

Committee: **Cabinet**

Date: **15 March 2005**

Title of Report: **Proposed Children's Centre in Peacehaven**

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

Purpose of Report: **To approve the transfer of £480,000 to the capital programme of Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust (NHS); to note the proposed transfer of the Management responsibility for the programme; and to note arrangements for lease negotiations between East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust (PCT) regarding the future use of the proposed Children Centre.**

Recommendations:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) provisionally approve the transfer of £480,000 to Sussex Downs and Weald PCT capital programme for Peacehaven Sure Start Children's Centre, using previously approved Sure Start Local Programme capital funds;**
 - (ii) note the proposed transfer of the Management Responsibility for the Havens SureStart programme from Sussex Downs and Weald PCT to East Sussex County Council;**
 - (iii) approve the outline proposals for the Children's Centre at Appendix A, subject to further feasibility work, with a final decision on the scheme to be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources; and**
 - (iv) note the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) approval of the Children's Centre Implementation Plan (a copy of which is available in the Members' Room)**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 On 3 August 2004 the Cabinet approved the overarching proposal for the use of the Children's Centre capital allocation within the General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) for 2004-2006. The Peacehaven Children's Centre, however, will not be funded through Children's Centre capital but rather through previously approved Sure Start Local Programme capital funds which are currently ring-fenced for use by the programme only.

1.2 It is proposed that £480,000 of Sure Start Local Programme capital funds, available to the Programme, will be allocated in principle to the development of a Centre attached to the Peacehaven Clinic. The proposal being recommended for approval within this report is the development of a Centre on one site – the Peacehaven Clinic. Two satellites – Peacehaven Infant School and Ashington Gardens Pre-school - will link in with the Centre at the Clinic but require no capital funds. The clinic will provide all of the Children's Centre core requirements apart from childcare which, it is proposed, will be met through the satellite sites. The project management for the new building will be undertaken by the PCT and be managed through its existing capital planning processes.

1.3 The management of the Havens SureStart programme currently resides with the PCT by agreement with the County Council. It is envisaged that this responsibility will transfer over to the County Council by March 2006.

1.4 The Peacehaven Clinic is owned by Sussex Downs and Weald PCT and it is proposed that the new extension, which will form the hub of the new Centre, will be leased from the PCT for 25 years to provide children's services. As with Children's Centre capital, if the Centre were to prove unsustainable the Council would be required to return the capital grant to the DfES. Any return of grant would be at market value at the time of claw back being invoked and not the full original capital sum. To safeguard the Council's position, CRD Property is being commissioned to work with the PCT on the lease

arrangements. The Council will be seeking a deed of indemnity for the grant the PCT will receive from the Sure Start local programme capital funding. It is proposed that the PCT indemnify ESCC up to the full term of the 25 year lease. If agreed, this would mean that the PCT would take on the responsibility for any claw back for the Children's Centre for the period of the lease agreement. It is considered that this risk is both manageable and small. Ownership and responsibility for maintaining the Children's Centre would rest with the PCT.

1.5 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 a 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 A total of £6.8m has been allocated to the Havens Sure Start Local Programme over a 10 year period to provide a range of services to support children and their families in Peacehaven and Newhaven. £1m of this funding has been allocated to capital development and £500,000 has already been spent on the new Denton Island Children's Centre. The PCT has been a major partner in the development of this SureStart programme from the point of initial application for SureStart status. By agreement with the County Council and the PCT, the management of the programme has been the responsibility of the PCT with the County Council being the Accountable Body.

2.2 The Clinic will provide some additional space from which to deliver integrated services as well as office accommodation for some of the existing Sure Start team. The Government is keen that schools play a key part in Children's Centres; Peacehaven Infant School is a short walk from the Clinic and is ideally placed as a satellite of the Centre offering the early education integrated with day care element of the Children's Centre Core Offer.

2.3 This development will not only meet Children's Centre health targets but also the Key Principles of the PCT, including: Keeping a Local Focus, Working in Partnership, Promoting a Positive Attitude, Involving the local community and Improving Health of Communities.

2.4 Officers from Sussex Downs and Weald PCT are reviewing the current progress of the scheme, and whether it can be completed by March 2006 as required by the terms of the grant. The PCT will, as part of the conditions of the funding transfer, bear the risk of meeting the completion deadline and remain within the allocated budget for the build. It is recommended that, subject to further negotiations between the PCT and the Council, the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Resources is given delegated authority to approve the final scheme and give agreement to the final lease arrangements between the Council and the PCT.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendations

3.1 The proposed Children's Centre would directly contribute towards the Council's strategic priorities of tackling deprivation and inequalities and promoting lifelong learning.

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