

	<p style="text-align: center;">Executive 29th May 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Report from the Director of Children and Families</p>
For Action	Wards Affected: ALL
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 2 Children's Centres Capital Programme – Review of Alternative Site Options</p>	

Forward Plan Ref: C&F06/07-034

Appendix 2 of this report is "Not for Publication"

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting of April 2007, the Executive noted that further feasibility work was being undertaken by officers to consider potential alternative site options for the Children's Centre serving the Alperton catchment area. This report reviews the findings of that feasibility work and asks for approval to develop a Children's Centre on the site of Alperton Community School instead of the development previously approved for Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools.
- 1.2 This report also reviews the position of the two PCT sites, notes progress being made at St Raphael's Community Centre to secure vacant possession and reviews the overall position of the phase 2 capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

2.1 In respect of the Alperton area, to:

Note the feasibility work undertaken on the siting of the Children's Centre at Alperton Community School and to approve the development of a Children's

Centre at this site instead of the development previously approved for Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools (see paragraphs 3.1 – 3.4).

2.2 In respect of the PCT sites to:

Note that the Director of Children and Families will sign a renewable 3-year licence agreement with the PCT with nil rental costs for the Council based on a quid pro quo arrangement (see paragraph 3.5).

2.3 In respect of St Raphael's Community Centre to:

Note the progress being made to secure vacant possession of the community centre in order to redevelop the building for use by the Local Authority for Children's Centre and wider youth and community activities and the work being undertaken to reduce or remove those risks (see paragraph 3.6).

2.4 Note the overall position of the capital programme in terms of both time and budget and endorse the actions being undertaken to secure and improve this position (see paragraphs 3.7 – 3.10).

2.5 Authorise the Director of Children and Families to negotiate with the DfES to either reduce the number of Children's Centres to be developed in phase 2 or to increase the budget allocated to the Local Authority should it become apparent that the target number of 7 centres cannot be delivered within the budget available (see paragraph 3.8).

3.0 Detail

Children's Centre serving the Alperton and Wembley Central Wards

3.1 Following the Executive meeting in April 2007 further feasibility work has been progressed on the siting of the Children's Centre in the Alperton catchment area at Alperton Community School, Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools or at Douglas Avenue Resource Centre. The reasons for re-considering the site option were set out in the April report. Appendix 1 of this report is an Options Appraisal Update of all sites now considered. Due to the financial and operational implications of re-accommodating social care staff teams currently located in Douglas Avenue Resource Centre, no further assessment has been made of this option; this is reflected in the appraisal. The details relating to Lyon Park in the appraisal reflect the outcome of further work with consultants to deliver the original scheme within budget (as detailed in the April 2007 report). It is clear that a Children's Centre could be delivered on the site of the former caretaker's house within the budget available but not now within the time remaining before the March 2008 deadline (see paragraph 3.10 for information on the deadline). Work has progressed with both Infant and Junior schools with additional information supplied to them about the Children's Centre catchment area. Neither schools' Governing Body met to re-consider their decision and the view of both headteachers is that it is unlikely that the Governing Bodies would change their previous decisions not to govern the Children's Centre unless the

catchment area was reviewed. On this basis Alperton Community School is the recommended option.

