

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Finance & Resources
DATE	29 September 2011
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Whitemyres Stores – Future Use
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/11/280

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report updates the Committee on the possible future of the soon to be vacated Central Stores. It advises that two Council uses have been identified.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee approves:-

- a) the transfer of Units 3 & 4 to Social Care & Wellbeing for the replacement of the Occupational Therapy Equipment Store at Crombie Road
- b) the transfer of Unit 2 to Social Care & Wellbeing for the creation of a User Records/Archive Store;
- c) the transfer of the existing Occupational Therapy Stores at Crombie Road to the Property Account, with the Head of Asset Management & Operations instructed to advertise them for lease at the earliest opportunity

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is understood from Social Care and Wellbeing that the cost of refurbishing Units 3 & 4 can be met from the Social Care & Wellbeing budget this financial year. It is further understood that the associated annual revenue costs for all three Units can be met from the Social Care & Wellbeing budget for subsequent financial years.

#### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There is an opportunity for the Council to investigate its requirements for both Corporate Archive Storage and Social Care & Wellbeing Archive/Record Storage. This matter will continue to be investigated to determine whether or not the Whitemyres units give the Council the opportunity to centralise all facilities at this location, in the longer term.

There is an urgency to relocate the Social Care & Wellbeing Service's User records from St Nicholas House, to ensure that the property can be closed within the originally agreed timeframe.

#### 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

The Finance & Resources Committee at its meeting on 17 June 2011 considered a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which provided a synopsis of the current situation at Whitemyres Centre (central stores), which proposed that the current Procurement operations cease to ensure that the Council did not encounter any financial loss.

The Committee instructed, inter alia, that:-

- i) current operations at the Whitemyres Centre cease as of 30 September, 2011;
- iv) the appropriate officers consider the future of this facility, and to report back to this Committee at the meeting of 6 December, 2011 in this regard.

The Central Store located at Whitemyres consists of three units extending to 2,035sq m. Two of the units (Units 3 & 4) are owned by the City Council, whilst the third (unit 2) is leased by the Council (along with the adjoining Unit 1) until 2024. Unit 1 is occupied by Corporate Governance for the Council's Corporate Archive Store. The current annual rent for units 1 & 2 is £85,000. These properties are identified in Appendix 1.

Two urgent uses for the three units being vacated, which fully takes cognizance of the industrial nature of the properties have been identified by Social Care & Wellbeing:-

Units 3 & 4:- Replacement Occupational Therapy Equipment Store  
Unit 2:- User Record User Storage for Social Care & Wellbeing

#### **Occupational Therapy Equipment Store**

This is currently located within two Council owned industrial stores at Crombie Road. It has been recognised that the property is no longer "fit for purpose" with staff having to work in very poor conditions due to the property now being too small to accommodate all the equipment required to meet the demands of Community Care. A move to the

premises at Whitemyres will enable Aberdeen City Council to provide an equipment service which is fit for purpose and meets the health and safety requirements to ensure the ever increasing demands placed on the Store facility can be met.

An adequately resourced and responsive equipment service is vital to ensure that service users remain safe and as independent as possible in their homes and Aberdeen City Council meets its target in respect of Community Occupational Therapy assessments and Delayed Discharges.

The Single outcome agreement and Community care plan are advocating:

1. Services need to be more responsive to the Community
2. The health and care needs of elderly people are important, as is the provision of services in a way that protects the personal dignity of people.
3. An increase in the percentage of older people aged 65+ with intensive care needs receiving services at home.
4. The maintenance of the number of delayed discharges within the six week delayed discharge planning period to 0.
5. The delivery of a comprehensive programme of care to those who need support and their carers

The present units at Crombie Road are small with no natural light. Due to the amount of equipment that requires to be stored the premises are very cramped, with too much equipment being stored above head height, with potentially long term Health & Safety issues for the City Council. The staff at the store have maintained a high standard of service under difficult conditions.

With the reablement and rehabilitation agenda, people should receive such care within their own homes rather than an acute setting. This has increased the demand for equipment. This increased use of assistive technology has also increased the demand for storage. The existing store at Crombie Road is unable to house any more equipment or staff.

The service recently acquired two decontamination units to carry out the essential cleaning of equipment. This will allow the service to recycle items of equipment with a projected saving based on 2010/11 financial year of £541,566.35. These machines were essential to meet the requirements specified by the Medical Devices Agency -MHRA DB2006(05) November 2006

Social Care & Wellbeing and Asset Management staff have undertaken detailed property searches to identify a suitable property that could be utilised for all the services that Occupational Therapy are statutorily obliged to undertake. Until the store at Whitemyres became available no property could be found which would meet the specification required or was affordable.

At the present time revenue funds, of up to £350,000, are available this financial year within the Social Care & Wellbeing budget to undertake necessary adaption work for the equipment store. Estimated costs prepared by staff in Enterprise Planning & Infrastructure indicate that it would be possible to refurbish this property for this specific use for approximately £250,000.

The annual revenue costs for Crombie Road is currently £34,000 whilst the estimated cost of the two units at Whitemyres is approximately £30,000pa. It is understood that this can be accommodated within the Social Care & Wellbeing budget. It should be noted that due to the intended use the Council would not pay rates for these properties.

A further additional revenue source would be the income received from the Council in leasing the Crombie Road units on the open market. This income would be in the region of £24,000pa. As the Council own all the adjoining units it would not be advisable to dispose of these units in isolation.

### **Social Care & Wellbeing Service User Records**

An urgent need has been identified to relocate all of the Service's User records held by Social Care & Wellbeing, currently stored in St Nicholas House and those already at Whitemyres in the Central store. Due to the imminent closure of St Nicholas House these files need to be moved by the end of October. It is imperative that these files are moved to allow St Nicholas House to be closed, thus achieving the required budget savings. It was originally intended to move the files to Marischal College, but it is understood that due to operational reasons this is no longer a practical solution.

The only property that has been identified which could be immediately utilised, and which has all of the necessary security measures which are required, is Unit 2 at the Whitemyres Centre. This unit adjoins the Council's existing Corporate Archive Store. Not only would this property accommodate the files, it also has the necessary office accommodation for the staff required to manage the facility. The estimated annual cost of this property is £75,000, and it is understood that finance is available to meet this cost.

The adjoining Corporate Archive Store is nearly at full capacity. There is an opportunity in the medium term to review how these two very similar facilities could be managed to increase efficiency for the Council.

Costs are currently being prepared for the relocation expenses and for the cost of moving the required racking and associated works, and today's Meeting will be advised of this information.

It should be noted that it would be difficult for the Council to sub lease Unit 2 as the adjoining Corporate Store has neither toilet facilities nor

the room to provide them. Staff working in the Corporate store (Unit 1) therefore require access to the welfare facilities in the proposed Social Care & Wellbeing Record Store (Unit 2).

## 6. IMPACT

Council – This report will ensure that Council property is being utilised to help assist in efficient delivery of services

Public – There will an improvement for the public due to the improvement of service delivery, particularly for occupational therapy.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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