

# CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER MEETING

## Agenda Item 11

Brighton & Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Early Years Capital Grant</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>6 July 2009</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Director of Children's Services</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Caroline Parker</b>	<b>Tel:</b> <b>293587</b>
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<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Forward Plan No: CYP10140</b>	
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

### 1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To agree proposals for allocating the Sure Start Early Years Capital Grant from the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF). This is a ring-fenced grant primarily aimed at private, voluntary and independent childcare providers with national aims to:
- improve the quality of the learning environment in early years settings to support delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, with a particular emphasis on improving play and physical activities; and ICT resources;
  - ensure all children, including disabled children, can access provision;
  - enable private, voluntary and independent providers to deliver the extension to the free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds and to do so flexibly.
- 1.2 To agree the capital plans for the Sure Start Children's Centre in Preston Park as part of the development of Phase Three Sure Start Children's Centres to be open by 2010.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To agree to develop the Preston Park Children's Centre at the Fiveways Pre School Playgroup, off Florence Road. The proposal is to replace the existing pre-fabricated building with a Council owned new build which would house both the playgroup and the children's centre at an estimated total cost of £820,000. This is to be funded by £450,000 from Children's Centre funding, £245,000 from the Early Years Capital Grant and £125,000 from the Fiveways Pre-School Playgroup.
- 2.2 To agree the following allocations for the Early Years Capital Grant (full details are in annex 1 and are all subject to further local consultation):
- Stringer Playgroup, Surrenden Campus – up to £160,000
  - St Joseph's Playgroup, Hollingdean- up to £50,000
  - Little Ducklings, Hangleton – up to £70,000
  - Roundabout Nursery – up to £200,000

- Brighton Unemployed Centre – up to £90,000
- Village Under Fives, Portslade – up to £300,000
- Refurbishment and/or rebuilding of sport pavilions housing early years providers including Dolphins in Nevill Park, Hollingbury Park Playgroup and Westdene Playgroup subject to further assessments and local consultation – up to £790,000.

### **3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**

- 3.1 The local authority has a statutory duty to secure sufficient free early years provision for all three and four year olds and sufficient childcare for children aged 0-14 to allow parents to work or train. At present the early years free entitlement is 12.5 hours a week for 38 weeks a year, usually delivered in 2.5 hour sessions. This is increasing to 15 hours a week for all children by 2010 with increased flexibility so that children will be able to access 15 hours over 3 days. Some providers will need improvements to their premises to deliver this. The local authority also has a duty to improve outcomes for all young children and to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged. Research has show that children will only benefit fully from early education and care if it is of high quality. A high quality setting needs the right built internal and outside environment and appropriate resources.
- 3.2 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has allocated Brighton & Hove a capital grant worth £1,062,287 a year for the three years 2008/9, 2009/10 and 2010/11. The DCSF's expectation is that the majority of this capital grant will be used to improve the environment in private, voluntary and independent (PVI) settings to support higher quality experiences for young children.
- 3.3 The CMM agreed the following strategy in the September 2008.
- To improve outcomes for young children and to narrow the gap for the most disadvantaged children by targeting funding on those groups with the worst environments identified in a citywide audit of rented premises or where capital alterations are needed to include children with disabilities.
  - To support the Council's childcare sufficiency duty by targeting funding on settings which offer affordable childcare, where childcare places are needed to meet local demand. This will include ensuring that sessional providers can offer the increased entitlement to 15 hours of flexible, free early years provision and could include expanding the number of places where there is clear evidence of unmet demand.
  - To link with the Primary Capital Strategy by aiming to relocate groups in the poorest multi-purpose accommodation into purpose built premises on school sites where possible, taking into account the local demand for places and the quality of existing provision.
- 3.4 The CMM also agreed an initial budget allocation including funding for equipment for voluntary groups and those in shared premises, an extension to

Peter Gladwin School to house a local playgroup, a range of small grants of under £50,000 and feasibility costs. Details of expenditure so far and committed spending are set out in annex 1.

- 3.5 Fiveways Nursery currently has a lease of part of the site at Florence Road which they have held since 1974 and negotiations are in hand for renewal. On the basis of the Children's Centre being approved, the intention is to agree a 25 year lease for Fiveways Pre-school at a peppercorn to reflect their contribution to the capital cost. The lease will need to be agreed by the governors of Downs Junior School.
- 3.6 There are a number of sports pavilions based in parks which also house early years providers. In some cases these buildings are in a poor state of repair. There are also particular challenges when early years providers share premises with sports changing rooms. Negotiations are underway with City Parks and in some cases further consultation may be needed with local users.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 Existing private, voluntary, independent or statutory services for children and families were asked to express an interest in hosting the Children's Centres. In Preston Park there was just one expression of interest by the deadline. The CYPT Board agreed in principle to the children's centre being based at Fiveways. Consultations have been held with Downs Junior School as the land is listed as a schools playing field for this school.
- 4.2 An audit of providers in rented accommodation has been completed and meetings held with City Services. Discussions have taken place with Peter Gladwin School, Village Under Fives and Parish Pre-Schools. Consultations are ongoing with City Services, Property and Design and Portslade Community College. The users of the shared buildings and local ward councillors will be consulted about the detail of the improvements where there may be an impact on other groups.

