

**For general release**

**Report to: Children, Families and Schools Sub-Committee**

**Date: Monday 15 March 2004**

**From: Director, Children, Families and Schools**

**Subject: Sure Start: Early Years Development and  
Childcare**

**Wards: All**

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

1.1 To ask members of the sub-committee to:

- approve the Sure Start Early Years Development and Childcare Plan for 2004-6;
- note progress on developing Neighbourhood Nurseries;
- consider whether to take forward plans for more childcare places in Children's Centres when revenue funding is not yet known and demand uncertain;
- consider a review of nursery education funding in the maintained sector in the light of the Sure Start emphasis on integrating services for young children.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That the EYDCP Plan be approved.

2.2 That the progress on Neighbourhood Nurseries be noted.

2.3 That the forward plans for Children's Centres, in line with recommendations in paragraph 6.7, be agreed.

2.4 That it be agreed to draw up terms of reference, for consideration by this sub-committee, for a review of nursery education funding.

### **3. Background**

3.1 The Children, Families and Schools Committee considered a paper last September which set out the Government's new 2004-6 guidance for "Sure Start".

3.2 Sure Start is the government's framework for bringing together early education, childcare, health and family support for children under 5. It also covers childcare for children up to 14 (16 with special needs). The Government's vision is to achieve a Sure Start for all children by providing integrated and high quality services leading to better outcomes for children, parents and communities. The focus is on securing early education increasingly as part of an integrated service for young children and their families, and increasing and sustaining childcare provision to enable parents to work. Sure Start also includes targeted initiatives aimed at disadvantaged areas and to support under-represented groups therefore reducing inequalities and discrimination. Annex 1 includes a summary of the Sure Start programme.

3.3 The Sure Start approach is consistent with both the Family Support Strategy and the Children's Trust and will contribute to both initiatives.

3.4 Brighton and Hove's work in this area has been recognised as a model of good practice nationally. We were one of only 11 Councils to be short-listed for Beacon Status for our Sure Start work. We are awaiting the outcome of the Beacon application. Feedback from the recent joint Ofsted/SSI inspection was also very positive.

#### **4. Information: Sure Start: EYDCP Plan**

4.1 The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) have removed the requirement for the EYDCP and the Council to agree a lengthy annual plan and to submit this to Ministers for approval. We now have local discretion to decide on the format of our local planning. We have agreed the attached Plan (annex 2) with the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. It follows the format of the Council team planning system and is considerably shorter than in the past.

4.2 The Plan follows the delivery guidance published by the DfES which asks us to address four main themes:

- Integrating services for young children
- Creating and sustaining childcare
- Ensuring equality, access and inclusion
- Workforce development.

4.3 New areas to note under each of the main headings are set out below:

##### Integrating services for young children:

- New legal duty to provide early education places for all 3 year olds from April,
- Increased emphasis on integration of early education with childcare,
- Development of Children's Centres providing integrated early education,

childcare, health and family support through the Children's Trust.

#### Creating and sustaining childcare

- Start up funding for out of school childcare to be routed through the Council rather than the New Opportunities Fund. The Children, Families and Schools Committee agreed to a strategy for allocating funding at its meeting in September 2003.
- Introducing childcare vouchers for Council staff
- To develop a Play strategy in response to the Government's 'Lottery Review of Children's Play'
- A new support scheme for new childminders
- Increased funding for sustaining childcare

#### Ensuring quality, access and inclusion

- Increased emphasis on raising the quality of childcare for children under 3 through the Birth to 3 Matters framework.
- Setting up a Childminder Network for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and childcare inclusion grants.
- Taking over funding a multi-agency initiative to support deaf children under 3 and their parents.

#### Developing the Childcare Workforce

- New programme of placement support for people undertaking level 2 qualifications funded by the Learning Skills Council and European Social Fund.

### **5. Neighbourhood Nurseries**

5.1 Annex 3 gives an update on progress in implementing the Neighbourhood Nursery initiative.

5.2 We will have created 200 new places in a range of nurseries across the city. Less than the revised target of 256 but more than our original allocation of 190. These nurseries are:

- Poet's Corner, Hove, September 2002 - 8 places
- Buffer Bear, Whitehawk, February 2003 - 32 places
- Buffer Bear, Moulsecoomb, July 2003 - 43 places
- Tarnerland, Hanover, May 2004 - 46 places
- Hollingdean Programme, Hollingdean - 50 places
- St Georges, Kemp Town, July 2004 - 21 places.

