

## **Meeting of the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services and Advisory Panel**

**4 September 2008**

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture & Children's Services

### **SURE START CHILDREN'S CENTRES PROGRAMME: PHASE 3**

#### **Summary**

1. This report seeks the Executive Member's approval for proposals to provide children's centre services to all 9,400 children aged under five years and their parents/carers across the City, by revising the reach areas of the eight existing children's centres and establishing a ninth centre in the South Bank/ Knavesmire area, plus a range of outreach settings.

#### **Background**

2. The national Sure Start Children's Centres Programme is at the heart of the Government's strategy to tackle child poverty and to deliver better outcomes for children and families. Children's centres are now seen as the primary means of delivering a range of integrated and localised services to children aged 0-5 years and their parents/carers, building on and mainstreaming the approach developed by Sure Start local programmes. Importantly, parents/carers and the local community should be actively involved in the planning and delivery of services provided by and through Children's Centres.
3. Under Phase 2 of the national programme, the City of York Council received capital and revenue funding to establish eight children's centres, serving a population of just under 6,200 children from birth to five years. A key objective of Phase 2 was to ensure that children's centre services were directed to families living in the more socially disadvantaged communities. All eight centres were designated by the Department for Children, Schools & Families (DCSF) by 31 March 2008 and are now offering early services. Necessary building and/or refurbishment work will have been completed on all eight sites by the early Autumn, and the level of services on offer from each Centre will steadily increase through 2009 until the full core offer of services is being delivered from all eight Centres.
4. The third and final phase of the national children's centres programme will see the Government achieve its target of establishing 3500 children's centres across the country by 31 March 2010, offering services to every child under the age of five and their parents/carers. At the same time, latest government

guidance places increasing emphasis on the need to offer a higher level of service to those children and families in greatest need.

5. The latest population estimates suggest that there are now approximately 9,432 children under the age of five living within the City. The DCSF initially invited the City of York Council and its key delivery partners to establish a network of twelve children's centres across the City, with average reach areas of between 700 and 800 children under five. More recently, the Council has been offered the flexibility to develop fewer than twelve children's centres; to develop correspondingly larger reach areas; and to apply some of the limited capital grant to the development of a number of smaller outreach settings.

## **Consultation**

6. The proposals in this paper have been developed by the children's centres management team, in consultation with local managers of the health visiting service. Subsequently, the proposals were discussed with the Regional Programme Lead, Together for Children, who has recommended them to the DCSF.
7. The proposals have been considered and supported by all the key delivery partners through the Children's Centres Project Board. In addition, the proposals have been shared with members of the Partnership Boards of the eight centres. By these various means, there has been consultation with managers and practitioners of key partner agencies and with representatives of the local Parents' Forums.

## **Options**

8. Options for the reach areas of a network of children's centres across the City have been determined by means of a comparative mapping exercise using the following datasets at the level of Local Super Output Areas (LSOAs):
  - the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI 2007) identifies areas of social disadvantage across the City;
  - the G.P. registration data produced by the North Yorkshire & York PCT (NYYPCT) provide the most up-to-date picture (June 2007) of the population of children under five years of age living within the City.
9. Initial proposals were developed in response to the Government's original requirement for the Council to develop a further four children's centres to provide universal coverage across the City.
10. Once greater flexibility was offered, proposals for a network of nine or ten children's centres were considered by the Project Board, with a final preference for nine centres, supported in two areas of the City by satellite centres and elsewhere by a range of smaller outreach venues.

