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**CHILDREN'S CENTRES ROUND 2 (2006-08) – CAPITAL FUNDING**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor Chris McEwan, Children's Services Portfolio  
Responsible Director(s) – Margaret Asquith, Director of Children's Services**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To outline the status of Darlington's round 2 (2006-08) Children's Centres.
2. To request that Cabinet formally release £444,090 Children's Centres Round 2 (2006-08) capital funding and £60,000 Children's Centres Round 2 (2006-08) 'rural up-lift' capital funding.

**Information and Analysis**

**Background**

3. In April 2005 the national SureStart Unit released its 'Ten Year Strategy for Childcare: Guidance for Local Authorities'. Accompanying this guidance was a letter setting out Darlington's round 2, (2006-08) Children's Centres targets and the associated funding available (see table at Appendix A).
4. The funding in round 2 is to enable authorities to develop services for all children under five and their families in those areas of the Borough which are within the 30% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas (SOA's) nationally (as opposed to the 20% most disadvantaged wards covered by round 1 requirements). There are no new childcare place targets for round 2, as within the 10 year strategy for childcare the Local Authority is charged with the responsibility to effectively manage the local childcare market ensuring that over time there is sufficient provision to meet parental demand.

**Proposal**

5. Using information provided by the Economic Regeneration Team, the Policy Unit and Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, the 30 per cent most disadvantaged SOA's for Darlington were identified. Many of these already appeared within round 1 (2004-06) catchment areas or were closely adjacent to them. The outstanding areas not covered by round 1 are the Lingfield, Banktop and Lascelles cluster and the Haughton wards. It was therefore appropriate to seek to develop the two additional Children's Centres in these two areas.
6. Facilities at Dodmire Infant and Junior Schools are currently being developed in round 1 (2004-06) to enable 'outreach' services to be delivered there by March 2006. This work is funded from round 1 Children's Centre capital and the SureStart Local Programme. There is therefore an opportunity to develop this site further as a round 2 Children's Centre. This development will not constitute a significant expenditure, estimates received indicate a

maximum cost of £120,000 which covers construction work and a reasonable contingency for possible unforeseen works and additional costs, to be funded from Children's Centres round 2 capital allocation.

7. In addition, there may be scope to establish a 'virtual' Children's Centre at Harewood House. Although this building is situated in Park West ward, it is located right next to the boundary of Park East ward, which is one of the 20% most disadvantaged wards. Harewood House is currently the site of Darlington's Child Development Centre from which a range of specialist services for disabled children are provided, such as the community paediatrician, the specialist Health Visitor, the Special Educational Needs Advisory Teacher, portage workers and the social work team. In January 2006 the Early Support programme and the 'key workers' model are also being implemented from this Centre. This 'virtual' Children's Centre would sit within Darlington's Children's Centres network with a view to it becoming a full Children's Centre in phase 3 (2008-10). The aim is that specialist services will start to be delivered in universal settings, such as Children's Centres and extended schools, thus creating a service which is child centred, integrated, accessible and locally responsive. Based on previous experience of this type of project, refurbishment costs from Children's Centres capital round 2 would be in the region of £100,000 for this project, and would include £50,000 to provide a high quality outdoor play area and £50,000 for remodelling and refurbishment works.
8. The ideal location for the Children's Centre serving the Haughton area would be integrated on site with the new Education Village, however, this requires further exploration and discussion with the PFI contract provider. If it is not possible to locate the Children's Centre within the Education Village site, other suitable accommodation would need to be identified. The remaining balance from Children's Centre round 2 capital of £224,090 would be utilised on this project. If agreed, the Haughton Children's Centre would take responsibility for the "outreach/satellite" provision at Red Hall, as developed within the round 1 plans.
9. Government Office North East has recently advised a total available amount of £60,000 capital and £80,000 revenue for 2006-08 "rural up-lift" funding available to Darlington to supply services for children under five and their families resident in rural wards. It is proposed to allocate the total capital grant of £60,000 to capital works in rural wards. GONE recognise that rural up-lift funding for Darlington over two years is of such a limited amount, that it would be more effectively used targeted in specific areas rather than spread thinly across all the rural wards.
10. Although none of our rural wards have SOA's which are within the 30% poorest nationally, it is clear that deprivation does exist in some of our rural SOA's: one of Middleton-St-George's SOA's is within the 50% poorest nationally and the entire ward of Sadberge and Whessoe is ranked within the top 63% poorest nationally.
11. It is proposed to develop "outreach/satellite" services in Middleton-St-George between 2006-08 aligned to the Children's Centre at Maidendale House. The most likely setting to deliver outreach is via the school site and an amount of £10,000 (from the £60,000 rural uplift capital) has been identified to undertake any minor works. A further proposal is to deliver "outreach/satellite" services in the ward of Sadberge and Whessoe between 2006-08 aligned to the Children's Centre at Haughton and the remaining £50,000 (of the rural uplift