5.3 The progress report notes that:

- We maximised the New Opportunities Fund capital allocation by working in partnership with a range of other organisations.
- The lack of suitable land and premises and planning considerations have been a major constraint.
- Over half of the (117) of the new 200 places have yet to open and the nurseries that have opened are not yet full. While we had always expected a slow take up of places this is a concern for planning future places.

5.4 Our initial plans included funding 36 places at the Church of the Immanuel. The Church was burnt down last year and initially the DfES agreed that capital and revenue funding would be held over for the Church. The DfES have now withdrawn this offer because they are overspent nationally. Instead they have offered us an additional £100,000 through the Children's Centres capital funding to pass onto the Church. We will have to provide revenue funding from our existing Children's Centre target.

## **6. Children's Centres and Allocation of Childcare Places**

6.1 The sub-committee has already endorsed the proposal to the DfES to create 6 Children's Centres, which will provide early education, childcare and a range of health and family support services. The proposed centres, as agreed by sub-committee are:

- The Wellsbourne Centre at Whitehawk, in partnership with EB4U
- Hodshrove Lane campus in Moulsecoomb, in partnership with EB4U
- City Centre Sure Start (see separate paper on the development of Morley Street campus) in partnership with Turnerland nursery school and neighbourhood nursery.
- Hollingdean Sure Start – already designated as a neighbourhood nursery
- Bevendean and/or Hangleton.

6.2 The DfES have given us a target of creating 150 more childcare places in Children's Centres by 2006 supported by capital funding of £1,014,959. The DfES have said that there will be start-up revenue funding for childcare places but will not be able to announce the level of this funding until the outcome of the spending review next autumn. Officials have hinted that it may be substantially less than the £5,300 per place of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. Recent guidance places a strong emphasis employing at least a half-time qualified teacher in each Centre. This will increase the running costs of provision.

6.3 The Committee has already agreed that £400,000 of the capital allocation should be allocated to creating a new nursery in North Portslade. This would replace the existing 20 place Acorn nursery on the Rise site. We are confident of the demand for new childcare places in the area given the very low level of existing

provision and backed up by a local survey. The sustainability of the nursery will be helped because there are the equivalent of 20 full time children ready to transfer into the nursery together with existing staff and equipment.

6.4 Our original intention was to create the remaining 100 childcare places by opening nurseries in:

- Whitehawk by converting the Family Centre next to the nursery class and working with eb4u plans to house the health and family support elements in the Wellsbourne Centre.
- Bevendean by converting existing space and building an extension linked with the nursery class at Bevendean Primary School  
Both schools have been consulted about the proposals and are keen to develop the nurseries.

6.5 We are considering whether to develop a Children's Centre in Hangleton rather than Bevendean to ensure a more even spread across the City. However there is no obvious location for developing new childcare places.

6.6 We are concerned that developing further childcare places at this stage represents a financial risk for the Council:

- We do not know the level of start-up funding for the new places. Even with the generous level of start-up funding for Neighbourhood Nurseries it is difficult to make the nurseries sustainable in the long term without charging fees above the Working Tax Credit ceiling of £135 a week.
- We are not clear that there is demand for more places. There are empty places in the two Buffer Bear nurseries in Moulsecoomb and Whitehawk. We do not yet know how well the places in Tarnerland and Hollingdean will be taken up. There are also empty places in existing nurseries in Hangleton. However the Government's view is that we should move ahead of demand and that demand will follow the opening of the new nurseries.
- We are also concerned about our ability to recruit staff for the nurseries - we have already had to re-advertise the childcare manager post for Tarnerland.
- There may not be enough capital funding for three new nurseries even making use of existing buildings.

6.7 We therefore recommend that we:

- Continue to look at a range of options for including childcare as part of the development of the Wellsbourne Centre in Whitehawk, taking into account the existing neighbourhood nursery in the area.

- Do not progress with additional childcare places at this stage in Bevendean or Hangleton. We would continue to plan for integrated services in these localities. We will consider linking Bevendean to the Moulsecoomb Children's Centre and developing Hangleton as a local Children's Centres, as part of the Children's Trust.
- Offer Church of the Immanuel the £100,000 capital funding offered by the DfES and revenue funding for 36 places.
- Consider including childcare in the project to replace the McKeith Centre and Jeanne Saunders Centre. This building will be completed after March 2006 so will be considered as part of the next round of Children's Centres.

