

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 6TH DECEMBER 2010

REPORT ON: ELMS - CHANGE OF SERVICE PROVISION FROM CLOSE SUPPORT TO EMERGENCY/SHORT TERM YOUNG PERSONS RESIDENTIAL RESOURCE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 719-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to agree the mechanism to proceed with a project in the 2010-2013 Capital Plan to allow the change in service provision at the Elms residential unit for young people, from close support to emergency /short term resource for young people requiring residential care.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:-

- 2.1 approve the proposed changes to the residential unit at a total cost of £249,948, inclusive of professional fees.
- 2.2 instruct the City Architectural Services Officer to negotiate with a suitable partnering contractor to obtain an Agreed Maximum Price for the works within the available budget.
- 2.3 authorise the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) (in conjunction with the Director of Social Work and the Director of Finance) to issue an acceptance to the successful contractor to carry out the works.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A provision for the above amount has been made in the Council's 2010-2013 Capital Plan.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 The Elms was designed as a "Close Support and Secure Unit", and was built between February 1999 and June 2000. The primary task of the unit was to provide a supportive environment which gives order and control to young people who are placing themselves (and in some cases, other people) at risk. For a young person to be admitted to secure care they have to meet the criteria set out in section 70(10) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

The Elms Secure Unit is part of the secure estate for Scotland and designated as a national resource. Only 13% of the secure estate in Scotland is owned and managed by local authorities. The 4 beds in the secure unit are licensed by the Scottish Government and can keep young people detained for up to three months. The Secure Unit offers on site Education for young people who are detained.

The Elms Close Support Unit was initially set up to offer a continuum of care for young people and had 2 specific objectives - to prevent young people going into secure care, and facilitating the early release of young people from secure care by offering a more structured and controlled environment than being placed in an 'open' residential unit.

4.2 Over the years a number of operational challenges have been experienced due to the design of the building and therefore a feasibility study by the Architectural Services Division was undertaken to address these. The study concluded that the unit's two principal shortcomings are:

- Its failure to be both secure and homely at the same time
- The conflicting layout of two incompatible uses which face each other.

This study then formed part of an appraisal of options for the building and service model in light of current service demands.

4.3 At a meeting of the Best Value Performance and Efficiency Sub-committee of the Policy and Resources Committee held at Dundee on 16th December, 2008, there was submitted Report No 637-2008 by the Director of Social Work advising the Sub-Committee on the conclusions, recommendations and findings of the Best Value Review Group on residential schools and external residential placements.

The Sub-Committee noted the findings and the recommendations as outlined and agreed that the following recommendation be remitted for consideration of the Social Work and Health Committee:-

"The outcome of the option appraisal of The Elms Secure and Close Support Unit is implemented."

4.4 The option appraisal considered by the sub committee reviewed the current model of service delivery in light of ongoing investment required, to ensure that service objectives continue to be met in a cost effective manner. The option appraisal highlighted a need to invest in the building to allow the change in service provision from the close support model to an emergency young persons unit for young people requiring short to medium residential care.

4.5 Trends show that the number of looked after children continues to rise. Dundee City Council has achieved success in providing stable environments in The Junction, which had been the emergency young persons unit, and the other open residential units which has resulted in a settled group of young people now permanently resident, with considerable potential for good outcomes. The impact of this is that we have no emergency provision for children in the non-secure residential service and very few long term vacancies. This has resulted in a significant increase in costs for external emergency/medium term accommodation over the last two years.

4.6 The works required to facilitate the partial conversion to form an emergency unit and to create a more homely environment include provision of a new dedicated entrance with associated external ramps for disabled access, upgrading and modernisation of kitchen, upgrading and improvements to the heating system and refurbishment of the en-suite toilet provision in the bedroom units.

4.7 Approval has been given by the Chief Executive to appoint an appropriate local contractor under a partnering arrangement to carry out this work and the total project cost is estimated to be £249,948, inclusive of professional fees.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report 637-2008

Equality Impact Assessment

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

DATE: 25th November
2010