

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: September 27 2005	MEETING NAME: Executive
Report title:		The Future of Bishops House	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		Newington Ward (surrounding wards – East Walworth, Faraday and Camberwell Green)	
From:		Director of Children’s Services	

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Executive:
 - (a) agrees to the allocation of £777,076 in capital funds to refurbish Bishops House and proceeds with its development as a Children’s Centre in Newington Ward; and
 - (b) requests that the Director of Children’s Services consults with parents, carers and staff and partnership agencies on the future delivery of children’s centre activities and the potential for a relationship between Bishops House and the local primary school in Newington Ward (Keyworth Primary School).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) issued Guidance to local authorities in April 2003 to develop Children’s Centres as the next stage after the development of Sure Start local programmes and the Neighborhood Nurseries Initiative. The first round of Children’s Centres’ development was April 2004 to March 2006; they are targeted at children aged 0-5 years who live in the 20% most deprived wards in the country. In Southwark’s case this encompasses 80% of the borough.
3. A Children’s Centre is where the following services are provided:
 - a full-time day nursery offering childcare and education to children from 0 – 5, including support to a network of childminders;
 - family support to parents in the surrounding area;
 - health services, including specialist and general health care for young children;
 - child and adolescent mental health services;
 - access to a qualified Early Years Teacher.

Children’s Centres must meet what is known as the “core offer” as set out in appendix 2.
4. The then Director of Education successfully applied to the DfES in May 2003 for “early designation” of Bishops House to become a Children’s Centre. In September 2003, the Executive approved the Children’s Centre Strategic Plan for 2004-2006, which recommended the development of twelve children’s centres in the most deprived wards in Southwark. Included in this plan was the recommendation to establish Bishops House Children’s Centre to serve the Newington Ward.

5. Bishops House Children's Centre is a grade 2 Victorian listed building (the old Bishop of Southwark's House); it is a four-storey building, with extensive gardens to the rear. It is situated to the north of the Borough on the border of Lambeth: the full address is 5 Kennington Park Place, Kennington, London SE11 4AS.
6. Bishops House Children's Centre, when fully operational, provides a wide range of flexible services to both children and families. These services are as follows:
 - 50 places for daycare and education, which can provide for 90 children aged 0 – 5 years when those attending part time are included;
 - play schemes at Easter and Summer for children aged 4 to 8 years old;
 - support to childminders who are caring for children with either special education or/and medical needs;
 - sessional play group for children 3 – 5 years who attend either 5 mornings or 5 afternoons, term time only;
 - sessions for children who have language or/and communication delay who are referred by Health Visitors or Speech and Language Therapists;
 - health promotion to the centre and community;
 - children with special education needs or/and medical needs are included within all the Centre groups;
 - supervised family contact service;
 - a Social Services Family Resource Team is based at the centre working with “children in need” and their families.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Bishops House Children's Centre Refurbishment and Development Programme

7. In 2004, a property review of Bishops House Children's Centre was commissioned to ensure that the facility was able to provide a full range of children's centre services. This was carried out by Southwark Building Design Service in consultation with senior managers and the Education Property Section.
8. The property review identified that two refurbishment schemes were required to maintain Bishops House Children's Centre:
 - **internal reordering and refurbishment works.** Rearrangement of internal areas to provide additional workspace and parents' facilities, associated mechanical and electrical works, sanitary installations, provision of additional IT facilities, improved external signage, associated works in connection with the reception area.
 - **rewiring.** A survey of the electrical installation reported in July 2001 that the circuitry, which is estimated to be 50 years old, was in very poor condition and the general installation was unsatisfactory.

9. As Bishops House is a grade 2 listed, Queen Anne style building, built in 1895, it is not viable to convert the facilities to meet the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act; therefore Southwark Building Designed Service were also commissioned to undertake a feasibility study to build a training facility with disabled access in the grounds of the Children's Centre. Unfortunately, the funds allocated from the 2004-06 capital allocations for children's centres for the building of the training facility are no longer available from the phase 1 children's centre funds, as the time required to obtain planning permission for a listed building site would take us beyond the deadline for obtaining approval for funding from the DfES. However, consideration for developing the training facility could be included in a later phase of children's centre funding. Alternatively, it might be possible to develop a facility with disabled access through a partnership with the local primary school (Keyworth Primary School).
10. The original budget for the programme of works was £483,250. However following the development of the design and specification of the works, including the requirements of English Heritage, the pre-tender estimated cost rose to £777,076; appendix 3 is a breakdown of the cost. The additional allocation which would be required from Education capital fund if the works are to proceed is therefore £293,826.
11. Since January 2005, plans have been progressively put in place to temporarily close Bishops House whilst the refurbishment was carried out, including taking no new admissions and relocating the children to alternative early years provision. Once the increase in estimated costs was known, the intended programme of works was suspended to allow time for the Executive to consider the additional cost and the future of Bishops House and to assess whether it was better to proceed on an alternative site.

