

## **Brighton & Hove City Council**

**Meeting:** Children and Young People's Trust

**Date:** 17 March 2008

**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Subject:** Early Education and Childcare in Moulsecoomb Children's Centre

**Ward(s) affected:** Moulsecoomb and Bevendean

### **1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To provide information about the proposals to deliver early education and childcare for Moulsecoomb Children's Centre which meets the Department for Children Families and Schools' requirement and the needs of the community.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree that early years provision for children aged 0—3yrs is run by the local authority located in and managed by the Moulsecoomb Children's Centre. Provision for children aged 3 and 4 years run by and located in the next door Moulsecoomb Nursery Class in Moulsecoomb Primary School. Moulsecoomb Primary School and the Children's Centre to work in partnership to meet the needs of all children aged 3 months – 5 years.

### **3. Information/background**

- 3.1 All Full Offer Children's Centres based in disadvantaged areas must offer full time early education and childcare for children 0-5. Until October 2007 this part of the core offer was met by the nursery run by Buffer Bear based in the Moulsecoomb Children's Centre. The Buffer Bear nursery was opened in 2003 as part of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. In October 2007 Buffer Bear decided to close the nursery because it was not sustainable. Buffer Bear had received start up funding from the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative and also from Eb4u. Both sources of funding ended in July 2006. The nursery was given a high level of support from Council early years staff including employing a part time qualified teacher to work in the nursery. Buffer Bear had Ofsted registration for 43 children but since opening had never achieved more that a 50% occupancy. The Ofsted judgement for

Buffer Bear was 'Satisfactory.'

3.2 Proposals for children aged 0 – 3 years.

3.3 This service will be available from 8am – 6pm using the space that Buffer Bear vacated within the Children's Centre. The nursery will have 21 places, 9 for children aged 3 months – 2 years and 12 for children aged 2 – 3 years. Initially the nursery will also provide breakfast, after-school and holiday care for 3 and 4 year olds. The provision will be based on the model at Roundabout Nursery in Whitehawk which has proved to be extremely successful, and will be managed as part of the Children's Centre.

3.3 The full year costs of this provision in 2008/9 would be £170,000. We plan to open the nursery in July so the cost for nine months will be £128,000. This funding will come from the from the Children's Centres element of the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant

3.4 At this early stage it is difficult to predict the level of take up. In Roundabout the first year's income for the whole nursery 3 months – 5 years was £32,000 rising to £100,000 in the second year of opening. This has been achieved through attracting parents from outside the Whitehawk area such as Kemptown, the Marina and Queens Park. We hope to do the same in Moulsecoomb but this is a different area with little 'through traffic' We will be advertising extensively to the LDC, University, local businesses and community venues to attract a mixed group of children. For this reason in the first year we have set the income at £5,000 with an understanding that take-up is likely to be slow at first.

3.5 There is some refurbishing required in the nursery space that Buffer Bear vacated. Initial quotes for this work are £68,000. This money is available from the SureStart capital grant for 2007/8. It is anticipated that this work will commence in March and will be completed at the end of April 2008. Once we have recruited staff it is anticipated that the 0 – 3's unit in the Children's Centre will open in July 2008.

3.6 Proposals for children aged 3 and 4 years

Provision for 3 and 4 year olds will be from Moulsecoomb Nursery Class during the school day. At first breakfast, after-school and holiday provision will be based in the Children's Centre Nursery. If there is sufficient demand the school will develop this provision on site over the longer term. The experience in both Roundabout and Tarnerland has been of little demand outside school hours.

This proposal will require the Nursery Class to work towards offering flexible sessions and lunchtime provision within the school day. This is in line with the move to more flexible early education provision and the increase to 15 hours by 2010. Currently the Nursery Class offers a morning or afternoon session for 2.5 hours over five days and will move to offering the free entitlement of 12.5 hours in an arrangement that suits parents. For example, over two and a half days if parents should wish. These changes will require minimal additional staffing. This model has worked well in Roundabout Nursery in Whitehawk which has increased attendance for 3 and 4 year olds from between 20 – 25 children per session to between 42 – 48 children per session. Moulsecomb Nursery Class is currently registered for 50 children in the morning and 50 children in the afternoon and there are currently 29 children attending in the morning and 25 in the afternoon.

- 3.7 Parents will need to pay for provision over the 12.5 hours free entitlement. We will develop a fee structure and be aware that uptake is likely to be slow in the beginning so would need to staff accordingly.
- 3.9 Initially we plan to provide breakfast, after school and holiday cover from the Children's Centre Nursery as we anticipate that take up would be low and this would not justify opening the Nursery Class outside school hours. The space in the Children's Centre Nursery is large enough to accommodate extra children, in a separate room if required.
- 3.10 The full year costs for this provision will be £45,000. This includes funding for lunch cover and an additional practitioner to support increased numbers within the nursery. The nursery will start to offer this service from September 2008 so the part year cost will be £26,000. This funding will come from the Children's Centres element of the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant This includes a minimal contribution from fees. Any fee income will reduce the subsidy.
- 3.11. The proposal includes a capital development on the school site to ensure there is sufficient space to accommodate additional children and to meet the space standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage. At present the nursery class is accommodated in one classroom. This space does not meet childcare standards for space and toilets. It would not be able to accommodate an increase in numbers of children or children who wanted to attend more sessions and stay over lunch. Preliminary inspection of the site has indicated a capital figure of approximately £185,000 to extend the Nursery Class. This funding is available from the Sure Start Capital grant which can be carried forward from 2007-8. Additional funding for

equipment and the outside area is available from the Early Years Capital Grant for 2008-9. The building work will take place over the summer to be completed by the beginning of the autumn term in September 2008.

