

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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<b>COMMITTEE</b>	Education and Children's Services
<b>DATE</b>	30 April 2024
<b>EXEMPT</b>	No
<b>CONFIDENTIAL</b>	No
<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	Bairns Hoose
<b>REPORT NUMBER</b>	F&C/24/122
<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Eleanor Sheppard
<b>CHIEF OFFICER</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>REPORT AUTHOR</b>	Graeme Simpson
<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE</b>	2.2

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To share with members progress in relation to the development of Aberdeen City's Bairns Hoose.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:-

- 2.1 note the update of progress and the Scottish Government grant award for 2024/25 to support delivery of our Bairns Hoose;
- 2.2 instruct the Chief Officer, Children & Family Services/CSWO to provide an update on progress as appropriate during 2024/25; and
- 2.3 instruct the Chief Officer Children & Family Services/CSWO to arrange a visit for Elected Members to view the Bairns Hoose upon completion of the build.

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### 3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Scottish Government's vision for a Bairns' Hoose in Scotland is 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."*
- 3.1.2 A Bairns Hoose is based on the concept of 'four rooms'. It brings together the four elements of justice, health, social work and recovery support into a single setting to deliver integrated support to best 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.
- 3.1.3 Committee will be aware that the Aberdeen City partnership was awarded "Pathfinder Status" in November 2023. To oversee the transformational change

required to deliver a Bairns Hoose, a Delivery Group has been established with a number of workstreams.

- VOICE – to ensure our service design is informed by and takes full account of the voice and views of children, young people and families.
- Systems and Processes – Reviewing existing systems and processes to enable alignment to the Bairns Hoose Standards.
- Capital & Resources – Overseeing the building development and the resource required to deliver a Bairns Hoose on a sustainable basis.
- Governance – oversight of reporting duties
- Evaluation – to lead learning and begin to understand the impact of a Bairns Hoose service model.

The Delivery Group reports directly to the Child Protection Committee and into the Public Protection Chief Officer Group.

## **3.2 Improvement Activity**

3.2.1 The Scottish Child Interview Model (SCIM) is being rolled out across Scotland to improve the way in which children and young people are interviewed by police and social workers. It is a trauma informed practice model which seeks to secure best evidence for court and risk assessment purposes from children and young people, who have been harmed or whose behaviour has caused harm to others.

3.2.2 SCIM is implemented across Police Divisional areas. Delivery of SCIM in Aberdeen City commenced in November 2022. It operates on a 'soft boundary' basis across the North East, promoting flexibility and a responsiveness to meet the needs of children and young people. The team, managed by a DI from Police Scotland and a Team Manager from Aberdeen City Council's Children's Social Work, ensures children and young people receive the required specialist response, support and care plans. The SCIM Team for North East Division were nominated and were the winners of a Chief Constable's Excellence Award for their work.

3.2.3 SCIM will be a cornerstone of our 'Bairns Hoose' service. An evaluation of Year 1 of the model is due to conclude at the end of April 2024. Learning from this will be built into the planning for our Bairns Hoose.

3.2.4 All Pathfinders were required to undertake a self-evaluation of local practice against the [Bairns' Hoose Standards](#). A repeat self-evaluation requires to be undertaken in early 2025 to evidence progress. The evaluation demonstrated real strengths in local practice but, as would be expected, areas where improvement is required to more effectively align to the Standards. While there is much we as a partnership can do to progress many areas of improvement, some require to be initiated at a national level.

3.2.5 In recognition that there are many shared processes, a multi-agency "Data Mapping" event was with the Aberdeenshire Pathfinder in early March 2024. This allowed us to begin to map out the highly complex landscape that the Bairns Hoose will interface with, across justice, social work, health and recovery. Having representatives from the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal

Service and Scottish Court and Tribunal Service was important to enable a better appreciation of the challenges within the justice aspect.

### **3.3 Bairns Hoose Design and Development**

- 3.3.1 The design of the Bairns Hoose has been finalised with all partners (Appendix 1). Colleagues in the Capital Cluster will initiate a tender exercise for this work in the coming weeks. The cost of renovating the proposed location (Links Hub, Regent Walk) was approved by Council at the budget meeting in March 2024. It continues to be anticipated that the renovation work will be concluded in early 2025.

