

17th January 2021**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S HOME PROVISION****Purpose of the Report**

1. To make recommendations regarding the staffing of Local Authority children's homes and to provide an overview of the Local Authority's approach to children's residential care.

Information

2. At Children and Young People's Committee on 13th December 2021 recommendations were agreed to cease the use of Minster View (Southwell) as a children's home with resulting proposals regarding staffing structures across the children's residential estate being received at this meeting of the Committee alongside detail on the proposal for the development of the children's residential estate. A summary of the proposals on wider development is attached as **Appendix 1**.
3. The provision the Council makes for the care and accommodation of our looked after children is guided by a "Sufficiency Strategy" which is kept under regular review. The number of children with complex needs and where residential rather than foster care is required, at least for a period, has grown and it is essential that there is access to the right volume of high-quality provision, either through developing these as a Local Authority or by commissioning them in the market.
4. At Policy Committee on 18th March 2020 it was agreed in principle that a further six children's homes would be purchased following further agreement of capital funds by Finance Committee. To date one home has been purchased and is being mobilised with staffing and management to be provided by 'Homes2Inspire', a not-for profit company with whom the Local Authority has a relationship through a block contract. A second home has also been identified and the purchase process is being completed, again with an intention that the home will be run by Homes2Inspire.
5. On 10th January 2022 a report will be presented to Finance Committee to request the release of the funding for the remaining four children's homes and an update on the outcome of that report will be given to Committee today. An opportunity has arisen for the Local Authority to buy the property next to one of its existing Outdoor Education facilities. The property appears suitable to be made into a children's home registered for three

children (having recently been re-evaluated as only being able to be registered for two) which could provide both Activity Placements, through joint working with the Outdoor Education facility, and Emergency Placements as an alternative to unregistered placements. This would provide known capacity which would help manage existing placement budgets, reduce the occasions on which the Council had to consider an unregulated – and now illegal – placement and add to the efforts to reduce time spent in care. The short-term remit of the facility would also make it suitable to take emergency placements. The national scarcity in placements is increasingly creating crisis situations for the Council in which unregulated placements are an illegal option set against the safety of vulnerable children. Keeping children within the region, with a known service and at a managed cost, would allow for a full assessment of need, and so the identification of an appropriate subsequent placement. This increases the probability of a successful period in care. The home would be owned by the Council. It would be registered as a children's home and operated by Homes2Inspire. The Activity Placements would be provided by the Council's Outdoor Education service from Hagg Farm and other sites as required.

6. A further two children's homes would be identified and purchased to provide a replacement for West View children's home which it is proposed should change its statement of purpose to replace the closed facility at Minster View. West View has been assessed as a suitable home setting for four children with learning disabilities and additional complex needs. It has also been identified that the children with social and emotional needs that West View currently provides for within its statement of purpose would achieve better outcomes in a smaller home setting and so it is proposed that these homes be registered with Ofsted for two children in each. It also reduces the risk of empty beds as there have been times where the presentation of a single child has meant the other three beds at West View have needed to be kept vacant.
7. Given the decision to close Minster View it is now necessary to disestablish the staffing for that home. Committee is recommended to approve the disestablishment of the following posts from 30th April 2022:
 - 1 FTE Registered Manager (Hay Band D)
 - 4 FTE Assistant Managers (Hay Band B)
 - 1 FTE Site Manager (Grade 3)
 - 1.6 FTE Domestic Assistants (Grade 1)
 - 1 Laundry Assistant (Grade 1)
 - 1.5 FTE Cooks (Grade 3)
 - 6 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4)
 - 21 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5).
8. The closure of the Minster View building and the disestablishment of these posts leaves £1,685,000 per annum for reinvestment.
9. To meet the changed profile of children's needs at West View additional staffing will be required and it is also recognised that staff may require additional training to work with the children to be placed there. Committee is recommended to approve the establishment of the following posts from 30th April 2022:
 - 8 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5)

