PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

for

Proposed Change of Use, Alterations and Extensions to Former Caretakers Bungalow to establish new Children’s Centre

at

Penfold Close, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, NN2 8AD

for

Northamptonshire County Council

prepared by

PHP Architects

August 2009
PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO
FORMER CARETAKER BUNGALOW TO ESTABLISH NEW PENFOLD
CHILDREN’S CENTRE

SUPPORTING STATEMENT

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 AND PROPOSALS:

The site upon which the former Caretakers Bungalow is located, is owned by Northamptonshire County Council and forms part of the now closed Kingsthorpe Middle Community School, which will eventually put up for sale for housing development. The building is currently unoccupied and its windows and doors are boarded up. The site is beginning to show signs of lack of maintenance and the planting and garden area is overgrown.

The site of the former school and the associated Caretakers bungalow is within a predominantly residential area, with the bungalow itself having access direct off Penfold Close, a residential cul-de-sac.

To create the Children’s Centre, it is proposed to adapt, alter and extend the existing bungalow building and form a separate site, by fencing off the bungalow from the remaining old school site and adapting the existing access road for exclusive use of the new Children’s Centre.

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). A large emphasis has been placed upon the creation of a “welcoming” environment.

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 main entrance is to be created to allow easy access for wheelchair users.

The layout of the existing external areas will be affected by the works by the alteration of the existing access road, the creation of new parking facilities, secure garden area and a covered play area is to be provided to protect
children playing outside. A new secure fence will be erected around the whole site and around the existing electric sub-station located to the rear of the site.

**Staffing Implications:**

The creation of the Children’s Centre will result in the employment of 3 no. full time equivalent staff who will use the site intermittently. As indicated previously a number of these employees time are likely to be spent delivering outreach activity at other community buildings

**Statement of Community Involvement/Pre-Application Publicity:**

Letters were sent out to local residents in Penfold Close informing them of the Panning Application and details of the proposed use of the building. No responses have yet been received.

As this site is developing, the lead body delivering the service will undertake responsibility to consult with local residents about the progress towards completion of the building and the services needed by families in the area. The services ultimately offered will therefore be unique to the local area.

**Demolitions:**

Only internal alteration/demolition will take place.

**Trees to be felled:**

No existing trees will be felled but the existing planting and hedge to the rear of the site will be cut back and tidied up.

**Flood Risk Assessment:**

Not applicable.

**Land Contaminants:**

Contaminant site surveys are organised but are still to be completed.
Vehicle access:

Access to the site is via Penfold Close by means of the existing access road to the old school. This access road will be widened and re-surfaced and blocked off from the old school by means of a new fence, creating an access exclusive to the new Children’s Centre.

Car parking arrangements for the site will be by the creation of a new dedicated parking area on the site for 7no. vehicles, including 1no. disabled space.

Due to the “reach area” for this children’s centre and the requirement to develop and deliver outreach activity it is expected that staff working permanently or accessing the site intermittently will use a car.

Site access during construction period:

Construction access to the site will be via Penfold Close.

Car parking:

As mentioned above, car parking arrangements for the site will be by the creation of a new dedicated parking area on the site for 7no. vehicles, including 1no. disabled space, contained within a fenced area with lockable gates. This should avoid any additional parking off site in Penfold Close.

Due to the “reach area” for this children’s centre and the requirement to develop and deliver outreach activity, it is expected that all staff working permanently or accessing the site intermittently will use a car. However, much of their work will involve delivering services elsewhere in the community, reducing the likelihood of any parking issues for Penfold Close. Families accessing the provision may visit the site by car but are more likely to live within the local community and will therefore walk to the Centre.

Access to the facilities via the availability of more environmentally forms of transport is to be encouraged by the creation of an external buggy store.

Services implications:

The existing building is served by its own independent mains services and these will be relocated/ altered as necessary during the works. No new mains services are required.
PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE, ALTERATIONS AND EXTENSIONS TO FORMER CARETAKER BUNGALOW TO ESTABLISH NEW PENFOLD CHILDREN'S CENTRE

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

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

Assessment

- **Physical** – The alteration and extensions to the un-used building and the improvements to the associated external areas will greatly improve the existing environment, which has become run down, an attraction for vandalism and overgrown. 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 front canopy and new entrance, the new secure covered and open play areas to the rear and the enhanced landscaping all assist with this.

- **Social** - This Children’s Centre will offer a universal provision to all children aged. To meet the core offer of a Children’s Centre the service provider will be working in partnership with agencies and organisations from the public, private and third sector. The Centre will also provide out reach work and 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.

- **Economic** – in line with the above, the development will have a positive economic impact on the area, as well as providing employment opportunities relating to the works associated with the alteration and extensions to the existing building.

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

As this site is developing, the lead body delivering the service will undertake responsibility to consult with local residents about the progress towards completion of the building and the services needed by families in the area. The services ultimately offered will therefore be unique to the local area.

Evaluation

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

Design

- **Use** – As a Children’s Centre, including Office, Meeting Rooms, Reception, Kitchen, Storage and Toilet Facilities.

- **Amount** – The requirement for 2no. single storey extensions to the existing building to provide required floor area. Covered main entrance and buggy store to front and covered play area to rear.

- **Layout** – Rooms arranged around and with direct access from main Reception Area. New main entrance into Reception, with external canopy over and adjacent buggy store. Canopy over external play area to rear and secure garden for outside play. Secure car parking area with direct access.

- **Scale** - Single storey extensions to match the existing single storey building and the adjacent residential buildings in Penfold Close. Adequate external space for outside play and car park area.

- **Landscaping** – To retain existing planting and re-enforce with additional planting top create a more welcoming and homely feeling to front entrance to building and to create a secure external play area to rear.

- **Appearance** – Use of materials to match with existing building and adjacent residential properties and creation of welcoming environment for visitors and users.
Access

The property design takes account of:-

- **Approach** – The design of the alterations and extensions, in particular the new front entrance canopy and new planting sensitively reflects the need to create a welcoming environment for the visitors to the Children’s Centre but also produces a design which compliments both existing adjacent properties and the overall community ethos.

- **Parking** - The design has taken account the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Parking and provided a secure off street facility for staff and visitor parking via the existing access road off Penfold Close.

- **Entrances** - Within the limits of the site the new entrance to the reception area has been positioned to create ease of access from both Penfold Close and the new car parking area, whilst maintaining an aesthetically pleasing look.

- **Horizontal and Vertical circulation** – The horizontal circulation within the property has been carefully planned to allow full access to all rooms and external areas. 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** – New fully automatic fire and intruder alarms will be fitted into the completed building and Fire Risk Assessments will be in place on occupation.

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 altered building and the new extensions 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 Northamptonshire County Council.
- Full consultation with Northamptonshire County Council to ensure the design of the property meets the needs of the end user.
• 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