capital) has been identified to carry out works to potential facilities, such as the local playgroup, village halls, etc. The outreach provision will be monitored and co-ordinated through the aligned Children's Centre.

12. Cabinet approval of these indicative capital costings is required prior to this information being submitted on the web based capital database system established by the national SureStart Unit, the national deadline for this is mid February 2006. A further paper will be submitted to Cabinet for information once Children's Centres round 2 capital projects have reach RIBA stage D.
13. These proposals and the round 1 boundary changes (outlined in the 'Children's Centres Strategic Proposal Round 2, 2006-08' to Cabinet on 29th November 2005) will ensure that 4,675 pre-school children and their families will be able to access Children's Centre services by 2008, exceeding the minimum government 'reach' target of 4,379 pre-school children. Darlington will therefore 'reach' 296 additional children under five than that required by the SureStart Unit.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

14. The proposal to develop two additional Children's Centres, rural 'outreach' and a 'virtual' Children's Centre in round 2 (2006-08) have been discussed and is supported by the Children's Centres Strategic Steering group which includes representatives from 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 and Community Association, Skerne Park Community Enterprise Association, Community Services and Economic Regeneration. These round 2 proposals have also been discussed with the Executive of Darlington SureStart Partnership and the regional SureStart Unit, Government Office North East.

### **Legal Implications**

15. 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**

16. 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**

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

## **Decision Deadline**

18. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter

## **Key Decisions**

19. In accordance with the Council's constitution this is classed as a key decision as it affects all wards within the Borough except Mowden, College and Hummersknott where it is anticipated that Children's Centres round 3 (2008-10) plans will be developed.

## **Summary**

20. In summary the following capital projects are proposed:
- (a) Dodmire Schools' site – maximum £120,000;
  - (b) Haughton area – maximum £224,090;
  - (c) Harewood House – maximum £100,00;
  - (d) Sadberge and Whessoe 'outreach' – 'rural up-lift' - maximum £50,000; and
  - (e) Middleton-St-George 'outreach' – 'rural up-lift' – minor works – maximum £10,000.
21. At this stage Government Office North East require only indicative allocations to be submitted on their web based capital database system by mid February 2006. The Capital Programmes Manager within Children's Services who has successfully project managed Children's Centres round 1 capital developments will additionally project manage capital works for round 2 and more detailed costings will be reported to Cabinet once these projects have reached RIBA Stage D.

## **Recommendation**

22. It is recommended that Cabinet :-
- (a) Note and approve the round 2 (2006-08) Children's Centre capital allocations; and
  - (b) Formally approve the release of £444,090 Children's Centres round 2 (2006-08) capital funding and £60,000 Children's Centres round 2 (2006-08) 'rural up-lift' capital funding.

## **Reasons**

23. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) They meet the national and regional SureStart Units, Government Office North East round 2 Children's Centres requirements and comply with the guidance; and
  - (b) They enable the Government set minimum 'reach targets' to be met and exceeded in Darlington.

**Margaret Asquith**  
**Director of Children's Services**

**Background Papers**

- 'Children's Centres: Funding Allocations for 2006-07 and 2007-08' letter of 4th April 2005 from Naomi Eisenstadt, Director, SureStart Unit
- SureStart Unit's 'Ten Year Strategy for Childcare: Guidance for Local Authorities', March 2005
- Cabinet Paper, Children's Centres Strategic Proposal Round 2, 2006-08' 29 November 2005

Nicola Davies: Extension 2803

<b>Local Authority : Darlington</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total number of new under 5s for LA to reach during 2006-08	<b>2,077</b>
Number of new children's centres to be created during April 2006 - Mar 2008	<b>2</b>
Total indicative Capital funding for 2006-2008	<b>£444,090</b>
Total Revenue funding for 2006 – 2008	<b>£1,002,794</b>