

Agenda item:

**[No.]**

**Cabinet**

**On 21 July 2009**

Report Title **Early Years Quality and Access Capital Grant Programme**

Report of **Peter Lewis, Director of Children and Young People's Service**

Signed :

Contact Officer: **Ros Cooke, Head of Early Years Foundation Stage Standards.**  
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Wards(s) affected: **All**

Report for: **Key Decision**

## **1. Purpose of the report**

- 1.1. To agree the proposed strategy and delivery programme for the Early Years Quality and Access (EYQA) Capital Grant of £4.029 million.

## **2. Introduction by Cabinet Member**

- 2.1. Children's experiences in their early years have a major impact on their future level of achievement and wellbeing. Too many of the children in the more deprived parts of our borough fail to achieve so it is important that we use additional funding, such as the EYQA, to target those areas, and those children, who could benefit the most.
- 2.2. The fund is therefore focused on improving the achievement of boys; of children with English as an Additional Language and of identified minority groups such as Turkish & Kurdish children and Black Caribbean boys.
- 2.3. The fund is also being used to target and improve poor provision right across the

borough and, specifically, to improve provision for disabled children.

**3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and /or other Strategies:**

3.1. This programme relates to Council Plan Priority 3. *Encouraging lifetime well-being, at home, work, play and learning* as it is designed to promote improved learning environments for our youngest children.

3.2. Additionally, it supports the aims and objectives of the Early Years section of the *Enjoy and Achieve* outcome area of the *Children and Young Peoples' Plan* and the *Every Child Matters* agenda.

**4. Recommendations**

4.1 That Cabinet approves:

- i) the strategy for utilising the EYQA Grant to support the aim of improving the overall Early Years provision within the Borough; and,
- ii) the outlined delivery programme for the EYQA Grant.

**5. Reason for recommendation(s)**

5.1. The proposed strategy would ensure that the funding was used to support the improvement of Early Years settings across the Authority. It is linked with other DCSF funding streams that support the Council to meet its Early Years Outcomes Duty and childcare sufficiency requirements.

5.2. Evidence indicates that the private, voluntary and independent Early Years provision across the borough varies in quality. Moreover, the overall educational attainment of children attending schools in the East of the borough is lower than that for children in the West. The EYQA Grant will help to ensure that, in Haringey, the achievement gap between the lowest achievers and the rest is reduced, as areas of high deprivation and/or poor provision will be targeted.

**6. Other options considered**

6.1. Not applicable.

**7. Summary**

**Background**

7.1. In November 2007, The Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) announced that Haringey would receive an EYQA Grant of £4.029 million from April 2008 to March 2011. This report details the strategy and rationale behind the partitioning of the Grant and its delivery.

7.2. The DCSF states that the EYQA Grant should support the delivery of the Government's Ten Year Strategy for Childcare 'Choice for parents: the best start for children' which relates to the *Every Child Matters* agenda. It is hoped that the EYQA Grant will assist in overcoming the challenge of reducing the gap in attainment between the lowest achieving children and the rest through securing better results when children are assessed at five.

### **National Focus**

7.3. Nationally, the EYQA Grant has three core aims:

1. To improve the quality of the learning environment in early years settings ...with a particular emphasis on improving play and physical activities; and ICT resources;
2. To ensure all children, including disabled children, are able to access provision; and
3. To enable PVI providers to deliver the extension to the free offer for three and four year olds and to do so flexibly.

7.4. In the first instance, the EYQA Grant will be focussed towards, but not limited to, improving the environmental quality of PVIs as these are the providers who have had little access to funding in the past. However, spending in the maintained sector is not excluded.

7.5. Support will be provided for improved provision of ICT.

7.6. The EYQA Grant will also be used in accordance with the findings of the Haringey childcare sufficiency assessment.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Challenges in Haringey**

7.7. The quality of provision across the PVI sector in Haringey varies widely with respect to the level of qualification, understanding and skill of practitioners and the suitability and state of the premises used. Every child deserves an equal chance to develop within good quality provision with well-qualified practitioners who are skilled and knowledgeable about young children in an appropriate environment.

7.8. Through analysis of Early Years Foundation Stage data we have identified that we need to improve;

- outcomes for children in problem solving, reasoning & number and in social and emotional development for all children;
- achievement of boys;
- achievement of children with English as an Additional Language;
- achievement of identified minority groups such as Turkish & Kurdish children and Black Caribbean boys; and
- ICT as it is an area that has been identified nationally as needing infrastructure support.

