

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 02/08/14
Report for: Decision
[Draft] Report of: Executive Member for Children’s Services

Report Title

The Relocation of Fairview Children’s Home to an Alternative Site at 190-192 Flixton Road, Urmston, M415DR

Summary

The report outlines a proposal to close Fairview 2 bedded Residential Children’s Home which is situated in the Timperley area and to relocate it to 190-192 Flixton Road where it will function as a 3 bedded home. The establishment of a 3 bedded home will allow 1 additional child in care, with complex difficulties, to reside in a small group living environment within the Trafford Community. This increase in capacity will reduce the Council’s dependency on high cost independent sector residential provision which typically costs 100k per year. By placing 1 less child in external residential provision there will be a predicted reduction in the annual spend on external residential placement of approximately 100k.

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient placements for children in care. Consultations about the proposal have taken place with staff that will be affected by the proposal, and with the Police, Health Services and Neighbours who live close to the Flixton Road site.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive are asked to approve the closure of Fairview 2 bedded Residential Children’s Home and to relocate it to 190-192 Flixton Road which will be open as a 3 bedded Home

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: **Gerard Crowther**

Extension: **0161-911 8650**

Background Papers: **None**

Implications:

<p>Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>As Corporate Parents the Council is committed to meeting the placement needs of children who are in the care of Trafford Council. This proposal increases the opportunity for more children in care to access a placement which provides a highly supported care environment and which is situated within the Trafford community.</p>
<p>Financial</p>	<p>The establishment of a 3 bedded home will allow 1 additional child in care with complex difficulties to reside in a small group living environment within the Trafford Community. By placing 1 less child in external residential provision there will be a predicted reduction in annual spend on external residential placement of approximately 100k.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p>	<p>If the proposal to open Flixton Road is accepted, the new home would need to be :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliant with National Standards for Residential Children’s Homes, The Care Standards Act 2010 and Children’s Homes regulations 2010. • Approved as a registered children’s home by Ofsted who would complete an inspection of the home so as to ensure compliance with Ofsted regulatory requirements. <p>The Children’s Homes Regulations, Care Standards Act 2000 and Children’s Homes Regulations 2010 set out requirements with regard to the completion of a Location Risk Assessment relating to the suitability and availability of local services and the location of the home and to carry out prescribed consultation.</p> <p>A Location Risk Assessment has been completed of Flixton Road. The outcome of this assessment indicates that the location is low risk and that the site offers a very positive community location which has good access to community resources.</p>
<p>Equality/Diversity Implications</p>	<p>An initial Impact Assessment indicates that there are no identified negative or adverse diversity or equality implications associated with this initiative.</p>

Sustainability Implications	<p>The costs associated with the development and running of Flixton Road will be sustained from savings made from reducing dependency on high cost external placements and from the current placements budgets.</p>
Staffing/E-Government/Asset Management Implications	<p>All staff who are currently employed at Fairview will transfer, under the same conditions of service, to the new Flixton Road Home.</p> <p>It is proposed that 3 night wake residential childcare officer posts who collectively cover 70 hours of night wake duties at Fairview are disestablished and that 2 additional full time residential childcare officer posts are established at the Flixton Road home. These 2 new posts will be ring-fenced for the night wake residential child care officers whose posts will be disestablished.</p> <p>Staff from the disestablished posts, who take up day time Residential child care officer posts, will be able to work the same amount of hours as the currently work but they will no longer receive an enhancement for the completion of night time duties.</p>
Risk Management Implications	<p>The savings associated with this proposal hinge around a proposal to reduce the number of children who are placed in high cost external provision. However other factors, such as, any unforeseen increases in the Looked After Children population, or an unforeseen requirement to meet the care needs of children with exceptionally high could increase Trafford's dependency on high cost external placements. However, increasing our own internal capacity to meet the placement needs of all children in care with complex needs mitigates against this potential risk.</p>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<p>The establishment of the home will enable more Trafford children in care to remain within a small and intensively supported group living environment which is situated within the Trafford community. It is envisaged that this will positively impact on the health and wellbeing of Trafford children in care who are placed at the home.</p>
Health and Safety Implications	<p>In order to be registered with Ofsted the new home</p>

	will be required to be compliant with relevant health and safety requirements.
--	--

