

Cabinet – 16 July 2008

Phase 3 Children's Centre locations and funding

Portfolio:	Councillor Zahid Ali, Children's Services
Service:	All Children's Service Areas - working in partnership
Wards:	All wards
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Summary of report

In April 2008, Cabinet agreed the development of 3 new Children's Centres. This report seeks further Cabinet approval on the geographical areas the new centres will reach and gives the principals for allocating the financial resources to enable access to Children's Centre service delivery across all of Walsall.

2. Recommendations

That cabinet approves:

- 2.1 The development for 3 new Children's Centres between 2008 and 2010 to reach the communities of:
 - Chuckery and Paddock
 - Pelsall
 - Streetly
- 2.2 The revised children's centre reach areas to ensure that all children and their families have access to local Children's Centre services by 2010
- 2.3 The principle to devolve funding to centres based on formula approach that gives flexibility to Centre managers, whilst ensuring that sufficient funding is allocated to deliver the core offer of services

- 2.4 Increased resources for additional outreach workers in the most disadvantaged areas from 2009; subject to confirmation of additional Sure Start Grant funding from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)
- 2.5 Increased resources from 2010 for Children's Centres that provide greater reach to high impact services that are evidenced based and demonstrate better outcomes for children and their families; subject to confirmation of additional Sure Start Grant funding from the DCSF
- 2.6 Continued central funding for complementary family support, health co-ordination support, pregnancy workers and father support workers, where these services can be shown to have high impact and provide better outcomes for children and their families

3 Background information

The Phase 3 Children's Centre Cabinet report agreed in April 2008 detailed the vision, services and achievements achieved across Phase 1 and 2.

3.1 Children's Centre Vision

The vision for children's centres in Walsall is to establish a universal entitlement so that every child in Walsall has the best start in life, provided through the ready access to provision that meets their learning, health and family support needs. Our aim is to provide better outcomes for all children through a truly inclusive service.

All communities in Walsall will have access to children's centre services to meet their needs, requiring differing levels of support according to families social and economic backgrounds and the existing services that are currently available. The development of children's centres nationally, and within Walsall, was based on a three phased approach. The first phase was based on providing support services for the most disadvantaged areas and then widening this to cover the 30% most disadvantaged areas in Phase 2. The third and final phase is to ensure that all communities in Walsall have access to children's centre services.

3.2 Achievements

Walsall has successfully developed and opened 15 children's centres, meeting the Government's target for March 2008.

The designated centres are:

Children's Centre Ward

Alumwell / Pleck Pleck

Bentley West Bentley and Darlaston North

Birchills and North Walsall Birchills Leamore
Blakenall Bloxwich East
Bloxwich West Bloxwich West
Darlaston Darlaston South
Palfrey Palfrey
Brownhills Brownhills
Edgar Stammers Blakenall
Fibbersley Park Willenhall South
Greenfield Rushall
Hatherton Beechdale
Leighswood Aldridge South
Lighthouse (Beacon) Willenhall North
Pheasey Park Farm Pheasey

3.3 Phase 3

The development of children centres will require an emerging strategy, founded on the evaluation and commissioning of evidence based services. This report builds on from what is currently know about children's centres in Walsall and is sufficiently overarching to allow for refinement and the development of more detailed functional strategies.

The strategy is to develop a further 3 centres in Phase 3. This has been based on a review of the reach areas covered by existing children's centres and the remaining super output areas still to be met. The strategy is to develop new centres in the following areas:

- Chuckery and Paddock
- Pelsall
- Streetly

It is proposed to increase the reach for Leighswood Children's Centre to cover Aldridge Central and also increase the reach for Greenfield and Hatherton to achieve the optimum of 700 to 800. Conversely, it proposed to reduce the reach from Palfrey and Birchills and North Walsall to more manageable sizes, whilst reflecting the natural communities they help to serve. In particular, this will mean that Palfrey will continue to have a relatively high reach (1485), but one that reflects its geographical and community relationship with the Caldmore area.

A detailed assessment of existing childcare, health and family support services will be conducted in 2008/09 and will cover the needs of priority groups such as lone parents, teenage mothers, fathers, black and minority ethnic groups, disabilities, special educational needs, looked after children and families living in poverty and workless households. Increased family support and outreach services in the most disadvantaged areas will help meet the needs of priority and excluded groups within Walsall.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

A total of £2,636,565 Sure Start Grant funding will be devolved to Children's Centres in 2008/09 for service delivery.

