

**Report of the Cabinet Member for
Services for Children and Young People**

Cabinet – 18 June 2015

**SITE ACCOMMODATION REVIEW FOR THE CITY & COUNTY OF
SWANSEA RESIDENTIAL HOME FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Purpose:	Proposal recommending how to optimise the service delivery model of emergency and short term residential placements with appropriate accommodation fit for purpose.
Policy Framework:	LAC Reduction Strategy, Child and Family Business Plan, Strategic Delivery Plan, Corporate Plan and Sustainable Swansea Programme.
Reason for Decision:	Current accommodation is not fit for purpose. Agreement needed for relocation to new accommodation that is fit for purpose to deliver the new statement of purpose of a 2 bed, emergency, short term residential children's home for us to maximise efficiency, quality and outcomes for our Looked After children.
Consultation:	Head of Legal Democratic Services & Procurement Head of Financial Services Corporate Building and Property Services Access to Services
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) It be agreed that the current site does not fit with the service delivery model agreed in November 2014; it is too large for the level of demand; is an inefficient use of Local Authority accommodation; is an incompatible environment for the service model and does not enable best or effective delivery of good quality care to improve outcomes for our Looked After Children. This site cannot be modified to make it fit for purpose. 2) It be agreed that delegated authority be given to Child & Family Services start a search for alternative smaller sites for the delivery of the service within the City & County boundary. Initially a search within the existing Local Authority estate would be completed. If an internal match fit for purpose is not identified, agreement be given to search for a residential property for purchase. 3) The financial implications of the move are agreed as proposed. Delegated authority is given to Child & Family Services to proceed with relocation in line with the proposed business case.

- 4) The legal and HR implications of the move are agreed as proposed.
- 5) The property is released for alternative use as considered appropriate by the Head of Corporate Property.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report focusses on the accommodation aspect of the agreed service model for the residential home at Ty Nant (agreed in November 2014.) Specifically that the provision of emergency and short term accommodation for Looked after Children should remain an internal service offered by the Local Authority at a reduced level of capacity to maximise quality and efficiency of service; deliver improved value for money and a sustainable service into the future.
- 1.2 The report sets out why the current accommodation site is no longer fit for purpose as set out in 1.1.
- 1.3 The report sets out a specification proposal for a new site that is fit for purpose now and is sustainable moving forward to deliver positive outcomes for Looked After Children in line with our strategic direction.
- 1.4 The report sets out the financial business case for the move and how it is sustainable moving forward in the context of the financial challenges facing the City & County of Swansea.

2.0 Current Accommodation Site

- 2.1 The site was purpose built to accommodate a different service model of residential accommodation; to house 8 children spread over 2, 4 bedded buildings. An additional building was built on site to house the necessary business support for this size of home.
- 2.2 Since the beginning of 2013 when the service was reconfigured and reduced in size; 1 of the 3 buildings has been completely mothballed and lies empty.

- 2.3 Business support for the home over the same timeline has been scaled back for 2 main reasons. Firstly, demand has reduced in line with the reduction in size of the home. Secondly, due to developments in smarter ways of working, moving towards a paperless system wherever possible and enabling residential care workers to record directly onto our PARIS system. The administration block is only used for 3.5 hours per week. These tasks could be completed in the staff office in a home. Effectively this means 2 of the 3 buildings on site are empty.
- 2.4 The 3 buildings sit on a large site set up with car parking for a dozen or more cars; grassed area; patios front and back; plus basketball court. While this was ideal for a busy site with 8 children and associated staffing, it has a disused, empty feel about it given the current configuration. It is not a homely environment. Maintenance of the site to a good standard is essential however it is an unnecessary expenditure of time and resource in an underutilised site.
- 2.5 Moving on to consider the specification of the building that remains in use as a home. The home has a large double height entrance vestibule off which runs 2 staff offices, a staircase and corridor. The layout makes for an initial impression that is business / office like rather than homely. This can also be an area where young people in the home gather if they are heightened in mood because of its size and access routes. It's a location where a majority of significant events or behavioural episodes occur.
- 2.6 The 2 offices are unnecessary and do not support a culture of a home environment. Only 1 small office is required to house computer, safe, keys, confidential files and so on. Staff on shift should predominantly be engaging with the young people in the home not removed in an office environment. General meetings already take place in communal dining or lounge areas as young people are encouraged to participate in meetings relating to their care plan so office space is not required for large meetings.
- 2.7 There are 4 bedrooms in the building. We are reducing our capacity in line with the new service model to 2 so there will be surplus space in this main building.
- 2.8 Each of the 4 bedrooms upstairs has an ensuite bathroom. This is in addition to a large family bathroom. While the ensuite facilities do support high levels of privacy for the young people placed, they have proved to present a problem in terms of damage and maintenance, for example, flooding damaging the adjacent bedrooms. Given the home environments from which our young people are often accommodated and move on to; an ensuite bathroom is an anomaly. In a smaller homely environment use of a family bathroom and an additional toilet are far more likely to be the norm and encourage appropriate socialisation plus respect for the home environment.