### **3.4 Evaluation**

- 3.4.1 All Pathfinders are required to evaluate the delivery of their Bairns Hoose Pathfinder activity. This is to enable learning to be collated and shared with other partnerships as the Bairns Hoose policy is rolled out across Scotland. To maximise learning the partnership has engaged in a collaboration with the University of Edinburgh to support our evaluation.

The University of Edinburgh were involved in the evaluation of the North Strathclyde Partnership's Bairns Hoose development. Our partnership with the University of Edinburgh (supported by Aberdeen City's Health Determinants Research Collaborative) will enable us to build on the learning rather than repeat learning from other Partnerships.

### **3.5 Funding**

- 3.5.1 In response to being awarded Pathfinder status the partnership was invited to submit a funding bid for the year 2023/24 (for the months of January – March 2024). As a result of the Pathfinder was awarded £281,875.00. In February/March 2024 a further funding process was initiated. As a result the partnership were awarded £500,000. The maximum pathfinders could be awarded was £500,000.
- 3.5.2 The 'rules' for spend have been varied to reflect that funding will be issued on a quarterly basis. Any underspend from the previous quarter will be deducted from the next quarter. This approach restricts flexibility and adds unhelpful bureaucracy.
- 3.5.3 Over January and February 2024 the Scottish Government Bairns Hoose Team consulted with all Pathfinders and Affiliates on whether the Pathfinder phase (currently due to conclude on 31 March 2025) should be extended. This was in recognition that there was a delay in the Pathfinder phase commencing. As such there will be limits to the learning gathered.
- 3.5.4 There was an overwhelming view that the Pathfinder phase should be extended and this is currently being considered by Ministers. It is currently not clear what funding would be available for any extension. Given many posts associated with Bairns Hoose are fixed term there is a risk that staff, for understandable

reasons, will look to secure permanent employment elsewhere. If this risk materialises it will undermine the learning within the Pathfinder Phase.

3.5.5 Funding for the sustained delivery of the Bairns Hoose policy will be informed by the Pathfinder phase. It is however clear that continued investment will be required to ensure partnerships are able to continue to improve the outcomes of children, young people and families 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.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no immediate financial implications arising out of this report.

4.2 Long term funding to embed delivery of the Bairns Hoose model has yet to be confirmed. Learning from Pathfinders will support an understanding of these costs. The temporary funding arrangements provide a risk to capturing the fullest possible learning.

4.3 Discussion in relation to funding from partners to contribute to the build costs are ongoing.

#### 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)  *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
<b>Strategic Risk</b>	No significant related risks	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Compliance</b>	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
<b>Operational</b>	Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people who have experienced harm or	Aberdeen City has a well established Child Protection data reporting	L	Yes

	<p>whose behaviour poses a risk to others is central to the planning for all children and young people open to Children's Social Work.</p> <p>Children's Social Work and Police Scotland have lead 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 nor best meet the needs of the children and young people.</p>	<p>framework. Going forward the framework will be amended to include reporting against the Bairns Hoose standards.</p>		
<b>Financial</b>	<p>There are no significant related financial risks from this report.</p> <p>The Business case for the redevelopment of the building to become a Bairns Hoose is concluded. This will enable a tendering exercise to be undertaken.</p> <p>All agencies will be responsible for funding the individual service components that will deliver a Bairns Hoose.</p>	<p>One of the core principles of delivering a Bairns Hoose service is 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.</p>	L	Yes
<b>Reputational</b>	<p>Failure to deliver on the Brains 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.</p>	<p>By being a pathfinder the Council will benefit from support from the National Bairns Hoose team to deliver a high quality service.</p>	L	Yes
<b>Environment / Climate</b>	<p>No significant risks identified.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A

## 8. OUTCOMES

<u><a href="#">COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</a></u>	
<b>Impact of Report</b>	
<b>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</b>	Ensuring the effective planning for children and young people has a direct relevance to the delivery of the

	<p>following statements contained within the Council Delivery Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure local services identify young people with mental health problems and help them get early support and help.</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<b>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</b>	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<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> <p>8. 25% fewer young people (under 18) charged with an offence by 2026.</p>
<b>Regional and City Strategies</b>	<p>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.</p>
<b>UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes</b>	<p>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 &amp; Young People</p>

	(Scotland) Act 2014, Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 and Children (Scotland) Act 2020.
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## 9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to the Bairns Hoose report presented to Committee in February 2024 has been reviewed and no changes required.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	Not required.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Bairns Hoose Design

## 11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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