



**Report of** Head of Service – Children Looked After Services  
**Report to** Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy  
**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021  
**Subject:** Design and Cost Report: Easdale Childrens Home:  
**Capital Scheme Number:** 32453/EAD/000



|   |   |
|---|---|
| Are specific electoral wards affected?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| If yes, name(s) of ward(s):<br>Killingbeck and Seacroft                         |   |
| Has consultation been carried out?  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Will the decision be open for call-in?  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, access to information procedure rule number:<br>Appendix number:   |   |

## Summary

### Main issues

- The purpose of this report is to seek approval to incur capital expenditure of £308,000 from capital scheme number 32453/EAD/000 to deliver a refurbishment scheme at Easdale children's home that will ensure a suitable physical and aesthetic environment as described in the Children's Homes; National Minimum Standards 10.3.
- Leeds City Council has a duty to offer sufficient and suitable accommodation for all Children and Young People who need to be accommodated and looked after. To ensure Leeds City Council meets this duty a programme of refurbishment works has been identified following a review of mainstream children's homes.
- Whilst the current level of investment has continued to ensure the homes are safe and secure, the décor in many of the homes is dated and the environment perceived to be not sufficiently 'homely'. The refurbishment identified within this report will ensure the children's homes within Leeds will keep pace with modern family life and the appropriate domestic changes.
- Leeds City Council's partners NPS Leeds Ltd will provide design and technical services for the proposed scheme, and the internal works will be delivered by the internal service provider, Leeds Building Services.

## **Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

This scheme will:

- Improve the provision for children and young people who are looked after within the City of Leeds.
- Maintain a local provision that supports a 'Sustainable Infrastructure' by minimising the need for local families to travel an extended distance.
- Support the authority's Health & Wellbeing strategies which strives to improve the outcomes of all citizens of Leeds.
- Ensure children and young people live locally, closer to their families and friends enabling increased contact as appropriate. This can support continuity of relationships and links with communities in Leeds which in turn should positively impact on the wellbeing needs of the children and young people. Living locally also means we are more likely to be able to build on this continuity of relationships to support reunification work with an increased potential for success.
- Facilitate coordinated preparation for adulthood amongst key partners to support effective transition to appropriate adult services, reduce unnecessary costs and improve outcomes/quality of life.
- Reduce the need to use external providers and developing our own local provision will generate annual revenue savings for Children and Families.

## **Resource Implications**

- The estimated scheme cost is £308,000; this includes £248,000 for construction, an allocation of £40,000 for design / technical fees and £20,000 for other project related costs.
- The cost will be met through capital scheme number 32453/EAD/000 as part of the Children's Home refurbishment programme.
- All cost estimates and detailed design was generated via Leeds City Council's joint venture partners NPS Leeds Ltd. The subsequent tender was issued by Leeds Building Services (LBS). All works will be delivered by Leeds City Council's internal service provider (LBS) in line with the authority's Contract Procedure Rules (CPR 3.1.4).

## **Recommendations**

The Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy is requested to;

- i) Authorise expenditure of £308,000 from capital scheme number 32453/EAD/000 to undertake the proposed refurbishment works at Easdale children's home.
- ii) Authorise to appoint Leeds Building Services to carry out the works in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 3.1.4

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is:
- 1.2 To provide background information with respect to the requirement to refurbish the children's home at Easdale. In doing so, the authority will ensure fit for purpose provision is made available for children in Leeds.
- 1.3 To seek 'Authority to Spend' £308,000 on the refurbishment of Easdale children's home, and appoint Leeds Building Services to carry out the necessary works.

## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 In July 2013, Executive Board approved the Children's Services strategy to close all large Childrens homes and replace them with smaller homes creating a more domestic and less institutional environment and to improve quality, range of services, outcomes for children and reduce dependence on expensive external placements through more suitable local provision.
- 2.2 To support this continued strategy, Executive Board in February 2020 agreed to re-allocate £1.5M for a programme of Children's homes refurbishments. The refurbishment which is the subject of this report is the first in a rolling programme of refurbishments to be brought forward subject to priority and cost.
- 2.3 The necessary refurbishment of identified prioritised children's homes within Leeds will ensure Leeds City Council meets national guidance for living standards in children's homes. It will improve the authority's capacity to offer better quality in-house placements, designed to be short term where ever possible, at a lower cost to external residential placements and provide a more cost effective range of provision for children who need to be looked after even for a temporary period.

## **3. Main issues**

### **3.1 Design Proposal and Full Scheme Description**

The proposed refurbishment works to Easdale children's residential home consists of the following components:

- Replacing glazing / windows and improving heating systems throughout.
- Removing old fireplace and plaster walls. All areas requiring new plaster works to be completed.
- Complete rewiring of the home and replacing all lights throughout installing flush roof lights. Replacing all electric sockets to be replaced with new facies incorporating USB charging points
- Replacing and/or modernising bathrooms throughout.
- Improving the staff areas such as the office function away from the domestic / living areas.
- Installation of a new kitchen to include new cupboards, worktops, cookers, hobs and all white goods.

- Introducing free flow between the kitchen and dining space to echo a more modern way of living. Includes removal of walls and developing larger shared spaces between kitchen, dining room and conservatory.
- Refurbishing all rooms throughout the building on both floors to ensure the décor is up-to-date and presents a 'homely' feel. Includes new flooring and new internal roofing. Complete redecoration to all rooms including floors, walls and ceilings.
- Re-roofing of the conservatory to ensure a more useful space for living and to provide a suitable area for professional support and guidance for all children and young people
- Improving the outdoor look to the home by repainting fences and providing suitable outdoor storage. Replace both front doors with modernised secure doors.