- 2.9 The kitchen and dining areas are joined by a serving hatch rather than being open plan. While both areas are functional, observation of how children and staff engage in the home evidences that children want to be in the kitchen assisting staff in preparation of food and chatting through anything from the day's events to bigger issues impacting their care plan. They will often stand in the kitchen leaning against worktops to interact. The dining room by comparison can be underutilised. A kitchen / diner layout to fully support interaction would be more beneficial to the engagement of direct work with the children.
- 2.10 Other rooms in the building include a separate pantry, separate laundry room, 2 further rooms used for direct work or reading / education plus an ample size lounge.
- 2.11 The design of the buildings was a question in the Consultation with Stakeholders in autumn 2012. Feedback was generally consistent in relation to issues over design. The buildings are not sufficiently homely. There is an institutionalised feel of a purpose built unit rather than a home. It's too big with an inappropriate design. There is insufficient emphasis on space for children and young people rather than for staff and administration.
- 2.12 In the subsequent Report to Cabinet proposals were made around how the vacant home; Ty Felin and the administrative block on the site could be utilised, alongside the reduced capacity in Ty Nant. However CSSIW have been clear that they would not support use of the empty buildings on the site of the home due to the potential risks to and from the children placed in Ty Nant by alternative use.
- 2.13 A building of this size is simply no longer required. As parts of the site have become disused and underutilised it accentuates the lack of homeliness. While the 1 remaining building in use is made the best of by the current staff team it is incongruent with the purpose.
- 2.14 The geographical location of the home has been noted as providing challenges to integration within the local community and a source of comment by the Inspectorate. The size of the site, its perimeter fencing and location on a raised area above a roundabout make it stand apart from other residential settings on the estate. It is well known as a Children's Home; the result in terms of young people placed there is that they are known as Looked After Children rather than maintaining their privacy. This can increase vulnerabilities and risks to children being targeted by inappropriate adults, whether this is for exploitation or criminality.
- 2.15 Feedback in relation to the location of the home was almost universally negative during the Consultation. There was a general consensus that the location of the home within an area of high socio economic deprivation significantly undermines the effectiveness of care planning.

The issue of location featured strongly in the feedback across the whole range of themes consulted upon.

- 2.16 Whilst recognised that the individual safeguarding practice of staff was positive, the location of the home and in particular concerns about interactions with peers in the local community and the difficulty in maintaining boundaries where there are issues such as problematic substance use means that overall safeguarding was considered to be undermined.
- 2.17 Historically there have been physical confrontations between community members, group of youths in the community, residents and staff. Since the reconfiguration and reduction in capacity at Nant y Felin the staff group have worked hard to engage the local community. This has been successful and there are no current concerns about risk of direct conflict with the local community who are supportive of the staff team and children placed.
- 2.18 Since the Consultation with Stakeholders the question has been asked '*Whether emergency/ short term residential care can be successfully delivered from Nant Y Felin (site) given the concerns about location and design*'. For the reasons stated above it can be concluded that the site is not fit for purpose for a 2 bedded emergency / short term service model.

3.0 Proposed Specification of New Accommodation

3.1 Geographical Location Considerations

- 3.1.1 There is a helpful document that has been produced in England '*Children's homes regulations amendments 2014*' which can assist us in the consideration of a new location for the home. This document was produced in response to concerns around which agencies should be responsible for ensuring that children's homes are appropriately and safely located in communities plus a number of reviews that highlighted the targeting of children's homes by perpetrators of criminality. The document also recognises that children placed in homes in deprived areas may face disadvantage and lack opportunities to enjoy and achieve in these communities.

In summary it sets the scene as:

" This advice has been developed to support good practice in carrying out location assessments. It is intended to encourage collaboration and partnership between children's homes providers and local services so that children who live in children's homes can access the same benefits and protections as all other children.

