

Cabinet – 12 April 2006

Children's Centre Capital

Portfolio:	Councillor Eddie Hughes, Children's Services
Service Area:	All Children's Services Areas – working in partnership
Wards:	All Wards
Forward Plan:	No

Summary of report

The report summarises and brings up to date the allocation of capital funds for Phase 1 of the children's centre development programme, covering the financial years April 2004 to March 2007. This follows a report to Cabinet in February 2006 which set out the detail of that programme. Capital funding for Phase 1 is being provided:

- through ring fenced capital grants allocated by the DfES for the purpose of developing children's centres
- through additional DfES capital grant for the development of childcare and related services, as part of the General SureStart Grant
- through the allocation of Neighbourhood Regeneration Funding (NRF) previously approved by Cabinet for the purposes of including a further three of the LNP areas.
- through capital grant for SureStart Local Programmes, which are now required to become children's centres.

Recommendations

That Cabinet agrees the allocation of capital funds as set out in this report.

Resource and legal considerations

For Phase 1, the Government allocated to Walsall capital funds of £3,204,564 for the development of children's centres. *The Sure Start Unit optimised the Sure Start Local Programme capital (£1 million) for Darlaston by including it in the Children's Centre capital, giving a total of £4,204,564.*

NRF funding has been earmarked from the Learning Commission to develop three additional centres.

Walsall has also been allocated further capital for the development of childcare and related services. This forms part of the General SureStart Grant. Advice from the DfES makes clear that this may be used as part of the children's centre programme.

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.

Community safety

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

Environmental impact

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

Performance and risk management issues

There are specific criteria established by the Government's Sure Start Unit for the project management of children's centres within the designated timeframe. A strategic approach is being established by the Local Authority that responds to and builds upon the resources currently available.

As ever with consultation programmes, there are construction risks associated with issues like inclement weather, unforeseen ground conditions and changes in general market conditions that might affect the timescales and cost of projects that in turn require adjustments to the programme. These risks are and will be managed as far as is practicable on an ongoing basis.

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 and areas of recognised disadvantage.

Consultation

The allocation of capital funds has been determined in consultation with stakeholders from schools and other services across Walsall.

Vision 2008

The report supports the council vision and takes forward actions detailed in the community plan.

Background papers

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

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

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

Contact officer

Michael Hiscox, Strategic Leader, Early Years

☎ 01922 686406

Signed:



Executive Director: David Brown

Date: 3 April 2006

Signed:



Managing Director, Education Walsall

Date: 3 April 2006

Signed:



Portfolio Holder: Councillor E. F. Hughes

Date: 3 April 2006

1. Purpose and Vision

- 1.1 To establish a universal entitlement so that every child in Walsall has ready access to provision that meets their learning, health and family support needs.
- 1.2 To develop children's centres across all Local Neighbourhood Partnership areas.

2. Key Principles

- 2.1 The development of children's centres forms a key element of the response to 'Every Child Matters' and the development of an integrated approach to services for young children and their families. Research has shown that if support is offered at the earliest opportunity then the life chances for children are improved.

The services offered by a children's centre include:

- early years education integrated with childcare
- family support such as parenting skills support, individual and group work on managing children's behaviour
- training
- support to move back into employment
- health advice and support on issues such as diet and nutrition

- 2.2 The government has set a target of a children's centre in every community by 2010, with all disadvantaged areas covered by 2008. To support this development, the DfES is providing grant funding to help meet both capital and revenue costs.

The underlying principles agreed for the development of children's centres in Walsall are:

- That children's centres should be focused on school sites where possible, forming part of the approach to extended schools.
- That children's centres should be developed across all Local Neighbourhood Partnership areas.
- That there should be an interagency approach to the development of children's centres, at both borough-wide and local levels.
- That in addition to providing the core services outlined above, individual centres be given the flexibility to develop their service provision according to local neighbourhood and community need.
- That in developing children's centres, government targets for childcare, reach, coverage of disadvantaged areas and the number of children's centres are met.
- That funding be based on a commissioning type of approach, to reflect the way in which a Children's Trust will be developed in Walsall.

3. Capital Allocations

- 3.1 The following table shows capital expenditure at each scheme for the period April 2004 to March 2007, broken down by funding source.

Children's Centre Funding for 2004 to 2007 showing funding sources										
Centre	SSLP Grant 04/05	SSLP Grant 05/06	ERDF 05/07	NNI Grant 04/05	CC Cap 06/07	NRF 04/05	NRF 05/06	GSSG 05/06/07	CC Revenue 05/06	Total Budget
St Matthews area								£27,108	£44,915	£72,023
Edgar Stammers								£31,088	£66,904	£97,992
Busill Jones					£391,899			£13,804	£24,000	£429,703
Mossley					£1,010,968				£44,948	£1,055,916
Fibbersley Park							£446,286	£85,918	£63,750	£595,954
Bentley West					£8,089	£448,000	£83,811		£18,000	£557,900
Leighswood					£712,726		£24,381		£36,575	£773,682
Greenfield					£611,622		£7,578		£43,050	£662,250
Pheasey Park					£866,828		£20,933	£61,663	£19,832	£969,256
Blakenall SS		£26,025								£26,025
Palfrey SS	£248,532	£751,468								£1,000,000
Darlaston SS			£370,340		£603,111		£217,011	£92,503	£100,335	£1,383,300
Alumwell/Pl eck SS		£60,000								£60,000
Birchills SS	£655,099	£344,901		£216,000						£1,216,000
Total	£903,631	£1,182,394	£370,340	£216,000	£4,205,243	£448,000	£800,000	£312,084	£462,309	£8,900,001

Notes:

Figures do not include revenue funding used to pay for a proportion of the fees

This table does not show future allocations from Phase 2 capital grant, which will be reported separately once allocations have been finalised.

SSLP = Sure Start Local Programme

ERDF = European Regional Development Fund

NRF = Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

GSSG = General Sure Start Grant

CC = Children's Centre