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF BISHOPS HOUSE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

12. The Executive is asked to review the options for the future development of Bishops House Children's Centres and to allocate funding if appropriate.
13. **Option 1:** to proceed with the refurbishment and rewiring of Bishops House Children's Centre as originally planned.
14. This involves continuing with the original plan to develop Bishops House Children's Centre as a phase 1 project (2004-6) and investing £777,076 in the refurbishment and rewiring of the facilities. This would require an additional allocation of £293,826 from the Education Capital Programme. The use of children's centre funding would require a commitment to maintaining Bishops House as a children's centre for at least 10 years, or part of the funding may be reclaimed by the DfES.

Benefits:

- To build on the success of Bishops House Children's Centre for providing a range of high quality services
- Bishops House has extensive outdoor play space which would be difficult to replace elsewhere
- The continuation of 90 place nursery in the Newington Ward, serving children aged 0 – 5 and other services such as the supervised contact centre
- Bishops House is already approved as a children's centre by the DfES Sure Start Unit
- The original works have been tendered for and therefore should be able to be delivered within a relatively short time scale. The building is empty and ready for refurbishment

Risks:

- Diverting capital funding from other educational projects
 - The facilities do not meet the requirements of the Disabilities Discrimination Act and therefore other arrangements will need to be made, in partnership with other Council services, to ensure services are available for disabled customers
15. **Option 2:** to undertake the minimum refurbishment and rewiring of Bishops House Children's Centre required to enable the building to re-open with the possibility of reviewing the long-term use of the facility.
16. This involves continuing with the original programme of works with a longer term view to developing the facilities as an alternative place for children's activities, such as a health centre or a family resource centre. This would require the investment in the refurbishment and rewiring of the building to a minimum cost which does not include phase 1, children's centre funding (£80,000). This is estimated to be £697,000.

Benefits:

- The continuation of 90 place nursery in the Newington Ward, serving children aged 0 – 5, until alternative nursery facilities are available
- Bishops House remains a resource for children and families in the Newington Ward
- The works should be able to be delivered within a relatively short time scale

Risks:

- Failing to maximise the potential use of round 1 children's centre funding
 - Diverting capital funding from other educational projects
 - Difficulty in establishing the nursery as a viable business without long term security (e.g. recruiting staff)
 - Savings are relatively minor and from external grant, therefore of no net benefit to the Council
 - Parents may not choose to send their children to a nursery if they cannot complete the full four/five years of their education and care provision
 - Uncertainty over the development an alternative use
17. **Option 3:** To close Bishops House Children's Centre and to focus the resources on developing a purpose built children's centre elsewhere in the Newington area.
18. Plans for this are at a very early stage and a feasibility study has not been carried out. It is estimated that it would take between 2 and 3 years to develop a children's centre at an alternative site in the Newington area. The most likely site for the development of a children's centre would be in partnership with Keyworth Primary School. To maximise the development of a children's centre at an alternative site may require the sale of Bishops House and the re-investment of the capital receipt. This option would require the provision of temporary nursery places while the project was progressed.

Benefits:

- To build a new purpose built children's centre facility that will be fully inclusive and cater for the needs of children and adults with disabilities
- To develop a children's centre in partnership with and under the governance of a local primary school

Risks:

- The loss of an existing, well-functioning service
 - The costs, timescales and other uncertainties associated with extending services to provide a children's centre on a new site which have not been assessed
 - Failing to maximise the potential use of round 1 children's centre funding
 - The loss of childcare services whilst waiting for a new children's centre project to be developed in the Newington area
 - The DfES may not approve the proposal if there is a delay in delivering the full Sure Start Children's Centre core offer
19. Option 2 above entails most of the additional costs of Option 1 but with reduced short-term benefits (in the loss of the planned Children's Centre) and some longer-term uncertainty over the development of an alternative use, including uncertainty over the availability of funds.
20. The real choice therefore seems to be between Options 1 and 3. Option 1 allows the continuation of a valued service, albeit at higher cost than previously anticipated, within the shortest possible timescale. Option 3 entails a significantly longer delay in restoring service levels, with much higher levels of risk around costs, timescales and other issues. On this basis, Option 1 is the recommended course.