In assessing the location of a children's home, a prospective provider of a new home or the manager of an established home will benefit from a clear understanding of the benefits and disadvantages of living in a specific location. This will help establish whether the area is suitable for a home, ensuring that

children feel safe and are able to benefit from good quality services. “ (p6. DFE-00529-2014)

- 3.1.2 Relating this to the identification of a new site for the current service, the proposal would be for the Home Manager to make a thorough location assessment, addressing the following considerations:

Consideration	Rationale
Whether the location of the home influences the potential for an already vulnerable child to be a victim of crime, such as being targeted for sexual exploitation, substance misuse, or criminality.	Safeguarding
Whether there is a likelihood of children placed in the home becoming drawn into gang crime or anti-social behaviour in the local area.	Safeguarding
The suitability of the local neighbourhood as a location to care for children who may have already been victims of abuse and neglect.	Safeguarding
Whether there are environmental factors that would represent a hazard to children, such as locations near level crossings or busy roads.	Safeguarding
Consultation with partners in the Police, LSCB, Probation, YOS, Education and Health to look at the make-up of the local community.	Safeguarding. Accessibility to local services
Opportunities to participate in leisure, sporting or cultural activities.	Accessibility to local services
Proximity to access appropriate education sites for the profile of children placed in the home.	Accessibility to local services
Proximity to access key support services for the profile of the children placed in the home.	Accessibility to local services
Access to public transport routes.	Accessibility to local services. Independence skills.

- 3.1.3 Once a location assessment is completed, a risk matrix will help determine the development of a risk management strategy. This would be submitted for consideration during Registration of the home and would be reviewed annually thereafter.

3.2 **Site specifications**

- 3.2.1 The Children’s Homes: National Minimum Standards sets out at Standard 10 – Providing a suitable physical environment for the child – the desired outcome that *“children live in well designed, safe, pleasant homes with adequate space in a suitable location where there is access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which will promote their development”* it further sets out the home environment should support *“its aims and objectives and proposed models of care for children and young people”*. As a provider the City & County of Swansea would aspire

to exceed the minimum standards and ensure as best fit as possible for delivery of the service model.

3.2.2 Relating this to the site specification the proposal would be:

Specification	Rationale
Detached property, close to other homes so it's integrated and not easily identified but with sufficient distance for privacy. Not isolated.	Integration in the community
Avoid areas too central to an estate or cul-de-sac preferably on the periphery.	Integration in the community
Property set in small grounds to support external activities in a safe environment.	Healthy lifestyle
Domestic garden area with room for patio seating; area to play some games.	Healthy lifestyle
Shed for secure storage of equipment such as bikes, barbeque and camping equipment.	Healthy lifestyle
Private driveway for parking.	Minimise disruption to neighbours

3.3 Internal specifications

Specification	Rationale
3 bedrooms (similar sizes)	NMS
Family bathroom	NMS
Additional toilet (not ensuite)	NMS
Staff office	Confidential information storage
Open plan kitchen diner	Added value of layout
Lounge	NMS
Quiet room / study room	Added value for direct work
No external fire escape required but fire doors to be fitted	NMS
Furniture, fixtures & fittings transfer from existing home	NMS
New build rather than an older home is less likely to require modification of specification and more likely to meet NMS	Financial implications

3.3.1 The specification in relation to bedrooms is based on the model of 2 children's bedrooms and a staff bedroom. Should capacity become a future problem then the site remains sustainable as the 3rd bedroom could be changed into an additional children's bedroom with the agreement of the Inspectorate and we could revert to waking night staff on shift during these periods of higher occupancy. This risk management strategy will negate the potential concern regarding a future smaller site. At this time however the demand, occupancy rates and profile of the young people accommodated all continue to support the agreed reduction in capacity to 2 beds.

- 3.4 Any capacity issues that should on occasion exceed the above would be offset by our arrangements with local and regional providers contractually supported under the regional arrangement of the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru. This ensures that any private emergency beds that may have to be commissioned are at a competitive rate; quality assured and as close to Swansea as possible. Care plans would then consider as a priority a return to our internal in area provision.
- 3.5 Successful private providers delivering a model of emergency / short term residential care for children and young people with complex needs operate in the main to the specification as set out 3.1 – 3.3. Most homes are homes on residential streets, although usually detached; they are not visually marked out from neighbouring properties so avoiding a label or stigma to the children being accommodated. The homeliness and 'normality' of these environments sets the scene for enabling staff to meet the needs of children who find themselves at a point of crisis in their lives. It engenders a culture of stabilising, calming, assessing and supporting these children with the specific source of their needs before the next stage in their care plan.
- 3.6 The proposed relocation of residential provision in Swansea supports the objectives of reducing the number of LAC whilst helping ensure that when a child does need to be looked after they are able to remain living in or as close as possible to Swansea and are enabled to live within a family environment. During the period of accommodation the children are given every opportunity to stabilise, address the issues that precipitated the crises and move on to fulfil their potential with sustainable strategies for preventing future crisis.