This may mean that we are not able to fully meet our new childcare places target of 150 by 2006 and may therefore lose an element of the capital funding. We will still be able to meet our Children's Centre reach target by extending the catchment areas of the other centres.

## **7. Review of Nursery Education**

7.1 Integrated Children's Centres, with early education being offered alongside childcare and a range of family services, is a central plank to the Government's strategy, as outlined in the Green Paper Every Child Matters.

7.2 Each local authority has a responsibility to provide sufficient early education places for 3 and 4 year olds. In Brighton & Hove, we have successfully achieved this through a range of services, including two maintained nursery schools, nursery classes in schools, independent and voluntary providers.

7.3 As we move towards integrated services through Children's Centres and the Children's Trust, and in response to increasing demand for both early education and childcare to be provided in the same place, it is advisable to review the allocation of part-time early education places in our maintained schools.

7.4 At this stage, there can be no firm views on the outcome of any review, and it will be necessary to consult and involve all our partners, particularly schools, in any such review.

7.5 It is therefore recommended that members of the sub-committee agree that officers should draw up draft terms of reference, and carry out some initial consultation on them, before returning to the sub-committee for endorsement of the terms of the review.

## **8. Consultation**

8.1 The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership have been consulted

about the EYDCP Plan.

8.2 Local partners are being involved in each of the proposed Children Centre areas, as part of the planning for integrated services through the Children's Trust.

## 9. Contact Officers

Rosalind Turner, Assistant Director, Community and Families  
Caroline Parker and Sarah Colombo, Joint Heads of Service for Sure Start

## Annexes

1. Implications
2. EYDCP Draft Plan
3. Progress on Neighbourhood Nurseries

## Implications

## Annex 1

<b>Meeting/Date</b>	TMT / Chairs Briefing, Children, Families and Schools Committee
<b>Report of</b>	Director of Children, Families and Schools
<b>Subject</b>	Sure Start – Early Years and Childcare Plan
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

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**Financial implications**

The General Sure Start Grant for 2004-6 is £4,013,788. This includes £1,014,959 capital and £435,283 revenue for Children's Centres. This figure is for two years and does not include funding for Local Sure Start programmes.

In addition in 2004/5 the Council will contribute:

- £899,300 early education funding for 4 year olds in non-maintained settings
- £1,922,900 early education funding for 3 year olds in non-maintained settings
- £274,214 contribution to the costs of Early Years Consultants (6.3 posts)
- £662,800 Pre School SEN Service (total cost)
- £177,700 to the EYDCP Team and Children's Information Service

The DfES have said that there will be start-up revenue funding for childcare places in Childrens Centres but that they will not be able to announce the level of this funding until the outcome of the spending review. Officials have hinted that it may be substantially less than the £5,300 per place of the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative. Recent guidance places a strong emphasis on the role of a qualified teacher in each Centre. This will increase the running costs of provision.

This would almost certainly mean that we would have to charge parents / guardians more in fees which in turn could affect the take up and ultimately the long term sustainability of the scheme.

*Finance Officer consulted: David Ellis & Kevin Ullah..... 23/02/04.....*

**Legal implications**

The LEA has a statutory responsibility to provide sufficient early education places for 3 and 4 year olds. This responsibility is met within Brighton & Hove currently. There is no longer a legal requirement to prepare and submit an EYDCP Plan. This was effected by regulations 2(4) and 2(5) of the Education (Nursery Education and Early Years Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/2939). The Regulations came into force on 1 January 2004. These regulations also confirm the duty to secure sufficient nursery education provision for three year olds from 1 April 2004.

*Lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson.....Date 24/2/04.*

<p><b>Corporate/Citywide implications</b> Sure Start will contribute to the Children's Trust agenda and Children's Centres will be one of the first integrated services to be considered by the Trust process.</p>	<p><b>Risk assessment</b> The report highlights the risk of building more childcare places when the revenue funding is unknown and demand for childcare uncertain.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability implications</b> These will be addressed as part of each project.</p>	<p><b>Equalities implications</b> Research evidence shows that good quality early education and childcare is of greatest benefit to children from disadvantaged communities. The Plan includes an objective to implement the findings of a Race Equalities Impact Assessment.</p>
<p><b>Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder</b> There is research evidence that good quality early education and childcare can reduce offending behaviour in later life</p>	



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**Background papers *[Part 1 reports only]***

1. 2004-2006 Sure Start Guidance

Contact Officer

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