TIMETABLE

21. If the Executive selects either option 1 or 2 above, the timetable for the re-opening of Bishops House is as follows:

ACTION	DATE
Negotiating contract	Oct/Nov 2005
Storage of equipment and furnishings	Nov 2005
Contract timetable - 26 weeks (estimated time for completion of works)	June/July 2006
Recruitment of staff	Feb to April 2006
Estimated re-opening of facilities	June/July 2006

CONSULTATION

22. Parents and carers were originally consulted on the temporary closure of Bishops House Children's Centre for the refurbishment and rewiring of the facility and were advised that their children would be temporarily relocated to alternative early years provision. In September 2005, parents and carers were advised that the refurbishment works had been delayed, pending a review of the children's centre programme by the Executive in October 2005. Given the urgency of the issue, the timetable for consideration of the future of Bishops House has since been advanced.
23. A number of parents and carers who are past and present users of Bishops House Children's Centre have expressed a view that they wish childcare services to continue at this facility.
24. The Executive may wish to recommend that the Director of Children's Services undertakes further consultation with parents, carers and staff and partnership agencies on the future delivery of children's centre activities and the potential for a relationship between Bishops House and the local primary school in the Newington Ward.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES ON THOSE AFFECTED

25. If the Executive chooses option 1 or 2, staff that are currently redeployed to other Early Years facilities will return to re-open Bishops House Children's Centre. A number of the children that are currently relocated currently relocated at alternative facilities will reach primary school age in January 2006, and will transfer to their chosen primary school. The younger children will be offered first choice to return to Bishops House to maintain continuity with key members of staff.
26. If the Executive chooses option 3, the closure of Bishops House, all staff will be offered new positions within the Early Years service. The children will be integrated into alternative early years provision. New parents and carers seeking childcare provision would be guided towards alternative early years provision and eventually, the new children's centre within the Newington area.
27. There are a number of organisations that work in partnership with Bishops House to deliver children's centre activities. During the temporary closure period, arrangements have been made to carry on their activities at alternative sites within the Newington area. Children's centre activities such as health, developing child-minding networks, speech and language services, would continue to be organised even if Bishops House is closed.

RESOURCE IMPLICATION

28. If the Executive selects option 1, the cost of refurbishing and rewiring Bishops House is £777,076; appendix 3 sets out a detailed analysis of the cost. It should be noted that there is a 10% contingency included in the estimated cost, as allowance has been made for any additional works that may be required whilst refurbishing the building. This is a relatively high amount as the building is listed and any additional works that may be required will need to be in harmony with the architecture of the building.
29. The funding package for the refurbishment and rewiring programme is as follows:

Children's Centre Programme (phase 1 Sure Start funding)	£ 80,000
DfES Grant 614	£146,375
DfES Grant 316	£103,000
LBS Capital – match funding Grant 614	£ 24,375
LBS Capital – rewiring	£129,500
LBS Capital – Education Programme	£293,826
TOTAL	£777,076

30. If the Executive selects option 2, the cost of refurbishing and rewiring will be £697,000.00. The cost of the project will be reduced by £80,000 and will exclude the refurbishment of the reception area. However, this is funding that has been allocated from the phase 1, children's centre capital allocation. If the Executive decides not to commit Bishops House to becoming a children's centre for the next ten years, this funding would not be available for other uses.
31. If the Executive selects option 3, Bishops House could be disposed of and the capital receipt would be available to the Council for re-investment in alternative projects.

CONCURRENTS

Financial Implications

32. Capital funds will be made available to the value of £777,076 from within the existing Education Programme in order to complete essential refurbishment works for Bishops House. Given the requirements of the Service, there is no alternative to this approach although the future of this and all other Council buildings will continue to be subject to review in line with wider accommodation strategy.

□

Borough Solicitor

33. Legal concurrent to follow.

REASON FOR LATENESS

34. Bishops House Children's Centre has been closed on a temporary basis in order to undertake the refurbishment and rewiring programme. When the pre-tender estimates were calculated, following consultation with English Heritage, and tenders received, the estimated cost was higher than expected. The decision on whether to proceed with the programme has therefore been brought forward, in order to resolve the future of Bishops House and the continuation of the service provision.