1.0 BACKGROUND

Fairview Residential Children's Home is located at 136 Fairywell Road, Timperley, WA156XB. The building is managed and owned by Trafford Council. The home is registered with Ofsted and provides care to 2 children aged 12-17yrs. Fairview provides specialist and intensive support to children in care who benefit from:

- Residence in a small group living environment.
- High levels of support from a dedicated team of residential care staff.
- Psychological support from Trafford's specialist looked after children's CAMHS service.

It is proposed that Fairview, which is a 2 bedded residential children's home is disestablished and that a 3 bedded residential children's home is established at 190-192 Flixton Road, Urmston. The Flixton Road building previously functioned as a residential children's home but was closed in 2009. However, since its closure, part of the building has been occupied by Trafford's Children's Outreach Support Service who provide domiciliary support to children and families which is focused on reducing admissions into care.

The Outreach Team use part of the Flixton Road building as an administrative and organisational base. The physical integrity of Flixton Road as a children's home remains largely in place and there have been no structural changes to the building since its closure.

Minor internal building work would need to be undertaken to the Flixton Road building to allow it:

- To be re-commissioned as a 3 bedded residential children's home which would be structurally independent of and separate to the administrative Offices of the Outreach Team;
- To continue to be used as an administrative and organisational centre for Trafford's Outreach Team.

The current Fairview building would be available to be sold.

2.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

It is proposed that 3 night wake residential childcare officer posts who collectively cover 70 hours of night wake duties at Fairview are disestablished and that 2 additional full time residential childcare officer posts are established at the Flixton Road home.

The establishment of 2 additional RCCO posts will allow Flixton Road to both provide high levels of supervision to children and to deliver night time care cover via the implementation of a staff sleep in rota.

Night wake staffs are currently only provided at Fairview because the lack of bedroom space means that staff cannot sleep at the home. Therefore it is not possible to provide night cover at Fairview via a “sleep in” arrangement as is the practice in Trafford’s other residential children’s homes. Trafford’s 2 other residential children’s homes are Kingsway Park and Old Hall Road. At both of these homes staff provide night time cover via a “sleep in” arrangement and there are no night wake staff. Kingsway Park and Old Hall Road are 6 bedded and 5 bedded homes and this method of providing night time cover has been sufficient to ensure safe care to children. It is also the case that this method of delivering night time care is one which has been approved of by Ofsted Inspectors.

In response to any specific identified critical need (as is currently the practice in Trafford’s other children’s homes) night wake staff can and will be arranged at short notice.

If this proposal is approved the 2 new RCCO posts will be ring fenced for applicants from displaced night-wake staff from Fairview who would be invited to consider these posts as part of the redeployment process.

All other staff who are currently employed at Fairview will simply transfer, under the same conditions of service, to the new Flixton Road home.

2.1 The Development of a Band 9 Senior Practitioner Family Placement Worker

The registered manager of Fairview currently carries out additional duties relating to the reviewing of approved foster carers. It is envisaged that the new 3 bedded residential children’s home will require a registered manager who is able to dedicate all of their time to the establishment and management of the new home. If the proposal to develop Flixton Road is approved the registered manager will no longer carry out fostering review duties. Therefore a dedicated 0.5 Band 9 Fostering Supervising Social Worker post will be established to carry out these duties, so as to ensure that foster care reviews continue to be compliant with nationally defined standards and time scales. The cost of this post has been factored into savings analysis which underpins this proposal.

3.0 THE REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL

3.1 The development of an additional specialist placement for one child in care

The model of providing a small group living environment to children with complex and challenging behaviour has been a very successful one. Fairview has achieved very positive outcomes for children in care and has successfully provided children with long term and stable placements. The development of a 3 bedded residential children’s home would allow one additional child in care to benefit from a placement in a small group living environment within the Trafford Community. Fairview Residential Children’s Home is not large enough to accommodate an additional placement for one additional child and it is not viable to either extend or make structural changes to this building to create additional living space for one additional child.

