

Matter Referred from Stoneygate Community Meeting – 16 February 2008

32. EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Mel Meggs, Head of Service, Early Years Provision, was in attendance to provide an overview of early years services, with particular reference to the Stoneygate Ward.

Mel stated that the early prevention service was responsible for ensuring that all children and young people were not prevented from having poor outcomes in later life. She spoke of research that found a distinct link between positive early life experiences and educational attainment. The meeting was informed that there had been a significant level of investment in early years services in the past 8-10 years.

Mel explained that 18 Children's Centres were located in Leicester, and that these all offered a range of different services that supported parents and children. Furthermore, it was noted that an extra five centres were to be built, and that this would enable every parent in the city with a child under the age of five to access a children's centre.

On a more local note, Mel explained that there were 434 children aged 3 or 4 in the Ward who were entitled to a free nursery education and that there were currently 507 places available, which covered 6 private nurseries and three schools. Mel stated that more work would be undertaken in relation to increasing the take-up of places for 3 and 4 year olds, and that part of this would cover working with schools and nurseries on providing a more flexible service to suit the work patterns of parents. In addition, it was explained that funding had been secured for free nursery places for 2 year olds.

In terms of the five extra centres, Mel explained that officers were looking at the numbers of children and assessing levels of need within particular areas, before submitting a paper to Cabinet.

Members felt that it was vital for one of the additional five centres to be located in the Stoneygate Ward, and formally requested that Cabinet be asked to strongly consider locating a Children's Centre in Stoneygate. The Chair asked for a show of hands in favour of asking Cabinet to consider this, and the vote was unanimously in favour of this.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be asked to consider locating one of five new Children's Centres in the Stoneygate Ward.