

Agenda item:

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
Date:	31 May 2012
Title:	Nursery provision for children with special educational needs in the New Forest
Reference:	3790
Report From:	Director of Children's Services

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to seek approval to vary the implementation of the Early Years SEN provision agreed by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on 12 March 2009 in order to accommodate the particular geographic context of the provision for early years children living in the New Forest area of Hampshire.

1.2 This paper seeks to gain approval to vary the SEN Early Years hub model so that instead of a centre of expertise being established in one venue to cover the area of the New Forest, a different model be adopted. The intention is to appoint an early years SEN specialist who would visit the maintained and non-maintained early years providers across the New Forest area. This would mean that children in the early years settings who have special educational needs would benefit from expertise and knowledge without having to travel long distances to a designated location. Staff working at the settings across the New Forest would also benefit from this model as there would be an expectation that the early years SEN specialist would train and model good practice for the members of staff in the settings.

The budget for the project has already been allocated to the SEN service as part of the decision made in March 2009; no further budget requirements are envisaged.

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2. Contextual information

- 2.1 A strategy for improving nursery education for children with special educational needs (SEN), which has the aim of providing more consistency across the county, was agreed by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services on 12 March 2009.
- 2.2 The early years strategy for SEN involves developing inclusive specialist nursery provision across the county of Hampshire, and involves working with Children's Centres and the non maintained sector to provide nursery education
- 2.3 In other areas of the county Early Years SEN 'hubs' have been established, however, because of the rural nature of the New Forest area, a peripatetic approach is proposed in order to meet the Special Educational Needs of as many early years children as possible in the New Forest area thus reducing the need for these young children to travel unacceptable distances in order to benefit from specialist input to meet their special educational needs
- 2.4 There are a large number of child care providers in the New Forest area. The aim is to ensure high quality SEN nursery provision in line with agreed practice. Children will be identified and supported by the new provision from the local authority, (in practice the SEN service) in accordance with existing agreed criteria.
- 2.5 Funding has already been agreed by schools forum to establish nursery provision in the New Forest. Discussions are already taking place to develop and implement a bespoke model of service delivery acknowledging the specific context of early years provision in the New Forest.
- 2.6 The SEN support for early years children with special educational needs will be provided by SEN early years professionals who will be based within the early years inclusion team.

3. Finance

- 3.1 The provision which will benefit nursery children who have special educational needs and who live in the New Forest, will be delivered from within the current budget.
- 3.2 It is envisaged that including on-costs, the annual cost of the number of staff will be £45,000. It is estimated that travel costs will be £5,000, and the admin support will be equivalent to one day per week at Grade D, integrated into the portage administration team.

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4. Other key issues

- 4.1 The original principle of focusing the SEN nursery provision in Children's Centres was agreed as a county wide strategy. However, the specific issues of the New Forest, for example the geography, the road network, the volume of traffic at certain times of year and the nature of the existing provision determines that a different model is needed.
- 4.2 The model proposed would complement existing services, including those available through Children's Centres, for example access to health support and advice for parents.
- 4.3 The services provided through the Children's Centres will in turn complement the development of the role of the SEN professional working with children with SEN and their parents, including:
 - early identification of children with special needs and disabilities and services and support for their families;
 - systems for referring/signposting families to further services;
 - providing information for parents/carers about the range of family support services and activities available in the area;
 - support and advice on parenting including support at significant transition points for the family;
 - access to specialist, targeted services for those families which need them, eg support for parents/carers of disabled children;
 - activities which increase parents/carers' understanding of their child's development;
 - promoting positive mental health and well being, including identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression, antenatally and post-natally;
 - provision of therapy services, for example speech and language, including liaising with national health service providers;
 - support for healthy lifestyles.

5. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- 5.1 the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services agrees to vary the implementation of the Early Years SEN Provision agreed by the Executive Lead Members for Children's Services on 12 March 2009 in order to accommodate the particular geographic context of the provision for early years children living in the New Forest area of Hampshire.

3.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
OR	
This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:	
<i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Corporate Strategy tick boxes above. If it is not applicable, please delete.</i>	

NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Nursery provision for children with special educational needs – tendering process	524	12 March 2009
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None