

To: **Executive Member**

**NEW EARLY YEARS FACILITY AT PRIESTWOOD
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to spend of up to £100,000 of the secured Section 106 Agreement (s106) funds to refurbish the North hall in the Berkshire Guide Centre (Windlesham Road, Bracknell) to create a 0-2 year old room. The building is part of Bracknell Forest Council estate.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 To approve spend of up to £100,000 s106 funds to create a new Early Years Facility at the Berkshire Guide Centre in Priestwood (0-2 year olds).**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The College Nursery currently located at Coopers Hill has received notice to leave the site at end of July 2021. Despite close working between Bracknell Forest Council and Activate Learning alternative premises have not been secured, therefore the staff and parents have received notice of closure.

The current provision offers affordable, flexible childcare for 0-5 year olds, Closure of this provision will leave some parents without childcare. Whilst we have a number of Early Years providers with vacancies for children age 2 years and over, there is minimal local affordable provision for under 2's.

Refurbishing the hall at the Guide Centre (BFC building) will enable the existing provider located within the building to extend the age range they cater for to include 0-2 year olds. The provision will double the number of places available for this age group. This will support the Council's statutory duty 'to secure sufficient childcare for working parents (or parents in education/training)' (Childcare Act 2006 Section 6).

The redevelopment of Coopers Hill will likely require the replacement of existing community facilities on the site to be in accordance with planning policies. This proposal will replace the existing nursery facility with an enhanced facility which removes an in-principle planning objection to the Council intention to redevelop the Coopers Hill site.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 This site is owned by the Council and is already rented to an Early Years provider currently rated 'Good' by OFSTED, no further registration is required and therefore the provision could be open from September 2021.
- 4.2 A scheme to create a brand new building was considered in the Wick Hill car park (off Bull Lane) this was not affordable and it was also noted that both the primary and secondary schools close to this site had excess capacity within the schools.

- 4.3 Contact was made with both local schools with excess capacity, however neither school was able to proceed with any plans to relocate the setting on to their sites.
- 4.4 A range of options were discussed with Activate Learning, contact was made with providers seeking to open premises within the local area, however possibly due to Covid these plans did not come to fruition.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Childcare Act 2006 Section 6, 'Duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents (or parents in education/training)'. Requires local authorities to ensure there is childcare available to enable parents to take up or remain in work or to undertake education or training to assist them in obtaining work. With the closure of the current provider we will be losing 9 places for 0-2 year olds, the setting also has a waiting list for this age group. By undertaking the refurbishment, the existing places will be replaced and an additional 11 places created.
- 5.2 The current provider at the Guide Centre ([Home | Little Acorns Montessori School Ascot and Bracknell](#)) first opened in Winkfield in 1994. In response to the nursery funding for vulnerable 2 year olds, the second site at the Guide Centre opened in 2013. The setting has grown over the years and currently has 42 funded children on roll. The setting supports children with additional needs and developed a sensory room to enable children to relax, take time and meet their sensory needs.
- 5.3 Development of the second hall will increase the rent paid by the provider.
- 5.4 Financial contributions to pay for the scheme will come from the following s106 receipts:
- 14/00437/FUL – land at Adastron House, Crowthorne Road, Bracknell (Cardew Court), finance code YN527 which has £31,414.19 available to spend.
 - 14/00858/FUL - land at Popeswood Garage, London Road, Binfield, finance code YN543 which has £83,250.16 available to spend.
- 5.5 It is proposed to spend up to £100,000 from the above s106 receipts which means any balance will be available to spend on other projects in due course. Both s106 receipts have contractual conditions relating to their spend which are that these sums must only be spent on
- “towards the cost of providing expanding or improving nursery and/or primary educational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings) within 3 kilometres of the site”.*
- 5.6 It is confirmed that the proposed scheme fulfils the contractual obligations for spending the s106 receipts in that it is for nursery provision and located in Windlesham Road, Bracknell with is within 3km distance of both s106 sites.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 The allocation of funding proposed in this report complies with the requirements of the s106 agreements.

The approval of the recommendation in the report falls within the decision making remit of officers in consultation with the Executive member pursuant to the Bracknell Forest Council Constitution March 2021 Part 2, section 6 paragraph 6.2 (a)(vi).

Financial Advice

- 6.2 Sufficient and eligible S106 contributions, as identified in the report, are available to fund the works outlined. Once approved the scheme will be added to the Council's 2021-22 Capital Programme and monitored as part of the capital budget monitoring process.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 Activate Learning undertook staff consultations to determine whether there were any alternative options available to continue to deliver services, no alternative options were found.

BFC Early Years Team have consulted with the existing provider operating from the Guide Centre who has consented to change the age range and operating model of the setting to accommodate the younger age range.

The 3 Priestwood and Garth Councillors were emailed regarding the proposed project. 1 Councillor responded with questions that were answered via email. A meeting then took place on site to view the current provision and to talk through the proposal.

Feedback following the visit was positive and included the following comments:

It was very useful to be able to look around the nursery again; I have an updated view of what happens now and can appreciate the intentions for the new project.

I think the potential accommodation should work well, and I am pleased to hear that it is intended that some staff will be able move with the children.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 N/A

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 This has been considered as part of the project. There is a contingency sum in the budget.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.6 The building will comply with current building regulations and will be thermally efficient.

Background Papers

Tender report-Appendix 1

Contact for further information

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