## Analysis

11. The Government's offer of greater flexibility has allowed the Council to develop proposals that will:
  - continue to focus resources on the areas of greatest social need and/or the highest population densities;
  - support a more targeted approach to service delivery that will offer levels of service that are commensurate with levels of social need across the City;
  - achieve an even distribution of children's centres across the three localities and offer reasonably balanced workloads to the three Locality Integrated Services Teams;
  - create a very close fit between the geographic areas covered by the children's centre and health visiting locality teams;
  - offer scope for some rationalisation of current governance and management arrangements, in order to establish a more sustainable long-term position;
  - make the most efficient and effective use of the capital and revenue resources that have been made available to the Council, ensuring in particular that maximum value is derived from the modest capital grant.
12. The proposal is to establish a network of nine children's centres across the City, three in each of the three localities. All the centres will be located in the more densely populated parts of the City within the outer ring road, whilst reaching out to the twenty-six villages that surround the City. However, the effect of creating only nine children's centres is that a number of them will be serving significantly larger reach areas, both in terms of geography and population. Under these circumstances, the issue of outreach venues becomes key to the effective delivery of services. Hence the network will be backed up by two satellite sites serving the northern and eastern suburbs and outlying villages; and the development of outreach venues in other areas, as resources permit.
13. The table at **ANNEX 1** offers brief information about each of the proposed Phase 3 reach areas and compares them with the existing Phase 2 reach areas. As anticipated, the proposals for Phase 3 will entail revisions to the reach area boundaries of all but one of the existing Phase 2 children's centres. **ANNEX 2** offers a map of the City, outlining the proposed reach areas. Explanatory notes are offered at paragraphs 14 – 21 below.

### West Locality

14. The size of the 0-4 population and the overall levels of social need in the west of the City, are significantly greater than in either of the other two localities. Accordingly, there is a strong argument for retaining smaller reach areas in this part of the City in order to target and concentrate effort on some of the City's most disadvantaged communities. Similarly, there is a strong case for retaining only three children's centres in the West Locality, as a means of

achieving a reasonable balance between the workloads of staff across the three localities.

#### South East Locality

15. It is proposed to establish a ninth and final children's centre to serve the South Bank, Knavesmire, Bishopthorpe & Copmanthorpe areas of the City. In order to achieve a balanced distribution of children's centres across the City, and in order to ensure equitable service delivery workloads across the three Locality Teams, it is further proposed to place this children's centre in an enlarged South East Locality, leaving the West and South East Localities with three children's centres each. A further advantage of this proposed boundary change is that the new South East Locality will align very closely to the NYYPCT's geographic arrangements for the delivery of the health visiting service in that part of the City (see also paragraphs 16 and 19 below).
16. On the other side of the City, a further locality boundary change is proposed that will complete the alignment of the children's centre and health visiting teams serving the South East Locality. The proposal is to extend the reach area of The Avenues Children's Centre to include Stockton on the Forest, which will require a re-drawing of the current North East and South East Locality boundaries. Stockton enjoys a good public transport link to the City centre, with a frequent bus service that sets down and picks up within 200 metres of The Avenues. Conversely, there are no easy links between the village and either New Earswick or Strensall, with the busy A64 trunk road offering a strong "natural" barrier.
17. Elsewhere in the South East Locality, the effect of these proposals will be to significantly enlarge the current reach areas of both The Avenues and St. Lawrence's Children's Centres. As a result, there is a strong case for the development of a satellite site on the south eastern periphery of the Tang Hall Estate. A satellite in that general area would ensure greater ease and equity of access to services across the reach area as a whole, particularly for some of the Locality's most disadvantaged communities.

#### North East Locality

18. There is a large concentration of 0-4 year olds in the northern part of the City. Here, attempts to achieve a balanced distribution of the under fives population across the three North East Locality reach areas, and to deliver an extended service from the three existing Phase 2 children's centres, have been complicated by the nature of the local geography and demographics, and the distribution of the population.
19. There are strong arguments against expanding the existing reach area of the Haxby Road Children's Centre northwards into Huntington and beyond, principally because it would cut across the already identified link between the Huntington and New Earswick communities, and because it would effectively sever the Children's Centre at New Earswick from a large part of its wider reach area. However, there is a much stronger case for extending the Haxby Road reach area eastwards to include the Monkton Road and Muncastergate

area. This area currently lies in the South East Locality within the reach of The Avenues Children's Centre, but at some distance from the Centre itself. Its inclusion in the Haxby Road reach area should provide local families with easier access to services. Transferring this area to the North East Locality will also create co-terminus areas for the children's centre and health visiting teams serving the North East Locality.

