Proposed Extension To Form New Shared Reception With Ancillary Facilities for Children’s Centre and Covered Play Area – Highfield Nursery, Wellingborough

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 link the Nursery to the existing Community Room 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 replicate the 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 existing site of the Nursery School. This site is within a 70% area of disadvantage. To meet the core offer of a Children’s Centre the Nursery will be working in partnership with the Family Centre and also Wellingborough Sure Start. The Centre will need to provide out reach work in Finedon and Irchester. 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. The Nursery already provides 1 drop in group for parents to come in and play with their children and at the same time access the Family Support Worker who works in the Nursery

- **Economic** – in line with the above, the development will have a positive economic impact on the area in its utilisation of a patch of underutilised space within the grounds of the Nursery.

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

Involvement

During December 2005 local residents were invited to attend a consultation evening in the town centre to look at the proposed plans for Children’s Centres. Positive feedback was given and a good understanding was taken away as to why there was a need for 2 more sites to be developed in Wellingborough.
Public questionnaires were given out and the local residents were given a 6 week period to respond to the proposed site. There were no objections to the proposed site being built.

As this site is developing the Children's Centre Manager and the Centre lead will have the responsibility to ensure that a piece of 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:-.

The design of the property had to be altered resulting in a small reduction in footprint size in order to take into account of a large diameter gas main along the western boundary of the site. The area immediately above this pipe will now be retained as a garden area with an improved hard surface play area. The works have also been extended to incorporate the resurfacing of the internal courtyard to the nursery to create a more welcoming environment for both the Nursery and Children's Centre visitors and internal remodelling of the Nursery to eliminate an existing step detail.

**Design**

- **Use** – this extension makes use of an existing area of land between the Nursery reception and Community Room to 'link' the two areas and facilitate the creation of the Children's Centre. The Sure Start Children's Centres will become a 'one stop shop', where children 0-5 years old and their families can have access to integrated services and information. The overall vision will be to ensure every child gets the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life. The Centre will deliver a carefully planned range of integrated services and will work with parents and service providers to deliver inclusive, accessible and child-friendly services that respond to local need and help children reach their full potential. The Centre will also provide or have links to services which will enable them to meet the core offer for what is nationally recognised as a minimum service which should be available for families. In the future, the Centre will deliver additional services to this core offer 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. The development sees the internal separation of the Children's Centre from the Nursery via secure doors, so as to maintain the security of the Nursery when the Children's Centre is in use out
of normal school hours, with both the Children's Centre and Nursery benefiting from the shared reception and entrance.

- **Amount** – the development sees the creation of an extension to link the existing Nursery and Community room, of 34m² to accommodate a new shared reception, small meeting room, as well an accessible toilet facility. In addition to the physical building development, an external buggy store is to be provided within the existing courtyard adjacent to the entrance doors, and covered play area for the Nursery to provide Nursery Children with protection from the sun.

- **Layout** – the extension layout orientation has been carefully designed in order to maximise natural light opportunities and compliment and the Nursery, so as not to provide conflicting access/egress points, especially considering the close proximity of the entrance door to the Nursery utilised by the children. As mentioned above, a separate internal entrance has been provided for the Nursery to prevent conflict with visitors, whilst still attempting to preserve the “welcoming” nature of the proposed shared reception. The limitations of the site in terms of existing access to the Nursery and existing below ground services have predetermined the size orientation somewhat, however the design has developed in order to minimise the impact on the surrounding properties.

- **Scale** – the development sees a single storey building be introduced to the site. To closely match in appearance the existing 'Community Room'.

- **Landscaping** – landscaping of the external areas has been carefully integrated into the design. The garden to the rear will provide a safe recreation space for the visitors to the Children’s Centre. The main entrance courtyard will be remodelled to provide level access to the new entrance doors and will incorporate a new hard standing tarmacadam surface and sympathetic lighting.

- **Appearance** – The style and construction materials of the existing buildings are to be continued in the proposed extensions. The extension consists of Decra roof tiles and felt flat roofs, red facing brickwork, powder coated aluminium windows and painted timber fascias and soffits. The rainwater goods will be black PVC. All external materials to match or be similar to existing. A simple steel framed structure with translucent sheet roof will form the covered play area over part of the Nursery playground.
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 and Nursery 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, based upon the fact that only 1 additional member of staff will be employed once the Children’s Centre is operational and that visitors will not be permitted to park on site as per the existing arrangements.