### **The Strategy for Haringey Outlined**

7.9. As stipulated by the DCSF, the EYQA Grant will be focussed towards the PVI sector and thereafter the maintained sector.

7.10. Throughout the programme there will be an emphasis and focus on:

- Supported self evaluation by settings and schools to ensure the sustainability of the programme and continued use of any developments linked to Early Years training
- Supporting the improvement of settings in areas of high deprivation in order to deliver our Early Years Outcome Duty of narrowing the gap in children's achievement;
- Supporting improvements in the PVI and Childminder sectors to encourage a level playing field of provision while continuing to support improvements in the maintained sector; and,
- Effective use of the capital to develop Early Years services (where appropriate, the EYQA Grant will be linked to Childrens Centre Phase III proposals). With respect to the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, where under-capacity exists we will, where possible, use the fund to support the development/creation of new places; for example, increasing the SEN provision throughout the borough and the number of childcare places in the West of the borough.

7.11. Bid invitations were sent out to all eligible PVIs and maintained sector settings. The process of evaluating each application is near completion and will be complete by the Cabinet meeting date of 21 July 2009. Every applicant has been notified that they will be advised of the outcome of their bid in due course and once Cabinet approval for the overall strategy has been attained.

#### **Evaluation of Bids**

7.12. Bids are graded, evaluated and approvals will be made based on a need priority basis, the criteria of which includes the following:

- The need to improve outside learning areas; particularly to support improvement in boys achievement;
- The need for ICT resources and equipment; particularly to support PVIs, and childminders to support children's play and assess their progress, particularly in the most deprived areas of the borough;
- The need for ensuring full access for disabled children and adults and children with Special Educational Needs;
- The further development of the Children's Centre programme to allow all children access to Children's Centre services.

7.13. A summary of the proposed allocation of the £4.029 million EYQA Grant is stated in the following table (A more detailed breakdown is provided in Appendix 1):

EARLY YEARS SECTOR	2009 TO 2010	2010 TO 2011	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
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<b>CHILDMINDERS AND PVI'S</b>	£ 1,133,000	£ 780,000	£ 1,913,000
<b>MAINTAINED</b>	£ 393,000	£ 1,280,000	£ 1,673,000
<b>PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b>	£ 120,000	£ 123,258	£ 243,258
<b>PROGRAMME CONTINGENCY</b>	£ -	£ 200,000	£ 200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 1,646,000</b>	<b>£ 2,383,258</b>	<b>£ 4,029,258</b>

NOTE: By definition, the private, voluntary and independent sector are private schools and nurseries, playgroups, independent schools and childminders. The maintained sector are local authority run schools and children centres.

#### **Outlined Programme Delivery**

- 7.14. All registered PVIs will be invited to receive ICT Training and Outdoor Play Training at the end of which they will receive an ICT pack (including items such as a digital camera and a printer/scanner/photocopiers) and an Outside Play pack (including items such as metal detectors and sand pits). It is planned that all PVI training for ICT and Outside Play will be rolled out over a period of a year up until July 2010. All ICT packs and Outside Play packs will be procured before December 2009.
- 7.15. All PVI bids that include construction works will be assessed by a dedicated team which will include an Early Years Outdoor Play resource and a Building Construction resource.
- 7.16. Approved PVI construction works will be staggered and finish by March 2011. Similarly, all approved construction works for the maintained sector will be spread throughout the lifetime of the programme, concluding at the latest at the end of March 2011. There will be a second round of bids invited to apply for funding by March 2010; any previously unsuccessful bidders will be given advice and/or support on how to analyse their need and encouraged to reapply.
- 7.17. All grant recipients will be required to sign an undertaking detailing the terms and conditions of the use/maintenance of any equipment and/or work carried out. For example, in the case of ICT equipment or Outside Play equipment any person/business that ceases to operate as a PVI provider within a predetermined time will be required to return the equipment to the Council for redistribution.
- 7.18. No construction/building works will be undertaken with the childminders. With respect to the construction works that will be carried out in other PVI settings, the applicant/designated authority will be required to agree and sign an undertaking which will include reference to the fact that they take full responsibility for any operating costs and issues associated with maintenance

of all completed work.

