

CABINET MEMBER – 7 APRIL 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. 19 of these projects have been approved, and a further 30 shortlisted, by the Cabinet Member on 5 May 2009, 7 July 2009, 4 November 2009 and 2 March 2010.

Development of the Shortlisted Projects

3. The shortlisted early years providers (for grants > £25,000) have been 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. 7 projects have submitted a full application form to date. Council officers are assessing these applications. 5 have been approved previously by the Lead Member. One project continues to be deferred.
7. One further project is now recommended for approval, subject to appropriate contractual agreement:
 - Steventon Pre-school Playgroup for a grant up to a maximum of £93,698 for a replacement pre-school building.

Financial and Staff Implications

8. The estimated cost of the project recommended for approval is £93,698.

Equality and Inclusion

9. 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

10. 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

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

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