4.0 Financial Implications of the Recommendations

- 4.1 There are financial implications attached to the recommendations within this briefing. Budgets and spend for the last 3 financial years are detailed for consideration.

Nant y Felin	Budget £'s	Actual £'s	Variance £'s
Year 12/13	746,000	1,001,000	255,000
Year 13/14	540,000	648,000	108,000
Year 14/15	551,000	557,000	6,000
Year 15/16	557,000		

- 4.2 For the financial year 2013/14 redeployment costs for staff associated with the reduction in the capacity from 8 beds to 4 beds equalled £100,000. Staffing was the only area of overspend for Ty Nant during the financial year 2013/14.
- 4.3 Sickness levels amongst staff have been successfully reduced since reconfiguration and this has successfully reduced costs in this area. This improvement should be maintained in the future.

- 4.4 Single Status has had an impact on the entitlement to payments for unsocial hours, waking night staff and weekend shifts on rota at the home. Irrelevant of site decisions these additional costs will have to be budgeted for. This impacted on the Budget for 2014/15. A 24 hour period of staffing incurs the following pay rates:

Shift	Rate
<i>6am-7pm</i>	<i>Basic Rate</i>
<i>7pm – 11pm</i>	<i>Unsocial Hours Rate (time and a third)</i>
<i>11pm – 6am</i>	<i>Night Shift Supplement + Unsocial Hours Rate</i>
<i>Saturdays</i>	<i>Time and a third (plus the above)</i>
<i>Sundays</i>	<i>Time and a half (plus the above)</i>

- 4.5 Staffing is the largest financial cost to the running of the home. Staffing costs for 2014/15 were at a budget of £507,000. Costs came in at £521,000. The overspend is attributable to coverage on additional hours against sickness and maternity leave equating to just under £20,000.
- 4.6 Based on the agreement to reduce capacity from 4 beds to 2 beds in November 2013, at point of relocation and implementation of the new model, proposed staffing levels would be reduced. There is a proposed reduction of 30% to the fulltime staff cohort, alongside a smaller reduction in the part-time contracts, which would allow us to maximise flexibility and responsiveness to the emergency service. This would still allow us to operate a strong key working ethos and deliver expertise in those areas of specific need for the profile of resident in Ty Nant.
- 4.7 The make-up of shifts could also be more cost effective in a new home where we could safely move from 2 waking night staff to 1 waking and 1 sleep-in night staff. Risk assessment on the current site due to its size and location necessitate 2 waking night staff. The majority of private providers are already able to run on 1 waking night and 1 sleep in to maximise efficiencies.
- 4.8 Short term of course there would be redeployment costs associated with staffing reductions during the financial year 2015/16 which would offset the savings in this financial year from the proposed reduction in staff. Estimated costs for this are at a maximum of £25,000.
- 4.9 Site costs will be an area where budget can be reduced although not as significant as staffing costs; over time this would be of value. Spend on premises for 2014/15 came in at £19,594. The current site has to have security and fire services that would be unnecessary in a smaller residential home. Similarly premises insurance and maintenance costs would reduce depending on the location and reduced size of the new home.
- 4.10 Relocation to a new smaller site fit for purpose would see staffing costs reduce to a predicted £350,000 pa. A saving of £170,000 on this year's costs. During the first year of relocation (2015/16) there would be the

costs of redeployment and costs of the relocation process itself that would offset this saving. Long term however there is a clear business case to reduce costs and improve outcomes for our Looked After Children by relocating the service to a new site.

4.11 Relocation costs will vary based on the identification of a specific site however we can consider those options in terms of a business case.

4.11.1 The furniture and many of the fixtures and fittings from the current home are appropriate to be moved straight into a new site. No costs are anticipated in this area.

