

# LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

Meeting of the  
12<sup>th</sup> April 2005

**Report from** John Christie Director of Education Arts and Libraries

For action

Wards affected:  
ALL

## Report Title: Brent Early Education and Childcare Strategy 2005-2010

Forward Plan ref: EAL04/05-0074

### 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the content and purpose of the Early Education and Childcare Strategy. The strategy document is appended.

### 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the strategy and approve its use in the future development of early education and childcare services in the borough.

### 3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The strategy provides a link between national guidance and frameworks, the London regional strategy for children and Brent's corporate priority 'supporting children and young people'. It draws together themes from *Every Child Matters - Change for Children*, and *Choice for Parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare* and the *National Health Service Framework*. These documents, following the Children Act 2004, provide clear direction for the continued integration of children's services, partnership working and the provision of early education and childcare services that are affordable, flexible, accessible and of high quality.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 it is expected that the financial implications, both revenue and capital, associated with the expansion of the Early Years Service as set out in the appended strategy, will be met from existing budgets or additional sources of direct funding. The government's 2004 spending review profiles the national Sure Start budget to 2008, when some elements of ring-fencing within Local Authority allocations are likely to be relaxed. An announcement on Brent's funding allocation to 2008 is imminent, once this has been received and levels of demand beyond 2006-07 have been established these will be notified to Members through the 2006-07 budget process. Care will need to be taken to ensure that all arrangements put in place will be financially sustainable beyond 2008.
- 4.2 The government has announced its intention to mainstream local Sure Start programmes, and to increase the number of Children's Centres; these activities will result in increased funding being devolved to the Local Authority.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

#### **6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 The strategy has been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no diversity implications arising from it. Early education and childcare services will be provided in increasingly flexible and accessible ways, at weekends and during the evening as well as during the day time, in locations that facilitate community engagement. Services will also be planned with the community for the community.

#### **7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications**

- 7.1 Given an enlarged remit and enhanced funding it is likely that the Early Years Service will expand. Accommodation has already been identified as part of the development of the Children and Families Department.

#### **Background Papers**

***Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004)***

***Choice for Parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare (2004)***

***National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004)***

***Making London Better for all Children and Young People (2004)***

***The State of London's Children report Executive Summary (2004)***

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