

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	15th April 2010
DIRECTOR	Annette Bruton
TITLE OF REPORT	Provision for Children with Additional Support Needs arising from Social Emotional and Behavioural factors.
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/10/033

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report seeks Committee approval to conduct an options appraisal on the redevelopment of the Cordyce site to improve provision for children and young people with additional support needs arising from social emotional and behavioural needs, on a spend-to-save basis.

1.2 This report takes forward recommendation 16 of the Transformation Strategy, which was agreed at Full Council on 1st October 2007.

- In conjunction with the review of school estates and the corporate asset management strategy, instruct officers to undertake a feasibility study for building/ refurbishing and managing a full time placement facility for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs; and a close support / semi-secure facility.
- rebuild of a full time placement facility for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs as part of the School/Learning Estate Strategy.

1.3 This proposal is part of a wider review of inclusion aimed at improving and developing a continuum of support for children and young people within Aberdeen City to ensure best outcomes for all and Best Value and aligns and integrates with Social Care and Well-Being service re-design proposals. A diagram showing the Continuum of Support is included as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 It is recommended that the committee:

2.1.1 instructs officers to conduct an options appraisal on the redevelopment of the Cordyce site to include, in addition to a replacement school, a specialist residential facility on a spend-to-save basis, subject to confirmation of the required funding;

2.1.2 instruct officers to refer the report to Finance and Resources Committee 6th May 2010 for approval of the funding of the options appraisal;

2.1.3 if the Finance and Resources Committee agrees funding of the options appraisal, instruct officers to bring a further report to Education Culture and Sport Committee on 18 November 2010 on the outcome of the option appraisal.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 An options appraisal will be carried out on a spend-to-save basis. This will include site surveys, ground investigations and concept designs. (Appendix 2) Alternative external funding is also currently being examined.
- 3.2 Spend on “out of authority placements” (residential care and education) has increased over the past decade and in 2008-9 spend was over £7.5 million, a large proportion of which related to provision for children with social, emotional and behavioural needs. Overspend on the budget has reduced and, in order to further reduce out-of-authority spend more needs to be done to improve provision locally to support children and young people within the City. This provision will contribute to a further reduction on out of authority placements which will lead to improved outcomes for young people.
- 3.3 The proposal to build a new facility on the Cordyce School site will have financial implications longer term and these will be considered as part of the option appraisal. These will be detailed in the further report to Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 18th November 2010. If approved in principle, a report will be submitted to the subsequent Finance and Resources Committee asking approval for inclusion in the Non-Housing Capital Programme for 2011-2012.
- 3.4 This proposal complements the spend to save proposal for the Intensive Community Support and Learning Service agreed by the Social Care and Wellbeing Committee on 1st December 2009 and subsequently by the Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 7th January 2010.
- 3.5 Revenue savings will accrue through more effective and efficient building infrastructure. Renewable energies reduce costs in newer buildings. Solar water heating and rainwater harvesting are producing significant savings in recent new buildings in the city.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

Community Plan

This proposal fits with the vision in the draft Aberdeen Learning Strategy and the aim to develop Aberdeen as a ‘City of Learning’. It is related to the following priorities within Vibrant Dynamic and Forward Looking:

2. Ensure Aberdeen's pupils and teachers have school buildings fit for 21st century
3. Ensure expenditure on education delivers maximum benefit to pupils' education
4. Continue to involve parents and pupils in their schools
5. Continue work to improve attainment across city schools
6. Ensure education is appropriate to pupils' needs and ensure pupils leave school with skills essential for living
7. Promote the health and well-being of pupils through healthy eating and exercise, including a daily free nutritious meal for every pupil and regular access to swimming
8. Ensure Aberdeen's teachers receive appropriate training and continuous professional development to deliver the best quality education
9. Review best teaching practice and trial projects in Aberdeen and beyond to identify the best ways of delivering an even higher quality education to all pupils
11. Allocate additional resources to support for learning, targeted to areas of greatest need
12. Continue work to raise the achievement of vulnerable children and close the attainment gap across the city
13. Make greater provision within the city for young people with additional needs to avoid placements out of the area

An Equalities and Human Rights assessment will be undertaken as part of the options appraisal.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The options appraisal will consider implications for staffing and resources.
- 5.2 The proposed residential facility will be a shared services project between Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire Councils, involving partner agencies and voluntary sector providers.