4.11.2 Option 1

If an appropriate residential setting is identified as meeting the criteria of the Location Assessment (based on the Criteria in 3.1) within the existing Local Authority stock; the upfront costs of relocation are likely to be incurred by modernisation and modification of the site to achieve the specification set out at 3.2 – 3.3. The level of this cost would be wholly dependent on the condition and specification of the site at time of identification but you would not reasonably expect this to exceed a budget of £50,000. This amount along with the redeployment costs of staff would likely be offset against the first full financial year saving of £170,000.

4.11.3 Option 2

If a residential setting meeting the Location Assessment has to be purchased as there is nothing fit for purpose in the existing Estate then homes to the specification set out above can reasonably be expected to fall in the bracket £230,000 - £275,000 in the current market. In this case the outlay would be recouped, again in addition to potential redeployment costs within 2 full financial years of the move.

Financial Year	Annual Budget	Staffing Budget	Redeploy -ment *	New Site Existing Asset*	New Site Asset Purchase*	Revised Staffing Budget	Saving	Recoup -ment Period (months)
Option 1								
15/16	557	507	+25	+50		-170	95	2
16/17	375	350	0	0		0	182	-
Option 2								
15/16	557	507	+25		+275	-170	-130	12
16/17	375	350	0		0	0	52	10
17/18	375	350	0		0	0	182	-

*Estimated costings

4.11.4 Based on the longer term financial savings that would result in relocation to fit the statement of purpose and a maximum 2 year recoupment period of any investment associated with the relocation. The financial business case for the move is a sound one and would make the service sustainable into the future.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report. The requirement under the Children Act 1989 to consult with staff, young people and families was met during the reconfiguration process at the end of 2012.
- 5.2 The proposed recommendation to relocate would be completed in consultation with CSSIW.
- 5.3 Should redundancies become a possibility detailed advice should be obtained from the Human Resources Department in respect of process and timeline.
- 5.4 Under the Council's Land Transaction Procedure Rules, the relevant Responsible Officer will instruct the Chief Operating Officer or his nominee to negotiate, settle or confirm the terms of such acquisition after taking into account any relevant statutory provisions or guidance and any advice from the Head of Legal, Democratic Services and Procurement. The terms of acquisition may only be approved in writing by the Chief Operating Officer and will be in accordance with the market value of the interest to be acquired.

6.0 Property Implications

- 6.1 The relocation of the existing facility at Ty Nant provides opportunity for further savings within the Sustainable Swansea efficiency workstream for assets (accommodation and disposal strategies) It may be possible to consolidate alternative service providers at the unit and release part of the wider property portfolio which is no longer fit for purpose for disposal.
- 6.2 Disposal of part of the wider portfolio would generate premises costs savings and additional capital receipt for the disposal programme.
- 6.3 For clarity however; disposal of the current site for alternative use is not pivotal to the business case in this paper for relocation. The business case as set out at 4.11 considers recoupment on expenditure due to relocation within a maximum of 2 years plus savings on future budgets. It is not predicated on capital receipt generated by disposal of the existing site.

7.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 7.1 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process was applied to the original report on the reconfiguration of the Residential Service (January 2012). An EIA screening document was subsequently completed for the Evaluation Report (October 2014).

7.2 An EIA screening document has been completed in relation to this current report (April 2015) and can be found at Appendix 1.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The existing site of the emergency short term residential provision is no longer fit for purpose because:

8.1.1 2 of the 3 buildings on site lay empty;

8.1.2 The 3rd building is too large for the new service model approved in November 2014;

8.1.3 The buildings are recognised by Stakeholders and the Inspectorate as inappropriate not being a homely environment nor having a design layout that supports best outcomes for children;

8.1.4 The location of the home is similarly recognised by Stakeholders and the Inspectorate as not being appropriate to support the care plans of the children placed there;

8.1.5 The reasons for which the site is no longer fit for purpose do not lend themselves to be remedied or adapted;

8.1.6 It is not an effective use of the Local Authority Estate when alternative resource would be better suited to the site;

8.1.7 Efficiencies and financial savings could be made by relocating.

8.2 There is recent guidance on Location Assessments, following a review of children's residential services in England, combined with the development of a service specification that not only meets National Minimum Standards but would optimise the outcomes for our Looked After Children using the service. This service specification enables us to move forward promptly once we have agreement to the proposed relocation of the service.

8.3 The relocation would enable us to reduce expenditure on the new model of service. This generates a potential saving of £170,000 pa moving forward in a sustainable way into the future of our services.

8.4 Relocation expenses would be recouped in a maximum 2 year financial period. This is a sound business case on which to agree relocation.

Background Papers:

None

Appendices: None.