- **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 for the security of the Nursery an appropriate, friendly and warm environment.

- **Emergency Egress/Alarm Systems and Evacuation Planning** – the design of the extension will ensure and assist evacuation should an emergency need occur. All travel routes have been carefully planned and existing emergency exit options are numerous. Evacuation planning will be recorded, and regularly tested in line with regulatory residential homes requirements.

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 Highfield Nursery Head teacher, Bursar and Governors to ensure the design of the property meets the safe and essential needs of the Nursery.
• Early consultation with local residents, during consultation evening held in December 2005.
• Public questionnaires were given out and the local residents were given a 6 week period to respond to the proposed site. There were no objections to the proposed site being built.
• 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

Piers Stidston
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Project Manager
6th November 2006
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Supporting Statement

Address:
Highfield Nursery
Finedon Road
Wellingborough
NN8 4AB

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 2010 there will be a Children’s Centre in every community. This will total 3,500 centres nationally.

The Childcare Bill, is a key milestone for driving the improvement of services that will reduce inequalities for children living in areas of disadvantage and also increase young children’s wellbeing. The Bill sets 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 particularly living in areas of disadvantage. Life chances for children are strongly related to poverty and deprivation and enhancing families’ access to additional appropriate services will help long-term to reduce this poverty. This will 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 future Children’s Centres fits into many local strategies and targets:

The Council Strategic Goals and Priorities

Through working with the County Council internal teams and other professionals and agencies, Children’s Centre services which are provided can enhance the knowledge and development of the local communities and can enhance the development of the County Councils following goals

- A healthier more active & independent life for adults
• A safer, freer and more prosperous county
• A cleaner and greener county
• A secure and independent future for our children

The Community Strategy for Northamptonshire 2004/2013
_Enhancing the quality of life for people and communities in Northamptonshire_
Children's Centres meets the key priorities which are:
• To improve health and access to appropriate services and the quality of life of most vulnerable and all who are at risk
• To help create and sustain local communities and neighbourhoods where people feel safe and secure and have access to services and support when they need them

_Ensuring economic prosperity for Northamptonshire Communities_
Children's Centres meets the key priorities which are:
• To promote economic vitality and raise the prosperity of all localities in the county so that everyone can gain from this success
• To raise relevant education standards and skills and the qualifications of people living in the county

Northamptonshire Children and Young People's Plan – April 2006
The Plan covers the five outcomes for Every Child Matters and states how as a county we will meet these outcomes. As the base for the creation of Children's Centres is focused strongly around Every Child Matters, Northamptonshire Children's Centres will adopt this Plan. The vision for the this plan is to 'ensure that all children and young people in Northamptonshire are healthy, safe and able to enjoy and achieve, so that they will make a positive contribution throughout their lives and achieve economic well-being'. The Plan has 10 priorities spread across the five outcomes, which are:
• Be healthy
• Stay Safe
• Enjoy and achieve
• Make a positive contribution
• Achieve economic well-being

To enable the plan to work, it will need a high level of integrated work to happen. This is happening at present and there is already a lot of good practice and Children's Centres along with Family Resource Centres and Extended services will extend multi agency teams and integrated working further.

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

As a local authority we are developing 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. The overall vision will be to ensure every child gets the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life.
Each Centre will deliver a carefully planned range of integrated services and will work with parents and service providers to deliver inclusive, accessible and child-friendly services that respond to local need and help children reach their full potential.

Children’s Centres will need to provide or have links to services which will enable them to meet the core offer for what is nationally recognised as a minimum service which should be available for families. The diagram and the following list illustrates what this should look like. Some Centres will deliver additional services to this core offer 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.

**Integrated Education and Childcare**

- In the areas of most identified need using national statistics, full day care with integrated early years education will be available. This will be offered for a minimum of 10 hours a day, 5 days a week, 50 weeks a year with access to funded places for 3 and 4 year olds.
- If the centre does not offer this service directly, it can provide local information on day-care.
- Support to childminders and / or a local network which might offer wraparound care.
- Links to local providers and out of schools clubs.
- Childcare provision as required to reflect the diverse needs of local communities.

