

Brighton & Hove City Council

For general release

Meeting: Children Families & Schools Sub-Committee

Date: Monday 8 September 2003

Report of: Director Children Families & Schools

Subject: Children's Centres

Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To inform members of the Government Programme for Children's Centres, and to set out some of the implications for Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 To seek delegated authority to draw up proposals for the location of Children's Centres to be submitted to the Department of Education and Skills for the deadline of 15 October.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the information about the national programme for Children's Centres, the financial allocation to Brighton & Hove and the targets for local Children's Centres to cover 2,252 children and to provide an additional 150 childcare places for children under 5.
- 2.2 To agree the proposed criteria for location of the Children's Centres outlined in paragraph 6.4
- 2.3 To give delegated authority for the Director to draw up proposals, based on the agreed criteria, and in consultation with the Chair and opposition spokesperson, to meet the DFES deadline of 15 October.
- 2.3 To agree to the proposal that the services that are integral to Children's Centres should be amongst the first to move into the Children's Trust

3. Information/background

- 3.1 Children's Centres are part of the Government's expanded Sure Start programme. A report on the Sure Start programme and the implications for

the Council appears earlier on this agenda.

3.2 Children's Centres are at the heart of the Sure Start programme. Their core services are:

- Early education integrated with childcare
- Family support and outreach to parents, including advice on employment opportunities
- Child and family health services

Although the centres are primarily for under-5s, they are encouraged to link with, or provide a base for, services for older children.

3.3 The government's aim is to have at least one Children's Centre in each of the 20% most deprived wards in the country. On the basis of our demography, Brighton and Hove has been allocated funding to develop Children's Centres covering 2,252 children and providing an additional 150 childcare places.

3.4 The financial allocation is £1,014,959 capital funding and £435,283 revenue funding over two financial years, 2004-2006 (see Annex 2). There will be additional funding for the extra 150 childcare places, which is still to be announced.

3.5 Given the relatively limited amount of money, the expectation is that Children's Centres will largely be developed from existing provision including local Sure Start programmes and Neighbourhood Nurseries.

4. Integrated Services

4.1 The Government places great emphasis on the need for services from Children's Centres to be integrated. By integration they mean:

- Children and families will be able to receive an integrated service from the centre across early education, childcare, support services and health advice. Families should have clear and ready access to these services, more than just signposting and information about other agencies
- Early education and childcare are integrated so that there is continuity of staffing and support for the children's development and experience
- Where services are to be provided from more than one location they reflect an integrated approach to the planning of activities and a shared management ethos
- Management arrangements are sufficiently robust to support and lead integration
- Where full integration has not yet been achieved there is a plan in place that will move services towards this over a 2-year period
- Every worker, within health, education, social services or the voluntary sector who has contact with a family living within the catchment area of the

children's centre should consider themselves to be part of the Children's Centre hub of local provision.

- 4.2 The Government recognises that it will not be possible in all cases to achieve both the core offer and full integration immediately and will designate Children's Centres where a good range of services is available. We must ensure that a basic 'offer' of full day care suitable for working parents, delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum, some parent support and a link with Jobcentre Plus is available on designation. Centres will need to meet full requirements within two years.
- 4.3 In the longer term we need to work towards integrated teams that include early education and childcare staff, health visitors, midwives, speech and language therapists, family support workers, Playlink and Early Link staff. These teams will need to cover a geographical area so this has implications for the relationship between GPs and health visitors.
- 4.4 We will also need to assess whether any additional services are needed in any of the areas, particularly those not covered by an existing Sure Start.
- 4.5 As a first step towards integration of services, we are proposing appointing Operations Managers to each Children's Centre. Their role would be to:
 - manage and co-ordinate care pathways for children and families
 - organise integrated management of caseloads
 - organise and undertake cross sector assessments of need.

5. Links with the Family Support Strategy and the Children's Trust

- 5.1 The Children's Centre concept is based on the same rationale as the Family Support Strategy and Children's Trust ie. better outcomes for children and families by providing integrated services and an increased emphasis on preventative services.
- 5.2 However Children Centres differ in that:
 - the funding only covers children under 5, although Centres are encouraged to link with services for older children;
 - the funded centres are to be targeted in areas of disadvantage, although Council's are free to fund Children's Centres in other areas.
 - there is an emphasis on the provision of early education and childcare as a core service of the integrated team.
- 5.3 The implication of becoming a Children's Trust is that we will be moving to fully integrated services by 2006. This is consistent with the timetable for Children's Centres. Following consultation with the PCT it is recommended that the services that are integral to Children's Centres should be amongst the first to move into the Children's Trust (eg. Council run integrated early

education and childcare places. health visitors, midwives, Playlink, speech and language services) and the relationship with both Sure Start Local Programmes and East Brighton for You (eb4u).

6. Where to base Children's Centres

- 6.1 Sure Start funded Children's Centres must be located in, or serve families from, one of the 20% most disadvantaged wards and /or pockets of disadvantage. Children's Centres will bring together locally available services but will not necessarily be developed on one site. However, if a number of sites are used; local authorities must demonstrate that they are close together and that users will be able to access them easily. The services offered should be integrated whether or not they are offered from a single site.
- 6.2 The revenue funding covers two years and at some £217,000 a year is very small compared to Sure Start funding. We therefore need to concentrate on reconfiguring existing services and linking with other forms of funding.
- 6.3 The Children's Centres must cover a geographical area and we have targets for the number of children to be covered: 2,252 by 2006 and 3,464 by 2010. We also have a target to create 150 new childcare place for children under 5. These places can be created in stand alone nurseries in disadvantaged areas.
- 6.4 The proposed criteria for locating Children's Centres in Brighton & Hove are:
- Existing Sure Start programmes – there is a clear expectation that Sure Starts should develop Children's Centres but with minimal additional funding.
 - Centres based in wards in the worst 20% based on child poverty (we are asked to use the old ward boundaries because information on poverty is not yet available for the new wards) or areas with pockets of poverty.
 - Areas that already have existing Children Centre type services eg. integrated childcare and early education, Playlink, Family Centres, additional health services.
 - Areas with a shortage of childcare and early education places for under 5s.
 - To aim to have at least one Children's Centre in each of the Four Family Support Strategy areas.
 - Areas with the potential to link to services for older children eg. out of school childcare, extended schools.