6. REPORT

- 6.1 In Aberdeen City we have a policy of inclusion which allows children and young people with additional support needs to access a range of provision to suit their needs through a staged intervention model. This provides a graduated approach to addressing additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural needs so that, where necessary, increasingly specialist expertise is brought to bear on a child or young person's difficulties:

- Mainstream schools with support
- Specialist support services
- Specialist residential provision

- 6.2 While the aim of the Education, Culture and Sport directorate is to provide education in a mainstream setting, as required by the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc Act 2000, there are situations where education outwith the mainstream setting is deemed appropriate: where such education is not in the best interests of the child or young person, where it would not be in the best

interest of other children or young people or where the cost of making provision in mainstream is prohibitive and unrealistic.

- 6.3 Cordyce School is situated on a large open site to the north of the city. The building is currently less than ideal for providing an education fit for the 21st century. The site itself is good and is considered suitable for redevelopment as there is a range of outdoor space which enhances the learning environment.
- 6.4 The school currently has provision for 42 full time pupils, all of whom are of secondary school age. The proposed new school would provide for upper primary and secondary aged young people with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural needs. Full consideration will be given to the pupil roll and the ethos and management of the school in the options appraisal. The role and remit of the school will be considered in the restructuring of services for children and young people with social, emotional and behavioural needs.
- 6.5 Young people with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural needs have a diverse spectrum of needs. Facilities will have to be provided for this broad range of need, from very vulnerable children and young people who have mental health or emotional needs to those who have behavioural needs. These children and young people require services that are sensitively design to ensure that their different needs can be met. The options appraisal will consider best practice in design and build of similar establishments throughout Scotland.
- 6.6 Children and young people with additional support needs arising from social, emotional and behavioural needs may require support from a number of agencies. For such children and young people, the school is an effective centre for joint working between the agencies delivering services to pupils. At present there are social workers based in the school, providing additional support for pupils. The importance of joint working of partner agencies should be recognised by the provision of an appropriate working environment which recognises the needs of the whole staff and the additional space required for integrated working offering modern facilities with a facility which can act as a centre of excellence in multi-disciplinary working. High quality conference, training and meeting facilities should be provided to enable the skills and experience of staff to be shared with other professionals, in education and in other services.
- 6.7 The new provision should be of a design that allows a friendly, welcoming atmosphere which is conducive to a positive learning experience. Any building has to take account of the fact that the population may change as may policy and legislation. There has to be flexibility in design to allow for changing needs or expansion of provision.
- 6.8 Children and young people deserve to be educated in a modern pleasant environment which has provision for modern technology and is flexible enough to meet future needs. Appropriate spaces should be provided for the range of subjects, with designated subject areas designed to create a safe and stimulating environment. The need for therapeutic provision should be

recognized. The Arts Education Team should be involved with children in creating a positive enriching environment. There should be opportunities for appropriate external learning opportunities.

- 6.9 It is important that staff are fully involved in the design of a new facilities. Adopting a holistic approach to the education and support of the children and young people will require agreement between a range of staff in order to address their nurturing, care and emotional support needs. Such a holistic approach would support children and young people to access education. This would require appropriate accommodation for addressing social and emotional needs. Consideration of the need for different types of areas, well spaced and considering the wide ranging needs of the children is required.
- 6.10 The number of children and young people being educated and cared for outwith the city's provision is decreasing but is still a significant financial commitment. Such provision outwith the city is not always in the best interests of the young people whereas, allowing young people to maintain their family and friendship contacts provides the support structure that allows them to build coping strategies within their own community.
- 6.11 The Cordyce site should also be considered for the development of a shared service resource. This would be a small intensive support unit. This would integrate a range of activities for children and young people including care, life skills, education and vocational training. This would operate in a partnership model and could include children and young people from Aberdeenshire as well as the city. It is envisaged that a voluntary sector partner/s may be engaged to run this facility in partnership with the authority. If the shared service facility were to be on the Cordyce site there would have to be clear boundaries and agreement about the management of the provision.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A Strategy for Transforming Services to Children and Young People – 2007 to 2010 agreed by Full Council 1st Oct 2007.

Intensive Community Support and Learning Service Report – Spend to Save Investments – agreed at Social Care and Wellbeing Committee of 10th December 2009 and Education, Culture and Sport Committee on 7 January 2010.

Appendix 1

Staged Provision for Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs arising from Social, Emotional and Behavioural Factors

