Proposed Extension to Desborough Library to establish a Children’s Centre

Supporting Statement

Address: Desborough Library, High Street, Desborough, Kettering, NN14 2QS

REASON FOR DEVELOPMENT:

National Overview
Sure Start Children’s Centres are key to the Governments Every Child Matters: Change for Children Programme. Children’s Centres will be the key to providing families with all the services that they might need. The Government has set the target that by April 2010 there will be a Children’s Centre in every community. This will total 3,500 centres nationally.

The Childcare Act 2006, is a key milestone for driving the improvement of services that will reduce inequalities and increase young children’s wellbeing. The Act set a requirement on the Local authority to deliver good quality integrated early childhood services, provide out reach and the inclusion and involvement of families. This work will be carried out in partnership with key partners such as the Primary Care Trusts and Job Centre Plus. Every Child Matters (ECM) focuses on the improvement of outcomes for children. Life chances for children are enhanced via making available families’ access to additional appropriate services. This has and will continue to be achieved through the development of Northamptonshire Children’s Centres.

The National Childcare Strategy links Children’s Centres to Extended Services, which continue to provide integrated services to children aged 5 plus and their families, through schools.

Northamptonshire Goals and Targets
The work being achieved by Children's Centres now and in the future fits into many local strategies and targets:

The Councils corporate outcomes
Through working with the County Council internal teams and other professionals and agencies, Children’s Centres and the services associated with them will contribute towards the 4 corporate Outcomes, these being:

- A safer, freer and stronger communities
- A secure, healthy and independent future for our children, our young people and our adults
- A smaller more enabling council focussed on out customers
- A cleaner, greener and more prosperous County
The Sustainable Community Strategy for Northamptonshire

This consists of 4 headline aims, these being:

- To be successful through sustainable growth and regeneration
- To develop through having a growing economy with more skilled jobs
- To have safe and strong communities
- To have healthy people who enjoy a good quality of life

Under each of these aforementioned headline aims there are three key principles. Children’s Centres can contribute to a minimum of one of these principles under each aim

Within “To be successful through sustainable growth and regeneration” a key principle is to “....improve and preserve buildings.... for future generations” The Children’s Centre build programme contributes towards this

Within “To develop through having a growing economy with more skilled jobs” 2 key principles are “workers have the right skills to respond to the employment needs of a dynamic economy” and “residents have the opportunity to learn throughout their lives” The delivery of support by Job Centre plus and Family / Adult learning through Children’s Centres will support both of these

Within “To have Safe and Strong Communities” two key principles are “residents have a shared identity and are involved in developing their communities” and “public services meet the needs of residents” Children’s Centres will contribute towards the former by members of the local community being involved in its governance and the latter by Centres being responsible for identifying and responding to need in the local economy. E.g. if there is a high rate of Reception year obesity, activity such as healthy eating courses would be provided

Within “To have healthy people who enjoy a good quality of life” all three principles will be supported through Children’s Centres. In relation to “supporting vulnerable people to help them lead fulfilling lives” Children’s Centres are tasked with prioritising support, through National Performance Indicators, for certain already defined excluded groups. In terms of “helping young people to have the best possible preparation to become adults” the driving ethos behind Children’s Centres is to develop early intervention and preventative services. In respect to “helping residents to make choices that improve their health and quality of life” Children’s Centres will offer easier access to a variety of health services such as midwifery and health visitors as well as providing family and employment support activity which will enhance quality of life.
Northamptonshire Children and Young People’s Plan –May 2009

The Plan identifies the five outcomes associated with Every Child Matters agenda. This agenda was embedded through the Children’s Act 2004.

The five outcomes are:
- Be healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

The plan identifies priority outcomes and measures. Children’s Centres and the activities / services delivered under its umbrella will play a key part in achieving these. They will also adopt the ethos that runs throughout this plan. In particular they will
- Deliver integrated services through effective partnership working
- Adopt prevention and early intervention principles
- Be a key delivery element of emerging area based working
- Support the development of the Children and Young peoples workforce
- Respond to identified needs by offering activities that will support communities to support families to support their children to achieve the five outcomes

Northamptonshire
How are we going to achieve this in our County?

