



PLANNING SUPPORT STATEMENT

for

**Proposed Addition and internal alterations to Existing Library
Centre to establish a New Children's Centre**

at

**Middleton Cheney Library, Main Road,
Middleton Cheney, Northamptonshire, OX17 2PD**

for

Northamptonshire County Council

prepared by

PHP Architects

October 2009

Supporting Statement

REASON FOR DEVELOPMENT:

National Overview

Sure Start Children's Centres are key to the Government's 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 outreach 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 focused on our 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?

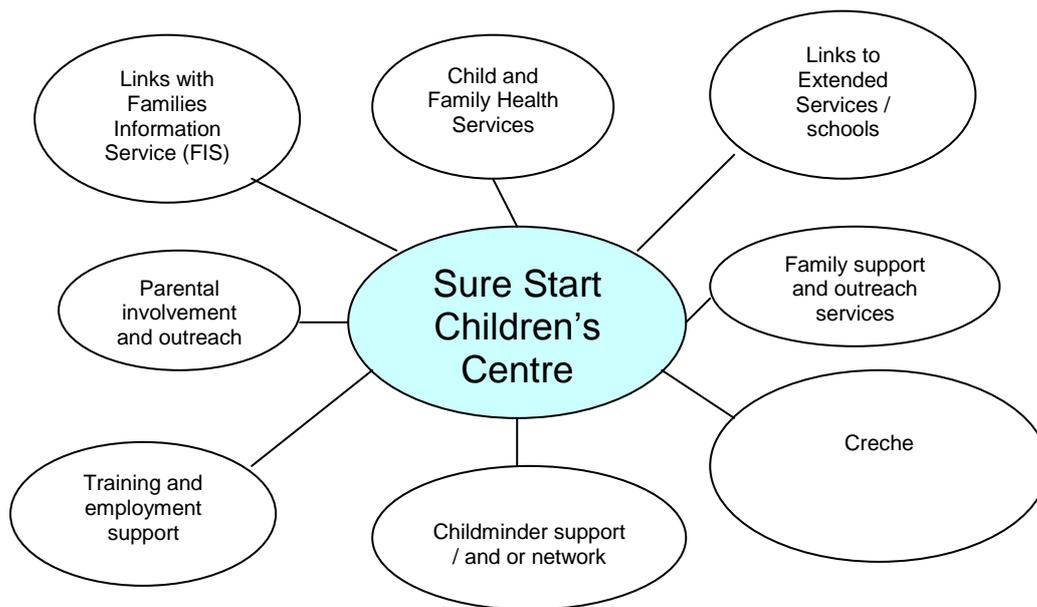
During 2004 – 2008, Northamptonshire have developed Sure Start Children's Centres to become a 'one stop shop', where children 0-5 years old and their families can have access to integrated services and information.

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 centre is located, is owned by the Northampton County Council and is currently operating as a Library Centre adjacent to an existing School. The site is within a predominantly residential area.

To create the Children's Centre, it is proposed an addition is added to the rear of the existing building providing a new office, meeting room, Group Room baby change/wc, disabled wc, reception and External courtyard with new store. Access into the existing library will be via the new childrens centre entrance. Access to the courtyard will also be provided from the library.

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 new addition comprises a facebrick clad timber structure with a single ply mono pitched roof, situated to the rear of the existing library. The library consists of a low key timber walled, flat roof construction. With the available development area to the rear of the site and being the new main point of entrance to both the Library and the new centre, the proposed building needed to be slightly more imposing than the existing, creating some visual interest and focal point. The addition sits higher than the existing library but is not overwhelming in scale. An angled overhanging roof to the entrance forms a canopy & buggy park and allows visibility from the road frontage. The roof takes the form of an angled monopitch.

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 with level threshold and automated doors. Internal spaces will afford access to wheelchair users.

The layout of the external parking area will be altered within the works by relocating the existing carpark entrance and kerbing to form to new layout incorporating both the Childrens Centre and Schools parking requirements.

Staffing implications:

The creation of the Children’s Centre will result in the employment of 2 full time equivalent members of staff. In addition it is anticipated there will be a further 7 part-time members 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:

This has taken place with written communication to the Parish Council, and two visits to separate Parish Council meetings over the summer – one by the Principal Librarian for the Area and the other by the Children’s Centre Locality Manager.

Demolitions:

No building demolitions are required.

Trees to be felled:

No existing trees are affected or are to be felled.

Flood Risk Assessment:

The proposed development is not within a flood risk area according to The Environment Agency Flood Map.

Land Contaminants:

A Ground investigation report is still to be completed, which will highlight any existing contaminants but none are expected.

Vehicle access:

Access to the site is directly off an existing through roadway serving the village. This access also currently serves as access to an area of the existing school. The current parking area is utilised by both the library and school.

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.

Site access during construction period:

Construction access to the site will be via the existing access road. Site traffic will be controlled to ensure there is no risk to pedestrians and residents and is expected to cause minimal disturbance. All construction works will be secured/fenced off with no public access.

Car parking:

As per the car and cycle parking standards stated in the Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking document (March 2003) the available maximum allowance for the Childrens Centre and Library combined is up to 13 car parking spaces (inclusive of disabled provision)

11 parking spaces have been provided. It is expected many local families would walk to the centre.

The 28no. spaces have been provided as agreed with the school for their use.

The number of additional bays will be accommodated within the existing car park which will be altered to suit. 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. The site will also attract cars from families wishing to access the services offered on this site. However these services will be planned to ensure they do not take place at times of the day when there will be high volumes of traffic.

Also 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 statutory services will be added to and adapted to serve the new addition and alterations as and where necessary inline with the appointed Mechanical and Electrical Engineers design.

Proposed Addition and internal alterations to Existing Middleton Cheney Library Centre to establish a New Children's Centre

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 existing Community Centre 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 assessment that the 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 within the community. 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 in its utilisation of local services and employment for local residents, as well as providing employment opportunities relating to the works associated with the extension / adaptation / new build
- **Planning policy** – this development supports the planning policy of development of brown field sites for construction works.

Involvement

As this site is developing, the Children's Centre Lead Body delivering the service / activities ('Action For Children') will have the responsibility to carry out consultation with local residents. This will comprise ongoing community involvement, and consultation on progress towards completion of the building and service design for the needs of local families.

Evaluation

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

Design

- Use – New childrens Centre incorporating new office, meeting room, Group Room, kitchen, baby change/wc, reception and External Courtyard with new store.
- Amount – The single story extention adds approximately 50% of new floor area to the existing site.
- Layout – The proposal is within an existing development in terms of pedestrian and vehicular access, security and lighting. These aspects will be improved with the new extension.
- Scale – The proposal is a single storey extension in keeping with the surrounding and adjacent school buildings. The scale of the development does not impose on the surrounding buildings.
- Landscaping – Existing trees and shrubs will be retained and protected where necessary. Additional planting will supplement the existing as necessary.
- Appearance – The proposed new addition comprises a facebrick clad external facade. The form and colour are in keeping with the existing surrounding buildings, in particular, the adjacent school buildings.

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 compliments both existing adjacent properties and the overall community ethos.
 - Parking –The design has taken account of the Supplementary Planning Guidance (March 2003)
 - Entrances - within the limits of the site the new entrance to the 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. 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 emergency fire alarm system will be designed by the Electrical Engineer to serve the new addition and will intergrate with or replace any existing system as required. A fire strategy plan will be developed incorporating both the Children Centre and Existing Library.
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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 Northampton 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 are 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