

EXECUTIVE BOARD
4th April 2005

Report of: Neighbourhood Renewal Business Unit

Title: **Rose Hill and Littlemore Sure Start Limited
Extension of Contract**

Ward: Rose Hill and Littlemore

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Key Decision: Yes

Lead Member: Councillor Dan Paskins

Scrutiny responsibility: Community

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board agrees to:

- 1. extend the existing contract between Rose Hill and Littlemore Sure Start Limited and Oxford City Council from 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2006 at a value of £49,084.**
- 2. refer this report to the South East Area Committee for information.**

Summary

- 1.1. This report requests approval from the Executive Board to extend the existing contract between Rose Hill and Littlemore Sure Start Limited from 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006, at a value of £49,084. This is because the national Sure Start Project have announced an extension to the scheme for one year.

Background and context

- 2.2. Sure Start is a Government funded initiative aimed at:
- Reducing social exclusion and improving the quality of life for families; and children in Rose Hill and Littlemore;
 - Raising the education achievements of the communities;
 - Making an impact on children's health, their social and emotional development.

- 2.3. The Sure Start programme is managed on a partnership basis. The City Council has 1 member and 1 officer representative on the Partnership Board. The Council have supported the programme through acting as the employer for 3 members of the Asian Families Team and 1 Lending and Recycling Officer. Sure Start provides the funding for these posts.
- 2.4. The Sure Start Programme started in 1999 and the original agreement came to an end on 31 March 2001. In April 2002 the Executive Board agreed a Minor Project Appraisal report and authorised extending the contract between Oxford City Council and Sure Start Limited until 31 March 2004.
- 2.5. The contract was extended for a further year following an extension of funding being made available for 2004/05. This was done by writing a letter of extension. Sure Start have now received further funding for 2005/6 and Oxford City Council has now received a request that this contract should be further extended for 2005/06. Officers felt that it would be prudent to request further authorisation from the Executive Board to extend this contract again.

The Sure Start Contract

- 3.1. Sure Start wishes to provide funding for the City Council to employ one Asian Families Liaison and Development Worker and two Asian Families Support Workers (part time) and one Lending and Recycling Worker (part time).
- 3.2. The aims of the Asian Families Outreach Team are to:
 - Ensure equality of opportunity in accessing services in the Sure Start area
 - Identifying and understanding the range of needs for Asian families and support access to appropriate of services
 - Assisting in developing services differently to make sure that they are accessible.
- 3.3. The aims of the Lending and Recycling post are to:
 - Provide a service to all families on Rose Hill and Littlemore to provide safety equipment, advice and small equipment donations.
 - To lend larger items of safety equipment to families on low incomes.

How the Sure Start Programme meets the Councils Priorities and Objectives

- 4.1. The Sure Start project is based in Rose Hill and Littlemore an area of serious deprivation (Neighbourhood Statistics on Rose Hill demonstrate that it is among the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the South East of England and that it's problems are masked by the affluence and prosperity of neighbouring Iffley Fields).
- 4.2. Strategy and Review Business Unit have represented Oxford City Council on the Board of Sure Start and Neighbourhood Renewal Officers are represented on the Management Group and the Board.
- 4.3. Oxford City Council support for the project is in line with the broader aims of social inclusion, regeneration and in working in partnership to achieve the Council's aims.
- 4.4. The work of Sure Start contributes directly towards the Council's vision by providing more and improved affordable community and leisure activities and through improving dialogue and consultation.
- 4.5. Sure Start has good involvement of parents in it's governance arrangements and designs all of it's activities to be affordable.
- 4.6. Sure Start is progressively evaluated and the findings are fed back into the work of the project. The evaluation of its first two years of operation is available and describes 'genuine partnerships', 'good engagement with Asian families' and ' an ambitious programme'.
- 4.7. Sure Start represents the kind of partnership that the Oxford Strategic Partnership is designed to facilitate. It contributes directly to the Active and Healthy Communities strand of the current Community Strategy.

Consultation

- 5.1. Sure Start recently reported on their work to the South East Area Committee. At this meeting the issue of future funding for the scheme was raised. The work of the Asian Family Support Workers and the Lending and Recycling service was supported by the Area Committee, because of the success that they have in supporting vulnerable families to access services and in improving the environment and home safety targets.

Financial implications

- 6.1. The total contract sum is £49,084 2005/06. The Council invoice for payment quarterly.
- 6.2. The Director of Sure Start has recently circulated a letter to Board members providing information on the level of available funding for the overall programme in 2006-07 is £834,065. This means that there will be a 25% reduction on their current budget with no uplift for inflation.

This funding will be paid through Oxfordshire County Council but it will be ring fenced for the local Sure Start Programme within the General Sure Start Grant. The letter also suggests that there will be 'large increases' in this grant for 2006-08 for Children's Centres.

- 6.3. The Board will be discussing how to plan for services from 2006 at the Board meeting on March 10th and it is intended to hold a workshop in May to look at future service delivery. The City Council will have officer representation at the Board meetings and at the Workshop.

Staffing Implications

Salary implications.

Job Title	Grade	Current scale point	Hours of work	Current pro-rata salary
Asian Families Support worker (Bengali)	6	28	10	£7,061
Asian Families Support worker (Hindi)	6	28	10	£7,061
Asian Families Liaison & development worker	SO1	31	30	£24,506
Lending & Recycling Worker	5	25	16	£10,456

N.B. All employees are at the top of their current grade so will be eligible for the annual inflation pay award but not the scale point increment.

- 7.1. All of the current staff have been in post in excess of 4 years at this moment in time except one. Their contracts have been renewed at least once and therefore according to the Fixed Term Contracts of Employment Policy, with the exception of one, they are entitled to convert to permanent status. Should the funding cease, they will therefore need to be redeployed under the Employment Stability Policy. This is the case of 31 March 2005 or at any date thereafter. One employee would not be eligible for permanency rights if the contract is not extended. All four employees are entitled to redundancy payments on reaching the end of their contracts. We would issue fixed term contracts to expire on 31 March 2006 (due to external funding) but all of the above will apply irrespective of the indicative date on the contract.
- 7.2. The Sure Start Board and Oxford City Council Officers are currently in the process of developing a forward strategy for funding these posts in the future.

Other possible means of achieving the objectives

- 8.1. The staff could be employed by another agency but this would cause some disruption to the staff and indicate a lack of commitment to the programme by the Council. In addition we might encounter TUPE staffing obligations.

The grounds for recommending a particular option

- 9.1. There are some risks to further extending the staff contracts in that they may become permanent employees of the Council and there may be financial implications because of this. But this is no different to the current situation should their contracts cease in March 2005 with the exception of one member of staff.
- 9.2. The work of the staff is highly respected within the communities and they possess valuable skills. The Sure Start Partnership Board is looking at ways in which the posts can continue to be funded in the future and on a more permanent basis. Officers are confident that a forward strategy for these posts will be identified by January 2006.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY:

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Dan Paskins
Strategic Director: Michael Lawrence
Legal and Democratic Services: Lindsay Cane
Financial Management: Andy Collett
Human Resources: Trudy Compton

Background papers: Executive Board Report ' Minor Project Approval for an Agreement with Sure Start – 23 April 2002

Rose Hill – Littlemore Sure Start: The First Two Years. A report of the local evaluation August 2000 – May 2002.

Report To South East Area Committee: Sure Start Rose Hill and Littlemore - Extracts from the Annual Report 2003-04