During 2004 – 2008, Northamptonshire have developed Sure Start Children’s Centres to become a ‘one stop shop’, where children 0-5 years old and their families can have access to integrated services and information.

Over the 2008-10 development phase Children’s Centres will be more of a “first stop shop”, with greater emphasis on outreach provision at different locations. This reflects the roll out of this project into more rural areas.

However the overall vision, to ensure every child gets the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life is maintained

Each Centre will deliver a carefully planned range of integrated services, responding to locally identified needs. They will work with parents and service providers to deliver inclusive, accessible and child-friendly services that support children and their families, through early intervention at age and stage, to reach their full potential.

Centres will deliver to different degrees, dependant on local need and demand activities and services outlined below
Furthermore additional services to this will be developed should feedback from consultation with the local community show that there is a need, for example baby massage, breastfeeding café or advice on money management.

Family support and Outreach Services

- Visits to parents within two months of birth informing them of how they can access services through Children's Centres
- Access to specialist health and education services
- Drop-in sessions for parents and carers
- Support and information to parents and carers about pre-birth, early days and childcare settings
- Encouragement for parents, especially fathers, to get involved with and support their child's learning and development
- Help and advice on parenting skills

Child and Family Health Services

- Antenatal help, advice and support from Health Visitors and Midwives
- Information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety
- Identification, support and care for mothers suffering from depression before or after birth
- Support with speech and language development
- Help with giving up smoking
Links with Families Information Service (FIS)

- Access through the Families Information Service (FIS) to comprehensive information on all local childcare options, as well as out of school groups and extended services available in schools.
- Information will also be available on local opportunities for family learning, sport and leisure, and community groups as well as signposting to national services for children and families.

Support for Training and Employment

- Access will be available to Jobcentre Plus in addition to local education and training providers.

EXISTING SITE/ PROPOSALS:
The site at upon which the proposed Children’s Centre is located, is owned by Northamptonshire County Council and is currently also occupied by Desborough Library. The site is within a predominantly residential area close to the centre of Desborough.

To create the Children’s Centre, it is proposed that the internal layout of the existing building be altered to create a shared entrance lobby, and a single storey extension constructed in the north west corner of the site adjacent the existing retail units fronting onto High Street.

Design approach:
The design approach to the project has been carefully considered in order to minimise the visual impact of the new build within the context of the local surroundings, whilst providing for the specific needs of the Children’s Centre (refer to Design & Access Statement attached). A large emphasis has been placed upon the creation of a “welcoming “ environment

The proposed extension to be constructed will form the principal Multi-purpose Room, Meeting Room and Office, the Reception being the only floor area taken from the library. An imperative design feature is that the Centre can be used and secured when the remainder of the building is not in use. A shared main entrance lobby is formed by enlarging the existing draught lobby of the library with separate access from this to the library and children's centre.

All relevant Disability Discrimination Act legislation has been taken account of during the design process within the areas affected by the construction works. An adapted, shared main entrance is to be created based upon the original library entrance lobby.
The layout of the external areas will be affected by the works. A small enclosed outdoor area will be created which will be accessible from both the library and the Children's Centre.

**Staffing implications:**
The creation of the Children’s Centre will result in the employment of 1 additional Fixed term contract member of staff (Information officer). In addition it is anticipated there will be a further 2 staff who will use the site intermittently. As indicated previously a high proportion of these employees' time are likely to be spent delivering outreach activity at other community buildings.

**Statement of Community Involvement / Pre-application publicity:**
Drawings of the proposal were displayed in the library and the local residents were given a 2 week period to examine these before a discussion event to respond to the proposal. Posters were on display in Desborough and the surrounding villages, and advertisements in the Harborough Mail. The proposal was also advertised in a separate children's activity event held at the library on 1 September. There were no objections to the proposed site being built, and positive comments were received from the public.

**Demolitions:**
Not required.

**Trees to be felled:**
Existing conifers along the boundary with the Co-op retail unit will need to be removed to construct the extension and improve natural lighting to the building and play area.

**Flood Risk Assessment:**
Not required- a search on the Environment Agency website indicates that the site is not within an area at risk of flooding.

