

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	20 February 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Bairns Hoose
REPORT NUMBER	CFS/24/049
DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Graeme Simpson
REPORT AUTHOR	Graeme Simpson
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.1.1 & 2.2

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise and share with members the outcome of Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application and the subsequent "bid" application.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note Aberdeen City's successful Bairns Hoose Pathfinder application;
- 2.2 To note the award of **£281,875** for the year 2023/24 to support Aberdeen City's delivery of a Bairns Hoose and to note a further round of funding will be made available for 2024/25 with a bid being required to be submitted by 21 February 2024; and
- 2.3 To request that the Chief Social Work Officer provides members with an update on progress to deliver a Bairns Hoose within the Annual Child Protection Committee Report and within the annual update to Aberdeen City's Children's Services Plan.

3.1 CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 A report was presented to the Education and Children's Services Committee in September 2023 (**see Background Papers**) in relation to Aberdeen City's plan to develop a Bairns Hoose. The Scottish Government has committed that by 2026: "*All children in Scotland who have been victims or witnesses to abuse or violence, as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm or abuse will have access to trauma-informed recovery, support and justice.*"
- 3.2 A Bairns Hoose brings together the four elements of justice, health, social work and advocacy/recovery support into a single setting to deliver integrated support to more effectively meet the needs of children who are victims of abuse or have witnessed violence as well as children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour has caused significant harm to others.
- 3.3 To support delivery of the 'Bairns Hoose' policy the Scottish Government invited local partnerships to apply to be "Pathfinders". Aberdeen City was one of 6 partnerships that have been awarded "Pathfinder" status. (Others Pathfinders are Aberdeenshire; Tayside; Western Isles; North Strathclyde, Fife.) The Pathfinder phase will run from 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2025. There is live discussion with Ministers about this

timeframe being extended to align to the original intention of Pathfinders operating over two years.

- 3.4 Successful Pathfinders were invited to submit funding proposals from an annual £6m fund. This was split on a £2m Capital and £4m Revenue basis. All funds awarded are required to be spent by 31 March 2024. As a consequence of this Aberdeen City partnership received **£281,875**. (The breakdown is **£120,500** capital and **£161,375** revenue.)
- 3.5 Funding for the year 2024/25 will operate on a similar basis with partnerships required to submit plans for spend for the year including for Capital and Revenue costs. The total fund for the year is at present still to be determined but is anticipated to be circa £6m.
- 3.6 Building on the approach taken to deliver the Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) across the North East, there are elements of our Bairns Hoose Pathfinder that we are collaborating with the Aberdeenshire Pathfinder. This will ensure consistency of approaches to undertaking child protection investigations but will also enable learning to be shared within a local context.
- 3.7 The Bairns Hoose Delivery Group continue to meet on a monthly basis ensuring a focus to progressing our Bairns Hoose. We recognise the need to ensure the views and voices of children, young people and their families are central to the design of our Bairns Hoose as well as how aspects of how the Bairns Hoose will operate. As such one of the five workstreams that will feed into the Delivery Group is VOICE. Ensuring its independence this is being led by Children 1st, our third sector partner who will deliver the advocacy and recovery service. There are 5 workstreams that will feed into the Group:
- VOICE
 - Systems and Processes
 - Capital and Resource
 - Governance
 - Evaluation
- 3.8 The Bairns Hoose Delivery Group will report progress to the Child Protection Committee on a quarterly basis, in addition to updating the Chief Officers Group who have strategic responsibility for delivery of the Bairns Hoose.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising out of this report.
- 4.2 The full extent of funding for Pathfinders remains unclear. We have received some initial funding and a further funding bid will be submitted at the end of February 2024 for the 2024/24 year. Our Pathfinder application also makes clear that delivery of a Bairns Hoose will require all agencies to contribute to its delivery.
- 4.3 The cost of developing our Bairns Hoose is included within the Councils Capital programme. Scoping to date indicates that the cost of redeveloping the space within the Links Hub for the Bairns Hoose will be greater than the forecasted amount within the Capital Programme. This will be revisited within the forthcoming Council budget process. The Capital element of the Pathfinder funding will be aligned to the Capital Cost.

