

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 26th July 2007

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CHILDREN'S CENTRES - DEVELOPING INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Executive Summary

- 1.0 This report invites Cabinet to:-
 Approve the location of the satellite attached to Bidston and St James Children's Centre at Manor Primary School site
- Approve the location of the Pensby Phase 2 Children's Centre at the Pensby Park Primary School site
- Agree to further consultation, including Moreton Family Centre, in the Moreton area to identify the most appropriate site for the Children's Centre.
- 1.1 The recommendations will enable the continued roll out of services across the 30% most disadvantaged areas in Wirral.

Background

- 2.0 Cabinet agreed the initial proposals to develop Phase 1 Children's Centres within the 20% disadvantaged wards based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) on 20th November 2003.
- 2.1 Phase 1 Children's Centres are complete and delivering a range of services.

Phase 1 Children's Centres

Ward	Site	Completion Date
Upton	Ganneys Meadow Early Years Centre	Oct. '04
Leasowe and Moreton East	Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre	Nov. '05
Bidston and St. James	St. James Centre	Sept. '05
Seacombe	Seacombe Family Centre	Sept. '06
Bromborough	Bromborough Family Centre	Oct. '05
Birkenhead & Tranmere	St. Werburghs Primary School	March '06
Rock Ferry	Rock Ferry Primary School	June '06

Cloughton	Hillside Primary School	June '06
Liscard	Liscard Primary	Nov. '06
New Brighton	Mount Primary	June '06

2.2 In Phase 2 (2006-2008) Local Authorities must plan to ensure all of the most disadvantaged families have access to Children's Centre services i.e. families in the 30% most disadvantaged areas as defined by ODPM Super Output Areas (SOAs). SOAs are geographical units developed by the Office of National Statistics. Each SOA has approximately the same number of households and population. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has looked at the characteristics of the households living in each SOA and these characteristics make up the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) each SOA is then ranked on its level of deprivation. The IMD for 2004 is presented at an SOA level rather than a ward level as with previous Indices. There are 32,482 SOAs compared with 8,414 wards. This means that wards have been broken down into much smaller components and the pockets of deprivation contained within wards have been captured in the latest index. Wirral has 207 SOAs 94 of which are located within the lower 30%

2.3 It is the Government's intention that by 2010 all communities will have access to a Sure Start Children's Centre with each reaching 800 children, aged 0-5, providing access to services within "pram pushing distance". It will therefore be necessary to have more than one Children's Centre in some wards.

This report seeks to request approval from Cabinet on the identification of:-

3.0 A satellite to Bidston and St James' Children's Centre

The satellite, a multi-function room, or rooms, will be used to enhance choice of where the community can access services. Services provided from the satellite will be overseen by the Bidston and St James' Children's Centre Manager and Management Board. The owner of the premises in which the satellite is situated will have no direct responsibility for the delivery of the service. Providers of services in the Beechwood area were invited to offer premises based on set criteria.

3.1 Applications were received from the Headteachers of St Paul's Catholic Primary School and Manor Primary School. The applications were supported by the Governing Body of each school. Both responses were assessed by a panel of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board. Council officers also inspected the premises prior to the Board's consideration of the applications.

The final decision regarding the recommendation was based on the Manor Primary site being the most cost effective for adaptation due to recent refurbishment and modernisation. This was supported by a feasibility study completed by the Local Authority's Technical Services Department.

The recommendation is to locate the Satellite to Bidston St. James Children's Centre at Manor Primary School.

4.0 The identification of the appropriate site in Pensby for a Phase 2 Children's Centre

There are three current possible options for consideration:

- i) Use an existing double mobile on the Pensby Infant/Junior school site

Whilst this is the cheapest option - the refurbishment and adaptation of an old double mobile unit located on the site, estimated at £30 – 40,000, it has a number of disadvantages. The unit is situated in the middle of the site and is not easily accessible to the public and would require additional security measures. It is also in a poor condition. In addition, the council has approved the publication of notices proposing the amalgamation of Pensby Infants and Junior Schools, with a desire to replace the existing accommodation. In these circumstances, it would seem unwise to add further services on the site ahead of its re-development. It may be the case that this accommodation would be useful to decant classes into during works or be used for storage etc.

- ii) Provide a double mobile on the Pensby Infant/Junior school site.

Whilst the provision of a new or refurbished unit onto the site would resolve some of the access and security issues set out above in (i), the other factors are also relevant to this option. Location would be dependent upon services, particularly drainage and could conflict with any proposed new build location and site access needs. The cost would depend upon whether a new or refurbished unit could be procured and the costs of service connections etc. but would probably be in the region of £80 - £130,000.

- iii) Locate the centre in existing accommodation at Pensby Park Primary School.

