

Manchester City Council Report for Resolution

Report to: Executive - 13 March 2019

Subject: Young People Leaving Care Service – Property Relocation

Report of: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

Summary

In 2017 Manchester City Council made the decision ‘that no care leaver’ will be placed in emergency ‘bed and breakfast’ accommodation; since that time Manchester has continued to proactively support and promote their independence; including the decision no care leaver up to the age of 25 years will pay council tax and transfer of Manchester’s Leaving Care Service in house in order to play a direct role in driving the experiences and outcomes of ‘our children’.

As part of the continuous improvement and investment in Manchester’s offer to our care leavers, this report sets out an opportunity for the Leaving Care Service to have an innovative and ‘fit for purpose’ location in Crumpsall. In addition, and informed by the feedback from our young people, develop further our work with The Prince’s Trust to have presence in the city centre that is inspiring, aspirational and offers a ‘one stop shop’ drop in facility.

This opportunity will require the current Leaving Care Service base to transfer from Moss Side to Crumpsall and capital investment to convert the former children’s home on Seymour Road, Crumpsall to be a ‘fit for purpose’ base that will include supported accommodation/trainer flats. The inclusion of supported accommodation/trainer flats will make an important contribution to preparing our care leavers for adulthood whilst at the same time delivering a year on year financial saving.

Recommendations

To recommend that Executive:

1. approve the relocation of the Leaving Care Service from 36 Monton Street, Moss Side to Seymour Road, Crumpsall;
 2. recommend that the Council approve a capital allocation of up to £1.2m to cover any unforeseen costs, funded by prudential borrowing; and
 3. recommend that the Council delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer, in consultation with Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources, to set the final budget for the project, the capital allocation and the borrowing.
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Wards Affected: Moss Side and Crumpsall wards

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of the contribution to the strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective Children's Social Care Services are critical to ensuring our most vulnerable citizens are afforded opportunities and supported to connect and contribute to the city's sustainability and growth.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Supporting our Care Leavers for whom we are the corporate parent to obtain greater outcomes and prepare them to engage in the future development of our City
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Enabling our Care Leavers to reach their full potential and empower them to make a positive contribution to our communities.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Supporting our Care Leavers to become better, stronger and well informed residents, which increases the livability of the City
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	A strong and well resourced service will be able to support our Care Leavers successfully, who will make a positive contribution to continuing growth in the City

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The revenue implications of the proposals contained in this report will be met from with the Children's Services revenue budget through the release of costs for the current Leaving Care property in Moss Side.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Estimated cost for the scheme is £1m for refurbishment with final costs to be confirmed as the design progresses. A business case will be submitted through Capital Strategy Board for approval. A capital allocation of up to £1.2m is requested, to be funded from prudential borrowing, subject to approval of final scheme from the Deputy Chief Executive and City Treasurer in consultation with Executive Member for Finance and Human Resources.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents Executive Members with detail regarding the proposed relocation of the Council's Leaving Care Service from its current base in Moss Side to a new location in Crumpsall.
- 1.2 The report provides detail on the delivery of a new service model from the Crumpsall building along with outline budget costs and programme timeline for the delivery of the scheme.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Manchester's care leavers are 'Our Children'; as their corporate parents, we have a duty and a moral responsibility to ensure they are prepared and provided with the right support to ensure they step into the adult world ready to access the many opportunities and are resilient to the challenges of adulthood in order to have safe, happy, healthy and successful lives.
- 2.2 Since 1995 Manchester City Council's Leaving Care Service has been commissioned via a third party organisation. Following a review of the contract and performance of the provider, in 2018 the decision was made to bring the service in-house.
- 2.3 The service is currently operated from "The Curve", which is located in Moss Side in a Manchester City Council owned building. This building was part of the investment estate and managed by Jacobs. It has now been moved into the operational estate. A recent review of the building has identified there has not been any significant investment in recent years and a Health and Safety risk assessment concluded that there is a significant amount of work required to the physical environment in order for it to be fit for purpose and meet the service expectations.
- 2.4 Children's Services are in phase 2 of a 3 phase transformation programme that will lead to a reformed and improved offer to our care leavers. As well as improving the overall service offer, processes and procedures, the directorate recognises that the physical environment can have a significant impact on the quality of the offer to young people.

The Proposal

- 2.5 Accommodation and suitable options are an ongoing challenge for Care Leavers. Officers have recently undertaken a needs analysis study to understand the housing needs of our Care Leavers. It was evident from the study that our Care Leavers required a range of housing options in order to meet their differing needs, and this includes offering training and support to maintain a tenancy.
- 2.6 We currently have 133 of our young people living in externally commissioned 'supported accommodation', at budgeted cost of approximately £5.6m per annum. This is the right plan for those young people, and in terms of service

delivery this represents an improvement as we have not had any of our young people in emergency accommodation since August 2018, and we have better working relationships with our partners, who are open to flexible, bespoke packages of support. In addition, our young people do not pay council tax, which contributes to their step to independent living.

