

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Regulatory Committee
Date:	18 March 2010
Title:	A new single storey Children's Centre extension, including associated external works, to existing school building at South Farnborough County Junior School, Cunnington Road, Farnborough, Hampshire (Application No: 10/00017/HCC) (County Council Ref: RME014)
Reference:	1441
Report From:	Head of Planning and Development

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The development of Children's Centres is part of a national strategy to achieve the objectives set out in the "Every Child Matters" Government programme and develop 3500 Sure Start Children's Centres across the country by mid-2010. To date, Hampshire County Council has provided 60 such centres in Hampshire over two phases of development. Phase III, the final stage of this strategy, is intended to provide a further 25 Children's Centres in the county, one such centre being at South Farnborough Junior School. A Children's Centre should not be confused with a nursery or a pre-school as it offers a variety of services to support the well-being of young families with pre-school children. Planning permission is therefore required for the provision of a new single storey Children's Centre building, including associated landscaping works at South Farnborough Junior School, Cunnington Road, Farnborough.
- 1.2. Issues: Existing and proposed development, compliance with the adopted Local Plan, consultees' views and consideration of objections from residents.
- 1.3. Reason for decision: It is considered the proposal would be in accordance with Policy ENV 17 (General Development and Design Criteria) of the adopted Local Plan (summary attached in Integral Appendix C), in that its design and materials are considered not to cause harm to the character of the surrounding area. Taking into account all considerations, there is no substantive reason to withhold planning permission.

2. Site and proposal

2.1. The existing South Farnborough Junior School site which also contains a Moderate Learning Difficulty unit (MLD), is situated on the north-west side of Cunnington Road, this road being a double ended relatively narrow cul-de-sac, one part being in the north, the second part being in the south, within a residential area near open parkland (King George V Playing Fields) in Farnborough as shown on the attached plan. The overall cul-de-sac contains housing mostly on its eastern side but also some dwellings close to the school boundary near the turning head of the cul-de-sac. Access to serve Cunnington Road is from Andrewartha Road to the east. Existing railings (approximately 1.2 metres high) are on the front school boundary. There are numerous trees on the school frontage and close to the area of the proposed Children's Centre. Staff Parking at the school is on the front and accessed from Cunnington Road.

2.2. Site considerations – By locating the Children's' Centre building on the north side of the Junior School there are a number of advantages:

- (i) the Centre is separated from the areas used by pupils and can be accessed directly by pedestrian visitors without interference to the school activities;
- (ii) facilities shared-use of the Centre by the school and use of the school hall by the Centre, subject to availability;
- (iii) enables a small fenced external play area to be created to the rear of the Centre and is suitable for shared use by the school's special education needs (MLD) unit.

2.3. In addition, the site was selected as the most appropriate location following the appraisal of a number of alternative options across the notional catchment area for the following key reasons:

- (i) the school site ensures good links with young families;
- (ii) good proximity to a significant number of under 5s;
- (iii) sufficient space available in an appropriate position on the site; and
- (iv) other options (sites) did not provide suitable or sufficient space.

2.4. Although located at the school site, the Children's Centre will operate independently of the school, providing a different but complementary service to the community.

2.5. The key feature of the Phase III Centres is outreach work – coordinating and enhancing the service provision through a network of existing local venues across a wide geographical area but close to where young families live. The majority of the service delivery will not take place within the building itself and will therefore be operating more as an administrative base from which the

activities are coordinated. This will mean taking the services to where young families are living rather than expecting the families to travel to the Centre. However, subject to the accommodation available at each Centre, a small amount of service delivery is carried out to meet the needs of those living nearby. In view of this, staffing levels reflect this with each Centre expected to have two full-time equivalent (FTE) family support outreach workers, together with a Centre Coordinator and an administrator, both half-time equivalents.