Such a location could take place whether or not the school closes as part of the approved Cabinet proposals (Cabinet 20.6.07 approved publication of Statutory Notices). Should the school remain open, existing space is available for the Centre, if the school closes, consideration could be given to the co-location of other services, particularly Area and District Children's Support Teams and other appropriate services. Refurbishment and alterations to create the Children's Centre are estimated at approximately £80,000. There are also some outstanding roofing repairs and boiler works which can be met from existing resources. Should the school closure proposals go ahead this option would result in the site being retained with ongoing running costs, part of which could be met from the Children's Centre budget. Co-location of other support teams will release accommodation elsewhere to contribute to the wider ongoing review of the council's accommodation needs. By retaining the site operationally the opportunity to consider declaring the site surplus and available for disposal would be lost, however the commercial value of the site would be strongly influenced by the planning policy in the area.

The recommendation is therefore to locate the Phase 2 Children's Centre at the Pensby Park Primary School site.

- 4.1 Primary schools will often prove to be the most suitable sites as they provide a natural focus for local communities and parents are familiar with them. However any

development must reflect the nature of the community it serves and be designed around existing provision.

5.0 Progress on other Phase 2 Centres

- 5.1 Work on seven of the other eight Phase 2 Children's Centres is progressing to plan with work in progress at each site, or in the final stage of planning. There are a number of challenges arising from one school, the proposed Moreton Phase 2 Centre planned for the Moreton Family Centre. Difficulties in aligning the Children's Centre core offer with existing use of the building and the cost and nature of works required to the building have all impeded progress in scheme development. It is proposed that further consultation commence to revisit Morton Family Centre, including centre users in addition to the identification of alternative possible sites.

The recommendation is that further consultation commence to identify the most appropriate site for the Moreton Children's Centre.

- 6.0 In the 30% most disadvantaged areas where the need for support services is high and where there are few existing services, Children's Centres will provide a strong focus for meeting the high demand for additional and intensive support. The Sure Start Guidance sets out what the 30% most disadvantaged areas would expect to see being delivered through Children's Centres: -
- o Early Years provision
 - o A childminder network
 - o Parenting education and family support services
 - o Education, training and employment services
 - o Health services
 - o Access to wider services
- 6.1 In Phase 3, the remaining 70% more advantaged areas should develop Centres from existing maintained, private and voluntary or community provision with additional services being added to meet local needs

Financial and Staffing Implications

- 7.0 External grant will be provided subject to the acceptance of Implementation

Plans by DfES:

Total Capital funding for 2006-2008 - £3,500,000

Total Revenue funding for 2006-2008 - £4,700,360

To address the following Target: - Minimum 19 Centres

Total minimum number of new under 5s for

LA to reach during 2006 – 2008 – 7,096

Total number of under 5s LA to reach by 2010 - 17,404

Equal Opportunities Implications

- 8.0 Sure Start Children's Centres will be one of the key delivery mechanisms to achieve the objectives set out in the Government's Every Child Matters programme. Our aim is to improve outcomes for all young children, and in particular to close the gap between the outcome for the most disadvantaged children and others. Outcomes and options for children, families and their communities will be enhanced by increasing the

availability of high quality integrated childcare and early learning, health and family support services. We want to see services brought together at neighbourhood level supporting parents/carers, both in their parenting and in their aspirations towards employment.

Consistent with the principles of the Every Child Matters, Change for Children Programme, we believe that universal services must include supporting those in most need, and should be tailored to meet particular needs of individual children, their families, and the communities in which they are based.

Human Rights Implications

9.0 Sure Start Children's Centres form a key part of the delivery of early years services by local authorities, increasingly as a major element in the planning and delivery of Children's Trusts arrangements. They are crucial to the implementation of the Government's Ten Year Childcare Strategy, *Choices for Parents, the Best Start for Children*, and contribute to improving the child outcomes set out in Every Child Matters: being safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; economic wellbeing; and making a positive contribution. The Government is advocating a shift to more co-located, multi-disciplinary services that provide personalised support to children and their families. Children's Centres will be a key building block towards this goal.

Local Agenda 21 Implications

10.0 This plan will use existing premises wherever possible. Premises will be refurbished and extended with minimum impact on the environment.

Community Safety Implications

11.0 There are none directly arising from this report.

Planning Implications

12.0 Relevant planning approvals will be sought from the Director of Property Services as required.

Anti-poverty Implications

13.0 It is the Government's intention that Children's Centres will be the key mechanism for improving outcomes for young children, reducing inequalities in outcomes between the most disadvantaged and the rest, and helping bring an end to child poverty.

Local Member Support Implications

14.0 The Children's Centre developments will directly effect all Wards

Background Papers

15.0 Children Centre Plan 21st April 2004

Recommendations

That

- (1) the location of the satellite attached to Bidston and St James Children's Centre at Manor Primary School site be approved;
- (2) the location of the Pensby Phase 2 Children's Centre at the Pensby Park Primary School site be approved; and
- (3) further consultation, including Moreton Family Centre, be agreed in the Moreton area to identify the most appropriate site for the Children's Centre.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services