20. However, the effect of retaining the existing northern boundary of the Haxby Road reach area is to significantly increase the size of the populations served by the other two children's centres. The reach area of the Children's Centre at New Earswick will take in not only Haxby and Wigginton, but also the whole of Huntington and Strensall and the surrounding villages. In furtherance of this proposal, it will be necessary to identify a range of outreach venues that will ensure the accessibility of services to families living in the north eastern part of the City. This extended reach area is consistent with the NYYPCT's organisational arrangements for the delivery of the health visiting service in that part of the City.
21. There is also a strong operational imperative to respond positively to the de facto extension of the existing Clifton Children's Centre reach area into parts of Clifton Without and Rawcliffe, and this extension to the Clifton reach area is also proposed. It is further proposed to include the village of Skelton in the Clifton reach area. Skelton has public transport links to Clifton Children's Centre but not to the Children's Centre at New Earswick.

## **Corporate Priorities**

22. The Children's Centres Programme contributes both directly and indirectly to achieving improved outcomes for young children in each of the five areas identified by Every Child Matters. Accordingly, it relates, and contributes, to the targets identified in the Children & Young People's Plan 2007 – 2010 and the Local Area Agreement 2007 – 2010. It also relates to the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and the Parenting Strategy and makes a significant contribution to the YorOK Board's arrangements for integrated working.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

23. Phase 3 is supported by a capital grant worth almost £1.2m over the three years 2008/2011. Indicative revenue funding has been notified for the same period and will support the steady expansion of services towards delivery of the full core offer from all children's centres by 31 March 2011.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

24. The proposals in this paper have no immediate HR implications. Over the longer-term, the further development of services under Phases 2 and 3 will require a revised delivery framework and an increased staffing establishment.

## **Equalities**

25. Through the under-pinning philosophy of the children's centres programme, including the prominent involvement of local parents in the design, planning and delivery of local services, children's centres will contribute to the greater empowerment of parents and children, will celebrate diversity and counter discrimination, and will offer parents and children greater equality of opportunity.

## **Legal**

26. Sure Start Children's Centres are underpinned by the Children Act 2004 and by the Childcare Act 2006. This latter legislation places a duty on local authorities and their NHS and JobCentre Plus partners to work together to improve outcomes for all children up to the age of 5 years and to reduce the inequalities between them. The Act also makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, a new framework to support the delivery of high quality integrated education and care for children from birth to five, to be launched in September 2008.

## **Crime and Disorder**

27. Achieving improved outcomes for young children and their families may have a longer-term impact on levels of anti-social and criminal behaviour.

## **Information Technology (IT)**

28. The development of an additional children's centre and a number of satellite sites will have continuing implications for the IT infrastructure, as well as requiring investment in additional hardware and software for use by staff of the Integrated Services Teams. The capital programme will address infrastructure requirements, and the purchase of additional hardware will be covered through the fixtures and fittings budget.

## **Property**

29. This paper does not offer firm proposals for the siting of the ninth children's centre and satellite sites. However, it is proposed to continue with the model of developing children's centres on primary school sites, through a mix of new build and/or the refurbishment of surplus classrooms, as opportunities present themselves. The modest amount of the capital grant will preclude developments on the scale of some of the Phase 2 centres.

## **Risk Management**

30. The principal risks associated with the children's centres programme are uncertainty over the scale of continuation funding beyond 31 March 2011, and the longer-term implications for the capacity of the "host" primary schools in the context of a rising local birth rate and planned growth in housing.

31. Indicative revenue funding for the three years 2008/2011 has already been notified by the DCSF, following the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review. However, given the current economic and political contexts, there has to be a degree of uncertainty about whether this consensus will hold and about whether current, ring-fenced funding commitments will be sustained. Any reduction in funding would be likely to impact adversely on the level of services that could be offered through children's centres, with an increased emphasis on targeted rather than universal provision.