- 2.6. Building Form and Materials – The proposed Children’s Centre will be a single storey rectangular modular building of approximately 82 square metres internal floor area to be attached to the main South Farnborough Junior School building and would be on its northern side. Although being modular, the building which is made in a factory and delivered to the site in sections will be permanent and its construction is fully compliant with current Building Regulations, including insulation. Foul sewage drainage would connect into the school’s existing system and surface water will be to a soakaway. The building will have off-white rendered exterior panels with large panels of natural timber cladding from sustainable sources set between dark grey double glazed aluminium window frames. A recessed entrance porch provides shelter and a clear indication of the Children’s Centre entrance. A small second recessed porch to the rear of the building protects the threshold of the door to the external play area. The high performance flat roof of the centre building is compatible with the flat roof of the adjoining SCOLA type school building. Inside the Centre, the accommodation will comprise a Reception Office, small meeting room/second office, a multi-purpose room and a toilet and store.
- 2.7. External works – It is intended to provide from Cunnington Road a gated entrance of vertical bars and same height/style (approximately 1.2 metres) as the existing school fence fronting Cunnington Road. From this pedestrian entrance will be a 1.8 metre wide tarmac footpath leading to the Centre building where the footpath widens by the Centre entrance. In front of the Centre it will be paved with Marshalls Saxon (or similar) concrete buff paving slabs. In order to secure the outside area which is attached to the Centre, there will be 1.2 metre high weldmesh galvanised metal fencing and a matching lockable gate. A small area of bush planting with a semi-mature tree is to be planted at the front of the Centre, whilst at the back it is intended to provide a small lawned area with a small secure external play area.
- 2.8. Parking – As with earlier phases of providing Children Centres, the proposal at the South Farnborough Junior School is based on Hampshire County Council’s Parking Standards. However, due to space constraints on the school site (i.e. proximity to buildings and hard play area), it is only intended to provide an accessible car space, which will require relocation of two normal spaces. The Junior School, including the MLD unit, have a total of 19 existing car parking spaces and there is additional parking available approximately 200 metres away in Rushmoor Borough Council’s public car park by the King George V playing fields off Sycamore Road. An unlit footpath connects the school grounds with this playing field/car park.

- 2.9. Trees – Two minor trees will need to be removed to facilitate construction of the access. The rest of the trees close to the development site will be protected from damage during the construction period.
- 2.10. Opening Hours – The Phase III Centre is required to be operational for 7.5 hours a day, five days per week, and 48 weeks per year. Given the emphasis on outreach work, a certain proportion of the Centre staff's operational hours will be spent away from the building, with the actual hours of the building expected to be less than this, based on local need and resourcing.

3. **Development plan**

- 3.1. Rushmoor Local Plan Review 1996-2011 shows the site as an existing school within the defined Built-up Area for Farnborough. The relevant Policy is ENV 17 (General Development & Design Criteria) and the proposed development accords with it.

4. **Consultations**

- 4.1. **Rushmoor Borough Council** has no objection. (No planning conditions were requested.)
- 4.2. **Highway Authority** has no objections subject to conditions including submission for approval of a Construction Traffic Management Plan before development commences. The Highway Authority comments that the Junior School and MLD unit currently details 27 staff currently drive to school and that there is a shortfall in the level of existing parking provided on site. However, there is the Borough Council's car park at the nearby King George V playing fields that can be used to accommodate additional parking demand for the school.
- 4.3. **The Local Member Councillor Wall** has been informed.

5. **Representations**

- 5.1. A total of 28 letters of objection have been received although 22 of them are the same content but with different addresses.
- 5.2. The letters of objection are on the following grounds:
- (i) there are existing problems with traffic in Cunnington Road and Andrewartha Road, particularly at peak times both morning and afternoon when children are brought to or collected from the school. The proposed Centre will cause further traffic problems in Cunnington Road cul-de-sac;

- (ii) a better location should be found as this is considered not to be the best site and would be better in Farnborough Town Centre where other facilities exist;
- (iii) the Children's Centre is not on a bus route thereby encouraging people arriving at the Centre to come by car and adding to the traffic congestion;
- (iv) King George V playing field car park tends not to be used by parents as they park their cars on Cunnington Road and Andrewarther Road;
- (v) because some residents in Cunnington Road do not have off-road parking and have to park their cars in the road, problems with parent parking causes further trouble with residents' parking.
- (vi) at peak times when parents cars are waiting, the road becomes blocked thereby impeding access for emergency vehicles should the need arise;
- (vii) there is no indication about opening hours of the Centre building; is there late opening during the week and weekends?

6. Commentary

6.1. The comments from the local residents are noted and response regarding these are:

- (i) Andrewartha Road and Cunnington Road are relatively narrow within the residential area and that some congestion at peak pick-up/drop-off times for the school is likely to occur. This is compounded by Cunnington Road being a double-ended cul-de-sac. However, Children's Centres tend to be operable outside of main school drop-off/pick-up times and would not materially effect existing traffic issues;
- (ii) an alternative location is not a material issue. However, a full appraisal of other school sites was carried out across the notional catchment area and other sites do not provide suitable or sufficient space. Moreover, South Farnborough Junior School site ensures good links with young families, there is good proximity to a significant number of under five year old children in the area, and the school has sufficient space in an appropriate position on the site. Although a town centre location may be one option, Children's Centres need to be on school sites where a complementary service can be provided;
- (iii) other centres are not necessarily on a direct bus route - the criteria if there is local bus service in the area is within a reasonable walking distance. In this case there are bus stops approximately 12 minutes walk away from the site on Reading Road;
- (iv) it is acknowledged that King George V playing fields car park at 200 metres distance is not as convenient as on site parking. However, this application is not intended to address existing issues of parent parking.

