childcare centre on the site of Thames View Infant school is due for completion in September 2004. This has previously been agreed by the Executive as part of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. It will provide 52 new full day care places. The nursery will form part of an overall children's centre complex of buildings which will include the Sue Bramley Centre and the new health building developed as part of the LIFT programme.

Marks Gate Sure Start

A new neighbourhood nursery providing 52 full daycare places and multi-purpose facilities has been created as part of a complex of children's centre facilities. The building has previously been agreed by the Executive as part of the Sure Start and Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. Although not on the school site the childcare facility is in close proximity to the existing school nursery and the two settings will work closely together.

Gascoigne Sure Start

Plans are in place to create 69 full daycare places integrated with the existing school nursery and reception class building. The existing community centre and family centres will be developed into a new neighbourhood centre incorporating the core children's centre services. The Sure Start programme has already been given Executive approval.

John Perry Primary School

Plans are advanced for the creation of a children's centre which will include 52 full daycare places integrated with the new school nursery. This has previously been agreed by the Executive subject to the necessary planning permission.

Jo Richardson

Construction is underway to create 47 full daycare places as part of the full service extended school previously agreed by the Executive.

William Bellamy Infant School

Initial feasibility work has identified the potential of the site to provide 69 full daycare places as part of a children's centre development. The governing body is supportive.

Becontree Primary School

The governors are keen to develop a children's centre on the school site integrated with the existing school nursery. An initial feasibility study has demonstrated that there is sufficient space available.

Expansion of Sure Start Local Programmes

The Barking based Sure Start local programmes will be asked to expand their services to cover a part of Eastbury ward up to Lodge Avenue. Eastbury Day Nursery will be expanded to provide additional childcare places and facilities for services. This will mean more residents will be able to benefit from the significantly larger revenue budget that the Sure Start local programmes enjoy compared to other children's centres.

Future Provision (Phase 2, 2006-2010)

Village Infant School

The close proximity of the school nursery, Ford Road Family Centre, the health centre and the library make this an ideal location for a children's centre. The development of a sports hall on the land between the Village Infant and William Ford Junior schools provides an opportunity to develop this site. The health centre building is due to become vacant. There is also a possibility that the Rectory Library may become vacant if a new library for Dagenham is built. The potential of the library to be developed in conjunction with the nursery as an integrated early education and childcare centre would be a very cost effective solution.

Lymington Fields

It is proposed that the potential new primary school will be developed as an extended school incorporating a children's centre.

University of East London, Longbridge Road Site

The potential to develop a children's centre on the old UEL site will be explored.