**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 Children’s Information Service (CIS)

• Access through the Children’s Information Service (CIS) 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 Highfield Nursery is located, is owned by Northamptonshire County Council and is currently also occupied by Victoria Infant School and Rowan Gate Primary School. The site is within a predominantly residential area and it is noted that Victoria Infant school is due to shortly undergo a significant redevelopment programme at the beginning of next year to extend the facilities provided which includes a ‘multi use games area’ and additional car parking.

To create the Children’s Centre, it is proposed to utilise the existing community room and link this facility to the existing Nursery by constructing a small ‘extension’ to provide a small meeting room, shared reception for both the Children’s Centre and Nursery, disabled toilet and minor improvements to improve circulation space within the nursery as a result of the above works.

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 through the creation of the joint reception facility for use by both the Children’s Centre and Nursery.

The proposed ‘infill’ to be constructed between the existing community room and Nursery has been designed on a single floor footprint, and externally will visually match the existing community room which is a relatively recent addition to the site. An imperative design feature is that the Nursery can be secured when closed whilst the Children’s Centre is use, such as during the summer holidays. All relevant Disability Discrimination Act legislation has been taken account of during the design process within the areas affected by the construction works. A new main entrance to the shared reception is to be created, carefully placed adjacent to a proposed buggy store within the existing internal courtyard.

The layout of the external areas will not be affected by the works, with the exception that the internal courtyard will be resurfaced to create a more welcoming environment for persons visiting for the first time. Separately, a covered play area is to be provided over part of the Nursery playground to protect children playing or receiving lessons outside.

**Staffing implications:**
The creation of the Children’s Centre will result in the Nursery employing 1 additional permanent member of staff (Information officer). Therefore the number of full time staff rises to from 4 to 5 whilst the number of part time staff remains at 15.

**Statement of Community Involvement / Pre-application publicity:**
During December 2005 local residents were invited to attend a consultation evening in the town centre to look at the proposed plans for Children’s Centres. Positive feedback was given and a good understanding was taken away as to why there was a need for 2 more sites to be developed in Wellingborough.

Public questionnaires were given out and the local residents were given a 6 week period to respond to the proposed site. There were no objections to the proposed site being built.

As this site is developing the Children’s Centre Manager and the Centre lead 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

**Demolitions:**
No demolitions are required on site prior to development.
Trees to be felled:
No trees are required to be felled prior to site development.

Flood Risk Assessment:
As the area of land does not fall within the flood plain, therefore no risk assessment is required.

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

Vehicle access:
Access to the site is via Finedon Road.

At present vehicular access is only possible for staff, with an automated barrier in use to prevent parents associated with any of the schools on the site from dropping off children on the site. The existing staff car parking for the site shared by all 3 schools and there are currently 74 spaces on site. This will increase to 99 spaces once the improvement works have been undertaken to accommodate the additional staff who will be working at Victoria Infant School in the next 18 months as indicated within Northamptonshire County Council Planning Decision WP06102. At present 3 no car parking spaces are specifically allocated to the Nursery, located directly in front of Victoria Primary School whilst the Nursery staff also share the large car park to the North of the school with the adjacent Primary and Infant School.

Of the full staff compliment at Highfield Nursery, there are varying methods of travelling to the site. Whilst the majority use a car, 5 members of staff either walk or cycle to work. This pattern is expected to continue once the Children's Centre becomes operational.

Site access during construction period:
Construction access to the site will be via Finedon road and it is expected that no deliveries will be accepted to site during School start/finish periods or before 9.00am in the morning or after 5.00pm at night. Weekend construction work is not proposed at this stage to limit the impact to the local area.

Car parking:
As per the car and cycle parking standards stated in the Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking document (March 2003) the available allowance for the nursery is up to 11.5 car parking spaces (inclusive of disabled provision). The existing car park arrangement adequately caters for the existing and proposed number of staff within the nursery/children's centre and the number of spaces available will increase further once the improvement works to Victoria Infant School are completed.

As per the existing arrangements, it is not proposed that visitors will be able to access the site by vehicle once the works to create the Children's Centre at the Nursery are complete. The 'centre' is designed for use by persons within the immediate surrounding areas and access to the facilities available by
more environmentally forms of transport is to be encouraged by the creation of the external buggy store.

**Services implications:**
All necessary mains statutory services exist upon the site. It is not anticipated at this stage that any of the incoming services will need to be upgraded.