



**Not for Publication:** Appendix B of this report exempt/confidential under Access to Information procedure rules 10.4 (3 and 4)

**Report of the Director of Children’s Services**

**Executive Board**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**Subject: Future of East Moor Secure Children’s Home**

**Electoral Wards Affected:**

All

**Specific Implications For:**

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In   
(Details contained in the report)

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 Children’s Services is requesting authorisation to begin a process of negotiation with the Youth Justice Board (YJB), the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and other key stakeholders to consider building a new secure children’s home in the city to replace East Moor House.

1.2 This report provides an overview of the current context for this request in view of the national picture, the service currently provided at East Moor, the contracting arrangements and the outcomes being delivered for young people in Leeds.

1.3 The information at appendix ‘B’ and appendix ‘C’ provides more details on these proposals. It is proposed that the information in these sections is designated exempt under Access to Information procedure rules 10.4 (3 and 4) as:

- this is information relating to the financial or business affairs of the parties identified in the report and of the Council and that in the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure, and

- publication could prejudice the City Council's commercial interests as it includes financial information relating to contracts that if published could influence negotiations between the Council and potential contractors. In these circumstances it is considered that the public interest in not disclosing this commercial information outweighs the interests of disclosure

## 1.0 Purpose Of This Report

The purpose of this report is:

- to outline the current service provided by East Moor Secure Children's Home as part of the secure estate commissioned by the Youth Justice Board (YJB)
- to identify the deficiencies in the accommodation provided, and
- to consider options and risks involved in building a larger secure children's home to provide additional bed spaces and accommodation for girls.

## 2.0 Background Information

### 2.1 National Context

Secure Children's Homes form part of the secure estate developed and managed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to accommodate 10-17 year olds committed to custody by the courts. In April 2005 the secure estate for children and young people was configured as follows:

	Boys	Girls	Total
Youth Offending Institutions (YOI)	2,612	88	2,700
Secure Children's Homes	182	53	235
Secure Training Centres	174	100	274
Total	2,968	241	3,209

The YJB aims to ensure that all boys aged under 15 and girls under 17 are cared for either in secure training centres or secure children's homes – up to 510 beds are available to the YJB for this purpose. The long term strategy for the YJB involves developing a secure estate which meets the aspirations of the Every Child Matters agenda, is child/young person centred and enables young people in secure accommodation to achieve their full potential through high quality care, educational opportunities and training leading to a reduction in re-offending.

Recent figures on youth offending suggest that, although total number of youth offences may be falling slightly, the incidence of serious youth crime including violent assault and sexual offences is increasing (up by 12% over the last three year period). There is also national evidence of an increasing trend for girls and young women to be convicted of serious offences leading to custodial disposals.

## 2.2 The YJB strategy 2007/08 notes that:

‘Secure establishments, whatever form they take, are scarce and expensive, and their portfolio and characteristics can only be changed slowly..... The YJB values highly the contribution secure children’s homes make to the secure estate, and wishes to sustain the current provision. In order to give more financial and operational security, the YJB will revisit contractual arrangements with secure children’s homes on shorter contracts, to see if more long-term agreements can be entered into’

The strategy also indicates an aspiration to place young people closer to home perhaps through regional commissioning and in recognition of the problems faced by young people leaving the secure estate, to develop step-down placements ie open sections within the secure estate to stage the journey from secure placement back into the community. There is a predicted shortfall of 50 bed places in the secure estate in the Yorkshire and Humberside region - the new YOI at Wetherby will provide an additional 48 beds for 15-17 year old young men, but there are no plans in place to expand provision for 12-14 year old boys - East Moor’s main users - or for girls.

2.3 The current contract between East Moor and the YJB runs to July 2009. Discussions will start over the summer about future contracting arrangements. A recent meeting with the YJB and DCSF representatives indicated the potential for moving from 5 year contracts to up to 15 years to give providers more security as the Board is aware that much of the secure estate is in need of major repair or replacement. (DCSF and YJB attempted to secure funding for a major capital programme for improving the secure estate in the last comprehensive spending review – but were unsuccessful)

2.4 Local authorities are not required by statute to provide secure children’s homes; over the past 10 years, eight secure children’s homes have closed for a variety of reasons, a loss of 98 bed spaces. There is no doubt that the demand for secure accommodation in a children’s home will remain high for the foreseeable future.

## 3.0 The service provided at East Moor

3.1 East Moor has a long history and originally opened as an ‘Industrial School’ in 1857. It has been through many changes since then, including becoming ‘regional secure unit’ and it moved to the current site in 1982 as a new build, with further new development made to increase bed numbers in 1997. East Moor House is now a registered children’s home, licensed by the DCSF, regulated by OfSTED and managed by the local authority through the Children and Young People’s Social Care Service. The YJB monitors performance through commissioning arrangements.

3.2 The service looks after 36 boys and young men – providing care and on-site education and training. Accommodation is provided in four 9-bed units, all are two storeys with shared bathroom facilities. The original building is no longer fit for purpose – the fabric of the original building is dilapidated and in urgent need of upgrading and the type of accommodation provided no longer meets national minimum standards for children’s homes because, for example, young people’s privacy cannot be ensured because of the shared bathroom arrangements. A full list of the deficiencies in the accommodation is attached at appendix ‘A’. Representatives from the YJB and DCSF have confirmed verbally that they would be unable to establish a long-term contract with the unit unless the accommodation issues can be addressed.

