



## **Neighbourhood Nursery Update**

**Local Committee for Woking  
28 January 2004**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

To update the Local Committee on the Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) in Sheerwater, Woking.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Sheerwater Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) has been established through the DfES SureStart programme to create local nurseries and Children's Centres in areas of disadvantage to deliver extended services to families and children, with the aim of reducing child poverty and improve their quality of life. This project is an excellent example of how collaboration between the County Council, Woking Borough Council, the NHS, the local community and a private provider can come together to create and deliver a valuable and much needed facility for local people. The Nursery opened on 5 January 2004 and is able to accommodate up to 106 children aged from birth to 5, with plans to achieve registration for children up to 8 years of age.

## **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

None – this report is for information

### **Introduction and background**

1. The Sheerwater Neighbourhood Nursery (NN) has been established through the DfES SureStart programme to create local nurseries in areas of disadvantage. The ward of Sheerwater is Surrey's highest area of disadvantage and the area therefore qualified for the grants from the DfES. The location of the NN required considerable discussion in the local community, including the Maybury and Sheerwater Partnership as well as with Woking Borough Council before the current site was identified and agreed. Woking Borough Council was very supportive during this period. Without its help, the project would probably not have been able to go ahead and its involvement will enable greater links to be developed with other services in the local community.
2. Woking Borough Council provided the site for the nursery on the basis of a long-term lease and loan finance of £400,000 to support the sustainability of the project. The Borough Council was particularly instrumental in steering the project through the planning process and its Building Services Team undertook the project management of the construction without charge. This project is an excellent example of how collaboration between the County Council, Borough Council, the local community and a private provider can come together to create and deliver a valuable and much needed facility for local people. The NN has a fourth partner with the local NHS who have entered into an agreement to purchase a number of the childcare places for staff employed in local health services. This project has also been accomplished in a very short timescale, once the site had been identified and there are many similar developments elsewhere in the country that are struggling with their projects. Again this is due to the involvement of the public and private sectors working hard to resolve matters promptly and Woking Borough Council has been instrumental in achieving this outcome.
3. Following the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative, the DfES announced its plans to establish a Children's Centre in the 20% most disadvantaged wards in the country. Sheerwater is Surrey's designated ward and the NN is an example of Surrey's planned implementation of the 'children's centre concept' of delivering extended services to families and children, to reduce child poverty and improve quality of life. The NN will offer a variety of services designed to meet the needs of the local community, by offering childcare, early education and parenting skills along with improved access

to employment and training through close links with 'job centre plus'. It will also offer a venue for training workshops and courses in response to local needs and will endeavour to be flexible in its support of the needs of the community through consultation and signposting of information to other agencies. An effective partnership approach has already been developed with the NHS through its purchase of places within the day nursery for their staff. The day nursery has already been involved with the Mela at the Mosque and other community activities to ensure community engagement and participation in the services on offer. A flexible approach to usage is envisaged and it is planned that many more multi-agency activities and ventures will take place using the NN as its base.

## **The Sheerwater Neighbourhood Nursery**

4. The facility is described by Peter Churchley of Caring Day Care as; "The largest planned addition to facilities for early years care and education is on schedule to open in Sheerwater on 5th January 2004 adjacent to the Community Centre, Primary Care Centre and Woodlands House. This new day nursery will be able to accommodate up to 106 children aged from birth to 5, with plans to achieve registration for children up to 8 years of age."
5. A team of local people, predominantly from Sheerwater and Maybury have been recruited to prepare the nursery for opening, and to care for the first children who are already booked to attend. In total when fully operational in excess of 25 full time jobs will have been created.
6. Additional funding has recently been secured to enable the roof space to be fitted out as a local training centre, with rooms for community use and services, and this will be completed by mid January 2004.
7. These facilities will enable the nursery to develop into a "Children's Centre", linking care, education and health for the benefit of children and their parents from the local community.
8. The £10,000 grant from the Local Committee for Woking is being targeted at fitting out and equipping this facility to ensure that it can be used in the most flexible and effective way. A bid has also been submitted to the Surrey Learning and Skills Council to secure funding to support a series of early years training courses, which will benefit people in Woking seeking to acquire or develop new skills.
9. This is an exciting partnership development that will become a model for early years and childcare services across the county. The involvement of all the partners will ensure that there is ongoing support for the services it will provide within the Nursery and in conjunction with other facilities in the local community.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

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