

REPORT TO: Children and Young People - Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2 June 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Children's Centres: Phase 3 Planning and Delivery (2008 - 2010)

WARDS:

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide information on the planning and delivery of Phase 3 Children's Centres, and to seek approval to begin the consultation process for the development of this programme.**

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- i) Support the recommendations concerning the alterations to designation details for Phase 1 and 2 Children's Centres (3.5);
- ii) Consider and comment upon options to be explored in Phase 3

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The third phase of the Government's Children's Centre programme will complete the national roll out of children's centres offering universal access to integrated services including: outreach services for families; access to community health services; integrated full day care and early education; information and advice; support to childminders; and, links with Job Centre Plus.
- 3.2 All Phase 3 children's centres will be situated outside the most disadvantaged areas and will therefore offer a less intensive level of support than those phase 1 and 2 centres serving families in the 30% most disadvantaged areas. However, even in the most affluent areas of the Borough, there will be families with young children at risk of social exclusion. Local authorities will have greater flexibility in deciding what services should be provided in the more affluent areas based on assessment of local need.
- 3.3 Twelve children's centres were established during phase 1 and 2 of the programme. All phase 1 and 2 centres are located within the most disadvantaged wards and all centres except the Kingsway Children's

Centre are situated within or adjacent to a primary school or nursery school building. In the first two phases of the programme, it was expected that individual children's centres should serve on average a "reach" of around 800 children under 5 years within the locality.

- 3.4 The "reach" issue was discussed at a recent Children's Centres Portfolio Framework meeting of the Operational Director for Preventative Services, the Divisional Manager for Children, Families and Extended Services and representatives of "Together for Children" (TfC). The purpose of the meeting was to review the Phase 1 and 2 centres and services to date and the planning for Phase 3 in order for TfC to report progress to Government.
- 3.5 The Government has a stated aim of developing 3,500 children's centres across the country. It is evident that the Government is over-achieving on its objective and is reviewing progress against its stated aim. As a consequence it was proposed at this meeting that certain Halton children centre sites should be combined. The rationale for combining these centres is primarily due to the low reach figures and the lack of need for full day care in some phase 2 areas as detailed in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2008. The proposed amended "reach" and Children's Centre table, which reduces the number of full children's centres from 12 to 8, is attached as Appendix 1. The Local Authority has been assured that this approach will not impact negatively upon funding allocations.
- 3.6 The amended reach table presents a number of opportunities for a more accessible and cost effective approach to the provision of children centre services. Combined centres would consist of a main centre and a satellite centre (or centres), which would allow for greater flexibility in how services are delivered and serve to make centres more viable in the long term. Additionally, satellite centres would not need to provide up to ten hours of full day care, but link to existing day care provision at any distance from the children's centre. The satellites would also not be subject to the usual requirement to employ a qualified teacher.
- 3.7 The original guidance concerning Phase 3 Children Centre delivery required a further 2 children's centres with a combined reach of 1,426 children under 5, predominantly serving families who are not living in the in areas ranked in the 30% most deprived Super Output Areas. The proposal is now for the development of 2 satellite centres to link to 2 existing centres to work together to extend their "reach" and provide access to the full core services.
- 3.8 Generally these Phase 3 centres will build on existing services for children and families like schools and extended services, health centres and nurseries to offer better integrated and accessible services for families, and will work closely with local private, voluntary and independent sector organisations. Commissioning services will also be a vital step in delivering children's centre services. This will be even more

important for phase 3 centres where services may not be on site, but where there still needs to be strong co-ordination of delivery.