6.5 Annex 3 sets out a summary of the potential for developing Children's Centres and new childcare nurseries across the City. It is recommended that the Committee gives the Director delegated authority to work up these proposals within the financial allocations, and to consult the Chair and Opposition spokesperson before submitting them to the DfES for the October 15th deadline.

7. Consultation

7.1 These proposals have been discussed by:

- EYDCP Early Years Sub Group
- Central Sure Start Board
- Hollingdean Programme Board
- EYDCP Full Partnership
- Children, Young People's Strategic Partnership
- Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust

7.2 Further consultation is being planned with the Schools, eb4u, local communities and staff.

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Meeting/Date	Children Families & Schools Sub Committee 8 th Sept 2003
Report of	Director Children Families & Schools
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Financial implications

The funding allocation is 435,283 revenue and 1,014,959 capital for 2004-6.

Revenue funding for childcare places has not yet been announced.

Finance Officer consulted: Kevin Ullah / Date 15 August 2003

Legal implications

There is no requirement for any legal changes as a result of the Children's Centres, but the future governance and accountability arrangements may be subject to future discussion, particularly in the light of the emerging Children's Trust. Lawyer consulted: Abraham Gebre-Giorgious. / Date 22 August 2003.

Corporate/Citywide implications

Children's Centres are part of the overall Sure Start strategy of the city and will contribute to regeneration and life long learning objectives for parents and carers returning to work and training

Risk assessment

Sustainability of the centres is a considerable concern with limited funding over a two year period.

Sustainability implications

Childcare services in disadvantaged areas can be difficult to sustain. This is a national problem. The EYDCP publicises the Child Tax Credit, will offer sustainability funding from April 04, offers business support and advice to combat this problem

Equalities implications

Our application for Children Centre funding has to include a Social Inclusion Strategy which sets out how we will:

- plan inclusive services for minority ethnic families;
- consult with families in all ethnic groups in the area;
- implement culturally appropriate services.

Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder

Research shows that good quality childcare can help to prevent offending behaviour in later life.

Background papers

Children's Centre Guidance
Sure Start Guidance 2004-2006

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Annex 1

THE CORE OFFER FOR CHILDREN'S CENTRES

All Children's Centres must offer access to the following core services:

- *Early education integrated with child care*
- *Family support and outreach to parents*
- *Child and family health services.*

In addition, they will act as a service hub within the community for parents and providers of childcare services for children of all ages - offering a base for childminder networks and a link to other day care provision, out of school clubs and extended schools. Centres will also have links with local training and education providers, Jobcentre Plus and Children's Information Services.

Funding for Children's Centres

Total number of children to be reached by 2006	2,252
Total number of children to be reached by 2010	3,464
Number of new childcare places to be created by 2004 - 6	150
Total indicative revenue funding for 2004 - 6	£435,283
Total indicative capital funding for 2004 - 6	£1,014,959

CHILDREN'S CENTRES CORE OFFER

Early education integrated with day care

- Early education integrated with day care for babies and children until they reach school age
- Day care suitable for working parents- a minimum of 5 days a week, 48 weeks a year, 10 hours a day
- Nursery places will be open to all, not just families in the immediate area, to provide the best educational outcomes for all children (admission and fee policies will be determined locally)
- Support for childminders, who may also offer linked care
- Early identification of children with special needs and disabilities with inclusive services and support for their families

Family support and parental outreach:

- Visits to all children in the catchment area within two months of birth

- Access to specialist services
- Parenting support and information as well as specific support for families in need and 'hard to reach' families
- Providing information and advice on parenting skills at significant transition points for the family (e.g. pre birth, early days, settling into childcare)
- Increasing parents' understanding of their child's development
- Increasing the involvement of fathers.

Child and family health services:

- Ante-natal advice and support for parents
- Information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety
- Identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression
- Speech and language and other specialist support
- Smoking cessation interventions.

Links with schools and Children's Information Services (CIS):

- Links to local schools, extended schools and out of school activities (holiday play schemes, before/after school play & learning)
- Information to parents/carers about CIS.

Links with Jobcentre Plus:

- Linking in with local arrangements (e.g. via the local authority's service level agreement) for collaboration with Jobcentre Plus Childcare Partnership managers
- Encouragement and support for parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment.

The Centres must also ensure that family support and health advice is available at times suitable for working parents and carers.

Parental Involvement should include:

- Consultation with parents and carers, including fathers on what services to offer, and systems to get user feedback on services
- Ongoing arrangements in place to ensure parents and carers have a voice

Children's Centres may well offer a range of other services, including

- Effective links with further and higher education institutions, and local training providers
- Training for parents and carers, including English as an Additional Language where relevant, Basic Skills, or parenting classes
- Specialist services for children with disabilities
- Benefits advice, including maternity benefits

- Childcare and other services for older children
- Toy libraries.

Funding for these services may need to be accessed from other sources.