



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
Mole Valley**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN MOLE VALLEY**

**CHILDREN'S CENTRES IN MOLE VALLEY**

**11 June 2008**

**KEY ISSUE**

The Government has given local authorities the strategic responsibility for delivery of children's centres. Update of the Children's centre programme in Mole Valley

**SUMMARY**

This report outlines progress towards delivery of children's centres in targeted areas within Mole Valley, incorporating an outline of the range of services to be included in the children's centre offer for children under 5, and how we plan to address the needs of the rural community.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee Mole Valley is asked to:**

- (i) note the report

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In line with the Government's Ten Year Strategy – 'Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children' and their vision to ensure that every child gets the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life. The overall objective was to develop 2,500 Sure Start children's centres by 2008, with the longer term aim of 3,500 children's centres by 2010, one for every community. It is intended that children's centres will be one of the key delivery mechanisms to achieve the objectives set out in the Government's Every Child Matters programme: being safe; healthy; enjoying and achieving; economic wellbeing; and making a contribution. The aim being to improve outcomes for all young children, and in particular, to close the gap between the outcome for the most disadvantaged children and others.
- 1.2 Through the Phase One Children's Centre Initiative, which drew to a close in March 2006, Surrey created four centres. The Phase Two targets was to create a further 46 centres between April 2006 and March 2008, the final total at the end of this period was 51. A total of 77, by the end of Phase Three, will be required to ensure every community across the County has a Children's Centre by 2010.
- 1.3 Children's centres will provide a range of services depending on local need and parental choice. The aim is for centres across the County to offer information, advice and support to parent / carers, as well as linking with early years provision (i.e. integrated childcare and early learning), health services, family support, parental outreach and employment advice for disadvantaged families. Services offered will not be the same everywhere, as needs of communities vary greatly. The intention is that children's centre services become permanent mainstream community services, which are developed with the active involvement of parent / carers and the local community
- 1.4 Mole Valley was divided into 7 children's centre areas each with a reach of approximately 800 children under five.
  - Area 16 Leatherhead Phase 1- Leatherhead Trinity School and Children's Centre.
  - Area 23 Dorking Phase 2– Dorking Nursery Sure Start Children's Centre.
  - Area 39 Leigh and Charlwood Phase 2 rural– Dover's Green Sure Start Children's Centre
  - Area 60 Bookham and Fetcham Phase 3 – Wellspring Sure Start Children's Centre, Leatherhead Trinity School and Children's Centre in partnership with Bookham Baptist Church.
  - Area 65 Ashted Phase 3– Leatherhead Trinity School and Children's Centre in partnership with St Georges Christian Centre.
  - Area 72 Leith Hill, Westcott & Okewood Phase 3 rural– Dorking Nursery Sure Start Children's Centre.

Area 77 Brockham, Betchworth & Walton on the Hill Phase 3 rural – Dover's Green Sure Start Children's Centre in partnership with Betchworth and Buckland Children's Nursery.

- 1.5 In rural areas it will be necessary to supplement static services with additional outreach and mobile services that help to take services to isolated, and or rural communities in Surrey, who face barriers in accessing children's centre sites. Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service commissioned a consultation on the need for this service with Surrey Community Action, which showed that groups would find this resource of benefit. Two vehicles have been commissioned and purposely built in order to provide a mobile Children's Centre family support service to specific areas. The vehicles are currently being built and are nearing completion, with final delivery of the vehicles expected by July 08 and operational by November 2008. We would hope to work with Mole Valley council regarding where this vehicle is parked when delivering family support services.

## **2 ANALYSIS**

- 2.1 Leatherhead Trinity is now well established offering a range of services to children and families including early years education and childcare, parenting support through health visitor clinics, parenting programmes, an outreach worker from Citizens Advice Bureau also provides sessions in North Leatherhead. Trinity will now have the governance for 2 additional areas however a local steering group will be established in each area.
- 2.2 Dorking Nursery School has had a capital refurbishment to be able to offer an extension to the early years provision they offer, enabling children from 2 years old to access the centre. They will also be able to offer more support to parents through drop in sessions for under 3's. Surrey Early Years and Childcare Service is in the process of transferring the management of Redlands Playlink to Dorking Nursery Sure Start Children's Centre. They will then become an integral part of the support available to families. Options are being explored for the relocation of Playlink either into empty accommodation on the St Johns School site or a new build to replace the existing temporary building.

## **3 CONSULTATIONS**

- 3.1 In June 2007 an extensive consultation with schools, statutory organisations, private providers and voluntary groups was undertaken. Organisations were asked to express an interest in the development of a phase 3 children's centre on their site. A number of phase 1 and 2 centres expressed an interest in covering an additional children's centre area. This has the benefits of building on the expertise at existing centres and makes better use of resources. However in order to ensure that services can still be delivered in the local areas, centres are working

with other providers to operate a local service. The role of the centre co-ordinator will be to ensure all communities within the area are consulted regarding need. A steering group will be established at each centre consisting of multi professional representatives and parents, this group will help prioritise which services should be established to meet this need.

#### **4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Department for Children Schools and Families provides a ring fenced budget to fund the development of services.

#### **5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

The children's centre provides a universal service for children under 5 and their families. There is however an expectation that services are made accessible to families who traditionally do not take up services. It will be the role of the children's centre staff to reach all sections of the community. Each centre will need to demonstrate that they are having a positive effect on the community through the self-evaluation form.

#### **6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

It is believed access to Children Centres, especially in those areas of deprivation will reduce those know to the police in later life.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**