

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS, SKILLS AND EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT****DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: PETER-JOHN WILKINSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING****SUBJECT: INVESTMENT IN SYTHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE SO THAT TWO YEAR OLD CHILDREN CAN ACCESS THE FREE EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To seek approval from the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement for a capital investment contribution at Sythwood Primary School (Academy) and Children's Centre so that two year old children can access their free early education entitlement.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member approves a funding contribution of £170,000 towards the capital investment on the site at the Academy.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Department for Education (DfE) requires all local authorities in England to secure free early education places for two year old children who meet the eligibility criteria based on household income. This report makes recommendations for capital investment which will ensure that there is provision in place in the Woking area of Surrey, Goldsworth East and West, and Horsell West, where there is a current shortfall in provision.

**DETAILS:****Business Case**

1. In November 2012 the government introduced a statutory entitlement for eligible two year olds to receive free early education (FEET) from 1 September 2013. Children from families with a low household income can access 15 hours per week, 38 weeks per year of free early education. The number of eligible two year olds in Surrey, identified by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is updated regularly and sent to the local authority to identify those children who become eligible as children transition into their three year old free entitlement. The county council has a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient FEET places, in accessible locations, for eligible children.
2. From the summer term 2014, places were targeted at families below a determined household income threshold. For Surrey County Council (SCC)

this led to 2,800 children being eligible for a place from September 2014. The development of two year old places is well underway and, at the end of July 2015, there were 2000 two year olds accessing a place in an early years setting in Surrey. SCC's Early Years and Childcare Service has undertaken an analysis of the need for places based on information on potential families provided by the DfE, population data held by SCC and data on available places in early education and childcare settings across the county. One of the areas in Surrey where there is a shortfall in places for two year olds is in the Woking area of Surrey, Goldsworth East and West, and Horsell West. There will be 52 children in the above wards entitled to free early education for two year olds (FEET).

3. The majority of children eligible for the free early education entitlement can be placed through existing provision but there are areas across the county where access to places is limited and providers have been encouraged to extend the number of children that they can take, or open additional sessions in the afternoon. In those areas where there is not the capacity to extend places in this way, however, there is a need for capital investment to provide access to the early education provision.
4. Sythwood Primary School is located in an area identified with a high number of eligible children and this was corroborated by the DWP list. The school manages a children's centre and has a nursery for two to five year olds on site but does not have dedicated two year old play and rest spaces. The proposal would accommodate 24 two year olds in a detached environment to meet their needs. The expansion of places in the area alongside other existing provision will meet the demand in the area.
5. Sythwood Children's Centre is a prime location for the provision of a FEET setting. Parents and children, particularly from the most disadvantaged parts of the centre's reach area including families from Goldsworth East and West and Horsell West, access the centre readily and feel supported and comfortable in this environment. Outreach workers provide additional support for many local families and regularly refer children for FEET funding. Other preschools within the area and childminders that offer FEET places are unable, or do not want, to take two year olds so there is a need to create additional places through capital investment. The places created at Sythwood Primary School will meet the demand for places in Woking.
6. Sythwood Nursery will be open between the hours of 8am and 6pm, there will be 26 places for three and four year olds and 24 places for two year olds. In addition to this, there are 30 morning spaces and 30 afternoon spaces on the school PAN, therefore making a total of 56 children at any one time in the 3 and 4 year old provision. It is envisaged that the school will begin to deliver their school PAN offer in a more flexible way as soon as guidance for the roll out of the 30 hour offer is in place.
7. The work involves the conversion of an existing bungalow to include open plan indoor play space for a maximum of 24 children with appropriate staff ratios. Adult/children's toilet facilities, nappy changing and outside space are required. The outside space for two year olds is to be kept separate from the after school club. The kitchen will be upgraded. Building consent was given on 16 April 2015. The planning permission for the bungalow conversion includes opening hours of 8am until 6pm, to offer a breakfast club and after school childcare.

8. The scheme will be procured, managed and delivered by Sythwood Academy school.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

9. There is no requirement for any formal consultation on this decision. Children's centres are subject to statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education In April 2013. That guidance requires local authorities to consult before making a significant change to the range and nature of services provided through a children's centre. The current proposal to increase places for two year olds does not constitute a significant change.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

10. For Goldsworth East, Horsell West and surrounding wards, there is the risk of not meeting demand in the area without opening new provision for two year olds, as other settings are at capacity and only have the potential to offer small numbers of places. The highest demand for places is from Goldsworth East ward where Sythwood School and Children's Centre is situated, and the children's centre location makes it easy for people to access the centre. It is a centre of high quality with a full range of services that they use to support the children and their families.
11. There is a requirement on SCC to ensure that two year old places are made available to eligible children and there is a risk to the Council's reputation if it is not able to fulfil this requirement.
12. There is a risk that the total scheme cost will exceed the funding available. The school, as project lead, will manage this risk and manage any shortfall.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

13. Sythwood Primary School and Children's Centre is part of the Bourne Education Trust. The governors have agreed to contribute to the scheme costs.
14. A business case for this scheme was presented to the County Council's Investment Panel and the financial implications of the scheme were considered.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

15. The £170,000 county council contribution for this scheme of work will be funded from the Early Years approved capital allocation.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

16. There is a duty on SCC to ensure that there are sufficient early education places for eligible two year olds.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

17. A full equalities impact assessment has not been undertaken on this proposal as it is unlikely that the proposal would have a negative impact on any groups

with protected characteristics. The proposals within this report are targeted at sections of the community that are already at risk of not accessing services.

#### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

18. The DfE has stipulated that Looked after Children are eligible for a FEET place. Children's Services has been informed of this and places have been taken up by Looked After Children.

#### **Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications**

19. There are no significant implications arising from this report. Access to a FEET place, however, is part of SCC's early intervention programme with the support being offered through the children's centre, helping to identify any concerns earlier.

#### **Public Health implications**

20. There are no significant implications arising from this report.

#### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

21. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change. The new buildings will comply with, or exceed, Building Regulations. The contractor will be required to provide a Site Waste Management Plan.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

22. The next steps that will follow any decisions taken by the Cabinet Member will be:

- For Sythwood Primary School to move forward with the adaptation of the proposed accommodation.
- Representatives of the Schools and Learning Service will inform the school of the decision taken by the Cabinet Member.

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#### **Contact Officer:**

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#### **Consulted:**

Finance service within SCC

Peter-John Wilkinson (Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, SCC)

Julie Stockdale (Strategic Lead for School Commissioning, SCC)

Deborah Chantler (Legal and Democratic Services, SCC)

#### **Annexes:**

There are no annexes attached to this report.

#### **Sources/background papers:**

There are no background papers in relation to this report.