



Derby City Council

**SAFEGUARDING AND CYP
CABINET MEMBER MEETING
24 June 2015**

ITEM 5

Report of the Strategic Director for Children and
Young People Department

The Light House Nursery Service Review

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Light House specialist nursery was one of a range of services provided from the Lighthouse which is an integrated team of education, health and social care professionals providing service's for disabled children across Derby. The children may have life limiting or chronic health needs with a learning disability and is also for families where it is clear that there are safeguarding issues and/or the family is at risk of crises. The Nursery service was established as a temporary solution by the Council to respond to the closure of the Hospital Nursery at the Ronnie Mckeith Centre in 2009 and offered 12 placements.
- 1.2 The nursery is non-statutory provision and currently solely funded by the Council with a budget of £80k of which £37k is delegated schools budget. At this present time there are no children accessing the nursery and the required Ofsted registration has expired. The three children who previously attended the nursery secured alternative nursery placements within mainstream nursery provision. The nursery cannot currently operate without a valid Ofsted registration and this will take 16 weeks to generate from point of decision.
- 1.3 The public consultation on the future of the nursery was open for eight weeks between 3 October 2014 and 28 November 2014. Specifically respondents were asked to comment on, accessibility, affordability and adequacy of the existing provision. There were 27 responses, of which 8 were from parents of children requiring specialist services. Of this eight, two had children attend the Light House Nursery provision in the past and two were parents of non-disabled children. The other 19 respondents were professionals of which 5 were Nursery employees either previously or currently.
- 1.4 Whilst there was a strong theme of "specialist provision" being required for this group of children, it was not unilaterally argued for this to be provided through the existing Light House Service (unless substantial improvements and investment was made) or that this provision should be provided by the Council.
- 1.5 The consultation responses were considered by the Departmental Management team of the Children and Young People's Directorate on 4th February 2015, with a recommendation to agree closure of the nursery and take forward to a lead member meeting.
- 1.5 The Lighthouse had a budget saving target of £100k for 2014 to 2015 and the existing

budgets are under pressure with increased demand from local families and carers. It is timely to ensure that the nursery is providing value for money for both families and the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To agree closure of the existing nursery provision at the Light House.
- 2.2 To continue with the agreed strategy with STePs Team and the Childcare and Family Information Service to enable delivery of a tailored service to existing nurseries currently providing specialist provision for disabled children with complex needs.
- 3.3 To begin internal consultation under the Re-Structure, Re-Deployment and Redundancy process with the existing staff.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 From the 12th May 2014, the three children accessing services from the Nursery were re-located to alternative provision, appropriate equipment was provided and the Light House Nursery team supported the alternative provider's staff until specific training could be arranged. The alternative mainstream nurseries assumed total responsibility for the care of the children without Light House support for the last two weeks of the academic year 2014. The three children settled well and parental feedback of these provisions has been positive.
- 3.2 The original transfer of the nursery service from the hospital in 2009 was a temporary solution to the inability of the hospital to provide sufficiency of placements and high levels of parental complaints. However, during 2014 and 2015 alternative mainstream Nursery providers have demonstrated their ability to deliver appropriate levels of service across a range of needs presented by disabled children. In addition there is initial evidence that suggests continuity of or increased outcomes for the Lighthouse Nursery children who are integrated within mainstream provision.
- 3.3 Given the consultation responses to the three quality standards of accessibility, affordability and adequacy of the current provision, none were met sufficiently to justify re-opening the Light House Nursery.
- 3.3 The current staffing employed by the Council to deliver the nursery services comprise 1 part time teacher, 1 part time teaching assistant and 1 part time health care aide. All are currently undertaking alternative duties but will need to become subject to internal consultation processes.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Accessibility- The consultation noted that where parents resided in the near vicinity, accessibility was adequate with good parking. However, given its location there were significant limitations cited for those families not living in the Chaddesdon area. In addition, several parents noted lack of ability to access additional sessions when required or the current service's inflexibility to changing times of sessions to support their employment needs. Accessibility through the existing one site option appeared to be favoured more by professionals, specifically Occupational Therapists, who were concerned about capacity to meet need if required to visit multiple sites across the City.
- 4.2 Affordability.-Most respondents commented that the provision was free, therefore affordable. However a large proportion did comment upon the transport costs which, depending on where families reside in Derby, could result in considerable expense in taxi fares rendering the provision unaffordable to access. There were also several references made to additional funding required to the existing budget in order for the Light House Nursery to deliver a full complement of services if it re-opened in the future.
- 4.3 Adequacy.-The majority of respondents agreed that 12 placements seemed an adequate number for the City and some suggested that more were needed. However, whilst 12 children could be accommodated each week at the Light House Nursery, daily capacity is such that only 3 or 4 children can attend at any one time. Given the adverse impact of the above factors, attendance was incrementally decreasing during the previous 18 months at the Light House Nursery, despite apparent need rising.
- 4.4 Hazel Lymbery Director of Specialist Services offered a meeting to the parents whose children had previously attended the Nursery to discuss their specific views on the Nursery's future. However none of the parents took up this offer. It is known that their children are all accessing other early Years settings.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 None considered

This report has been approved by the following officers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s) | Alison Parkin: HOS Finance Hazel Lymbery: Director Specialist Services |
|---|---|

| | |
|---|---|
| For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices: | Suanne Lim 01332 642444 e-mail suanne.lim@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 Implications |
|---|---|

Appendix 1

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The current budget for the Light House nursery is 80k of which 37k is Delegated Schools Budget. This portion of funding will return to Inclusion and Engagement to support the programme for tailored support for disabled children in the future.

Legal

- 2.1 There is no statutory duty on the local authority to provide nursery services

Personnel

- 3.1 There are three staff employed who will require internal consultation through Re-Structure, Re-Deployment and Redundancy process.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 Each child received an individual assessment of need and their chosen nursery provided with appropriate equipment to meet these needs such as safe handling

Health and Safety

- 5.1 No impact

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 No impact

Asset Management

- 7.1 The room that was used for the Light House Nursery will revert back for use by the residential service and is adjacent to this provision

Risk Management

- 8.1 Children have been signposted to other services

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The service supports the Councils priorities of
- inspiring start in life
 - inspiring start in life by improving educational attainment

- inspiring working life by improving skills and creating jobs