- 2.7 Working with Corporate Estates, the Directorate have identified a suitable property in the operational estate that could be converted to provide a new base for the Leaving Care Service. The property, on Seymour Road in Crumpsall provides approximately 520 square meters of accommodation over two floors. An outline feasibility design has been completed showing the ground floor could provide staff accommodation and contact space for young people including a reception area, staff office, multi-purpose area, laundry, toilets and ground floor meeting rooms. The first floor could provide 6 residential units, consisting of 3 studio units with kitchen and bathroom, and 3 bedrooms with access to shared bathrooms. An operating model is being developed in consultation with our young people to ensure residents are appropriately supported, either through our own resource or an external partner resource. Admissions will be informed by clear criteria, subject to matching and management oversight. In addition there staff will be available to manage the admissions, matching and discharge arrangements, including the support our young people in their readiness to be 'good tenants/live independently outside the 8am to 8pm hours, when the care leaving service is open for young people. This cover will also include where young people can look to in the event an immediate response to support is required.
- 2.8 The opportunity of an alternative location as set out in the above paragraph and with that a larger premises, there is an opportunity to create a new base for the service more aligned to the new service ethos, and the needs of young people. The new base could be used flexibly to provide both 'live' training spaces (training flats) as well as emergency and 'step down' residential accommodation for young people. The former would be used to increase care leavers readiness for independence; the latter will reduce reliance on expensive 'supported accommodation', currently used for 38 young people. It is anticipated that the proposed development will provisionally reduce the Children's Service supported accommodation spend by £180k per annum.
- 2.9 Our young people have been engaged in discussing and developing the aforementioned opportunity and design; whilst there are some reservations it has been met with their resounding support.
- 2.10 Capital Programme have prepared the feasibility designs, and outline costs estimate a budget of c£1m will be required, inclusive of all fees. This budget estimate will be market tested with contractors following approval at Checkpoint 1 at Capital Strategy Board. The refurbishment programme has an estimated duration of 36 weeks to include an initial 18 week period of detailed design, procurement of contractor and final cost provision followed by a construction period of 18 weeks. Subject to receiving Checkpoint 2 approvals at Capital Strategy Board on 16th April and there being no delays in regards to procuring a contractor, the scheme could be delivered in December 2019.

- 2.11 A separate assessment of opportunities to introduce sustainable technologies and reduce carbon usage on the site will be made in the following design stage.
- 2.12 Alternative properties have been considered, but the condition and configuration of the Seymour Road property (designed as a residential home for children) provides the best potential for economic refurbishment.
- 2.13 It should be noted that the Directorate envisage the refurbished property as a key location for young people accessing the leaving care offer, particularly the new residential offer, but are also working with partners to develop an accessible advice and support provision in the City Centre as part of a holistic offer to young people. These discussions are advanced and the service are positive with regards to the outcome.
- 2.14 The impact, if the scheme is not supported, would be the offer continuing in the current location, without the residential offer. This would result in an inhibited offer to young people, and a missed opportunity to have greater control over the costs of supported accommodation.
- 2.15 The Estates Team are working with the Directorate for Children and Education Services to propose a new use for the Monton Street property, which would be vacated as part of these proposals. This work is in the early stages, but a currently a viable ongoing operational use of the property is anticipated. Proposals will be brought forward in due course following consultation with the appropriate Executive Members.

3.0 Contributing to the Manchester Strategy

(a) A thriving and sustainable city

- 3.1 The Care Leaving Service is developing its options for young people in terms of education, employment and training. We are focussing upon our NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) young people and showing 'aspiration' for our young people who are EET (**Engagement in education, employment and training**) and have goals to progress further.

(b) A highly skilled city

- 3.2 Our Care Leavers will offer us our employees of the present and the future. As Corporate Parents, we are committed to offering each individual young person an opportunity that is suited and matched to their skills, in line with their goals and ambitions. The Care Leaving Service intends to be the driving force behind this - linking in with our own Council services and local employers / partners.

(c) A progressive and equitable city

- 3.3 There has been and continues to be some very effective partnership work

completed, across all spectrum requirements of care leavers - health, education, independent living, suitable accommodation.

(d) A liveable and low carbon city

- 3.4 Our young people are proud to be from Manchester, and we have to show our dedication to providing a service that stands above that of others. Our partnership work, our young-person focussed, tenacious staff team are key highlights.

(e) A connected city

- 3.5 The care leaving service is going through a journey, and we are building an effective team that young people that can be proud of accessing. Accessibility is the key word in terms of achieving the voice of young people in a variety of ways and listening to their wishes in terms how they want the service delivered and what they want to achieve individually. We will be evidencing a 'you said, we did' attitude - that promotes relationships and generates growth, connectivity and accessibility.

4. Key Policies and Considerations

(a) Equal Opportunities

- 4.1 N/a

(b) Risk Management

- 4.2 N/a

(c) Legal Considerations

- 4.3 N/a