

THE EXECUTIVE

5 APRIL 2006

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

STRATEGIC PROPOSAL FOR PHASE 2 CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND PROCUREMENT OF CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS	FOR DECISION
<p>Summary:</p> <p>This report sets out proposals for the location of seven new children's centres on or in close proximity to primary school sites. It briefly describes each project and the recommended procurement route.</p> <p>Wards Affected: Alibon, Chadwell Heath, Eastbury, River, Village and Parsloes</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial: This is a major Government initiative, supported through an external grant from the Sure Start Unit. Details of the investment needed to achieve these proposals are contained in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7. The revenue costs will be supported initially from the Children's Centre revenue budget. The cost of the childcare will eventually become self sustaining through fees paid by parents.</p> <p>Legal: The only potential legal issue will be if a decision is taken to allow a private or voluntary sector provide to deliver the childcare element. In such a case a legal contract will need to be drawn up.</p> <p>Risk Management: The main risk is that financial viability will be affected by low-take up of childcare places. The Children's Centre revenue grant will provide a childcare subsidy, during the first three years of operation, to enable childcare fees to be kept at a level affordable for local parents. This will be particularly important in order to establish the viability of the childcare element. Apart from the risk to the service, there is a procurement risk element dealt with separately in the report.</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Diversity: Services delivered through children's centres will be culturally sensitive and available for everyone. All children, including disabled children and those with social educational needs will be able to access services.</p> <p>Crime and Disorder: There are no specific issues or implications in relation to crime and disorder. The builds will be designed to take into account the need to design out potential crime.</p>	

Recommendations		
The Executive is recommended to:		
1	approve the strategic location of Children's Centres in Phase 2 of the Borough's programme during the period ending March 2008;	
2	approve the proposals for the procurement of projects as described in the report, subject to individual periodic gateway reviews within the CPMO capital appraisal process and appropriate funding;	
3	indicate whether Members wish to contribute to the contract packaging and specification of projects or in the subsequent evaluation and awarding of contracts, in accordance with Contracts Rules, Part D Paragraph 3.6 of the Council's Constitution.	
Reason		
To assist the Council to achieve its Community Priorities of 'Better Education and Learning For All' and 'Improving Health, Housing and Social Care'.		
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1 Background

- 1.1 The Government's children's centre agenda plans to enable local authorities to supply services to all children under five and their families in the 30% most disadvantaged areas by March 2008 as a step towards universal coverage in 2010. The total number of children under five which the Authority is expected to reach by 2010 is 12,494.
- 1.2 The development of children's centres is also crucial to the development of the Government's Ten Year Childcare Strategy which aims to make early years and childcare a permanent, mainstream element of national provision.
- 1.3 The location of children's centres on school sites means the children's centre services can be planned with those for extended schools. Planning the two initiatives together means that a co-ordinated offer of services for children aged 0-19 can be made.
- 1.4 Through the work which has been undertaken in conjunction with the Sure Start Unit, a great deal has been achieved in the first phase of establishing children's centres in Barking and Dagenham. The following projects have been either completed or are on site:

Full day care places	
• Wellgate – Marks Gate	52
• Seagulls – Thames View	52
• Abbey	52
• Castle Green	47
• Gascoigne	69
• William Bellamy	69
• Becontree	52
• John Perry	52

- 1.5 This work has done a great deal to improve the availability of childcare places. However, there is still a great deal to do and in terms of moving that forward, the Government has made recent announcements that funding will be made available for Phase 2 of the development of Children's Centres.
- 1.6 Children's Centre revenue funding from the General Sure Start Grant 2006-08 amounts to £5,105,821. Capital funding from the General Sure Start Grant 2006-08 totals £3,830,000 for the development of six new centres.
- 1.7 The approved capital programme for 2006-07 onwards includes a sum of £1,250,000 from the Council's resources towards the cost of developing the six new children's centres. This combined with the £3,830,000 allocated external funding provides a total funding of £5,080,000 for the Phase 2 Children's Centre development. Further work is being undertaken to establish the full detailed cost of the proposals for the six centres. Further reports will be presented to the Executive once this detailed work has been undertaken.

2 Phase 2 Children's Centre Development

- 2.1 In determining the location of the Phase 2 children's centres a number of factors were considered including:
- indicators of multi-deprivation;
 - number of lone parent households;
 - number of children under five;
 - number of teen parents;
 - Phase 1 developments;
 - infant and primary school sites with the potential for development.

Having considered the above factors and identifying gaps in provision the following proposals for location are recommended for adoption by the Executive:

- Marsh Green Primary;
- Leys Primary;
- Parsloes Primary;
- Furze Infant;
- Village Infant;
- Sydney Russell Secondary.
- Eastbury Infant, Dawson Avenue (current Eastbury Comprehensive site);

- 2.2 The addition of the seven Phase 2 centres to the eight developed in Phase 1 will take the Council closer to its objective of achieving a universal service offer for families with children under five. It is anticipated that a Phase 3 programme commencing in 2008 will complete the network, and some early feasibility study work will be undertaken in the interim in support of this.