- 4 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4).
10. Any vacant posts that are not filled by existing Minster View staff as part of an enabling process will be recruited to in line with the mobilisation plan to change the purpose of the home. This additional staffing will cost £381,000 per annum plus up to £70,000 in antisocial hour enhancements.
 11. It is also recommended that approval is given for the establishment of posts for the two new two-bedded children's homes as below. Again, these posts will be established from 30th April 2022 but will be recruited to in a timescale that matches with the mobilisation plan for the homes.
 - 1 FTE Registered Manager (grade subject to job evaluation)
 - 2 FTE Assistant Managers (Hay Band B)
 - 0.8 FTE Specialist Social Worker (Trauma) (Hay Band B)
 - 1 FTE Site Manager (Grade 3)
 - 2 FTE Domestic Assistants (Grade 1)
 - 6 Night Care Workers (Grade 3)
 - 4 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4)
 - 16 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5).
 12. The total staffing and running costs for these homes are estimated to be £1,461,518.
 13. The fourth children's home, if agreed by Finance Committee, would form the basis for a new service which is currently being developed as a joint venture with colleagues from the NHS and where it is proposed to have mental health expertise to intensively support children who cannot be cared for safely by their parents and might otherwise require inpatient treatment or where there are concerns for their safety but where they do not have a treatable condition. It is proposed that a clear operating model will be developed with an ambition to have this home mobilised by April 2023.
 14. Whilst Policy Committee agreed in 2019 that a replacement should be sought for Oakhurst children's home unfortunately to date a suitable property has not been found. Options to improve Oakhurst are being considered and a further more detailed options analysis will be prepared and presented to the relevant Committees. That aside no other changes are planned to the Local Authority owned and run children's homes. All respite care for children with learning disabilities now takes place at The Big House and Caudwell House continues to provide care, including some respite, for children with significant physical disabilities.
 15. The Council is continuing to develop its relationship with the market through the block contract with Homes2Inspire, which we continue to grow when suitable opportunities present themselves, and through the D2N2 framework of residential providers shared with Nottingham City, Derby City and Derbyshire. By autumn 2022 it is expected to have revised the Sufficiency Assessment and to have a new Market Position Statement for residential care available to signal the Council's future intentions to the market so that providers can consider developments and investments with knowledge of the number and type of residential homes that we are looking to commission in the future.

Other Options Considered

16. The options presented have been derived from the Sufficiency Strategy and analysis of the needs of children in the care of the Local Authority. A wide range of options have been considered regarding the size and functions of homes, but the recommendations today represent the best options for stable placements that are close to children's home communities and that provide safe and high-quality care.

Reasons for Recommendations

17. These recommendations ensure that for those children who are most difficult to place in the children's residential home market the Council has high quality provision that will meet their needs.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

19. Whilst the costs of the additional staff at West View and the two new homes exceed the savings from Minster View by up to £227,000 (dependent on the requirement for enhancements) it is assessed that the proposed staffing and operating models will lead to high levels of occupancy and as such this will push down on reliance on the external market. Given this, the external placements budget is proposed to pick up any shortfall, although this is unlikely to be required in 2022-23 whilst mobilisation plans are enacted and will be taken into account in future budget planning. Prior to any proposed new services coming on stream the money available from Minster View will be used to supplement the external placements budget before being allocated to the relevant services.

HR Implications

20. It is not anticipated that any redundancies will result from the proposals in this report. The majority of Minster View staff are already deployed to other duties and an enabling process will be completed in line with the Council's policy which will see staff either formally moved to the jobs into which they are currently deployed or to one of the posts being established through the recommendations of this report. There will be consultation with staff and Trade Unions throughout the proposed changes. It is recognised that the changes that staff experience will mean that additional support and training is required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 1) agrees to disestablish the following posts from Minster View children's home from 30th April 2022:
 - 1 FTE Registered Manager (Hay Band D)
 - 4 FTE Assistant Managers (Hay Band B)
 - 1 FTE Site Manager (Grade 3)
 - 1.6 FTE Domestic Assistants (Grade 1)
 - 1 Laundry Assistant (Grade 1)
 - 1.5 FTE Cooks (Grade 3)
 - 6 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4)
 - 21 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5).
- 2) agrees to establish the following additional posts in West View children's home from 30th April 2022:
 - 8 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5)
 - 4 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4).
- 3) agrees to establish the following posts for two new two-bedded children's homes from 30th April 2022:
 - 1 FTE Registered Manager (grade subject to job evaluation)
 - 2 FTE Assistant Managers (Hay Band B)
 - 0.8 FTE Specialist Social Worker (Trauma) (Hay Band B)
 - 1 FTE Site Manager (Grade 3)
 - 2 FTE Domestic Assistants (Grade 1)
 - 6 Night Care Workers (Grade 3)
 - 4 Residential Care Workers (Grade 4)
 - 16 Residential Social Care Workers (Grade 5).

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Laurence Jones
Service Director, Commissioning and Resources
T: 0115 9773042
E: Laurence.jones@nottsccl.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (ELP 04/01/22)

21. The Committee has authority to consider the matters set out in this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (NC 05/01/22)

22. The costs of the additional staff at West View and the two new homes exceed the savings from Minster View by up to £227,000 (dependent on the requirement for enhancements). The report proposes that this is unlikely to be required in 2022-23 whilst mobilisation plans are enacted and will be taken into account in future budget planning. Prior to any proposed new services coming on stream the money available from Minster View will be used to supplement the external placements budget before being allocated to the relevant services. Any additional costs in future years will have to be contained within the existing budgets.

HR Comments (BC 05/01/22)

23. The staffing implications are contained within the body of the report. As stated above, it is not anticipated that any redundancies will result from the proposals in this report. Staff will be deployed using existing employment procedures and additional support and training provided where required. Ongoing consultation with staff and the Trade Unions will occur throughout the proposed changes.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Children's home provision - report to Children and Young People's Committee on 13th December 2021](#)

[Increasing residential capacity for Looked After Children – report to Policy Committee on 18th March 2020](#)

Equality Impact Assessment

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

All.

C1536