### **Programme Management**

- 7.19. Various resources will be used at different stages throughout the programme with the overall running of the programme delivery being supervised by a EYQA Programme Manager; with guidance from a Senior Management Project Board consisting of the Head of Early Years Foundation Stage, CYPS Capital Accountant, BSF Capital Programme Manager and Head of Primary and Pre-School Construction.
- 7.20. Programme management costs includes costs for the Programme Manager, administrators and any other necessary resources; in the first instance and where possible, Council resources will be used and costs for their time charged to the EYQA programme. Programme management costs may also include the use of any specialist resources (consultants) that could be required to ensure the efficient delivery of the programme until it is complete in March 2011.

### **8. Chief Financial Officer Comments**

- 8.1. In assessing and approving the bids, care needs to be taken, particularly in respect of providers in the non-maintained sector, to ensure that proper consideration is given to the following areas:
- The need to treat VAT correctly where for certain providers this may be non-recoverable; and
  - The need to be aware of any Capital Gains Tax implications where any improvement to a private (non-business) residence may give rise to a liability.
- 8.2. In cases where there may be issues in these areas specific guidance should be sought from Corporate Finance on a case by case basis.

### **9. Head of Legal Services Comments**

- 9.1. The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report and comments that the implementation of its recommendations will assist the Council in complying with its duty under Section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006 to fund education for three and four year olds. Such provision can be made in a variety of settings.

### **10. Head of Procurement Comments**

- 10.1. Not applicable.

### **11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments**

- 11.1. The programme is designed to run alongside other Early Years programmes which together aim to ensure that all children are able to make good progress

in their learning and develop within good quality provision with well qualified practitioners who are skilled and knowledgeable about young children within appropriate environments. It is designed to support the achievement of our national equalities target for narrowing the gap in the achievement of young children.

## **12. Consultation**

- 12.1. Consultation has been and will be undertaken with the private, voluntary and independent sector to establish; what are the evaluations of their priorities for improvement within the context of the programme requirements.
- 12.2. The Early Years Quality and Inclusion Team and the linked Children's Centres have been consulted on their views on the areas of improvement that should be a focus across the sector and provide support to those settings which need help to improve.
- 12.3. The Primary and Pre-School Construction departments of the Children and Young People's Directorate have been consulted and involved in the development of the programme. Initial consultation has taken place with the Legal Department.

## **13. Service Financial Comments**

- 13.1. The Council has been allocated a total of £4.029 million of grant from the DCSF Sure Start unit for funding the Early Years Quality and Access Programme. The grant must be defrayed by March 2011.
- 13.2. A significant proportion of the funding will be used to support provision in the PVI sector, and it has been important in developing the delivery strategy that a good balance is achieved between supporting early years policy objectives, responding to provider bids and also ensuring the proper use of public funds. It is considered that the provision of equipment packages alongside training, and the release of funding to providers based on specialist assessment of approved works carried out will achieve this balance.
- 13.3. Delivery of the programme to meet the timetable remains challenging and it will be important to programme the deployment of resources to achieve this. The planned use of the grant as outlined in para 7.14 includes provision for programme management to achieve this.

## **14. Use of appendices /Tables and photographs**

- 14.1. Appendix 1:Early Years Quality and Access Capital Programme Expenditure Profile

**15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

15.1. Not applicable.

**Appendix 1****Early Years Quality and Access Capital Programme Expenditure Profile:**

EARLY YEARS SECTOR	2009 TO 2010	2010 TO 2011	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
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<b><u>CHILDMINDERS</u></b>			
IT PACKS (280NR)	£ 280,000	£ -	£ 280,000
OUTDOOR PLAY PACKS (280NR)	£ 420,000	£ -	£ 420,000
TRAINING, PROCUREMENT, STORAGE & DISTRIBUTION COSTS	£ 20,000	£ -	£ 20,000
<b><u>PVI'S</u></b>			
IT PACKS (75NR)	£ 75,000	£ -	£ 75,000
1ST ROUND BIDS	£ 338,000	£ 400,000	£ 738,000
2ND ROUND BIDS	£ -	£ 250,000	£ 250,000
TARGETED EXPENDITURE	£ -	£ 130,000	£ 130,000
<b><u>MAINTAINED SECTOR</u></b>			
CHILDREN CENTRES	£ 105,000	£ 420,000	£ 525,000
SCHOOLS	£ 288,000	£ 860,000	£ 1,148,000
<b>PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b>	£ 120,000	£ 123,258	£ 243,258
<b>PROGRAMME CONTINGENCY</b>	£ -	£ 200,000	£ 200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 1,646,000</b>	<b>£ 2,383,258</b>	<b>£ 4,029,258</b>