3.2 Responding to Increased levels of Demand

Trafford's child in care population has continued to grow in line with both the national and regional trends. The growth in the Looked After Children population is predicted to continue at least in line with the predicted rise in the overall Trafford child population. The looked after children population in April 2014 stood at 317, which is 7.5% higher than April 2013. There is a continuing need to ensure a sufficient and varied range of placement options for children in the care of Trafford Council. The development of an additional specialist placement will contribute to meeting future predicted demand

3.3 Savings and Cost Analysis

An initial start-up investment of £32K is required during the first year of the proposed development. This investment is required to cover the cost associated with the completion of essential small scale interior decorative and building work. This cost will be funded from capital receipts arising from the disposal of the current Fairview Children's Home.

In addition to the above, the staffing requirements have been reviewed and there will be a need to:

- Establish 2 x additional Residential Child Care Officer posts to meet statutory requirements and to ensure that a high level of supervision is provided to children with high support needs;
- Establish a 0.5 Social Worker post to address the gap left in fostering review responsibilities held by the current registered manager which could not be maintained when she manages a larger 3 bedded unit;
- Provide additional funds for sleep-in allowances to be paid to staff who will provide night time cover to the home.

The cost associated with the establishment of these posts would be offset by the disestablishment of the existing night wake staff posts (totalling 70 hours). Therefore the net cost of establishing the above posts and funding the sleeping allowances would be £42,848.

The total annual costs of the proposed Flixton Road home, taking into account the above staffing and sleep in duty costs would be £532k per year.

The current position is that Fairview provides 2 placements for an annual cost of £458k. However, to meet the needs of an additional child who may require specialist care in a similar small residential children's home, we currently have to purchase a bed from an external provider at an average cost of £174k per child per year. Therefore the current position is that Trafford pay £632k for 3 placements.

If the proposal to develop Flixton Road is accepted then the new home will deliver 3 specialist placements at a cost of £532k and therefore there will be an annual saving of £100K.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Consultation with Children

The two children, who are currently placed at Fairview, will by the time of the proposed opening of Flixton Road, have moved to reside in supported independent living placements. This move is in keeping with their current care plan.

Children who are placed at Fairview at the time of the relocation date and who will be affected by the move to Flixton Road will be consulted about the planned development of the new home.

Children will not be placed at Fairview if their individual needs and care plan objectives would be negatively affected by a future move to Flixton Road.

Children who are resident at Fairview at the time of the proposed move will be encouraged to be involved and to participate in the relocation process and the move will replicate the experience of a family moving to a new home.

It is not possible to predict at this stage which children will be resident at Fairview at the time of the relocation, however, the needs of these children will be given the utmost priority and children will not be placed at Fairview if it was felt that any future relocation would negatively impact on their individual care plans. The process of relocation will be underpinned by careful placement planning, consultation with children and the involvement of the children in the move to their new home.

4.2 Consultation with Staff

A consultation paper was distributed to inform and invite comments from Fairview staff on the relocation of Fairview Residential Children's Home to Flixton Road.

These arrangements followed the process of consultation in line with the Council's Organisational Change Policy.

A consultation meeting was held with members of Fairview staff on Friday 29th August 2014 where staff were collectively given an opportunity to discuss the proposed changes.

Feedback from staff was very positive. Staff agreed with the rationale for the move, they felt the move would provide the opportunity to extend the services offered at Fairview to more children. Staff felt Flixton Road would be a more appropriate location for a children's home and they noted the park was located directly opposite and that the area benefited from good transport links.

Staff felt that an increase in the number of children who are provided with care in a small group home by one child would not significantly impact on the work they undertake. They felt the increase of 2x Residential Child Care Officers would enable them to continue to provide a high level of supervision and direct work to all children placed with them.

