

CABINET MEMBER – 1 JUNE 2010

APPROVAL OF LARGE CAPITAL GRANT PROJECTS FOR EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. On 16 September 2008 the Cabinet approved the Oxfordshire Early Years Capital Programme 2008-2011. This sets out the plans for expenditure of £7.8 million that has been made available by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to secure significant investment in early years provision, mostly to benefit children in the non-maintained sector.
2. 59 expressions of interest for Large Grants (> £10,000) were received from early years providers. 44 of these projects have been approved (subject to contractual agreement), and a further 5 shortlisted, by the Cabinet Member on 5 May 2009, 7 July 2009, 4 November 2009 and 7 April 2010.

Development of the Shortlisted Projects

3. The shortlisted early years providers (for grants > £25,000) were invited to complete a full application form for return to the Council by 31 March 2010 at the latest.
4. On-site visits were arranged for meetings between Council officers, the early years provider and the landowner or school (as appropriate).
5. Advice has been provided by Council legal, finance and procurement officers as to the most appropriate forms of funding agreement and contractual processes for awarding and distributing grants.
6. One further project is now recommended for approval, subject to appropriate contractual agreement:
 - Stanford Pre School is currently located in the village hall and operates on a 'pack-away' basis. A grant up to a maximum of £356,000 has been applied for to construct a purpose designed building providing activity room, office/meeting space, storage, toilets, kitchen and outdoor play space. The new building will be located on land adjacent to the Village Hall.

Financial and Staff Implications

7. The estimated cost of the project recommended for approval is £356,000, this cost will be met from capital grant provided by the DCSF to secure significant

investment in early years provision. The revenue costs associated with the ongoing operation and maintenance of the building will be met by the pre-school.

Equality and Inclusion

8. The Early Years Capital Grant is for the improvement of the learning environment in early years settings to support young children's play and learning with a view to raising achievement and narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and the rest.

Sustainability

9. It is recognised that each project (that involves a new building, extension or major refurbishment) will not necessarily match the assessment criteria of the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) it will however seek to meet those principles and seek to achieve the level of 'GOOD'.

RECOMMENDATION

10. **The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families is RECOMMENDED to approve the application from Stanford in the Vale Pre-school for funding from the Early Years Capital Grant, subject to appropriate contractual agreement.**

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