

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 JULY 2013

PETITION – SURE START NURSERY AND PRE-SCHOOL FACILITIES

ADDENDUM REPORT

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults

Author: Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

This addendum report provides the director's comments, which were listed as to follow in the original report and also adds information about an additional paper copy of the same petition, which was also submitted to the Council but was omitted from the report.

1 Petitions referred to this committee

- 1.1 The e-petition was also accompanied by a paper copy of the petition which received 118 signatures and was received by the Council on 12 June 2013.

2 Director's comments

- 2.1 The daycare nursery at the Magpie Hall Road site will be changing its opening hours such that the number of children attending will more than double to 64 places.
- 2.2 The pre-school nursery at Tramways, Luton, will be opening an additional session each week, so that it provides places on every morning and afternoon. The pre-school will provide places for 32 children.
- 2.3 Both nurseries will give priority to local families. Places will be available for children aged two and above, and most families will receive places free of charge. In the past month there has been a large increase in enquiries and applications from local families in central Chatham and Luton seeking to access the expanded free early education provision from this September.

- 2.4 The continuation of fee-paying full daycare across the whole working day and for 50 weeks per year, alongside the newly expanded free early education places, is not operationally or financially viable and would require the continuous re-direction of Council funds away from Sure Start services to subsidise childcare for a small number of children.
- 2.5 Financial subsidies for childcare for working families are available through the tax system (HMRC), whilst local authorities are not funded to provide subsidised childcare.
- 2.6 Current users of the nursery who wish to continue to use the nurseries within the changed hours will be able to do so, whilst those who are making childcare arrangements with other local daycare nurseries are being supported to do so.
- 2.7 The purpose of Sure Start Children's Centres is to help young children to thrive, to develop well and to be ready for school. The changes within All Saints, and its pre-schools, will increase the number of local children who will benefit from attending this outstanding centre.

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