Nevertheless, this facility does provide an alternative parking area especially for staff;

- (v) the Centre's opening hours might vary, including some weekend working in the morning, but operations usually are away from the site. There are no amenity issues arising from this.

6.2. There are no objections from Rushmoor Borough Council or the Highway Authority and the proposed development is considered, taking into account the comments above, to accord with the relevant policies of the current adopted Local Plan. Other considerations have been noted but do not justify withholding of planning permission.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. That planning permission to construct a new single storey Children's Centre extension including associated external works, at the existing school building South Farnborough Junior School, Cunnington Road, Farnborough (Application No. 10/00017/HCC) be granted subject to the conditions in Integral Appendix B.

Links to the Corporate Strategy

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Maximising well-being:	yes
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes

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

A new single storey Children's Centre extension, including associated external works, to existing school building at South Farnborough County Junior School, Cunnington Road, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 6PL (Application No: 10/00017/HCC) (Site Ref: RME014)

Location

Environment Department, Hampshire County Council, Elizabeth II Court West (1st floor)

CONDITIONS

Time Limits

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date on which this planning permission was granted.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 (as amended) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Hours of Working

2. There shall be no access to the development site by any traffic associated with the construction (ie. no delivery vehicles, no contractors' cars, nor plant and machinery) in the morning between 08:20 and 09:05, and in the afternoon between 15:20 and 16:05 on normal school days.

Reason: In the interests of public safety and, to avoid traffic conflict at the times of day when pupils are arriving at and departing from school.

3. No work relating to the construction of the development approved, including works of preparation prior to operations, the delivery of construction materials, skips or machinery, nor the removal of waste materials, shall take place before 0800 hours or after 1800 hours Monday to Friday inclusive, before 0800 hours or after 1600 hours on Saturday, and not at all on Sunday or recognised public holidays unless otherwise agreed beforehand in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect the amenities of occupiers of nearby properties.

Highways

4. Before the construction of the Children's Centre building is commenced, a Construction Traffic Management Plan shall be submitted in writing to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed Plan shall be maintained for the duration of the construction works.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

5. Before the construction of the Children's Centre building is commenced, details of the contractors' temporary access shall be submitted in writing to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The details shall include measures to prevent pedestrians entering the contractors' compound, the arrangements for closing the existing footpath, and measures for providing pedestrian access to the rear of the school. The agreed details shall be implemented prior to construction of the new building and retained for the duration of the construction period.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

6. Measures shall be taken to prevent mud and spoil from vehicles leaving the school site during the construction period being deposited on the public highway. No vehicle shall leave the site unless its wheels have been cleaned sufficiently to prevent mud or spoil being carried on to the highway. In the event this occurs, the highway shall be cleaned-off on each day of working.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

New Footpath

7. The new pedestrian access to be provided and as shown in principle on the submitted drawing P8242-102 Revision H, shall be constructed prior to construction of the Children's Centre and the closure of the existing access. The new footpath shall be retained for its intended purpose.

Reason: To prevent conflict between pedestrians and construction traffic and to ensure adequate access has been provided to the site.

Car Parking

8. Before the Children's Centre is brought into use, the car parking space for drivers with a disability shall have been properly provided and made available for use. These spaces shall be retained for that purpose. In addition, the two replacement standard spaces shall have been provided by the time the Centre is occupied.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory development.

Protection of trees

9. Prior to construction of the Children's Centre building, measures shall be taken to protect from damage, those trees which are to be retained and which are closest to the construction site. Sturdy metal fencing such as "Heras" type or similar shall be used and shall be retained for the duration of the construction works.

Reason: In the interest of retaining the natural features of the site.

Landscape

10. All the hard landscape areas shall have been implemented before occupation of the Children's Centre building. In addition, the replacement semi-mature trees to be provided shall have been planted as soon as possible following completion of the construction works for the new building. In the event the building is completed in the summer months, then the tree planting shall be carried out in the first available planting season. Any new planting that dies or is removed within three years from its initial planting, shall be replaced as soon as possible with similar species.

Reason: To secure a satisfactory development.

*Annexe to Reason for Conditions
(as required by Article 22 of the Town and Country Planning
(General Procedure) Order 1995 – as amended)*

RUSHMOOR LOCAL PLAN REVIEW 1996-2011 (Adopted August 2000)

Policy ENV 17 (General Development & Design Criteria)

Development on smaller sites and change of use, which is in accordance with other policies of the Local Plan, will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the development does not result in any demonstrable harm to amenity;
- (ii) the scale, layout, materials and design are consistent with the character and appearance of the area and the relationship with adjoining development;
- (iii) adequate consideration has been given to the design of spaces around and between buildings, with use of hard and soft landscaping; and
- (iv) existing landscape features are used to advantage and, where appropriate, new landscaping is included.