

Proposed new build, to develop a Children's Centre – Rushden Community College ,Rushden

Supporting Statement

Address:

The Rushden Community College,
Hayway,
Rushden,
Northamptonshire
NN10 6AG

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 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 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 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.

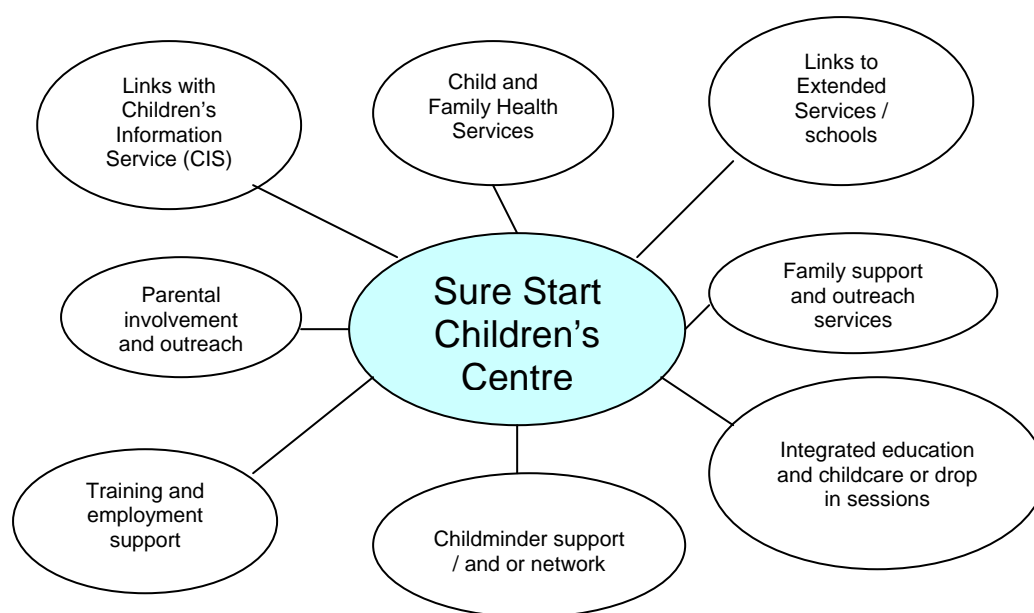
Northamptonshire

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.

Hours of Opening

- Proposed hours of opening for the Children's Centre are 8am to 6pm Monday – Friday and Saturday 9am to midday. If possible the

children's centre would like to have the flexibility to open 6 Sundays per year.

EXISTING SITE/ PROPOSALS:

The site upon which The Rushden Community College is located, is owned by Northamptonshire County Council. The site is within a predominantly residential area though playing fields are evident on one side of the site.

To create the Children's Centre, it is proposed to locate a pre fabricated modular building within the school grounds adjacent to existing nursery on the school site. At present bike sheds are located where the children's centre is to be located and these sheds will be removed prior to main works commencing and a new bike shed is to be provided elsewhere on the school site. A buggy store will also be introduced to the front 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 modular facility 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 introduction of contrasting cladding to part of the front elevation to highlight the entrance and the large welcoming reception area.

The proposed location for the modular building makes use of an underutilised area of the existing school where a large dilapidated and underutilised bicycle shed is currently located. The children's centre building has been designed on a single floor footprint to limit the visual impact of the building on the surrounding school environment. All relevant Disability Discrimination Act legislation has been taken account of during the design process of the modular building, between NCC and the building supplier.

The layout of the external areas will not be affected by the works, with the exception of the relocation of the bike sheds and the provision of a new buggy store to the front of the children's centre. The existing tarmacadam will be made good as required to create a more welcoming environment for persons visiting for the first time.

Staffing implications:

The creation of the Children's Centre will result in the employment of 2 additional part-time staff and 1 full time equivalent member of staff (Information officer and Family Support worker).

Statement of Community Involvement / Pre-application publicity:

During April 2006 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 further development of Children's Centres within East Northants. It has taken along time to find an ideal location. This has been done with further consultation during 2007

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 people's 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. However the existing bike shed will be dismantled and removed from site and a new bike shed provided elsewhere on the site.

Flood Risk Assessment:

As the area of land does not fall within the flood plain on the basis of the information obtained from the Environment Agency website, therefore no risk assessment is required.

Land Contaminants:

All contaminant surveys will be completed as required by the supplier of the modular building. A Waste Acceptance Criteria Test will be undertaken before works commence on site

Vehicle access: Access to the site is via the main car park on the school site.

Parents are encouraged to walk with their child/children to school, however most pupils walk themselves as this is a secondary school site. The existing staff car parking for the site offers a large amount of spaces on site which will be maintained following the completion of these capital works. It is intended that 2 additional car parking spaces will be created to accommodate the additional staff to be employed at the Children's Centre, adjacent to the current car park.

Site access during construction period:

Construction access to the site will be via the main road (Hayway) and the rear entrance to the school via Spencer 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. As it is a modular construction the ground works will be prepared in advance and then the Centre will be delivered by cranes.

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 125 car parking spaces (inclusive of disabled provision) based upon 112 full time staff and 25 part time staff on the site. The existing car park will be modified to provide 2 additional car parking spaces on the school site once the nursery/children's centre is operational.

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 are complete. The 'centre' is designed for use by persons within the immediate surrounding areas and access to the facilities available by more environmentally friendly forms of transport is to be encouraged by the availability of an 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.

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Design & Access Statement

Assessment

- **Physical** – the new modular building to form the Children's Centre will be located adjacent to the Nursery and will compliment the surrounding buildings by being a single storey building. 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 Rushden Community College. 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. 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 adjacent 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. Anticipated activities at the children's centre include Family Groups, (stay and play), specialist services for families such as speech and language therapy, midwifery and health visitor sessions.
- **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 school.
- **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 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 to omit a proposed office and provide an additional meeting room and more welcoming reception facility. Contrasting cladding has also been provided to part of the front elevation to create a more welcoming appearance.

Design

- Use – the proposed location of the modular building for the children's centre makes use of an existing area of underutilised land adjacent to the Nursery. 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.
- Amount – the development sees the creation of an new standalone facility of 133m² to provide a new reception, 3 meeting rooms, a wheelchair accessible toilet facility with adjacent WC/ baby change facility, store room and kitchenette/ tea point 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 a new bicycle store facility will be provided elsewhere on the school site.

- Layout – the new children’s centre layout orientation has been carefully designed in order to maximise natural light opportunities and compliment the adjacent Nursery, so as not to provide conflicting access/egress points.. The limitations of the site in terms of existing fencing and adjoining buildings 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..
- Landscaping – The external grounds surrounding the modular building will be reconfigured to provide level access to the new entrance doors and secure fencing to prevent unauthorised access to the side and rear of the building.
- Appearance – The style and construction materials of the existing buildings are to be continued in the proposed extensions. The modular building is finished with a grey profiled metal sheet roof and goosewing grey external cladding with exception of contrasting cladding around the main entrance, which will be imitation timber boarding. All windows and doors will be finished in blue (RAL 5011) to assist the visually impaired and contrast with the surrounding walls.

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 3 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 childrens centre 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 modular building 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.
- Consultation with the Rushden Community College Staff and Governors to ensure the design of the children's centre meets the safe and essential needs of the school and NCC.
- Early consultation with local residents.
- 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

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6th March 2008