3 Procurement

- 3.1 For consultancy issues, the process to appoint specialist design feasibility has commenced in view of the timescales set by the Government. It may be possible to utilise the framework agreements which are being put in place for consultants once the feasibility reference scheme has been completed. This will be subject to the framework agreement being in place. Alternatively it may be necessary to utilise the Local Education Partnership (LEP) which is being established for Building Schools for the Future.
- 3.2 In relation to construction as the Executive has already approved the development of framework contractor agreements the procurement of all construction will be via these agreements providing they are in place when needed. Alternatively and until such time as the agreement are completed the intention would be to subject to competitive tender using contractors selected from Construction Line.
- 3.3 In order to progress these schemes, the Executive is being asked to approve the procurement routes for the projects as set out below.
- 3.3.1 Marsh Green Primary School: The current building fronting the A1306 is, to a large extent, vacant and part of it can be made available to accommodate the development of a children's centre. It is intended to do some redecoration and refurbishment work and purchase appropriate equipment and furniture so that the centre can be established. This work will be carried out in conjunction with the term maintenance contractor as it will be mainly repairs and redecoration work.
- 3.3.2 Leys Primary School: At the present time, Leys does have a facility as part of the Borough's extended schools' programme. It is intended to transport the current temporary building located at John Perry Primary School which was put there during the construction of the children's centre. With the relocation of this building to Leys, it will mean a service can be offered to the local community very quickly with minimum cost. It will allow the development to proceed in conjunction with the activities already undertaken at the school in the extended schools role. A large part of the cost will be fitting out the demountable with furniture and equipment.
- 3.3.3 Parsloes Primary School: There is no area within the school which could be utilised or adapted and this development will need to be new build on the school site. In order to move this forward, some initial designs from a company which is used to designing Children's Centres has been commissioned – Anne Thorne Architects Partnership. The project will be procured by using our framework contractor if in place when needed or alternatively tender arrangements via Construction Line, or if the LEP is in place to utilise this.

3.3.4 Village Infants' School: It is proposed to explore the potential to develop the former Ford Road Nursery as a Children's Centre, use design consultants experienced in Children's Centre design, and refurbish the building using the Term Contractor or framework contractor, or if the LEP is in place to utilise this.

3.3.5 Furze Infant School: This is probably the most complex of all of the schemes because of the restricted site. It will require significant skill to facilitate a development on the site. Initial feasibility work is being carried out through Anne Thorne Architects Partnership. The project will be procured by using our framework contractor if in place when needed or alternatively tender arrangements via Construction Line, or if the LEP is in place to utilise this.

3.3.6 Dawson Avenue: A separate report will be submitted to the Executive, looking at the future use of what will be the former Eastbury Dawson Avenue site. This proposal will be to link provision on that site with Eastbury Infant School. The work will be very specific and will involve some refurbishment of existing buildings, together with some new build. The project will be procured by using our framework contractor if in place when needed or alternatively tender arrangements via Construction Line, or if the LEP is in place to utilise this. Initial feasibility work has been commissioned through Greenhill Jenner Partnerships looking at extended use of facilities on the site.

3.4 A Summary of the Procurement Proposals is as follows:

Site		Procurement - Professional services	Procurement – building Adjust to reflect all comments above
1	Marsh Green Primary School	None required. Using DRE surveyors.	Use term maintenance contractor - repairs and redecoration
2	Leys Primary School	None required. Using DRE surveyors.	Move temporary building from John Perry Primary School
3	Parsloes Primary School	Company used to designing Children's Centres	Competitive tender, Framework contract or LEP
4	Village Infants' School	Company experienced in design refurbishment.	Redevelop Ford Road Nursery - term contractor.
5	Furze Infant School	Restricted site. Needs design consultants with ability to development facility of this kind	Framework, LEP or competitive tender.
6	Dawson Avenue	Company used to designing Children's Centres with experience of refurbishment.	Refurbishment of existing buildings +framework, or LEP

3.5 Design consultants for projects 3 and 5 will be recruited simultaneously.

3.6 Other procurements of furniture and equipment are being dealt with as a separate framework contract.

4 Implications

- 4.1 The development of children's centres on school sites will be aligned to the development of extended schools services. This will enable a seamless offer of services to be made for children aged 0-12 and their families.
- 4.2 There is a risk that the childcare aspects of these proposals which require parents to contribute, would not achieve financial independence within the required 3 years. However, the evidence with the centres already developed is that the facilities are well used and supported by the community and it is not envisaged that this would be different in the second wave of developments.
- 4.3 In terms of procuring the building, there are risks as follows:
- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Designs are not affordable | - | Action: Examine component parts to reduce costs and reflect similar provision elsewhere. |
| Cost Overruns | - | Action: A small contingency will be held to deal with such costs. Better planning at the initiation stage will help avoid this. |
| Delays in design | - | Action: Minimised by selection of suitable design consultants experienced in designing children's centres. |
| Delays in construction | - | Minimised by good project management. |
- 4.4 Clearly, the Government has set ambitious targets for Barking and Dagenham and has allocated significant resources to support the programme. This report sets out how the next wave would be achieved.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the Borough's Procurement Officer, the Finance, Planning and Procurement Manager in the Education, Arts and Libraries Department, the Solicitor to the Council and CMT.

Background Papers

Executive Report May 2004

Social Regeneration – Early Years and Childcare Service

Strategic Proposal for Children's Centres.