

Neighbourhood Nurseries

1. This paper gives an update on the progress on the Neighbourhood Nursery initiative.

Background

2. The Neighbourhood Nursery initiative was launched in 2001 and aims to reduce unemployment in disadvantaged areas by offering good quality childcare places for children from 0-4. Brighton and Hove was initially allocated funding for 190 places. We had to complete a Plan for the DfES by June 2001 and successfully bid for a further 66 places bring our allocation to 256.
3. The NNI supplies limited capital funding from the New Opportunities Fund (initially 337,250 and increased to £670,464) and three years start up revenue funding from the DfES at £5,400 a place. Places had to be open by March 2004.
4. The Plan set out a strategy of distributing the places across the city. We were strongly encouraged by the DfES to work together with other initiatives to (eg Sure Start and New Deal for Communities) and to create a mixture of private, voluntary and public places. Indeed the very limited capital available from the New Opportunities Fund meant that partnership working was essential for us to meet our target. Annex 1 sets out a table showing our proposed and final allocation of places.
5. In developing the initiative we were constrained by both the availability of capital funding and a lack of suitable sites for development. The DfES deadline of 31 March 2004 for the opening of all Neighbourhood Nurseries also proved demanding. This has since been extended until July.
6. In some areas it was not possible to find suitable premises or good quality providers willing to invest. In retrospect it is clear that our initial plan spread the places too thinly across the city.

Buffer Bear Nurseries

7. We were already working with two nursery initiatives in East Brighton when the funding was announced. The Valley Social Centre in Whitehawk had space for a nursery and we had already started converting part of Moulsecomb Infant School into a nursery using DfES and eb4u capital funding. Neither eb4u nor the Council was willing to run these nurseries so we tendered for a provider and selected Buffer Bear. We also helped Buffer Bear to apply to eb4u for additional funding to make places more accessible to eb4u residents. The Valley Social Centre nursery opened in February

2003 and the Moulsecoomb nursery in July 2003. The number of spaces in both nurseries was constrained by the size of the buildings.

Partnership with Sure Start Local Programmes

8. The DfES were very keen for us to work with both Sure Start local programmes and nursery schools. We worked in partnership with Central Sure Start and Tarnerland Nursery School to develop a Neighbourhood Nursery at the school. This is seen as a model of good practice by the DfES. We also worked with the Hollingdean Programme to develop a Neighbourhood Nursery as a central part of their new Sure Start centre.

North Portslade

9. Developing more childcare and early education places in North Portslade has been a key objective for us for some time because of the shortage of provision here. The original plan was to allocate just 10 places because the ward is not in the most deprived 20% of wards. However when we were approached by a doctors' surgery with a proposal to jointly develop a health clinic and nursery we allocated additional places here. The plan was to relocate and expand the Portslade Community College nursery (Acorn). The development would have been the first real Children's Centre in the city. Unfortunately after a year of work the application for planning permission was rejected. We have just had approval from P and R Committee to an alternative project that will include a new build nursery on The Rise site. The project could not be completed in the Neighbourhood Nursery timescale and so will use Children's Centre funding.

Other Places

10. To allocate the other places we advertised for private and voluntary providers who were interested in developing new places in the disadvantaged areas. They needed to have either existing premises that could be expanded or converted or to have identified potential premises.
11. Successful bidders were:
12. Poet's Corner Nursery in Shirley Street, an existing nursery that, with a small amount of work, was able to expand to create 8 new places.
13. Church of the Immanuel, Islingward Road. We worked with the Church to successfully apply to the New Opportunities Fund for £100,000 to convert the church hall to a 36 place nursery.
14. Early Years Plc who were keen to build a nursery in Hangleton and were prepared to find a substantial amount of capital if we could find them land. We looked at the possibility of siting the nursery on the new Goldstone Primary School or at West Blatchington. However neither site was viable

because of playing fields legislation and planning issues. We were also concerned about the impact of a new nursery on the existing nursery classes in the area.

15. By the NOF deadline for applications in December 2002 we had reached our target of 256 places. We reallocated places originally allocated to Hangleton to projects across the city including 15 extra for North Portslade. The alternative was to lose these places.
16. However we had two setbacks in 2003:
17. The planning application for North Portslade was rejected. Because we had already applied to NOF for capital funding the DfES and NOF agreed that we could reallocate the places to another project – if it could open by March 2004.
18. The Church of Immanuel burnt down in May 2003. Initially both NOF and the DfES agreed to carry over the funding while the Church was rebuilt.

St George's Church Kemp Town

19. When it was clear that the revised plans for an expanded nursery for North Portslade at the Rise site would not meet the NOF deadline we looked at options for reallocating 30 places. At the same time St George's Church approached us with a request for funding for their 21 place nursery and the EYDCP Executive approved this last July. Their application to NOF was approved in November and their planning application approved in December.

Church of the Immanuel

20. We did not seek to reallocate the places for the Church of the Immanuel because both the DfES and NOF agreed that they would hold the funding over past the deadline of March 2004. However we were told in December that, because the DfES and NOF are overspent nationally, they have withdrawn this offer. Instead the DfES are prepared to offer us an extra £100,000 for our Children's Centre capital to fund this project. We do not yet know about the level of revenue funding for childcare places in Children's Centres. At present the DfES are suggesting that the Church of the Immanuel places should be counted within our existing 150 allocation.

Key Points

- 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.
- We maximised the NOF capital allocation by working in partnership with a range of other organisations

- The lack of suitable land and premises and planning considerations are a major constraint
- 117 of the 200 places have yet to open and the nurseries that have opened are not full. This is a concern when planning future childcare places.
- Capital development work takes a long time and is very staff intensive. We need to improve our project management and try to schedule developments.
- We have still not been able to develop any childcare places in Hangleton.
- We will have to decide whether we can offer some Children's Centre childcare revenue funding to the Church of the Immanuel. This is difficult when we do not know the amounts involved.

Allocation of Neighbourhood Nursery Places

Ward	Original allocation	Places built	Capital Funding	Comments
Marine	50	32 opened Feb 2003	Eb4u capital	Buffer Bear nursery in the Valley Social Centre. VSC included space for a nursery. No NOF capital. Number of places constrained by building. 45 children in 8 fte places
Moulsecomb	50	43 opened July 2003	DfES wrap-around/ eb4u	Buffer Bear nursery based in Winterbourne Centre converted with Council and eb4u capital. Number of places determined by size of building. 36 children in 14 fte places
Kings Cliff / Hanover	30	46 Due to open May 2004 21	£250,000 Sure Start, £240,608 NOF, £82,957 LEA/ Dfes £159,856 NOF	Tarnerland Neighbourhood Nursery due to open in April 2004. Joint project with Tarnerland Nursery School and Central Sure Start Church of the Immanuel project (36 places) – funding was initially agreed by NOF and the DfES but then withdrawn in December 2004. St George's Church - Kempton Crypt Community Centre. Will open July 2004.
Brunswick / Vallance	30	8 opened Sept 2002	-	Additional places in private Poet's Corner. children in ?places
Hollingbury	40	50 Due to open May 2004	£945,000 Sure Start, £170,000 NOF, £150,000 NRF	Hollingdean Community Nursery based in Hollingdean Programme building. .
Hangleton	30	0		No places identified. We had a private provider who was interested in building a nursery but we were not able to identify any premises.
North Portslade	10	0		The planned co-located Children's Clinic and Nursery behind Peter Gladwin school did not receive planning permission. Instead a nursery will be built on the Rise site using Children's Centre Funding

