
CHILDREN'S CENTRES CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/06 – RELEASE OF FUNDS

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio

Responsible Directors(s) – Margaret Asquith, Director of Children's Services

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval to release capital monies awarded to the Local Authority by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for Darlington's Children's Centres capital schemes which were approved by Cabinet in October 2003.

Information and Analysis

2. At the Council meeting on 9th October 2003, Council approved the Strategic Proposal for Children's Centre and New Childcare Place Development, 2004-06. The proposal subsequently received approval from the Sure Start Regional Team in local Government Office (GONE) in October 2004, the Darlington Children's Centres Strategic Steering Group was formally convened and local consultation, planning and design work commenced. This Strategic Steering Group is now at a stage to request the formal release of Children's Centres 2004-06 capital funding from Cabinet.

2004-06 Children's Centre Services

3. The 2004-06 Strategic Proposal to GONE set out how Darlington will meet its target of creating a minimum of 100 additional childcare places by March 2006, ensuring that a minimum of 2,302 pre-school children, resident in the most disadvantaged areas of the Borough (those wards/'pockets of deprivation' which are within the 20% most deprived nationally) benefit from the associated services. During 2004-06 Darlington has been awarded a total indicative **revenue grant of £353,627** and a **capital grant of £674,491** to enable this to happen.
4. The 2004-06 proposal includes creating 4 main Children's Centres and 2 'outreach' Centres as set out below:

Ward	Children's Centres Proposal Summary	Notional 'In Principle' Capital Allocation per Centre/outreach
Cockerton West	Create 30 new place full daycare facility in Sure Start Centre at Mount Pleasant with links to network of 4 new childminders creating 12 new places .	Centre - £150k

Eastbourne	Firthmoor Neighbourhood Nursery to become a 52 place Children's Centre and a network of 3 new childminders to be created giving 9 new places . Children resident within the wards of Lascelles and Bank Top can access outreach-based facilities offered, including a network of 3 new childminders giving 9 new places .	Centre - £40k Outreach - £190k
Park East	Sure Start Centre including Park Side Neighbourhood Nursery to become a 52 place Children's Centre with links to a network of 3 new childminders giving 9 new places .	Centre - £45k
Northgate	Sure Start Children's Centre including 'Kids & Co. at North Road' to become a 41 place Children's Centre and a network of 3 new childminders to be created giving 9 new places . Children resident within the wards of Central and Red Hall estate can access the Centre and outreach based facilities offered, including 20 new full daycare places and a network of 4 new childminders creating 12 new places .	Centre - £5k Outreach - £245k
Total no. of new places created	110 (target is 100)	Total Capital Spend = £675k

5. Each main Centre will offer access to the following core services for children 0-5 from the outset:
- a. good quality early education integrated with childcare;
 - b. family support and outreach to parents;
 - c. child and family health services, including ante-natal services; and
 - d. support for children and parents with special needs.
6. In addition, by March 2006 the Children's Centres will develop, in consultation with the local community to act as a service hub for parents of children up to the age of 14 (16 with special educational needs) and childcare providers by offering a link with other daycare provision and extended schools and by being a base for childminder networks, out of school, breakfast and holiday clubs and mobile crèches. Centres will also have links with local training and education providers eg by delivering adult/family literacy programmes, Job Centre Plus and other back to work programmes and the local Children's Information Service (CIS).

2006-08 Children's Centres Services

7. For the 2006-08 period the DfES has awarded Darlington an indicative capital allocation of £444,090 and an indicative revenue allocation of £1,002,794 to create 2 new Children's Centres by March 2008, ensuring that a minimum of an additional 2,077 pre-school children, resident in the most disadvantaged areas of the Borough (those super output areas which are within the 30% most deprived nationally) benefit from the associated services.
8. The DfES has given Local Authorities the flexibility to review existing Children's Centre proposals in the light of this additional funding. As a result, the Darlington Children's Centres Strategic Steering Group, guided on planning issues by the Early Years Service, is in the process of reviewing its Children's Centres Strategy. Areas which will be looked at include the siting of any additional Children's Centres and the realignment and development of current outreach Centres. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet for the release of 2006-08 capital funding.

Outcome of Consultation

10. Consultation has taken place with the following groups:
Members of Children's Centres Strategic Steering Group representing SureStart Local Programmes, Co. Durham & Darlington Priority Services NHS Trust, Co. Durham & Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, Darlington Primary Care Trust, Jobcentre Plus, Darlington College of Technology, Firthmoor District & Community Association, Skerne Park Community Enterprise Association, Community Services and Economic Regeneration

All members are in full agreement with the proposal.

Legal Implications

11. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

12. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

13. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework.

Decision Deadline

14. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does represent an urgent matter.

Key Decisions

15. In accordance with the Council's constitution this is classed as a key decision as it affects all wards within the Borough.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that Cabinet note the details of each individual Children's Centres capital scheme and release the 2004-06 Capital Funding of £674,491 and the associated Revenue Funding of £353,627.

Reasons

17. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons:-

- (a) to enable work to proceed on the Children's Centres capital proposals; and
- (b) to enable the target of creating 100 new childcare places and also creating easily accessible services for 2,302 pre-school children and their families to be met.

Margaret Asquith
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers

Darlington's Strategic Proposal for Children's Centre and New Childcare Place Development, 2004-06

The Strategic Proposal for Children's Centre and New Childcare Place Development, 2004-06 – Cabinet Paper, 7th October 2003.

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