

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 25th NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EARLY YEARS CAPITAL GRANTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report requests Cabinet approval for the remaining uncommitted Early Years capital grant totalling £69,000. These proposed allocations will complete a 3 year Surestart Programme to support investment in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector. Provision has been included in the CYPD Capital Programme for 2010-11.

1. Background

Surestart funding to improve Early Years Quality and Access is as follows:-

	Amount £
2008-2009	1,238,960
2009-2010	1,238,960
2010-2011	1,238,960
Adjustment	- 769,000
Total Quality & Access	2,947,880
Allocated	2,878,880
Remaining to be Allocated	69,000

1.1 The grant has three aims:

- 1) To improve the quality of the learning environment in early years settings.
- 2) To ensure all children, including disabled children are able to access provision.
- 3) To enable PVI providers to deliver the extension of the free offer for 3 and 4 year olds and to do so flexibly.

The DFE expectation is that the majority of the capital grant is used to improve the quality of the environment in PVI settings, both to support lasting and higher quality experiences for young children and ensure that all children can access services.

1.2 Cabinet agreed the initial programme for the new DCSF Early Years Capital funding stream on 16th October 2008 and has since approved applications from providers at meetings held on 23rd April 2009, 25th June 2009 and 18th March 2010.

114 PVI providers have so far applied for this funding and all have been approved, enabling settings to be awarded grants of up to £10,000 to support IT, outdoor learning and the implementation of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

In addition, facilities at Brookhurst Pre-school (Broadhurst Primary School site), Pulford Pre-school (Brackenwood Primary School site), Bebington Pre-school (Stanton Road Primary School site), Irby Pre-school (Irby Primary School site) and Great Meols Pre-school (Great Meols Primary School site) have been significantly upgraded / replaced.

Final Phase

This paper gives details of applications from the remaining 9 PVI settings who had not previously made any application for grant funding, to a total of £66,875.

Two settings are applying following completion of their new provision. They are Bebington Pre-school Playgroup (on the site of Stanton Road Primary School) and Irby Pre-school playgroup (on the site of Irby Primary School).

They have each been invited to submit proposals for expenditure up to £10,000.

It is proposed that the other 7 settings share the remaining capital allocation and have submitted applications of up to £7,000.

Details are contained within Appendix 1.

1.3 The applications have been received as follows:

	No of applications	Total amount
Outdoor Learning	9	£39,237
Information technology	7	£15,140
Resources/ Furniture	5	£12,498

The criteria for approval focuses on the following priorities:-

- Plans to develop outdoor learning environments that will enhance learning and development for young children.
- Development of Information Technology to improve access to digital technology for children and staff.
- Purchase of furniture and other resources to enhance the learning environment in line with the principles of Effective Teaching and Learning.
- Previous grant awards.

Settings are required to demonstrate:-

- Ofsted report – satisfactory or better
- Clear justification for spend in line with improving outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage as defined above
- Support and endorsement from the setting Foundation Consultant
- Secure financial position to ensure longer term sustainability

The applications proposed for approval are set out in the attached Appendix 1.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The bids for small grants totalling £66,875 can be met from within the approved Children and Young People's Capital Programme. Funding is from a ring fenced Capital Grant.

3. Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The whole of the grant is to be spent by 31st March 2011, therefore, this report proposes that, as far as possible, the items of equipment and other resources be purchased centrally and then distributed to the groups, to ensure spending deadlines are met.

4. Staffing Implications

- 4.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

5. Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment

- 5.1 This initiative forms part of the strategy to ensure “sufficient provision, distributed appropriately across the authority to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable access by all to Early Years Services”. (DFE guidance).

6. Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

7. Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 7.1 There are none arising directly from this report.

8. Planning Implications

- 8.1 PVI providers are responsible for seeking planning permission where this is indicated by the nature of their proposals, for example, the intention to erect a canopy to facilitate all year round access to outdoor learning opportunities.

9. Anti-poverty Implications

- 9.1 The capital proposals in this report are intended to secure and support early years education and support for all children and families, which in turn contribute to the Anti-Poverty Strategy. All PVI settings are required to have an inclusion policy setting out “how they will meet the needs of all children” (DFE guidance).

10. Social Inclusion Implications

- 10.1 All PVI settings are required to have an inclusion policy setting out “how they will meet the needs of all children” (DFE guidance).

11. Local Member Support Implications

- 11.1 Capital Funding has been bid for by PVI groups across the borough.

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 There are none arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) The proposals for allocations of small grants to the 9 PVI settings listed in Appendix 1 be agreed.

David Armstrong
Interim Director of Children's Services