**Land Contaminants:**
All contaminant surveys are still to be completed.

**Vehicle access:**
Access to the site is via the shared service access with the adjacent retail units, and is staff only, and will be unaffected by the proposal.

Car parking arrangements for the site will be formalized and the parking area resurfaced.

**Site access during construction period:**
Construction access to the site will be via the shared access with the adjacent retail units, with the Contractor’s Site Compound area situated at the rear of the site during the works.
Car parking:
The existing car park arrangements will be formalized, providing 6no. 2.4 x 4.8m parking spaces.

The central location of the centre within Desborough enables users of the service to travel using public transport or on foot, and access to the facilities via the availability of more environmentally forms of transport is also encouraged by the creation of an external buggy store. There is also a bus stop immediately outside the main entrance.

Services implications:
The proposal makes use of existing public foul drainage in Saxon Close, and storm water will be discharged to a new soakaway on site.
Proposed Extension to Desborough Library
Design & Access Statement

This statement should be read in conjunction with the associated building plans and elevations depicting detailed elements.

Assessment

- **Physical** – the new extension to the library building will compliment the surrounding buildings. One of the main priorities of the design and initial assessment of the site was to provide a “welcoming” environment for the children and parents, trying to create a family environment as far as possible. It is seen as essential to encourage persons from their homes into the local community and the design of the extension with the new reception assists with this.

- **Social** – This Children’s Centre is to be based upon the Desborough Library site. This site is within a 70% area of disadvantage. To meet the core offer of a Children’s Centre the service provider will be working in partnership with agencies / organisations from the public, private and third sector. The Centre will provide out reach work in the Desborough area. We envisage families attending for small group work or appointments to meet with the Local health Visitor, Midwife or Speech and language Therapist. They may well also be drop in sessions with a representative from Job Centre Plus. If these services are already being delivered within the community elsewhere then the centre will act as an information point and will signpost families to these services rather than recreate additional ones.

- **Planning policy** – this development supports the planning policy of development of brown field sites for construction works.
Involvement

As this site is developing the a) lead body delivering the service / activities (Provider Services / ActionforChildren) or b) NCC will have the responsibility to ensure consultation with the local residents in their community takes place to find out peoples understanding of the building work and about peoples knowledge of what will be provided and the services they would like to see from this site. Evaluations will be drawn up from the results and plans will be made.

Evaluation

In the evaluation process, a number of elements had to be incorporated into the detailed design process, outlined below:-.

Design

- **Use** – Families attending for small group work or appointments to meet with the Local health Visitor, Midwife or Speech and language Therapist. They may well also be drop in sessions with a representative from Job Centre Plus. As indicated previously a high proportion of the employee's time are likely to be spent delivering outreach activity at other community buildings.

- **Amount** – The extension creates 60m² gross internal floor area, including the main Multi-purpose Room, Meeting Room, Office, and WC. Reception area is reallocated space within the existing building. There is also a flat roofed extension to enlarge the entrance lobby by 4m². A 1.8 x 2.8m timber shed is provided within the rear bin store area for storage.

- **Layout** – The plan layout is designed to minimize circulation space, and link with the existing library via the shared entrance lobby. The main Multi-purpose room is set away from the front elevation so that the associated external play area is protected by the building. A covered buggy store area is created by shedding the roof of the existing building down to form a canopy. Natural light and ventilation are provided into the centre of the plan using velux roof windows to the Multi-purpose room and meeting room, and also over the rear of the buggy store area so that some light is 'borrowed' for the reception desk window. New door link from the existing children's library area into the new play area.