- 3.9 Areas not covered by existing Children's Centre "reach " so far are Beechwood, Heath and Daresbury within Runcorn; and Farnworth and Birchfield within Widnes. All these areas are in the less deprived wards within the Borough. It is proposed that a range of options will be explored.
- 3.10 Local authorities must involve providers, parents and other interested parties at a formative stage in identifying needs and developing plans for phase 3. Consultation must include child health and maternity services and plans should include the full involvement of the PCT. Local authorities should also explore plans with private, voluntary and independent sector providers. Section 8 of the Childcare Act 2006, restricts local authorities from providing childcare where there are alternative and appropriate means of delivery available.
- 3.11 In Phase 3 local authorities will be supported by TfC to ensure that robust and achievable plans are in place for the delivery of the programme for the 2008-2010 period. It is essential that local authorities record progress for the development of individual centres on the TfC web- based portal. This data and knowledge management system has been developed to support delivery and designation of centres. Currently all Halton entries are up to date and accurate.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Governance and management arrangements for children's centres have been established, with ongoing work taking place concerning accountability through Children's Centre Advisory Boards and links to Children's Trust arrangements. In light of the proposals for combined centres and Phase 3 developments, it may be appropriate for a cluster of centres to share one management board or advisory board, providing the communities served are adequately represented.
- 4.2 Phase 3 offers unprecedented opportunities to link developments to both existing provision and emergent Primary Capital Programme and BSF developments. Proposals for Phase 3 will include consultation concerning these opportunities. When planning Phase 3 Children Centres, local authorities are encouraged to explore all opportunities for the co-location of the centres with maintained nursery and primary schools.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The development of the centres in phase 3 is supported by capital funding of £521,866.
- 5.2 Within the Sure Start, Early Years and Childcare Grant allocations for 2008-2011, the children's centre revenue – together with the ring fenced grant for ex-Sure Start local programmes that are now children's centres- provides resource for an overall "reach" figure of around 7610 children under 5 years. It is not envisaged that phase 3 centres will incur full year running costs for 2008-10.
- 5.3 Additional funding for the maintenance of centres developed under phase 1 and 2 has been allocated as £27,323 (08-09); £47,194 (09-10); £49,661(10-11).

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Children's Centres are a key delivery mechanism for the Every Child Matters agenda and are central to the Children and Young People's Plan.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

A key performance indicator for Children's Centres is the reduction of the number of 0-4 year olds in workless households. Children's Centres work in partnership with Job Centre Plus and Adult and Community Learning as part of the drive to encourage parents back into work or training.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Children's Centres provide a base for child health and maternity services and joint targets with PCT are pursued covering: breast feeding, obesity and infant mortality rates.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Children Centres operate a progressive universal model of support which includes intensive interventions for the most at risk children and families.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Children's Centres contribute to the regeneration of locality areas and the modification / extension of existing premises.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Local authorities are charged with the strategic planning of children's centres and are required to have strong programme management arrangements in place. Detailed programmes for each capital project must be entered into the Government's web-based system. Failure to enter details within the prescribed time-scales could result in loss of funding.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Children's Centres impact on all aspects of the Borough's wider policies for social inclusion and equality and diversity.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Childcare Act 2006	Grosvenor House	Geraldine Derby
Halton Children and Young People Plan 2006-09	Grosvenor House	Geraldine Derby
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2006	Grosvenor House	Geraldine Derby
Sure Start Children's Centres: planning and delivery Phase 3	Grosvenor House	Geraldine Derby

Appendix 1

Name of CC	Type	Old Reach Figure	New Reach Figure	Comments	Justification for change
All Saints and Halton Lodge	30%	427 + 429 =	856	Potential link to satellite development in Phase 3	Combine 2 centres
Castlefields and Halton Brook	30%	327 + 440 =	767		Combine 2 centres
Brookvale and Palacefields	30%	984 + 423 =	1407		Combine 2 centres
Ditton and All Saints Upton	30%	499 + 427 =	926	All Saints Upton was Hough Green	Combine 2 centres
Kingsway	30%	705	705	Potential link to satellite development in Phase 3	No change
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour	30%	294			Check - reach is restricted. Possible link as satellite to Ditton
Warrington Road	30%	862	862		No change
Windmill Hill	30%	197			Check - reach is restricted. Possible link as satellite to Brookvale
Total = 8					