- 4.4 The Pathfinder phase is intended to more accurately determine the revenue costs to deliver our Bairns Hoose. Some of these costs are already built into existing service delivery and will be 'lifted and shifted' into the Bairns Hoose. However there are other elements yet to be fully quantified, specifically the advocacy and recovery service. The evaluation of the 6 Pathfinders will inform the Scottish Government's financial planning to support and scale up delivery of Bairns Hoose across all 32 local authority areas.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) <small>*taking into account controls/control actions</small>	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant related risks	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	The Scottish Government policy is that every child in Scotland will have access to a Bairns Hoose service by 2025. It is anticipated that national reporting will in future include reporting against the Bairns Hoose Standards.	The CPC has primary oversight on progress to develop and deliver a Bairns Hoose. Regular reporting will be shared with Aberdeen's Public protection Chief Officers Group.	L	Yes
Operational	Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people who have experienced harm or whose behaviour poses a risk to others is central to the planning for all children and young people open to Children's Social Work (CSW). CSW and Police Scotland have responsibility to investigate allegations of abuse or where children's behaviour poses a concern to others. While this duty is currently being fulfilled the environment in which these investigations occur does not fulfil the requirements of the Bairns Hoose standards.	Aberdeen City has a well established Child Protection data reporting framework. Going forward the framework will be amended to include reporting against the Bairns Hoose standards.	L	Yes
Financial	There are no significant related financial risks from this report.	One of the core principles of delivering a Bairns Hoose service is	L	Yes

	The Strategic Business case is being concluded and will inform the Capital plan presented to Council in March 2024. All agencies will be responsible for funding the individual service components that will deliver a Bairns Hoose.	that by providing early trauma informed support to children and their family it will reduce the demand on services in the longer term and reduce the likelihood of children requiring intensive support.		
Reputational	Failure to deliver on the Bairns Hoose standards will have a reputational impact on the Council. It will also adversely impact on the assessment of Children's Services within future strategic joint inspections.	By being a pathfinder the Council will benefit from support from the National Bairns Hoose team to deliver a high quality service.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN

		Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement		<p>Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people has a direct relevance to the delivery of the following statements contained within the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure local services identify young people with mental health problems and help them get early support and help. • Ensure the Council follows best practice as a corporate parent to get the best outcomes for looked-after young people, those in kinship care and those with additional support needs such as autism, developmental disorders or mental health problems • Continue to seek to support young people to receive care in Aberdeen, through fostering, adoption and other services and seek to reduce "out of authority" placements.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan		
Prosperous Outcomes	People Stretch	<p>Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people for whom secure care might be considered has a direct relevance to the following stretch outcomes in the LOIP:</p> <p>4. 95% of children (0-5 years) will reach their expected developmental milestones by the time of their child health reviews by 2026</p> <p>5. 90% of children and young people will report that they feel mentally well by 2026.</p> <p>6. 95% of care experienced children and young people will have the same levels of attainment in education, emotional wellbeing, and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>7. 95% of children living in our priority localities will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p>

	8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.
Regional and City Strategies	Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people is central to the planning for all children and young people open to Children's Social Work. This activity is relevant to the Aberdeen City Council Delivery Plan, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, and the Children's Services Plan.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people is central to the planning for all children and young people open to Children's Social Work supports the Scottish Government's drive to #KeepthePromise. This wide ranging and ambitious programme impacts on a range of statutory duties on the Council in relation to vulnerable and care experienced children including those contained in the Children(Scotland) Act 1995, Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011, Children & Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and Children (Scotland) Act 2020.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Delivery of a Bairns Hoose will positively impact on all children, young people and families who require to access a Bairns Hoose. It will enhance the Council's ability to deliver on its statutory duty to investigate allegations of harm and to respond effectively to meet the needs of children under the age of criminal responsibility whose behaviour pose a risk to others. As such it is considered that a full Impact Assessment should be completed. New Initial Impact Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	Not required.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Education and Children's Services Committee, 12/09/2023 10:00](#)

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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