- 3.2 The initial findings of the feasibility study at Alperton Community School show that there are two viable siting options for the Children's Centre; by the main and pupil entrances of the Ealing Road site. Careful consideration must be given not to impact on the future development of the site as Alperton Community School will be redeveloped as part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. At the time of drafting this report, consultants are finalising a full masterplan of the school site to show the options available for school redevelopment and a full feasibility study of how the Children's Centre would fit in this masterplan. The initial findings of the feasibility study (although this is based on initial cost estimates only and without detailed survey work which will be completed after Executive approval has been obtained) show that a Children's Centre at Alperton Community School could be afforded within the budget available. The feasibility study also shows that given the delays to the development of this Children's Centre as a result of re-considering the choice of site this centre could not be completed before the end of March 2008. It is more likely to be completed in June 2008. Officers will continue to work closely with the Sure Start Unit to obtain approval for this scheme in spite of the difficulties with meeting the deadline. It is considered likely that this will be achieved, due to the policy change outlined in paragraph 3.10. This is no longer considered to be a high risk to the Council.
- 3.3 Alongside the feasibility study of the capital project, discussions continue with Alperton Community School in respect of Children's Centre governance. Whilst the engagement of the Governors in management and governance of a Children's Centre on the school site is not a pre-requisite for siting the Children's Centre here, Governors involvement is seen as desirable by the Council. Following the Executive meeting in April 2007 initial discussions with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors indicated that the Governing Body would wish to govern the centre (providing there was no financial liability). At an extraordinary full Governing Body meeting Governors reviewed the Children's Centre catchment area, the options available for governance and the initial findings of the feasibility study. Governors are positive about the value and impact of Children's Centre in this area. The Governing Body agreed to the Local Authority continuing the feasibility study and further design work on siting the Children's Centre on the school site. The Governing Body also agreed to work with the Local Authority on governance but at the time of drafting this report have not yet agreed which of the three options for governance presented to them would be their preferred model. Officers believe that on balance a centre at Alperton Community School would better serve the needs of local families and be the best use of Council assets. Members are therefore asked to approve the development of a Children's Centre at Alperton Community School instead of the one previously approved for development at Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools.
- 3.4 Should Members approve recommendation 2.1 to develop the Children's Centre at Alperton Community School then the former caretakers house at Lyon Park Infant and Junior Schools will remain vacant and in need of significant refurbishment. The future use of this property would be the subject of a further report to the Executive.

Wembley and Willesden Centres for Health and Care

- 3.5 In April 2007, the Executive authorised the Director of Children and Families to approve arrangements for the establishment of Children's Centres at Wembley and Willesden Centres for Health and Care and to sign a renewable 3-year licence agreement with the PCT with nil rental costs. This agreement was based on the principle of a quid pro quo arrangement (outlined in the November 2006 report) whereby neither the Council nor the PCT charge the other for use of its own accommodation to deliver Children's Centre core offer services. At the time of drafting this report the licence agreement is being reviewed by the PCT's lawyers and details surrounding the quid pro quo nature of this agreement are being finalised. It is anticipated that this agreement will be signed by both parties by the 29th May Executive meeting. In the meantime, officers continue to develop feasibility studies and initial design work for the provision of Children's Centres at the two alternative locations identified in earlier reports; Barham Primary School and Treetops Nursery. Members are asked to note that officers continue to work closely with PCT staff to develop operational Children's Centres in these locations and to work towards opening these centres before the March 2008 deadline.

St Raphael's Community Centre

- 3.6 In February 2007, the Executive approved the model of service delivery and management proposed for St Raphael's Community Centre and authorised officers to undertake further work to develop it. The Executive also approved the capital allocation of £412,548 to be spent on providing suitable facilities at the centre. Since February 2007, officers have been working with the tenant to secure vacant possession of the community centre in order to redevelop the building for use by the Local Authority for Children's Centre and wider youth and community activities. In addition to the legal process being followed (the current position is outlined in Appendix 2) and in order to ensure that activities that the tenant suggests are currently taking place in the centre can continue during the refurbishment works, officers have requested details of the tenant organisations' own requirements for alternative accommodation and contact details of existing centre users to enable officers to establish their requirements directly. Potential alternative venues have been identified (pending receipt of users' requirements) to facilitate the continuance of existing activities. To date, the tenant has not provided this information. Due to the risks attached to securing vacant possession in order to redevelop the centre in time to deliver the Children's Centre services, officers are considering alternative ways in which this can be achieved. Officers from the Children and Families and Legal Departments are currently seeking further legal advice on ways to expedite matters to secure vacant possession of the property in time. In the event that this cannot be achieved, officers will work with the DfES to review the options to bring forward delivery of a phase 3 Children's Centre (targets and budget for phase 3 Children's Centres to be confirmed by DfES in Summer 2007) and to slip this phase 2 centre to be delivered in phase 3. This would ensure that the Council is able to deliver the publicly stated goal to redevelop the community centre to allow