3.3 East Moor is judged to be a high performing unit by external inspections and the YJB;

civil servants regularly consult staff from East Moor on policy and practice. The centre has worked hard to establish a very good relationship with the local community and regularly participates in local events and school competitions. As a high performing children's home, the centre management team provides an important training and support service to other children's homes in Leeds, including a current training programme on safe handling and restraint. The Centre Manager is a key member of the Children and Young People's Social Care Leadership Team and also sits on the Workforce Board and the Leeds Local Safeguarding Children Board.

3.4 The boys and young men accommodated at East Moor fall into three main categories:

- Remanded by the court: they have not yet been found guilty but the court believes they are likely to continue to offend, and present a danger to the public – or they are charged with serious or grave offences and are a danger to themselves or others. They are accommodated for an indeterminate period until the end of the court process and often have weekly court appearances in their hometown.
- Serving court directed sentences – their punishment is to be deprived of liberty and the service works with them to reduce offending, on restorative justice and rehabilitation programmes.
  - most are on Detention and Training orders which run for four months to two years and are served 50:50 custody/on licence
  - others convicted of serious offences may be serving sentences of two years to life.

This group have end-to-end sentence plans in place and programmes to address their behaviours and to meet their individual needs. .

- Welfare placements – under section 25 of the 1989 Children Act, where children and young people have a history of running away and there is a high risk that they will continue to run away and are likely to suffer significant harm or injure self or others, a secure order can be made by the Family Court and the young person can be placed within the secure estate.

The average length of stay at East Moor is 94 days. Most of these boys come from the North of England.

#### **4.0 Contracting Arrangements**

4.1 The contract with the YJB covers 34 of the 36 beds. Payment is made regardless of the level of occupancy. Bed prices across the secure children's home sector range from £486 to £621 per night, with East Moor currently being the cheapest at £486. The funding tariff operates as follows:

- The YJB meets the total cost for every child or young person serving sentences; this includes the nightly bed price, cost of escorts to court appearances etc and financial support to families and carers to maintain contact.
- Local authorities are required to pay 2/3 of the bed price for young people on remand and all of the associated costs of placements.
- Local authorities are responsible for all of the costs of children and young people in secure welfare placements. East Moor has two 'secure welfare' beds provided at a cost of £637.04 per night.

## **5.0 Outcomes for children, young people and their families**

- 5.1 There is ample evidence that reduction in re-offending rates is inextricably linked to the level of support that can be offered to children and young people leaving the secure estate. East Moor has a dedicated rehabilitation officer, who is able to work for up to six months with children and their families who live within a radius of 70 miles from the centre. For young people from Leeds, placement in East Moor ensures that effective partnerships with the YOS, CAMHS, Education Leeds, health services, substance misuse services and other community based services can be mobilised to support young people and their families as they move through sentences. Young people can, for example, re-start school before they return home so that a proper pattern of attendance is established. East Moor is one of only three SCHs with a Board of Governors (Education Advisory Board) who are very active in ensuring that Leeds young people receive their statutory educational requirements.
- 5.2 Effective outreach support to these young people and their families contributes to stronger family relationships and may prevent some of these young people coming into public care.
- 5.3 East Moor provides a safe and secure environment for children and young people. The secure estate accommodates children and young people with complex needs, including mental ill health and behaviour problems. Suicide and self-harm are a real and rising concern. East Moor has an excellent record – there have been no suicides and only 4 minor incidents of self-harm in last 5 years despite providing accommodation to some of the most vulnerable boys and young men in the country.
- 5.4 The centre also has excellent performance on managing bullying and violent behaviour – often young men who have been bullied or who have been perpetrators of bullying in YOIs have been transferred to East Moor because of its reputation for being able to manage these young people.

In Secure Training Centres, over 100 incidents of injuries to children and young people were recorded during physical restraint in a four-month period – 23 resulted in young people requiring medical attention, and one young man died. No such injuries have been recorded at East Moor.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

The Executive Board is asked to agree to Children's Services starting a process of negotiation with the Youth Justice Board (YJB), the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and other key stakeholders to consider building a new secure children's home to replace East Moor House.

The areas in which East Moor secure children's home falls short of current requirements is extensive, and includes:

- Lack of en-suite provision in 27 bedrooms
- Size, layout, fixtures and fittings in 27 bedrooms
- Two-storey units
- Opening windows that provide potential ligature points.
- Lack of space in living areas
- Inadequate kitchens, both centrally and in living areas.
- Central dining room, as opposed to in-unit dining
- Difficulty of access for disabled visitors and residents
- Dustbins and plant rooms within security fence
- Number of baths/showers in 3 house units
- Nature and location of fence
- Vocational areas in education block
- Energy usage, efficiency and insulation
- Lack of fire breaks in roof space
- Insufficient space for residents to exercise their right to visits in private.
- Deteriorating central courtyard and gymnasium