

## **Briefing Note for the Forward Plan Select Committee**

**31<sup>st</sup> August 2004**

### **Sure Start Roundwood Project**

Members will be aware that within the Sure Start national programme it is proposed that three Sure Start children's centres will be opened in Brent. One of these will serve the Roundwood ward. The buildings will be funded by capital provided by the Sure Start Unit, but all plans need to be agreed by the unit before the capital is released.

The original plan for Roundwood was to build a base for Sure Start at Longstone Avenue and re-develop Curzon Crescent Nursery school, with the intention of providing the range of services required to meet the Sure Start core offer across both sites. The Sure Start Unit takes the view that wherever possible one integrated children's centres should be established and in July 2004 they formally requested Brent to review its plans for Roundwood.

Senior Officers from Education and Social Services reviewed the costs of developing both sites and the implications of providing services from one site only. The estimated cost of building a centre on the Longstone Avenue site was found to have increased considerably since the original plan was developed and officers concluded that the plan was no longer cost effective. They also concluded that the implications for service provision were marginal and insufficient to justify the cost of developing both sites. The decision was therefore made not to proceed with the building at Longstone Avenue.

Officers are aware that this has created disappointment amongst the parents who have contributed to the development of the plans for Longstone. The Deputy Director of Education and the Interim Assistant Director Social Services met with the Sure Start Roundwood Management Board on 12 August to explain the decision to them and to reassure them that the Sure Start local programme would be fully integrated within the children's centre at Curzon Crescent. The management board accepted their decision and voted to agree to the development of the children's centre at Curzon Crescent. Implementation plans for Curzon Crescent have been submitted to the Sure Start Unit and have been accepted. It is anticipated that capital will now be released and work will start on the Curzon Crescent site in the very near future.

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