a greater range of childrens', youth and community activities to be provided in an accessible way for the whole community. In order to ensure the Childrens' Centre could be designated by March 2008, officers are exploring the opportunity to use the Former Area Housing Office on the St Raphael's estate, which has recently become vacant. This is unsuitable to provide services in the long-term but could be used on a temporary basis to meet needs. The Executive is asked to note the risks attached to the current position and the actions being undertaken to remove and reduce those risks. Alongside this, design work for the St Raphael's Community Centre has been progressing with appropriate revisions to ensure the scheme is delivered within budget but without compromising the centre's accessibility for local people or the rental potential of accommodation to ensure this community resource is sustainable. The Executive is asked to note the work being undertaken to secure vacant possession and to ensure Children's Centre services can be available to the local community.

Overall Capital Programme

- 3.7 In April 2007, the Executive was advised on the overall capital programme and the risks attached to delivering the required number of centres within budget by the deadline of March 2008. The Executive endorsed the actions being undertaken to secure and improve the position. Since drafting the April report, officers have been working closely with consultants with the intention of ensuring that all new build and refurbishment schemes are deliverable within budget and on time. Currently all new build and refurbishment schemes could be delivered within the allocated budget.
- 3.8 The new build development schemes at Fryent Primary School, Queens Park Community School and Alperton Community School have all been reduced in size from the brief developed to provide good quality functional spaces. The schemes currently provide the minimum accommodation required to enable the Children's Centre core offer to be delivered as planned in Brent. In terms of quality and specification, significant reductions have also had to be made to all the new build and refurbishment schemes. Officers are currently exploring alternative construction methods that could be used to enable new build centres to be delivered on time and on budget and with a higher level of quality and innovation than could be expected from a traditional construction method.
- 3.9 In addition to reductions, additional funding of £30k has been identified for St Raphael's Community Centre (this is to be finally confirmed). Agreement to use both PCT sites will also allow the re-allocation of funds from both projects to others in the programme. The allocations of £100k to each hospital site are generous but cannot be reduced until it is certain that funding will not be required for alternative development schemes (i.e. when the agreement is signed). The allocation to these centres will be halved to reflect the need only to provide furniture, equipment, signage and ICT resources. Table 1 (attached as Appendix 3) shows how the capital allocations would be revised (to be approved by the Director of Children and Families). Should it become apparent that the target number of 7 centres cannot be delivered to the required level of quality within the available budget, Members are asked to authorise the Director of Children and Families to negotiate with the DfES to either reduce the number of Children's Centres to be developed in phase 2 or to increase the budget allocated to the

Local Authority. The DfES has already reduced the target number of centres from 9 to 7 on the basis that the Local Authority showed it could still provide the required services to the required number of children under 5 with 7 centres.

3.10 The programme and timeline continue to be under review. In order to ensure completion by March 2008 the steps outlined in the April report are being undertaken. All seven centres will be designated by the DfES by March 2008. This will be achieved by creative use of existing venues that are suitable for providing some but not all Children's Centres services. The criteria for designation are limited and do not require a full programme of activities to be in place. Recent guidance issued by the DfES states that a process has been established for Local Authorities to secure approval to spend outstanding 07/08 capital in 08/09 in order to complete centres that cannot be completed by March 2008. This is due to the number of Local Authorities informing the DfES that centres would not be completed by March 2008 and because the DfES wishes to see centres provided for local families in the most effective ways. Officers have presented information on each centre to DfES in a recent portfolio review meeting who have indicated that each centre meets the necessary criteria for carry forward to be approved (see paragraph 4.4 for clawback implications). Officers continue to work to achieve a balance between providing an acceptable level of quality and functionality in these centres within the budget available and to provide full services to local families as soon as possible.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The total Children's Centres capital allocation for 06/07 and 07/08 (combined) is £2,049,714. In addition, an allocation of £360,000 has been made from the General Sure Start Grant (Extended Schools) capital funding to support the development of Children's Centres on school sites. The Extended Schools allocation of £100k made to the Lyon Park Schools has been confirmed as available to transfer to Alperton Community School should the Executive approve this recommendation. The capital allocation is direct grant rather than supported borrowing and therefore in itself has no net impact on the Council Tax. A further £30,000 capital funding is likely to be allocated to St Raphael's Community Centre from the St Raphael's and Brentfield Neighbourhood Renewal Project as part of the Walking Links project. This will fund specific elements of external works at and around the centre. This funding is not shown in the table below as it is yet to be finally confirmed. Table 1 (attached as Appendix 3) shows how the capital allocations would be revised based on developments in the overall programme.