### Contestability

3.12 The proposal is that the Council should provide the childcare for children under

3 and Moulsecoomb Primary School should provide childcare for children 3-5. The Childcare Act 2006 states that a local authority must determine, before providing childcare itself, whether another provider is willing to provide it and whether, in the circumstances, it is appropriate for the local authority to provide the childcare itself. (This restriction does not affect the provision of childcare by the governing body of a maintained school).

We have considered whether the childcare could be provided by another provider and have concluded that the local authority is the best option. Key reasons are:

- The local authority has a duty to improve the early years outcomes of young children and to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged children. Some of the city's most vulnerable children live in Moulsecoomb. This is reflected in the low level of the Foundation Stage outcomes for children in Moulsecoomb Primary School. It is essential that we ensure that children here have the best quality early years provision to help improve outcomes.
- We need an option based around the existing nursery class on the site. The provider of the nursery in the Children's Centre will need to work very closely with the school including initially sharing the care of 3 and 4 year olds. This can be best achieved if the nursery is managed by the Children's Centre. We are also planning for an administration post to work across both nurseries so that parents pay one set of fees.
- At the time of the closure of Buffer Bear many of the parents requested that the Council take over the running of the nursery and they expressed disappointment that at that time we were not in a position to do so. The reputation and success of the Roundabout Nursery in Whitehawk is helpful in explaining to local parents what the future provision is likely to be.

## **4. Consultation**

4.1 James Dougan, Caroline Parker and Celia Lamden have discussed these proposals with the Moulsecoomb and Bevendean Ward Councillors.

**Contact Officers:**

**Celia Lamden Sure Start Area Manager – East (4529)**  
**Caroline Parker City Early Years and Childcare (3587)**

<b>Meeting/Date</b>	Children and Young People's Trust
<b>Report of</b>	Director of Children's Services
<b>Subject</b>	Early education and childcare in Moulsecoomb
<b>Wards affected</b>	Moulsecoomb and Bevendean

### **Financial implications**

The preliminary costings for the Moulsecoomb Children's Centre nursery for a full year are £170,000 and for the Moulsecoomb Nursery Class £45,000 total expenditure for 2009/10 would be £215,000. The part year costs for 2008/9 are £128,000 for the Children's Centre assuming an opening on 1<sup>st</sup> July 08 and £26,000 for the Nursery Class assuming an opening on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2008, total expenditure for 2008/9 £154,000. This funding will come from the Children's Centres element of the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant.

The capital expenditure is £185,000 for Moulsecoomb Nursery Class extension and £68,000 for refurbishing existing nursery space in Moulsecoomb Children's Centre. Total amount of £253,000 to be met from the SureStart capital grant funding 2007/8 carried over into 2008/9. This has been agreed by Together for Children on behalf of the DCSF. The carry forward has been reported to the Policy and Resources Committee.

**Finance Officer consulted:** Sue Coleman      **Date** 22-01-2008

### **Legal implications**

*The proposals set out in the report will assist the authority in meeting their duties to children in need under the Children Act 1989. As set out in the body of the report under the Childcare Act 2006, before providing childcare itself, a local authority must determine whether another provider is willing to provide it and whether, in the circumstances, it is appropriate for the local authority to provide the childcare itself.*

*The Lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson    Date 11.02.08*

<p><b>Corporate/Citywide implications</b> This proposal fits with the DCFS expectation that every designated Children's Centre offers early education and childcare. This fits well with the governments antipoverty agenda in encouraging parents to return to education and employment through providing high quality childcare.</p>	<p><b>Risk assessment</b> The main risk is low take up of places which will lead to a continuing subsidy in future years.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability implications</b></p>	<p><b>Equalities implications</b></p>

<p>It is likely that the Council will have to support this nursery on an ongoing basis in order to meet the needs of the Moulsecoomb community.</p>	<p>Providing high quality early education and childcare will enable more parents to access education and employment opportunities and therefore narrow the gap between children living in deprived communities and their peers in more affluent areas of the city.</p>
---	--

**Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder**  
 It is widely known that if young people have a sound education and positive career options the likelihood of them resorting to criminal activity is reduced. Through providing high quality early education and childcare this will enable children to be ready to access the school curriculum at 5 years and so enhance their chances of progressing through the school system with success and achieving their full potential.

**Background papers [Part 1 reports only]**  
 1. The Childcare Act 2006

**Contact Officer**  
 Celia Lamden SureStart Manager 291529. Caroline Parker Head of Service City Early Years and Childcare 293587