

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: MODERNISATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL HOMES, IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 20 MAY 2004	Ref: KS/JD	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

1.1. This report advises Committee on progress made to modernise the provision of care for children and young people who need to be looked after and accommodated in a residential setting, in North Lanarkshire.

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1. A report entitled "The Modernisation of Children's Homes in North Lanarkshire", was approved by the Social Work Committee, on 30 October 2003. The objectives of this plan are:-

- To progressively create more community based alternatives to residential care
- To reduce the overall number of residential care home places.
- To build two new homes to high quality design specifications
- To reconfigure existing provision so that over time, no home will have more than six places
- To produce a more appropriate geographical spread of services across North Lanarkshire.

2.2. The plan to modernise the children's homes in North Lanarkshire is set out in four phases.

**Phase 1** - The replacement of Cecil Street with a five bedded unit at the vacant former respite Care unit at Buchanan Street, Coatbridge.

**Phase 2** - The relocation of day services currently provided on the Kirknowe site in Wishaw, to Cecil Street Coatbridge, (currently a residential children's unit) and the creation of a new purpose built six-bedded unit on the Kirknowe site.

**Phase 3** - A new purpose built six-bedded unit on a site in Cumbernauld, to replace Pine Court Children's Unit.

**Phase 4** - Future implementation of incremental plans, to reconfigure the remaining residential care provision, in keeping with the principles and philosophy set out in the plan.

2.3 An action plan has been agreed to implement Phase 1, 2 and 3 of the plan to modernise Children's Homes in North Lanarkshire. The action plan addresses: the location, size and design of proposed buildings; management and staffing arrangements; new working practices; and a plan for consultation with children and their families, managers, staff, neighbours and community representatives.

### 3. PROPOSALS/CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 **Phase 1** - The relocation of Cecil Street Children's Home. Onsite work at Buchanan Street commenced at the end of December 2003 and will be completed by May 2004. This will facilitate the relocation of residents and staff in Cecil Street Children's Home, to a five-bedded Children's Home in Buchanan Street, Coatbridge, or, to other appropriate sites/locations, by June 2004.
- 3.2 **Phase 2** - The refurbishment of Cecil Street for the relocation of day services currently provided on the Kirknowe site is scheduled to begin in June/July 2004 and completion is planned by October 2004. This will facilitate the relocation of the new day services by November 2004.
- 3.3 Onsite work at Kirknowe, Wishaw to build a new 6 bedded Children's Home is scheduled to begin in November 2004, with completion due, by May 2005.
- 3.4 **Phase 3** - The identification of a site in Cumbernauld to build a new 6 bedded Children's Home to replace Pine Court Children's Home has been prioritised and a detailed options appraisal exercise has been carried out. Appendix 1 provides a description of the options appraisal process undertaken, the site identification exercise, and the benefits criteria applied to each site. The preferred site is on land formerly occupied by Cumbernauld Primary School, The Village, Cumbernauld.

### 4. FINANCIAL / PERSONNEL / LEGAL / POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost of the proposed developments has been set aside in the Council's capital plan for years 2003/4 – 2004/5 (inclusive).
- 4.2 Negotiations with trades unions over the personnel implications of the changes continue.
- 4.3 Future progress reports will be submitted to Committee, with regard to costs and further developments as a matter of course.

### 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Committee is asked to:
- (i) Approve the location of the proposed site for a replacement Children's Home in Cumbernauld;
  - (ii) Remit to the Policy and Resources (Personnel) Sub Committee for information;
  - (iii) Invite the Director of Social Work to submit future progress reports; and
  - (iv) Otherwise note the contents of this report.

  
**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**21 April 2004**

*For further information on this report, please contact Bobby Miller, Development Manager, NLC, Social Work Department, 73-77 Merry Street Motherwell, Tel. No. 01698 332286, email millerr@northlan.gov.uk*

## **APPENDIX 1      OPTIONS APPRAISAL SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

A detailed options appraisal exercise has been carried out to evaluate potential sites for a new build, six-bedded children's home in Cumbernauld. Identification of potential sites for children's homes was undertaken by Housing and Property Services. In keeping with the findings of the Member/Officer review it was agreed to prioritise potential alternative sites to replace Pine Court Children's Home.

### **Benefits Criteria**

Each site was assessed against the benefits criteria developed from best practice, identified from the Regulation of Care Registration Requirements and the National Standards for Care Homes for Children and Young People.

The benefits criteria and weightings are scored against criteria in three sections:

1. Practical requirements:

Size, affordability, planning consent, readiness for use, regulation of care issues

2. Quality of provision and outcomes for children and young people:

Safety and security, accessibility, integration in the community

3. Addressing concerns and consultation:

Community effect and acceptability

Criteria 1 and 2 are applied in the selection of a site and Criteria 3 is applied if the result of 1 and 2 mean that a site maybe suitable for the new build children's home.

Each criterion was awarded a weighting and the methodology independently scrutinised by the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care.

### **Analysis of Potential Sites**

Potential site options in Cumbernauld were identified as five empty sites and two former primary school sites. Four of the sites were not feasible options as they were either not available, too small, or too small with poor topography and thereby unable to accommodate the proposed new build six bedded children's unit. Three sites proceeded to a full options appraisal.

The first of the three sites fully evaluated scored lowest, primarily as a result of its isolated and prominent location, close to the entrance of the local high school.

The second of the three sites fully evaluated scored less favourably than the preferred site, particularly in respect of safety and security issues within the community for young people living in the unit. The site is overlooked by housing in an area that has a substantially greater reported volume of police calls than the preferred site. This is likely to adversely effect the integration in the local community and outcomes for young people.

The last of the three sites fully evaluated scored significantly higher than the other sites. The site of the former Cumbernauld Primary School site consists of fire-damaged, disused school buildings that require to be demolished. The only place of residence in the immediate vicinity is the former janitor's house. Whilst there are concerns about anti-social behaviour in the Village area, these are markedly less than in the above site. There are not considered to be major concerns about the safety of young people travelling to and from the unit. The qualitative difference in environment between this site and other sites identified will assist the Council to meet its legal obligations in respect of regulation and care standards.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The outcome of the Options Appraisal exercise has informed the following recommendations:

- (i) That Pine Court Children's Home is replaced with a new build, six bedded children's home, on part of the site of the former Cumbernauld Primary School in the Village, Cumbernauld.
- (ii) Pine Court Children's Home to be closed on completion of the new unit.