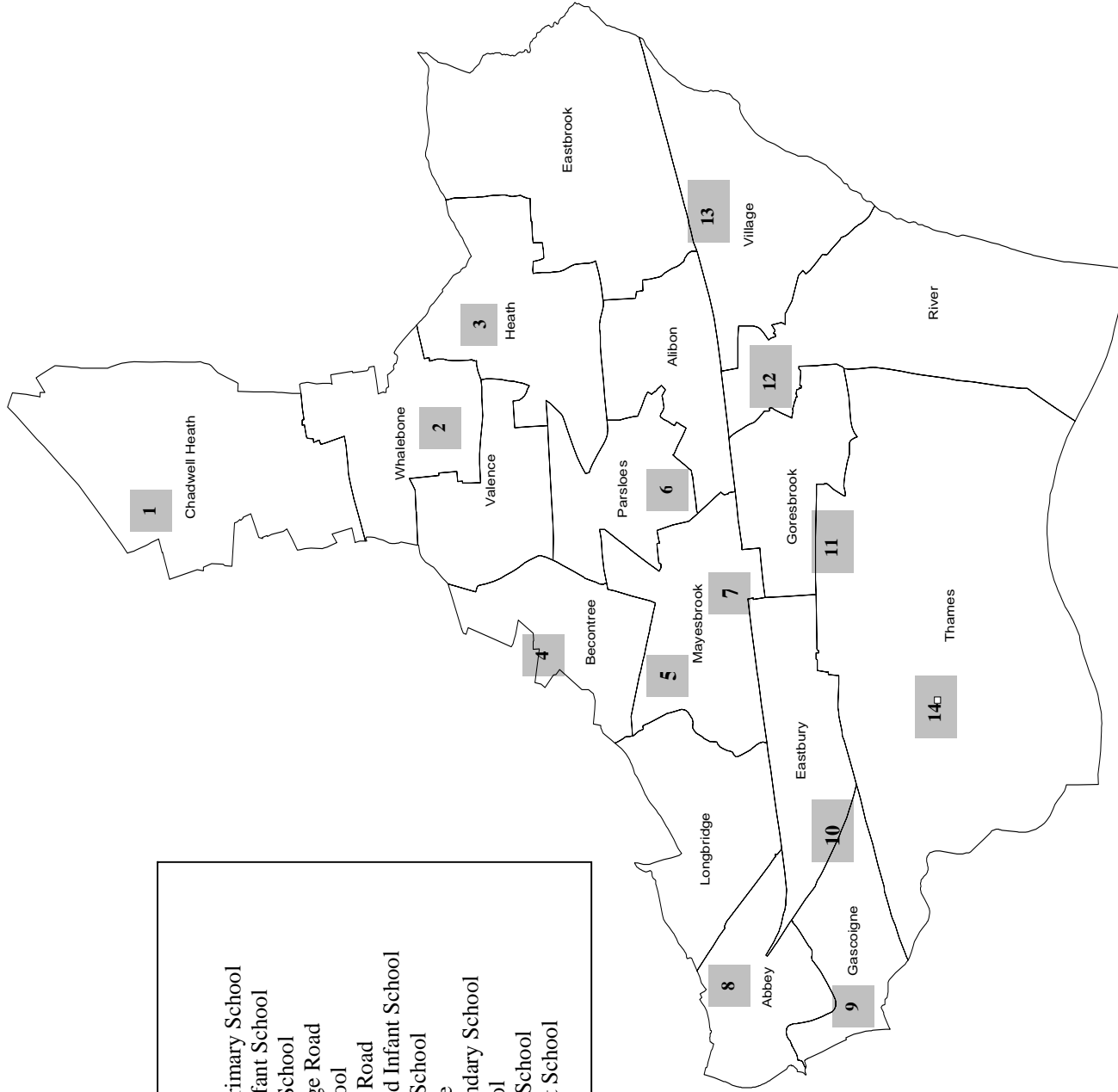
Sydney Russell Secondary School

A neighbourhood nursery has been constructed on the school site. The potential to develop this as a children's centre will be explored.

Early Intervention Project, Acorns 2

The potential to develop a children's centre in conjunction with this project in Markyate Road will be explored.

1. Marks Gate
2. Lymington Fields Primary School
3. William Bellamy Infant School
4. Becontree Primary School
5. UEL site, Longbridge Road
6. Sydney Russell School
7. Acorns 2, Markyate Road
8. Northbury Junior and Infant School
9. Gascoigne Primary School
10. Eastbury Day Centre
11. Jo Richardson Secondary School
12. Village Infant School
13. John Perry Primary School
14. Thames View Infant School



Appendix 2 Children's Centre Capital Programme Funding Streams 2004 – 2006

Project	Cost	Funding Source										Standards Fund	Total
		SSLP	NOF	NNI	NRF	LDA	Seed Challenge	DEAL Capital Programme	Children's Centre (Sure Start)	0	0		
Thames View	£1,633,692	£589,148	£93,000	0	0	£110,000	£300,000	£206,193 (03-04) plus LBBB re-distributions £229,741 (03-04)	0	£105,610	£1,633,692		
Abbey	£1,370,000	£1,075,000	£130,000	£65,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£1,370,000		
Marks Gate	£1,105,000	£1,075,000	£30,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£1,105,000		
Gascoigne	£1,500,000	£1,075,000	0	0	0	0	0	£125,000 (04-05)	£300,000	0	£1,500,000		
John Perry	£1,325,000	0	0	£402,400	0	0	0	£50,000 (03-04) £750,000 (04-05) £97,600 (05-06)	£25,000	0	£1,325,000		
Jo Richardson	£1,300,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	£1,000,000 [300,000]	0	£1,300,000		
Eastbury	£50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£50,000 (05-06)	0	0	£50,000		
William Bellamy	£1,500,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£200,000 (05-06)	£1,300,000	0	£1,500,000		
Becontree	£1,002,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£702,000 (05-06)	£300,000	0	£1,002,000		
TOTAL	£10,785,692	£3,814,148	£253,000	£467,400	£100,000	£110,000	£300,000	£2,410,534	£2,925,000 [300,000]	£105,610	£10,785,692		

KEY:

SSLP	Sure Start Local Programme, Capital Grant from Government
NOF	New Opportunities Fund
NNI	Neighbourhood Nurseries Initiative, Capital Grant from Government
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
LDA	London Development Agency
DEAL	Department Education, Arts & Libraries including Wrap-around Childcare Budget
CHILDREN'S CENTRE	Children's Centre, Capital Grant from Government Sure Start Unit

Note

⊕ This is not the cost of the building as such but £1m is a contribution to reduce ongoing revenue payments as part of the new PFI arrangements at Jo Richardson. The balance of £300,000 capital cost is converted into a revenue payment and is to be met from the Children's Centre Revenue budget.