



Meeting: Full Council

Date: 27 February 2014

Wards Affected: Berry Head with Furzeham

Report Title: Future of The Nest Nursery

Is the decision a key decision? Yes

When does the decision need to be implemented? September 2014

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1. Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 The Nest Nursery continues to require an on-going budgetary subsidy from Children's Services (£40k per annum). To remove the budget subsidy the Local Authority has engaged in a tendering exercise with the intention of transferring the Nursery to an external provider. The closure date for applications is the 20th February 2014. However the response so far demonstrates that there are a limited number of providers expressing an interest and the level of questions and details being requested indicate that the Local Authority may not receive any applications on this date.

2. Proposed Decision

The Mayor be recommended:

- 2.1 That, subject to no procurement applications being received on the 20 February 2014, the Director of Children's Services be authorised to consult on the proposed closure of The Nest Nursery, Brixham. The consultation would propose that the Nursery closes on the 31 August 2014.

2.2 Reason for Decision

Without a successful procurement outcome the Nursery will continue to require a financial subsidy from the Children's Services budget. The Children's Services budget needs to prioritise financial resources to ensure statutory functions are being met. The direct delivery of a Nursery provision by the Local Authority is not a statutory function.

The decision would have a negative impact on the community,

- There are insufficient childcare placements for all children to be able to attend a similar provision (i.e. nursery)
 - Using a combination of surplus nursery places (Brixham and Paignton) and childminders it is estimated that there would be sufficient childcare placements but these may not be the provision of choice for parents.
 - Parents of 0- 2 year children would have no other alternative than to select childminding as an option within the Brixham area.
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Supporting Information

4. Position

- 4.1 The Nest Nursery has required an on-going budgetary subsidy from the Local Authority. The cost of providing the Nursery has been reduced to £40K, however the ability of the Local Authority to reduce this further is constrained compared to a private provider. The Local Authority has engaged in two previous procurement processes, both of these have resulted in a negative outcome.

Prior to offering the current tendering opportunity, the officers engaged with Brixham Church of England Primary School to explore the possibility of the nursery being delivered and managed under the school governing body. This option was fully explored and considered but was not deemed viable.

5. Possibilities and Options

- 5.1 As the outcome of the procurement process is currently unknown, no alternative options have been explored. Through the consultation process further options may be identified and explored.

The officers are committed to working with Brixham Town Council. They would support members to explore how to generate and develop alternative childcare within Brixham i.e attracting a new provider to the area to offer provision on an alternative site.

6. Fair Decision Making

6.1 The decision being requested is to allow a process of consultation to be undertaken. If the recommendation is agreed the consultation would be undertaken and full information submitted to a future council meeting.

7. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

- 7.1 Not appropriate

8. Risks

8.1 The decision to not engage with a consultation process would result in the budgetary savings identified not being achieved. The consultation process would result in a full analysis of the impact and the identification of risks.

Appendices

None

Additional Information

None