- **Scale** – The extension is single storey to match the existing library, with the overall height matching the smaller pair of pitched roofs on the existing building.
- **Landscaping** – The existing concrete slab paving immediately adjacent to the main entrance is replaced, to suit access to the building, and covered buggy store. Two new 1.5m wide tarmac access pathways cross the existing grassed area in front of the building, and new soft landscape planting is positioned between the two angled paths, in the approximate location of the existing shrub planting. The existing planting area on the corner of High Street and Saxon Close is replanted. The covered buggy store, access path to the north east elevation, footpath between the north west gable and the adjacent retail unit, and the external play area in the centre of the site, are all to be surfaced with tarmac. The existing rear door, to be use to access the building whilst the works are undertaken, is accessed via a new tarmac pathway connected to the footway of Saxon Close. The existing broken concrete area between this and the vehicular access is to be removed and replaced with a grass verge. The Car parking area to the rear is to be resurfaced with tarmac, and the car spaces formalized and realigned to create the access from Saxon Close. Access to the site is controlled with new 1.3m high bow top fencing to the north east elevation and buggy store. 2.4m high metal palisade fencing forms a secure bin store to the rear of the building.

- **Appearance** – The external walls of the extension are to be facing brickwork to match the existing building, with blue brick plinth below window cill level to match the cill detail on the existing building. Where the corner of the existing building is visible between the new brickwork of the extension, and the entrance lobby, a veneer of new brickwork, with a flush two-course blue brick string, covers the original facing brick, to unify the appearance of the Children’s Centre. The roof of the existing room to form the reception, is recovered with Marley Edgemere interlocking tiles, again so that the roof covering is consistent. The existing slate hanging to the fascia and gable of the original building is removed and replaced with tRESPA cladding panels on the reception and entrance lobby areas. The new gable end is formed as a parapet as a stop for the fascia overhangs, and to visually tie the building to the parapet detail of the adjacent retail unit.

## Access

The property design takes account of:-

- **Approach** – The design of the extension sensitively reflects the need to create a welcoming environment for the visitors to the Children’s Centre but also produces a design which complements both existing adjacent properties and the overall community ethos.
Parking – The site provides staff parking only, with the spaces formalized. However, the site is located within Desborough town centre and is on bus routes / accessible on foot.

Entrances - within the limits of the site the new entrance to the shared reception has been positioned to create ease of access whilst maintaining an aesthetically pleasing look, blending in with the adjacent buildings.

Horizontal and Vertical circulation – the horizontal circulation within the property has been carefully planned (refer above). Vertical circulation is not applicable for this single storey property.

Access to all services – Internally the new extension has been carefully laid-out to maximise use and management. All facilities take account of the security of the employees yet still ensures the provision of an appropriate, friendly and welcoming environment.

Emergency Egress/Alarm Systems and Evacuation Planning – An escape route has been provided from the extension via a footpath between this and the adjacent retail unit, with the fire alarm system extended to cover the extension. The existing fire alarm panel location in the entrance lobby is maintained.

Philosophy and Approach:
The Children’s Centre property has been specifically designed to enable ease of access for people with disability. Access to and internal travel routes within the new extension and proposed Children’s Centre have been carefully planned to provide ease of access for visitors and can make use of essential facilities. The design of the property is considered to meet the spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act as well as meeting other regulatory and statutory requirements.

Sources of advice and consultation
• Planning advice from both Northamptonshire County Council and Northampton Borough Council.
• Full consultation with the Library and Children's Centre staff to ensure the design of the property meets the needs of both.
• Public consultation: drawings of the proposal were displayed in the library and the local residents were given a 2 week period to examine these before a discussion event to respond to the proposal. Posters were on display in Desborough and the surrounding villages, and advertisements in the Harborough Mail. The proposal was also advertised in a separate children's activity event held at the library on 1 September.
• Advice from a range of professional groups and bodies – particularly around disabled access and compliance with Building Regulations. During the design process key structural, mechanical/electrical and access professional advice has been sought to ensure the Children’s Centre operates as efficiently as possible.

**Nature and impact of environmental constraints**
No apparent environmental constraints identified.

**Proposed solutions for overcoming identified constraints**
N/A

**What steps have been taken to ensure this information is made available to building occupiers**
Refer above. All key building occupiers have been regularly consulted with and are part of the overall design team. Information has been disseminated to all interested parties for comment and direction on a regularly basis.

**Additional material information**
N/A

**Sursham Tompkins & Partners**
**Architectural Services and Project Management**
Cottage Farm
Mears Ashby Road
Sywell
Northampton
NN6 0BJ

Reference: DB/4558/25367/DB 10 September 2009