

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **15 March 2005**

Title of Report: **Hailsham East and the Diplocks Sure Start Children's Centre**

By: **Director of Children's Services, Education and Libraries**

Purpose of Report: **To approve the Council taking on the management responsibility for the Sure Start Children's Centre programme in Hailsham East and the Diplocks and seek endorsement of the proposal that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) take out a lease for the Hailsham East Community Centre.**

---

**Recommendations:**

**The Cabinet is recommended to:**

- (i) approve East Sussex County Council entering into a lease agreement with Wealden District Council for the Hailsham East Community Centre, and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources to approve the details of the lease;**
  - (ii) note the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) approval of the Hailsham East and the Diplocks Sure Start Children's Centre programme (a copy of the Implementation Plan is available in the Members' Room); and**
  - (iii) note the proposed transfer of management function of the programme from Hailsham Trust to East Sussex County Council from 1 April 2005.**
- 

**1. Financial Appraisal**

1.1 Hailsham East Community Centre was opened in June 2001. The total cost of the build was £1.8 million. It is proposed that East Sussex County Council take out a 25 year lease with Wealden District Council for the Community Centre building to provide children's services and ensure a wider community usage, reflecting the terms and conditions of the different funding streams.

1.2 As with Sure Start Children's Centre capital, if the Centre were to prove unsustainable the Council would be required to return the capital grant to the DfES. To ensure the Council's position in this regard CRD Property is being commissioned to work with the Wealden District Council on the lease arrangements. Any return of grant would be at the market value at the time of claw back being invoked and not the original capital grant. This is in accordance with the guidance to the Accountable Body on Sure Start capital projects issued by the DfES. However, the risk is judged to be very small.

1.3 The running costs of the building to run as a Children's Centre will be met by the Sure Start local programme. From April 2006 money for this programme will be met through the General Sure Start Grant. It is anticipated that in addition to the Children's Centre activities the Community Centre will continue to provide a variety of activities for the wider community, which will be supported by the income generation strand.

1.4 Hailsham Trust has been responsible for running the Community Centre building since November 2002. It has worked to increase the income generation of the Centre to ensure its longer term sustainability. To date, the revenue costs have been met by four funding streams reflecting the original usage of the building: Sure Start (66%); SRB (14%); Sussex Downs College (6%) and Income generation (14%). The intention is to increase the income generation. Experience to date suggests that a regular income generation is possible. ESCC will continue to work with Wealden District Council and Hailsham Trust to secure the Community Centre's wider usage.

1.5 To date there is £ 41,000 of unallocated Community Centre income. It is recommended that this is used for the future sustainability and maintenance needs of the Community Centre with a review of the

Community Centre business plan to be completed by 30 June 2005.

1.6 The level of recurrent funding for Children's Centres to be provided by the Government through the General Sure Start Grant after 2006 is uncertain. If there are shortfalls they will need either to be met by partner agencies or addressed through management plan, which might need to include reducing or ending services. A management risk action plan for each Centre will need to be reported annually to the Lead Member for Children and Young People; and Libraries. Additional funding beyond 2006 is likely; however the allocation cannot be confirmed at this time as it relates to the Treasury funding cycles.

## **2. Supporting Information**

2.1 Sure Start Hailsham East and the Diplocks trailblazer programme was set up in 1999. Hailsham was also successful in attracting SRB funding. A model for local delivery was developed integrating the Sure Start and SRB programmes. Hailsham Trust was commissioned by East Sussex County Council, as the accountable body, to manage the delivery of the Sure Start local programme. In November 2004 the Trust Board decided that it would relinquish the management responsibility of the Sure Start local programme as it achieved Children's Centre status on 1 April 2005. East Sussex County Council has always been the accountable body for the Sure Start local programme

2.2 Opened in June 2001, Hailsham East Community Centre was built using public funds. Sure Start funded two thirds of the £1.8million capital build. Sure Start provided all the money for the kitting out of the building.

2.3 The Lead Member for Social Services and Health agreed, at a meeting in November 2002, for the County Council's Social Services Department to take on a six month licence of the Hailsham East Community Centre. After six months the building would be handed over to the newly established Development Trust (now known as the Hailsham Trust).

2.4 The building has never been handed over to the Trust and the Trust has requested that East Sussex County Council formally take on responsibility for the Community Centre. Currently the holder of the legal title of the building is Wealden District Council which holds the property on Trust for both Wealden District Council as the accountable body for the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) regeneration programme and ESCC as accountable body for Sure Start.

2.5 By April 2005, the programme will be in the sixth year of a 10 year programme. Funding for the programme from 2006 will be made through the general Sure Start grant. The SRB revenue stream ceases in April 2006.

## **3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations**

3.1 The Community Centre is the key delivery site for the Hailsham East and the Diplocks Sure Start Children's Centre. The Children's Centre programme directly contributes towards the Council's strategic priorities of tackling deprivation and inequalities and promoting lifelong learning. It is therefore recommended that the Cabinet agree that the County Council should enter into a lease agreement with Wealden District Council, on terms to be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources, in order to secure continuity of use for this building.

DENISE STOKOE

Director of Children's Services, Education and Libraries

Contact Officer: Catherine White, Planning and Commissioning Manager, Tel: 01323 769433

Local Member: Councillor Bentley

C15Mar2005HailshamEastandtheDiplocksSureStartChildren'sCentre.doc