REASONS FOR URGENCY

35. This item is on the published Forward Plan for October. However, the decision has been brought forward.
36. As soon as the Executive has decided on the future of Bishops House Children's Centre, this will either allow the planned works to proceed as soon as possible and with minimum disruption, leading to the re-opening the facility, or will enable officers to plan long term for the redeployment of staff and children.

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
<i>Early Years Services</i>	<i>John Smith House</i>	<i>David Wallis 020 7525 5156</i>

APPENDIX 1

Audit Trail

Lead Officer	<i>Romi Bowen, Director of Children's Services</i>	
Report Author	<i>David Wallis- Head of Early Years</i>	
Version	<i>Final Version</i>	
Dated	<i>23 September 2005</i>	
Key Decision	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / EXECUTIVE MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments included
Borough Solicitor & Secretary	Yes	No
Chief Finance Officer	Yes	Yes
Head of Procurement	No	No
Date final report sent to Constitutional Education		23 September 2005

Appendix 2: Sure Start Children's Centres Core Offer

All Children's Centres must offer access to the following core services:

Early education integrated with day care:

- Early education integrated with day care for babies and children until they reach school age
- Day care suitable for working parents - minimum of 5 days/week, 48 weeks/year, 10 hours/day
- Nursery places will be open to all, not just families in the immediate area, to provide the best educational outcomes for all children (admission and fee policies will be determined locally)
- Support for childminders, who may also offer linked care
- Early identification of children with special needs and disabilities with inclusive services and support for their families

Family support and parental outreach:

- Visits to all children in the catchment area within two months of birth
- Access to specialist services
- Parenting support and information as well as specific support for families in need and 'hard to reach' families
- Providing information and advice on parenting skills at significant transition points for the family (e.g. pre birth, early days, settling into childcare)
- Increasing parents' understanding of their child's development
- Increasing the involvement of fathers

Child and family health services:

- Ante-natal advice and support for parents
- Information and guidance on breast feeding, hygiene, nutrition and safety
- Identification, support and care for those suffering from maternal depression
- Speech and language and other specialist support
- Smoking cessation interventions

Links with schools and Children's Information Services (CIS):

- Links to local schools, extended schools and out of school activities (holiday play schemes, before/after school play & learning)
- Information to parents/carers about CIS

Links with Jobcentre Plus:

- Linking in with local arrangements (e.g. via the local authority's service level agreement) for collaboration with Jobcentre Plus Childcare Partnership managers
- Encouragement and support for parents and carers who wish to consider training and employment

Children's Centres may well offer a range of other services, including:

- Effective links with further and higher education institutions, and local training providers
- Training for parents and carers, including English as an Additional Language where relevant, Basic Skills, or parenting classes
- Specialist services for children with disabilities
- Benefits advice, including maternity benefits
- Childcare and other services for older children
- Toy library

Appendix 3: Bishops House Children's Centre

Analysis of Cost Estimate

Item	Refurb	Rewire	
Refurbishment and decorations	49,469.79		
Re-plastering	11,032.96		
Joinery	10,850.00		
Flooring	29,182.00		
Improvements	40,799.80		
Sanitary Installations	16,425.00		
Electrical Installations and BWIC		182,000.00	
Air conditioning main office	10,000.00		
Public Health Engineering	10,000.00		
Carcass installation for data services		15,000.00	
Containment routes for other services		3,000.00	
Changing incoming electrical equipment		10,000.00	
Additional BWIC with services		26,589.84	
	<u>177,759.55</u>	<u>236,589.84</u>	414,349.39
Contractors preliminaries	25,526.03	33,973.97	59,500.00
	<u>203,285.58</u>	<u>270,563.81</u>	
Contingency @ 10%	20,328.56	27,056.38	
Provisional Sums	25,500.00	6,000.00	
Southwark Direct Costs	15,150.00	3,950.00	
Asbestos removal	5,000.00		
	<u>269,264.13</u>	<u>307,570.20</u>	
Professional Fees @ 14.25%	38,370.14	43,828.75	82,198.89
Statutory Fees		5,000.00	
Procurement Fees		7,400.00	
Removal & return of furniture		35,000.00	
	<u>307,634.27</u>	<u>398,798.95</u>	706,433.22
Client contingency @ 10%	30,763.43	39,879.89	
	<u>338,397.70</u>	<u>438,678.84</u>	777,076.54