4.2 The contingency sum available for all projects will be re-allocated as required when all projects are at RIBA Stage D or held as a contingency for the tender stage. In the event that all tenders are received within budget, it will be held as a further construction contingency and if still not required, will be used to provide more or better quality external landscaping and/or furniture and equipment at all centres. The use of this contingency sum will be approved by the Directors of Children and Families and Finance and Corporate Resources, as approved in the November 2006 report.

- 4.3 As reported in July and November 2006 and in April 2007, these capital projects bring with them liability for ongoing running costs. A revenue grant is confirmed up to March 2008, after which time no revenue grant funding is confirmed for the Local Authority, although this is the expectation. The DfES have indicated that budget allocations for 08/09 will be made available to Local Authorities in Summer 2007. The risks associated with this were detailed in the July report. It is intended that a further report seeking approval of the full revenue expenditure profile will be submitted for Executive approval at a later date.
- 4.4 Given the policy change detailed in 3.10, it is unlikely that capital funding that cannot be spent by March 2008 will be clawed back. In the process of individually approving capital for projects, NPS (Sure Start/DfES Technical Consultants) review deliverability of the scheme. Capital would only be approved for a scheme if it could either be completed by March 2008 or an approval had been obtained to carry forward capital to 08/09 enabling the centre to be completed after that date. There is no impact on revenue grant as centres will be designated by March 2008.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Works and consultancy contracts in respect of the development of the Children's Centres will need to be procured in accordance with the requirements of the Council's standing orders and the EU Procurement Regulations where applicable
- 5.2 As these are grant funded works there will be outputs upon which the grant is dependent and there is the possibility of claw-back of grant monies should projects fail to meet their specified outputs.
- 5.3 The Council will need to enter into contracts and other arrangements with partners to commission services to deliver the Children's Centre services. Any such contracts and arrangements will need to be monitored to ensure that targets are met and best value is achieved.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Diversity implications were fully considered in the July report. At the time of that report, an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out. A copy is available from the office of the Director of Children and Families. It is expected that there will be a positive impact on equalities as a result of this capital programme.
- 6.2 Services offered will be tailored to meet the needs of local communities. The greatest resource for Children's Centres will go to those children most in need. Phase 2 Children's Centres cover the borough's 30% most disadvantaged super-output areas as measured by the National Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD 2004). The IMD 2004 measures seven domains of deprivation: income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, living environment and crime.
- 6.3 Each Children's Centre has a unique catchment area and community profile, some covering more advantaged areas where they link geographically to more

disadvantaged ones. These areas are characterised by their diversity of culture, ethnicity and faith. Families living in all of these areas experience varying levels of disadvantage based on the indicators given above.

- 6.4 Children's Centres will benefit the whole community including those families considered to be within the most excluded groups. All centres will be inclusive and compliant with the access requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications

- 7.1 There would be staffing/accommodation implications if the alternative option of Douglas Avenue was developed to provide the Children's Centre in the Lyon Park catchment area.

Background Papers

- i) Equality Impact Assessment – September 06
- ii) Report re. C&F06/07-001 – Children's Centres – Phase 2 Capital Programme (17th July 2006)
- iii) Report re. C&F06/07 011 Phase 2 Children's Centres – Capital Programme Approval (13th November 2006)
- iv) Report re. C&F06/07-021 Phase 2 Children's Centre Capital Programme (12th February 2007)
- v) Report re. C&F06/07-026 – Children's Centre Capital Programme – Phase 2 Alternative Site Options and Phase 1 Update (29th May 2007)
- vi) Project files

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