#### **5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The capital cost of the Fiveways children's centre project is estimated to be £820,000 of which £450,000 will be met from within the children's centres capital funding of £492,000 that was left unallocated in the April CYPTB paper. A further £245,000 will be funded from the Early Years Capital Grant and it is intended that the remaining £125,000 will come from Fiveways Pre-school by means of a mortgage secured on the property. This will depend on the Council agreeing a 25 year lease. The budget for Children's centre capital for 2009/10 is £772,381 and the budget for 2010/11 is £1,121,961. Revenue costs for the children's centre will be met from the children's centre revenue budget. The remaining funding will be kept as a contingency.

The capital costs of the other projects will be met from the early years capital grant allocation. The DCSF allocation is £3,186,861 for the three years 2008/2011. The first year's funding of £1,062,278 was agreed by CMM in September 2008. The table at annex one shows the funding committed so far:

£790,000. A total of £100,331 was spent in 2008/9. This paper commits a further £1,780,000 and leaves £491,530 unallocated. The split between the financial years is £1,147,00 for 2009/10 and £1,939,530 for 2010/11. Details are in annex 2.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Michelle Herrington*

*Date: 19/06/2009*

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Childcare Act 2006 introduced a duty on local authorities to both improve all young children's outcomes, and to reduce inequalities between them, through integrated early childhood services. These proposals for the allocation of the early years capital grant will support these duties by ensuring sufficiency of places and improving the quality of the learning environment where most needed. The development of the Fiveways Pre-school will need to take account of the land's status as a school playing field. The Council has certain permitted development rights, in the form of General Consents under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act. One of the General consents that is available to LA's for development of playing fields is when an authority wishes to provide accommodation for services for children. The Children's Centre is just such a development.

*Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson*

*Date: 24/06/09*

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 Good quality early years education improves outcomes for all children and particularly those who are most disadvantaged.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 Provision of childcare in local communities supports the sustainable communities goal, as well as reducing climate change and energy use.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 Research shows access to good quality childcare supports children and young people's learning and achievement in later life.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 The "I DO RM" tool will be used for new projects.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.7 The relevant corporate and CYPT objective are:
- Reduce inequality by increasing opportunity
  - Enjoy and achieve – improving early years outcomes

**6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):**

- 6.1 In Preston Park Fiveways Playgroup was the only provider to express an interest in hosting the Children's Centre by the deadline. See paragraph 7.1 below.
- 6.2 The recommendations follow the guidance from the Department for Children, Families and Schools to target the funding on the private and voluntary sector and for the funding to be based on an assessment of need. The alternative would be to spread the funding across a larger number of childcare providers so

that more providers could have made smaller improvements. The audit and feasibility studies have shown that there are a number of buildings in a very poor state of repair. This may be the only chance of replacing these buildings. Many of the groups in these buildings are run by voluntary management committees and tend to charge affordable fees to parents. Targeting the funding on the settings in greatest need supports the Council's duty to improve early years outcomes and narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers.

## **7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 Fiveways is an extended day playgroup based on local authority land off Florence Road. They are one of the largest early years providers in the city with 52 places and were attended by 101 3 and 4 year olds in January 2009 including 16 children from disadvantaged areas. They also provide places for 2 year olds and collect children from Balfour and Downs Schools for after school care. Fiveways have an outstanding Ofsted judgement.
- 7.2 The early years capital funding aims to improve the quality of the learning environment with a strong emphasis on children accessing a high quality outside environment. There are just over 100 daycare providers in the city in the private, voluntary and independent sector with a wide variation in the standards of premises. An audit has been completed of groups in rented accommodation across the city looking at the state of repair of the building including access to natural light, disability access and children's access to a safe outside space. Many of these buildings and sites are owned by the Council. The poorest quality accommodation is based in buildings which are multi-purpose eg. sports pavilions and have to meet the needs of different users and pre-fabricated buildings that were installed in the 1970s and are now coming to the end of their lifespan.
- 7.3 The report also proposes an extension to the Roundabout nursery to increase the number of spaces for two year olds. This is needed to provide places for children on the child protection register and free places for the city's most disadvantaged two year olds.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. Early Years Capital Funding Summary for 2008/9
2. Early Years Capital Funding Summary for 2009/11

### **Documents In Members' Rooms:**

None

### **Background Documents**

1. CYPT Board Report April 2009 Phase Three Children's Centres
2. DCSF Letter – Quality and Access for All Young Children – Three Year Allocations of Early Years Capital Grant

