

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee

Date of Committee 28th March 2007

Report Title Development of Children’s Centres in Nuneaton and Bedworth

Summary This paper provides an update on the development of Children’s Centres within Nuneaton and Bedworth.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No

Background papers

- Phase 2 Children’s Centres – Cabinet report 2.11.06
- Developing a Strategy for Children’s Centres across Warwickshire – Cabinet report 13.1.05

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-

Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members Spokespersons for information:
Cllr Richard Grant – “noted for consideration by the Area Committee”
Cllr Jill Dill-Russell – no comment to make
Cllr John Whitehouse
- Cabinet Member Cllr John Burton

- Other Cabinet Members consulted Cllr Izzi Seccombe – “*approve for consideration by the Area Committee*”
- Chief Executive
- Legal Victoria Gould – comments incorporated in the report
- Finance
- Other Strategic Directors
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES**

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee – 28th March 2007

Development of Children's Centres in Nuneaton and Bedworth

Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families

Recommendation:

That the Area Committee acknowledges the duties imposed on Warwickshire County Council by the Childcare Act 2006 and comments on the work in progress to meet them.

1. Background and context

- 1.1 The Childcare Act 2006 is the first piece of legislation that is solely dedicated to the provision of childcare. It seeks to implement the proposals of the Government's ten year strategy for childcare, '*Choice for parents, the best start for children*' (December 2004).
- 1.2 The Act very clearly places the responsibility upon Local Authorities to strategically lead the development of childcare facilities while working in partnership with other agencies in the statutory, private and voluntary sectors.
- 1.3 The purpose of childcare is to allow parents the opportunity to take up or remain in work or to undertake training that would assist them in finding work.

2. The duties imposed on Local Authorities

There are two main duties imposed on Local Authorities:

- (1) The Outcomes Duty
- (2) The Sufficiency Duty.

2.1 The 'outcomes' duty

- 2.1.1 The Outcomes Duty is imposed to improve the Every Child Matters outcomes for all children under five years of age. It is focused upon improving their well-being and reducing inequalities in achievements by helping them to access

integrated, high quality early childhood services. In doing so, Local Authorities are required to work with partners in NHS and Jobcentre Plus, and demonstrate integrated working with private and voluntary sector providers to deliver a range of services through the development of Children's Centres.

2.1.2 It is this legislation which underpins the development of Children's Centres and prescribes the services which need to be provided which must include:

- integrated early years provision – childcare and education
- a childminding network
- parenting education and family support services
- education, training and employment services
- health services relating to younger children, parents and prospective parents
- provision of information to parents
- access to wider services.

2.1.3 It is the duty of the Local Authority to identify and assist those parents who would not otherwise access the services on offer and encourage them to take up those services.

2.2 The 'sufficiency' duty

2.2.1 Local Authorities are required to assess the local childcare market and secure sufficient childcare to enable parents to access work or training that would lead to employment opportunities. Childcare will only be viewed as sufficient if it meets the needs of the local community. It must meet the needs of families on lower incomes and those families having a child who is disabled.

2.2.2 Local Authorities must take the strategic lead in developing services but will not be expected to provide them directly.

3. Children's Centre developments within Nuneaton and Bedworth

3.1 Phase 1 Children' Centres in Nuneaton and Bedworth have been operational and meeting the full core offer since March 2006. The Phase 1 centres are located within the top 20% areas of disadvantage, incorporating Early Excellence Centres and Sure Start Local Programmes, and are sited as follows:

- Camp Hill
- Stockingford
- Abbey
- Bedworth Heath Nursery School
- Newdigate (linked site Bedworth Heath Leisure and Activity Centre)
- Riversley Park Children's Centre (linked site Donnithorne Avenue/Hill Top).

- 3.2 Phase 2 of the programme concentrates upon the 30% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas (SOAs) of the county. In Phase 2 a further four centres are under development in Nuneaton and Bedworth to be located at:
- Exhall Grange School and Science College outreaching into Keresley
 - Bulkington Village Centre outreaching to the local village areas
 - Poplar ward, Bedworth, incorporating Bulkington Road Nursery School and Furnace Fields Parents' Centre.
 - Park Lane.
- 3.3 School sites have been asked to confirm their preferred governance arrangements for their Children's Centre. Where school governing bodies have not expressed a wish to run the services themselves then the governance will be put out to tender (March/April 2007).
- 3.4 Exhall Grange Children's Centre is part of the larger refurbishment of the Exhall Grange site. It will open up a range of opportunities for the communities of Ash Green, Exhall and Keresley to access early years services.
- 3.5 Bulkington Village Centre will build upon the services already operating from this popular community centre to offer those focusing upon the needs of families having children under five years of age.
- 3.6 The Children's Centre in Poplar ward will bring together Bulkington Road Nursery School and Furnace Fields Parents' Centre. Planning approval is sought from Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council to create a new build which will be a partnership arrangement with Nicholas Chamberlaine Trust.
- 3.7 Park Lane is to have a new modular building upon the site of Park Lane Primary School. This will replace the existing old temporary buildings and widen the services provided to local families.
- 3.8 All capital projects are scrutinised by Atkins, the Government appointed agents who oversee the capital elements of the Children's Centre projects. Atkins check the designs, value for money and fitness for purpose of each project. The Warwickshire County Council Capital Projects Team feel confident that Atkins' requirements are being met and at this point the Capital Programme for Children's Centres in Warwickshire is on track to meet the deadline for completion (March 2008).
- 3.9 An Area Children's Centre network has been established to bring together the heads of centres from Phase 1 and the evolving staff as they are appointed from Phase 2. The centres are required to provide information on a quarterly basis, some of which is fed back to the Sure Start Unit.
- 3.10 Each of the Children's Centres has regular input from the Warwickshire County Council's team of advisory teachers.

3.11 The Nuneaton and Bedworth Provider Development Service continues to provide support and guidance to new and existing providers of childcare. The team is based within Stockingford Early Years Centre and Library.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Children's Centre developments within Nuneaton and Bedworth contribute to meeting the requirements imposed upon Local Authorities by the Childcare Act 2006.

4.2 The focus of the centres is to improve the well being of children under five and support their families. In doing so it is essential to engage the co-operation of a range of agencies, both statutory and non statutory, to meet the needs of the individual communities.

4.3 In Nuneaton and Bedworth the creation of Children's Centres is already providing essential service provision to families within their own locality. However, it is early days and we must continue to monitor and assess each individual centre through regular consultation to ensure the most appropriate services are provided.

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6th March 2007