

23 August 2007

**Planning Application ref: DC024357 - New Primary School, Children's Centre, temporary classroom, new access, Hard and soft playing space, vehicle turning and drop off, staff and visitor parking. Land rear of Harcourt Street/Mill Lane, Reddish, Stockport.**

1. Questions have been raised regarding the proposed Children's Centre and its operation in respect of the above planning application proposals. These are addressed below.

2. The Design and Access Statement sets out the opening and operational details of the Children's Centre. It would cater for 0-5 year olds, opening between 0800-1800 (10 hours daily), 48 weeks of the year, and catering for up to 50 places. The likely split is 16 places for 3-4 year olds, 24 places for under 3 year olds and 10 places in the crèche. Sure Start integrated provision is included in this for under fives.

3. The Children's Centre service would be delivered via a number of partners, reflecting the existing services at Fir Tree nursery, but this is supplemented by services which will continue to be delivered through the Health Centre, the childminding network, and other childcare providers. The proposed Children's Centre will not be providing additional childcare over the existing nursery provision provided by Fir Tree Nursery.

4. Fir Tree has a nursery provision of up to 52 places, and this covers part time and full time attendance and numbers do vary during the year with highest take up during the summer period (school holidays) and the lowest in the winter. Actual take up of places during the 2006/2007 academic year was 19.5 full time equivalent (fte) Autumn term 2006; 28 fte Spring term 2007; 34.5 fte Summer term 2007.

5. The traffic generated by this facility has been forecast to transfer to the proposed new school and Children's Centre. The Transport Assessment for the proposed new School off Mill Lane has accounted for the traffic implications of the Children's Centre specifically the traffic impact on the highway network. The proposed opening hours for the Children's Centre help to spread the traffic impact by allowing commuters to drop off young children before the main school peak and pick up later in the day. The Children's Centre and the provision of before and after school clubs also helps to spread that impact by allowing siblings to be dropped off early with one journey.

6. The Children's Centre function is to provide advice and support to parents, in a coordinated way, in the Reddish Area. However, it will not be planning additional childcare in North Reddish (beyond the Fir Tree provision) as there is sufficient care across the area, already provided by private and maintained nurseries and childminders. The children's centre will work with parents via outreach (home visiting) and then supporting parents to attend various support groups which will be held at the clinic, the community centre, and also occasionally at community rooms at the application site. These activities are intermittent, would take place during school hours, so that parents can collect children, and will probably not be standing groups all year.

7. The Head of Children's Centre's has confirmed that SMBC will continue to work with people attending centres to encourage walking to activities; there will also be considerable

home visiting; and the range of community type sessions would be held in a range of locations across North Reddish. These sessions may occasionally include a wider range of parents, child and baby groups within school hours (i.e. not in the peak travel times) such as a baby clinic, health visitor attendance, parents groups while children are looked after in an adjacent room etc. As stated above, some of these sessions may take place in the health centre or the community centre. These sessions are all considered as ancillary activity in planning use terms which will not create significant transport implications. The Centre will provide a critical level of support, and one which parents have told the Head of Children's Centres that is very important. At parenting groups already held in the Reddish area, local parents have stated very strongly that they want such activities to continue as they offer valuable support.