The budgets assigned to individual centres will be based on a formula approach that recognises the following factors:

- Centres serving the most disadvantaged areas
- Dual site centres
- Daycare / crèche places for family support
- The size of reach area
- Teacher support equivalent to 1 full time post in phase 1 and 2 centres
- Family / Health support, equivalent to a least 2.5 full time posts
- Inflationary costs, specifically higher premises costs and incremental staff costs / pay rises

Revenue funding for the development of the phase 3 centres will be provided, however, it is anticipated that running costs will not be incurred until September 2009 when centre managers and support staff are appointed.

The formula approach will be at least sufficient to meet the staffing cost models suggested in the DCSF children's centre Phase 3 guidance. This will be provided through a combination of directly appointed staff within the centres and centrally appointed staff working across the borough.

A contingency will be retained for exceptional children's centre costs that cannot be determined for the newly developed centres.

Subject to confirmation from the DCSF that increased funding will be provided between 2008/09 it is proposed to:

- Increase the number of outreach workers in the most disadvantaged areas from 2009
- Increase the resources from 2010 for Children's Centres that provide greater reach to high impact services that are evidenced based and demonstrate better outcomes for children and their families

4.2 Legal:

All Children's Centres will be accountable to Walsall Council and will require Legal Agreements to ensure the delivery of services in line the DCSF requirements and performance management requirements specific to Walsall.

4.3 Staffing:

Staffing costs within children's centre will be provided through the individual budget allocations. Staffing levels are subject to continued funding from the DCSF; currently indicative allocations have been released that shows a significant increase in funding for Walsall Local Authority across the financial years 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.

The majority of centres are based on school sites and will be subject to Single Status.

5. Citizen impact

The adoption of this strategy will impact on the learning, health and social care of children, young people and their families in Walsall.

Children's Centre will support the key improvements in the Children and Young People's plan. The strategy provides a specific focus on the following priorities

Being Healthy

- Fewer young teenage girls becoming pregnant
- No further increase in the number of children who are seriously over-weight
- Fewer babies dying before their first birthday

Staying Safe

- Fewer children needing to be looked after by the council
- Fewer incidents of domestic violence and more help for children in families where there is domestic violence

Enjoying and Achieving

- Ensuring more young people engage in enjoyable learning and recreational activities

Making a Positive Contribution

- Increasing the engagement of children and young people in positive activities
- Enabling children and young people to develop positive relationships and involve them in solutions and bullying and discrimination

Achieving Economic Well-Being

- More sustainable and attainable employment opportunities to improve economic wellbeing within families and to help address levels of child poverty and deprivation
- Further reducing barriers and accessing training and employment through better co-ordinated provided by children's centres

6. Community safety

The adoption of this strategy will impact on the safety of children, young people and their families in the communities of Walsall.

7. Environmental impact

The adoption of this strategy will supplement current progress on community needs analyses and lead to developments, which will impact directly on the learning, health and social care of children, young people and families in Walsall.

8. Performance and risk management issues

8.1 **Risk** There are specific criteria established by the DCSF for the development of children's centres that must be met by 31st March 2010.

8.2 **Performance management:** Project management systems will be employed for the Children's Centre programme to ensure the DCSF requirements are met and progress will be overseen by the Extended Services Executive Strategic Group.

9. Equality implications

The adoption of this phased development will lead to recommendations and developments that will impact directly on the learning, health and social care of children, young people and their families in Walsall. There is a focus on identified vulnerable groups.

10. Consultation

The Children's Area Partnerships (CAPS) will guide and shape the development of children's centre services in the three new areas proposed. Development through the CAPs will also enable key stakeholders to be consulted. Planning Guidance for Phase 3 Children's Centres makes specific reference for the need to consult with the private, voluntary and independent sectors, which will be facilitated through independent consultation process. During the development, the individual centres will be supported centrally with appropriate tools and resources to meet the need to consult with children and families when planning service delivery.

Background papers

Report to Cabinet 12th May 2004: Strategic Approach to the development of Children's Centres and Extended Schools

Report to Cabinet 20th October 2004: Developing Children's Centres

Report to Cabinet 8th February 2006: Developing Children's Centres

Report to Cabinet 12th April 2006: Children's Centre Capital

Report to Cabinet 12th July 2006: Phase 2 Children's Centre Programme

Report to Cabinet 29th November 2006: Children's Centre Capital Programme

Report to Cabinet 16th April 2008: Phase 3 Children's Centre programme 2008 to 2010

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Signed:

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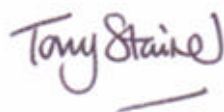
Signed:

Councillor Zahid Ali

Portfolio Holder

Date: 7 July 2008

Signed:



Tony Stainer

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Date: 7 July 2008