Proposed Extension and Internal Remodelling for Children's Centre — Highfields Community Primary School, Kettering

Supporting Statement

Address:
Highfields Community Primary School
Highfield Road,
Kettering
Northants
NN15 6HY

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.
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.

![Diagram of Sure Start Children's Centre]

**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 upon which Highfields Community Primary School is located, is owned by Northamptonshire County Council. The site is within a predominantly residential area within the town.

To create the Children’s Centre, it is proposed to utilise the existing Nursery facilities on the site and refurbish sections of the existing building. The existing Dining Room area will be rotated and be extended to form part of the new extension. The existing reception will become shared between the Nursery and the Children’s Centre.

Design approach:
The design approach to the project has been carefully considered in order to provide a visually pleasing 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). Both the Children’s Centre and Nursery have placed a large emphasis upon the creation of a “welcoming” environment through the joint reception facility.

The proposed extension to the existing building and has been designed on a single floor footprint, and externally will visually provide a modern aspect to an un-inspiring existing elevation. An imperative design feature is that the Nursery / School can be secured when closed whilst the Children’s Centre is in 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 buggy store has been located adjacent the existing entrance doors.

Replacement light to the internal rooms will be provided by 2no. new large rooflights with openable vents plus additional windows to the East Elevation.

The layout of the external areas will only have minor alterations. The building structure will extend to form a covered play area as part of the Nursery / Children’s Centre environment. An enclosed external play area will be raised to suit the existing ground floor level of the building and be surrounded with a brick dwarf wall and metal bow top fencing.

The new Site Supervisors equipment store will follow the existing flat roof / facing brick wall structure.

Staffing implications:
The creation of the Children’s Centre will result in employing 4 additional part-time members of staff including the Information officer post, and a part-time Family Support Worker.

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 a site to be developed in the Highfields part of Kettering.

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. The school is fully supportive of the development of the Children’s Centre but has chosen not to be involved in its management. The Centre will therefore be managed by the Northamptonshire County Council.

As this site is developing the Children’s Centre Manager 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:**
There are only minor demolition works to the existing structure.

**Trees to be felled:**
There will be one mature hawthorn tree that will be felled. To compensate for this the front of the new building will be landscaped and 4no. new saplings planted.

**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 have been carried out and classified the soil as inert.

**Vehicle access:**
Access to the site is via Highfield Road, Kettering.

At present vehicular access is only possible for staff 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 currently holds 15 spaces on site.

The additional 3.0m of tarmac running adjacent to the existing parking bays will allow for the parking to be reconfigured and increase the numbers to 19 spaces. This will also include provision for a disabled parking bay.

Of the full staff compliment at Highfields Community Primary School, there are varying methods of travelling to the site. Whilst the majority use a car, however 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 Highfields 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 school is up to 17 car parking spaces (inclusive of disabled provision). The existing car park arrangement only provides for 15 spaces. Once the works are complete and the Children’s Centre opens 4 additional part-time members of staff are likely to be employed and therefore the scheme includes for 4 additional spaces to increase the total to 19 which we consider is the maximum permitted under the Planning Guidance note referred to above.

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 School 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.