## Recommendations

32. It is recommended that the Advisory Panel advises the Executive Member to endorse the proposals made in this paper for revising and extending the reach areas of the eight existing children's centres, supported by satellite centres in two areas of the City, together with the establishment of a ninth children's centre in South Bank/ Knavesmire area, subject to the identification of a suitable site.

**Reason:** To ensure City of York Council makes timely and well-founded decisions about Phase 3 of the national Children's Centre programme.

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**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## **Background Papers**

*Improving Outcomes For All Our Children: A Strategic Framework for the Delivery of Children's Centre Services across the City of York*, Report to Children's Centres Project Board, 18 September 2006 (revised 21 September 2007)

## **Annexes**

**ANNEX 1** Phase 3 Children's Centre Reach Areas: A Summary of Final Proposals

**ANNEX 2** Map



<b>ANNEX 1</b>							
<b>Phase 3 Children's Centre Reach Areas: A Summary of the Final Proposals</b>							
<b>Children's Centre/Locality</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>			<b>Phase 3</b>			<b>Principal Changes to reach areas</b>
	<b>SOAs</b>	<b>0-4</b>	<b>IDACI</b>	<b>SOAs</b>	<b>0-4</b>	<b>IDACI</b>	
<b>North East</b>							
Clifton	8	816	35%	14	1352	59%	Current reach area significantly extended to include the Clifton Without and Rawcliffe areas, plus Skelton. <a href="#">Outreach venues to be identified.</a>
Haxby Road	9	757	39%	10	832	46%	Addition of the Monkton Road & Muncastergate areas, adjacent to Bell Farm Estate. Aligns with Health Visiting Service's N/East Locality Team. Will involve a small adjustment to the Children's Centres N/E & S/E locality boundaries.
New Earswick	13	809	71%	14	938	79%	The immediate reach area served by the Children's Centre at New Earswick will be extended to take in the whole of Huntington The remainder of the greatly extended reach area, as outlined below, will be served by a satellite site.
Satellite of New Earswick CC				4	459	89%	<b>Covering Strensall, Earswick &amp; Towthorpe.</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2382</b>		<b>42</b>	<b>3581</b>		
<b>South East</b>							
The Avenues	11	879	43%	11	747	65%	The immediate reach area served by The Avenues has been significantly re-aligned by the transfer of the Monkton Road area to the reach of the Haxby Road CC (see above) and by the satellite arrangements described below. A further change has been made by adding Stockton on the Forest to the reach area, in order to align with the HV Service's arrangements. Stockton also has convenient public transport links to The Avenues. This change will involve another adjustment to the Children's Centres N/E & S/E locality boundaries.
Satellite of The Avenues CC				5	370	63%	<b>Covering the Osbaldwick Lane area of Tang Hall Estate, plus Osbaldwick village, Murton, Dunnington &amp; Holtby.</b>
St. Lawrence's	10	686	62%	14	964	65%	Current reach area will be extended to include the Fulford area and all the villages in the Wheldrake Ward, from Elvington round to Naburn. <a href="#">Outreach venues to be identified.</a>
South Bank				15	1087	75%	Ninth reach area covering Scarcroft Road area, South Bank, Knavesmire, Bishopthorpe & Copmanthorpe. To be included in a revised South East Locality to balance workloads across the West & South East Localities. Aligns very closely with the health visiting service's SE Locality. <a href="#">Outreach venues to be identified.</a>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>1565</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>3168</b>		
<b>West</b>							
Hob Moor	10	750	41%	13	939	60%	Scarcroft Road area now included in the new South Bank reach area (see SE Locality). Reach area now extends into parts of the Holgate area and also covers the Askhams & Rufforth.
Westfield	6	662	20%	6	680	27%	No change but slight population increase.
Carr	9	826	50%	12	1064	60%	Reach area now extended to cover Knapton, Hessay, Upper Poppleton, Nether Poppleton & the area of housing around the Poppleton Road Business Park. <a href="#">Outreach venues to be identified.</a>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2238</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>2683</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>6185</b>		<b>118</b>	<b>9432</b>		

## Phase 3 Children's Centre Reach Areas: Proposals for Nine Children's Centres &amp; Two Satellites

