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Approvals

This document requires the following approvals. A signed copy should be placed in the project files.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Gill Hanlan	Head of Sure Start	27.09.10	1
Sarah Clover	Childcare Manager	27.09.10	1

Local Impact on Childcare - the sale of St Peters School Site - Devizes

Overview

Purpose To ensure sufficient childcare in the Bath Road area of Devizes.

Background The current childcare provision is situated on the St Peters School site on Bath Road which is to be sold. The majority of the land including the building and land currently occupied by Taylor Made Childcare is owned by Salisbury Diocese. There is also a strip of land on the site which is owned by Wiltshire Council. (site plan attached)

Once the existing St Peters School relocates to the new site on London Road, Devizes, tenants on the diocese land at Bath Road will be evicted. Formal notice has been given to the current tenants.

Taylor Made Childcare Ltd – currently provides full day care nursery provision for 0 – 5 years, and is Ofsted registered for 98 children, with 107 on role. Their last Ofsted inspection was 21.11.1010; the nursery achieved an Outstanding grade.

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Advice This is a difficult dilemma especially under the current financial climate, where costs need to be kept to a minimum. The balance between possible job losses and a reduction in childcare against the cost of keeping the site and the long term commitment by Wiltshire Council is not an easy one. Listed below are the options to be considered.

There are several options to be considered:

Options:

1. Taylor Made Childcare Ltd to cease trading on the St Peter's site, Devizes once the school closes and the site sold.

Local Impact: If no alternative site/building, can be sourced (which is the current status) then approximately 100 families will need to find alternative childcare. This may include a large number of working parents. The business will cease trading resulting in 18 redundancies.

There is some other childcare provision across Devizes some of which is not full; however this provision is on the London Road side of Devizes which is the opposite side of the town from the current Taylor Made Childcare site, on Bath Road.

Strategic Impact: The proceeds for the sale of the LA land would go to Wiltshire Council.

However, the Childcare Act 2006 (Section 11) places a duty on local authorities to undertake an assessment of the Sufficiency of Childcare in their area.

Sufficiency of childcare is defined as childcare that is sufficient to meet the requirements of parents who require childcare in order to enable them to take up or remain in work or to undertake education or training which could reasonably be expected to assist them to obtain work.

This links to Schools & Learning's Branch Strategic Plan 2009-2012 1.6 Childcare.

It has been predicted that over the next few years to 2016 there is a slight decline in the number of children 0 – 14 years, however, with new housing developments totalling approximately 2000, 30% of which has already been built with a further 31% committed across Devizes this prediction is set to change and will lead to a shortage of places.

Risk: Objection from employers' parents and staff, possible petition and local press coverage.

2. A land swap of the Diocese land with the Wiltshire Council land and leave Taylor Made Childcare Ltd in the current building. New landlord being Wiltshire Council. Parking, outdoor play space is incorporated into the area of land and would not be in addition to.

Both pieces of land in question are approximately the same in value although a proper evaluation would need to take place on behalf of Wiltshire Council to confirm.

It means access would be needed around what is currently the Taylor Made Childcare site, for part of the new housing development. Wiltshire Council would need to be reimbursed for the proportion of this land should this be the case.

Strategic Impact: No impact on Childcare Sufficiency within the Bath Road area of Devizes.

Local Impact: No inconvenience to approximately 100 families whilst finding alternative childcare. Smooth transitions for all the children especially for those children with special needs.

Risk: The building currently used by Taylor Made is an old Victorian building which will require regular maintenance. This building will become an additional asset for Wiltshire Council with the added responsibilities that goes with such an asset. The land may not increase in value or may be difficult to sell as development land.

Possible Solution: To ensure a full internal & external maintaining/repairing lease is issued to Taylor Made Childcare Ltd, with a lease period to be agreed. The land should increase in value over a period of time, subject to the improvement of the current financial market. This would give more time to find a long term solution for childcare in the Bath Road area of Devizes, as well as being a form of land investment for Wiltshire Council. Expert advise should be sort about the potential sale of the land for development, to ensure issues concerning highways, environmental are not future barriers once the new housing development has been built. This could potentially provide an income for the Local Authority or at least cover costs.

The proprietors of Taylor Made Childcare have been made aware of this lease arrangement.

3. The proceeds of the land sale which currently stands at approximately 16% of the total sale value is ring fenced towards providing a new facility for a childcare provider.

Local Impact: this would be the same as point 2, as the childcare would remain on the site but within a new building.

Strategic Impact: This would also be the same as point 2. In addition to this the proceeds from this sale would go back centrally and it would have to be agreed by Cabinet that the proceeds would be ring fenced and the project then managed by Department of Resources (Property Services) together with Early Years & Childcare Team.

Risk: Due to the current financial market the value of the land will probably not achieve its' full value and therefore the proceeds of the sale may not be sufficient to fund a new building for childcare. The Sure Start Capital Grant 2008-2011 three year programme has been cut and therefore this means any additional financial support to this project is no longer available.

Current construction prices of approx £1500 per sqm means a fund of approximately £280,000 would be required to build a new childcare facility. There is an obvious risks that construction costs will increase and future funding from central government very limited.

Parking and highways would have to be considered as a new build and the parking would have to be in addition to the build.

It is not clear as the whether there will be community parking available, as there is a church adjacent to the site.

Preferred option:

Option 2 to land swap would be the preferred option.

Reasons for selection of chosen approach

Option 2 would assist the LA in meeting its Duty to Sufficiency. It would also be the less risky option in terms of cost if investigated prior to commitment.

Option 1 – this would not help with regards to childcare sufficiency in Devizes the picture may be different in the future when the dynamics of Devizes change through the Local Development Framework. It would obviously impact in terms of job losses, not just for staff but for parents of children with disabilities in an already uncertain time which would have an impact on the local economy.

This option would provide income for the Local Authority.

Option 3 – would be the riskier option in terms of costs and management, due to the time it takes to sell, develop and execute the project it may not be viable because of increasing costs in a time of financial uncertainty for the Local Authority.