All staff affected by the change were provided with an opportunity to discuss the changes at 1:1 meetings with a manager. Three Waking Night Residential Child Care Officers took up the opportunity for individual consultation sessions. The three Night Wake staff were positive about the opportunity to take up positions as Residential Child Care Officers and all expressed a view that the proposed move would benefit the children and the Service as a whole, however, they expressed disappointment that the 20% salary uplift that they receive for night wake duties would be lost.

4.3 Consultation with the Police and Health agencies and Neighbours who reside close to the new home about the proposal to open the a new home

As part of the Ofsted Registration process there is statutory requirement for organisations who are planning to develop a new residential children's home to consult with Police, Health Agencies and neighbours who reside close to the new home about the proposal to open the a new home. These consultations have been completed and the feedback from the consultation exercise is described below.

4.4 Consultation with Neighbours

A consultation exercise with members of the community who reside close to the proposed Flixton Road development has been completed. Members of the nearby community were each sent a letter on the 6th October 2014 which:

- Informed them of the proposal to Open Flixton Road as a small children's home;
- Invited them to provide written or verbal feedback about the proposal;
- Invited them to attend a consultation forum which took place on the 16th October 2014.

The only feedback received as an outcome of the consultation process was from six neighbours who reside close to 190 -192 Flixton, who attended the feedback forum which took place on the 16th October 2014.

At the forum the neighbours asked to for reassurance that the children placed at the home would be provided with close staff supervision and they also asked for reassurance that the number of children who were placed at the home would be limited to 3 children only. Reassurance about both these matters was given.

The neighbours also voiced some concern about any potential impact that the development of a home may have on house prices. However they accepted and understood the need to allow and to support children in care to reside in the community and they felt that a small 3 bedded children's home would provide an opportunity for children to be provided with a positive opportunity. Neighbours also asked that all visitors to the home, especially night time, respect the need to be quiet and to avoid banging car doors when they exit or enter their vehicles. One neighbour who resides in adjacent property asked that the boundary fence is repaired and raised slightly to protect privacy.

The consultation forum was a very positive event and neighbours demonstrated clear a strong sense of community and understood the need to positive care to children and welcome children in care into the community.

4.5 Consultation with Health

NHS Trafford CCG were formally consulted about the proposal to open Flixton Road. They noted that the Flixton Road property is close to Trafford General Hospital, and consequently there is ease of access to the Trafford Patient Walk-in Centre. The CCG also advised that the nearest GP practice will be Trafford Health Centre. It was noted that Trafford Children in Care are already ordinarily resident in Trafford and therefore there will be no new demand on specialist health service.

4.6 Consultation with Police:

The police have been consulted about the proposal to open Flixton Road as a 3 bedded residential children’s home. The police have no significant concerns about the proposal . The police have checked police systems and there are no identified issues in the Flixton Road area that may cause safeguarding concerns for children placed at the home and once the home has opened the police have indicated that the Neighbourhood Policing Team will make contact with the staff to forge strong working relationships with them .

5.0 Planning Permission.

There have been discussions with Planning Officers with regard to the planning position and steps are being taken to ensure that the proposed change of use meets all requirements in that regard

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS

Consideration could be given to maintaining Fairview in its current format as a 2 bedded children’s home, and to not commencing the development of Flixton Road as a 3 bedded residential children’s home. However this action would:

- Reduce the opportunity for more children in care, who have presenting complex or challenging behaviour, to reside in a children’s home which provides a small group living environment and which is situated within the Trafford community;
- Result in the loss of potential annual savings from reduced dependency on residential placements purchased from external providers;
- Result in loss a capital receipt that would be gained from the sale of the Fairview site.

7.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

The proposal potentially allows more children in care who have presenting complex or challenging behaviour to reside in a children’s home which provides a small group living environment and which is situated within the Trafford community.

There will be a potential saving of £100k per annum from the relocation of this children’s home in respect of overall placement costs for children in care.

Key Decision Yes
If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

P HED

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials).....
.....

Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials).....JL.....

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE (electronic)



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.