



## **Termination of wrap-around Childcare at North Chaddesden Children's Centre**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 North Chaddesden Children's Centre, based at Cavendish Close Infant School, is one of the 18 Children's Centres in Derby, all managed and run by the Local Authority (LA)
- 1.2 In 14 of the centres, including North Chaddesden, childcare is offered. Whilst childcare was a requirement of meeting the children's centre core offer, demand across the city has been unpredictable. The statutory duty to provide childcare has now been removed by the Government.
- 1.3 Delivery of wrap-around care is particularly costly as Ofsted ratios need to be met and most parents only want wrap-around. Wrap-around childcare is taken over and above the 15 hours of flexible free entitlement provided by the school. In addition, the children's centre only provides wrap-around care and not full day care.
- 1.4 In the case of the provision at North Chaddesden, take-up has been particularly poor with attendance as low as two children for some sessions.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2 To agree to closure of wrap-around care at North Chaddesden Children's Centre, with the service in future to be delivered by an alternative provider.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The statutory duty on LAs to provide wrap-around childcare has now been lifted by the Department for Education (DfE), having recognised this was often not an appropriate or viable use of resources.
- 3.2 Childcare is costly and requires a subsidy from the revenue budget. This is due to complying with Ofsted requirements for staff-to-child ratios, and ensuring staff are not lone working at any part of the day.
- 3.3 Parents and carers can only access the childcare on top of their flexible free entitlement. It is not available for parents to access from 8 am until 6 pm for a whole day without accessing the flexible free entitlement. The reduced number of hours and the need to ideally have split shifts has made it difficult to recruit staff and often more expensive agency staff have been employed.

3.4 The service could be delivered in partnership with an alternative local provider, of which there are a number in the area.

<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>
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4.1 Children’s centres have been developed in the city since 2004 and originally grew out of Sure Start local programmes, early excellence centres, neighbourhood nurseries (NNI) or from partnerships with local schools.

All of the 18 children’s centres through different delivery models meet the core offer of:

- Integrated Early Years and Childcare
- Child and Family Health Services
- Family Support
- Adult Learning and access to Jobcentre Plus
- Outreach Services
- Families Information Service and access to childminders.

4.2 North Chaddesden Children’s Centre offers 16 places for three- and four-year-olds to access wrap-around childcare as an addition to their 15 hours’ free entitlement. Sessions on offer are 8 am until 9 am, 12 noon until 1 pm and 3.30 pm until 6 pm. In addition, some children can take up a whole day of care wrapped around their flexible free entitlement. This offer has been available at North Chaddesden since September 2008. For the first three months, September – November, there was no take-up of this service at all.

4.3 From January 2009 to date, take-up by local parents has continued to be slow and at no point have there been more than nine children at any one session. This level of attendance is not consistent across five days. The most used session when nine children are present is the shortest session of one hour over lunchtime. This in turn adds an additional charge to the revenue budget for food.

Morning and afternoon sessions never go above seven children. The longer afternoon sessions are the most poorly used. A breakdown for the wrap-around sessions accessed the week commencing 22/11/2011 is:

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>AM Session 8 until 9</b>	4	7	6	6	4
<b>Lunch (1/2 hour)</b>	7	9	9	6	6
<b>PM Session 3:30 until 6</b>	3	3	4	2	3

- 4.4 Ofsted requirements state that there must be a senior member of staff appointed and a minimum ratio of one qualified member of staff to eight children. However, to prevent lone working, there must always be two staff available with additional staff costs to cover for sickness and annual leave. The reduced number of hours for wrap-around and the need to ideally have split shifts has made it difficult to recruit staff and often more expensive agency staff have needed to be employed.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Alternative options could be for the childcare to be delivered by a private provider within the locality.

There are 12 providers already available in the area including childminders. One private provider already has a partnership agreement to provide 0-3 care for children within the children centre reach area.

Cost ranges from £3 to £3.50. Currently, children's centre childcare costs £2.80 an hour. However, the LA is currently reviewing charges and this may increase to a £3.50 hourly rate in the New Year.

Another alternative option is for the school to develop a viable business case to provide the wrap-around childcare as a part of extended services delivered by them.

- 5.2 Support to those families who need to find alternative childcare will be provided by the Family Information Service, who will support the brokerage of alternative provision.

### This report has been approved by the following officers:

<b>Legal officer</b>	Stuart Leslie – Director Legal and Democratic Services
<b>Financial officer</b>	Alison Parkin – Head of Service CYPD Finance
<b>Human Resources officer</b>	Alimun Nessa – HR Advisor
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Rita Silvester – Service Director Strategy and Commissioning
<b>Other(s)</b>	

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<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1 The staff cost of delivering the childcare at North Chaddesden is £66,000. Fee income has been limited, so there would never be a point where this service could break even with a revised projected income for the year of £14,000. Fee income as at the end of November is £6,779 (eight months). Redundancy costs of £592 could be incurred if the staffing could not be redeployed in other LA-run childcare settings and would be funded from the ring-fenced grant.

**Legal**

- 2 None – early indication from Central Government tells us that childcare will not need to be provided from children’s centres in 30% Super Output areas.

**Personnel**

- 3 Currently there are two FTE childcare workers employed to deliver the wrap-around childcare and a vacant 0.5 position who may be at risk of redeployment or redundancy. Individuals deemed at risk of dismissal by reason of redundancy will be subject to normal consultation requirements.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4 Whilst the wrap-around childcare would not be available directly from the children’s centre, alternative childcare provision is available within the locality for families, including those most disadvantaged to access.

**Health and Safety**

- 5 Ratios must be adhered to, to meet Ofsted requirements, and staff should not be lone working.

**Carbon commitment**

- 6 N/A

**Value for money**

- 7 The childcare is costly as staff ratios need to be maintained and staff are recruited on Local Authority terms and conditions, which are considerably more costly than within the private, voluntary and independent sectors.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

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  - To integrate and deliver our services with partners to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness (CYP4.1).
  - To deliver value for money across all services (COD2).
  - To address and review the financial impact of major projects, legislative changes and changes to local government funding (CPD3.7).