

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE		Subject: MODERNISATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S HOMES IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 18 MAY 2006	Ref: JD/DC/KE	

1. Purpose of Report/Introduction

To advise Committee of 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 Social Work Committee on 30 October 2003. The objectives of this plan were:

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

2.2. The plan was to be implemented in phases:

- Closure of Cecil street and the establishment of a new 5 bedded unit in Buchanan Street
- The transfer of day care services from Kirknowe in Cambusnethan to Cecil Street, Coatbridge
- The creation of a new purpose built six bedded unit on the Cambusnethan site
- The closure of Pine Court in Cumbernauld
- The establishment of a new purpose built establishment on a site in Cumbernauld
- Development of further plans to reconfigure the remaining residential care provision.

3. Proposals/Considerations

- 3.1. A whole sector approach to appointments of staff has been used to make certain that the views of existing staff in their relocation have been taken into consideration. New appointments of managers and senior staff have been made to ensure that all substantive vacancies have been filled in anticipation of the new home opening.
- 3.2. Cecil Street closed and was refurbished to provide the Community Alternative services that were formerly provided at Kirknowe, Cambusnethan. The new 5-bedded unit was established in Buchanan Street and this unit opened in September 2004.
- 3.3. The new 6-bedded unit on the site of the former Kirknowe building in Cambusnethan began construction at the beginning of 2005. It is due for completion and hand over in May 2006. The staff complement for this home has been selected and will transfer from their existing locations at the end of May to commence an induction programme.
- 3.4. The opening of the new unit in Cambusnethan will enable the closure of the Pine Court unit in Cumbernauld in June 2006.
- 3.5. Planning application was submitted for a new 6-bedded unit in Cumbernauld Village on the site of the former village school. Representation from the community and advice from Scottish Heritage has led to a reappraisal of the positioning of this development within the same grounds of the former school. New plans are to be submitted by the end of April with a proposed time line of 2008 for completion.
- 3.6. The designs for two new children's homes in Motherwell and Airdrie were produced in September 2005 and were put on display for the comment and feedback of all Council officers with a key interest in the Modernisation Programme. Young people currently in care and young people who had recently left care were also consulted on the new plans. The display was also shown to members of the Social Work Committee. All comments were used to amend the designs in preparation for submission for planning.
- 3.7. The planning application for the Motherwell home has been submitted. It is intended that the proposed timeline will lead to completion by the end of 2007.
- 3.8. The planning application for the Airdrie home has been delayed due to the withdrawal of the availability of the proposed site in Katherine Street. This site may be requisitioned for the proposed reopening of the railway line that will require to use the Katherine Street site for a station and car park. A full options appraisal of available sites in Airdrie was undertaken and Committee approved the use of the former Meadowside House site in March 2006. The planning application will be made by the end of May with completion anticipated at the end of 2007.

4. Financial/Personnel/Legal/Policy Implications

- 4.1. The cost of the proposed developments outlined in Section 3 above have been set aside in the Council's capital plan for years 2006/7 to 2008/9 inclusive.
- 4.2. Discussion with trade unions about 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) note the progress to date of the modernisation programme and;
- (ii) invite the Director of Social Work to submit future progress reports.



Jim Dickie
Director of Social Work
24 April 2006

For further information on this report please contact Susan Taylor, Manager, Children, Families & Justice on 01698 332032 or David Carver, Co-ordinator, Looked After & Accommodated Children on 01698 332651