

**REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE- 11 JUNE 2007**

**REPORT ON: MERGER OF BELLFIELD NURSERY SCHOOL AND PARK PLACE NURSERY SCHOOL**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

**REPORT NO: 283-2007**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This Report seeks approval to consult all stake holders regarding a proposal to establish nursery provision for the West End of the city at Park Place Nursery by merging the existing Bellfield Nursery with Park Place Nursery School.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To formally publish and consult on the Director of Education's proposals as outlined in paragraph 1.1 and to report the outcome of the consultation to the Recess Sub Committee on 16th July 2007.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 In the event that the proposal goes ahead from August 2007 there will be savings of £82,400 in financial year 2007/2008 and £131,800 in a full financial year. In the event of the proposal not going ahead funding would require to be identified to address the issues in paragraph 6.1.

## **4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These proposals will support the sustainability of nursery services within the town centre. The merger will reduce the consumption of energy and water and make efficient use of available building resources.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This proposal ensures that access to nursery education for those with physical and mobility impairment is improved.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 Bellfield Nursery School is housed in a building which now requires refurbishment. A recent Report into the condition of the building by the Education Department's Property Officer indicates, "The building is of generally traditional construction having masonry outer walls with plaster finish internally. The roof construction is timber trusses cedar shingle (slate) finish. The condition of the building having regard to its age requires a level of upgrading and long term maintenance which include new lighting, insulation, improvements to heating system, replacing the shingle roof, new windows, upgrading of kitchen, refurbishment of toilets and replacement of ceilings throughout - the estimated cost of this being in the order of £140,000.

The location of the building and the topography of the site make this building difficult and complex to develop and improve for its present function. To satisfy basic public access requirements it would require expenditure in the order of £36,000. The sloping outside play area

severely restricts the extent that this can be used for children's recreational purposes and its use is severely restricted during periods of inclement weather”.

- 6.2 Bellfield Nursery School is located to the west of the town centre, within the grounds of St Joseph's Primary School and serves a diverse population which includes children of students attending the nearby University and many children from minority ethnic families. Park Place Nursery School is nearby and is adjacent to Park Place Primary School. This nursery serves a population of families with similar characteristics as those using Bellfield. Both nurseries cater for large numbers of full time children and provide all day services to support parents in employment, education or training.

Park Place currently has capacity for 120 part-time places. However, there is spare accommodation available in Park Place Primary School. The current P1 classroom is adjacent to the Nursery and could accommodate a further 60 part-time nursery places.

- 6.3 Park Place would then have space for a total of 180 part-time nursery education places for 3-5 year olds. In addition 20 places at Park Place Nursery provide all year childcare services for the new provision for two year olds.
- 6.4 Law Nursery School is in close proximity to Park Place and Bellfield nurseries. It is envisaged that Law Nursery could therefore accommodate any children from Bellfield Nursery who do not take up a place at Park Place Nursery.
- 6.5 The current nursery admission statistics for year 2007-08 are provided below but it is anticipated that more children will enrol in the next few months. Late admissions are very common across Dundee but are particularly prevalent in the locality of the University due to the high number of international student families that arrive to begin studies in September and October.

	No. of registered part-time places available	No. of part-time places allocated to returning children in 2007-2008	No. of part-time places applied for in session 2007-2008	Total no. of part-time places required for session 2007-2008
Bellfield Nursery School	100	45	39	84
Park Place Nursery School	180	55	34	89
Law Nursery School	140	54	34	88
<b>Total part-time places in Law and Park Place</b>	320		<b>Total part-time places required for session 2007-2008</b>	261

This leaves 59 part-time places still available.

This also leaves spare capacity for children requiring nursery provision for entry in January and April 2008.

## **7.0 PROPOSAL**

7.1 These proposals have been designed to:

- ensure sound financial management and prudent spend of the Education Department's revenue and capital budgets in 2007-08
- ensure that the children from the West End of Dundee can continue to access high quality and flexible services

7.2 As part of the consultation into these proposals, parents, staff and the relevant Trade Unions will be formally consulted and their views considered. A further report will be brought back to the Recess Sub Committee on 16th July 2007.

7.3 It is anticipated that Law and Park Place will be able to accommodate all of the children from Bellfield Nursery and the transition arrangements will be managed carefully and sensitively and will ensure that parents' individual concerns are addressed. The merger will be managed by the Early Years Manager working alongside the Acting Head Teacher of Park Place Nursery School (substantively Head Teacher of Bellfield Nursery School) and the Head Teacher at Law Nursery School.

7.4 A letter has been sent to all the parents who have applied for nursery provision at Bellfield Nursery School for entry in August 2007 informing them of the proposal so that they can request alternative provision in light of this information if they wish to do so. The parents of children who are currently attending Bellfield Nursery School have also received a letter advising them of this proposal. All parents will be informed and consulted in the normal manner following any decision taken to consult on this proposal.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION**

8.1 This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Director of Social Work, and Head of Communities.

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

Anne Wilson

31 May 2007

AW/LG