3.2 Through consultation with Easdale children's home, consideration was given to numerous options of how the proposed refurbishment work would best enhance the existing provision and 'design out', where ever possible, the historic challenges and building limitations faced by the staff and young people alike.

3.3 The estimated scheme cost is £308,000; this includes £248,000 for construction, an allocation of £40,000 for design / technical fees and £20,000 for other project related costs.

3.4 To enable the refurbishment works to proceed as expediently as possible and reduce any risks associated with intrusive building works, the management team and children relocated from Easdale children's home into Cramner Bank children's home in February 2021.

3.5 Planning Permission is not required for this type of refurbishment scheme, but Building Control approval will be sought as required.

### 3.6 **Programme**

The proposed refurbishment of Easdale children's home will commence April 2021. The schedule of works will be delivered in one phase over a 12 week programme.

3.7 The key milestones to achieve this programme are detailed below:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| - Design freeze confirmed              | - February 2021 |
| - Tender return                        | - March 2021    |
| - Approval of authority to spend       | - March 2021    |
| - Start on site                        | - April 2021    |
| - Handover                             | - June 2021     |
| - Re-occupation of residents and staff | - June 2021     |

3.8 The approval of Authority to Spend, as requested within this report, is on the critical path and therefore crucial to the delivery of the project in accordance with the dates listed above.

3.9 The proposed works will be project managed by Leeds City Council Projects and Programmes. Children's Services will provide governance oversight and decision making. Technical support and design services will be provided by NPS Leeds Ltd.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 The refurbishment programme has been the subject of extensive consultation with Children's Services Officers, the staff and young people in the home, Leeds Building Services, NPS Ltd, Planning, LCC Building Control, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service and Finance Officers.
- 4.1.2 Whilst no planning approval is required for the internal refurbishment of the homes, meetings have been held with the aforementioned officers to ensure the proposed changes, designed to ensure a 'homely feel', are being made in line with current regulations and national standards.
- 4.1.3 A project team made up of colleagues from within Childrens Residential Services, City Development, NPS Ltd and LBS have regularly met to ensure regular design conversations are maintained.
- 4.1.4 Senior Officers within Children and Families are briefed regularly.
- 4.1.5 Ward Cllrs were notified of the works in February 2021.
- 4.1.6 Further Ward member briefings will be undertaken in due course along with community consultation events and further communication exercises as deemed required.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 4.2.1 The recommendations within this report do not have any direct nor specific impact upon any of the groups falling under the remit of the equality legislation and the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. A screening document has been prepared to this effect and an independent impact assessment is not required for the approvals requested. The screening document has been sent to the Equality Team to be approved, publishing and held on-file.

### **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 4.3.1 Following changes to legislation, quality standards and compliance towards the Ofsted inspection framework, a review of both the mainstream children's homes and homes for children and young people with complex needs and disabilities has identified capital requirement in respect of suitability and whole scale condition issues. Leeds has a duty to offer sufficient and suitable accommodation for all children and young people who need to be accommodated.
- 4.3.2 This scheme will improve the provision for children and young people who are looked after within the City of Leeds.
- 4.3.3 Maintaining a local provision that supports a 'Sustainable Infrastructure' by minimising the need for local families to travel an extended distance.
- 4.3.4 Support the authority's Health & Wellbeing strategies which strives to improve the outcomes of all citizens of Leeds.
- 4.3.5 Children and young people living locally closer to their families and friends enabling closer, increased contact as appropriate. This can support continuity of relationships and links with communities in Leeds which in turn should positively

impact on the wellbeing needs of the children and young people. Living locally also means we are more likely to be able to build on this continuity of relationships to support reunification work with an increased potential for success.

- 4.3.6 Living in Leeds would facilitate coordinated preparation for adulthood amongst key partners to support effective transition to appropriate adult services, reduce unnecessary costs and improve outcomes/quality of life.
- 4.3.7 Reducing the need to use external providers and developing our own local provision will generate annual revenue savings for Children and Families.

#### Climate Emergency

- 4.3.8 The current global climate challenge is a concern and efforts are in place to address this. This project contributes to making Leeds carbon neutral by 2030. The plan includes but is not limited to:

- “promote a less wasteful, low carbon economy
- and build sustainable infrastructures.” LCC

The refurbishment works will improve the thermal efficiency of the buildings through better insulation and general building repairs to improve air tightness.

#### **4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money**

- 4.4.1 The capital investment required to refurbish Easdale Childrens Home is £308,000 broken down as below, all costs rounded up to the nearest £1k.

| <b>Easdale Childrens Home</b>  | <b>£</b>       |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Construction estimate (RIBA 3) | 248,000        |
| Fees and Surveys               | 40,000         |
| Client Contingency C8%         | 20,000         |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>308,000</b> |

- 4.4.2 Firmer costs will be available after LBS provide quotes for the works. At this point should the estimated costs exceed the available budget the scope will be reviewed to ensure the schemes remain financially compliant. Any funds unexpended on conclusion of the works will be returned to the parent programme to help fund works to other Children’s Homes as prioritised by Children and Families.

#### 4.4.3 Capital Funding and Cash Flow

| Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme        | TOTAL        | TO MARCH       |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|--------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   | £000's       | 2020<br>£000's | 2020/21<br>£000's | 2021/22<br>£000's | 2022/23<br>£000's | 2023 On<br>£000's |
| LAND (1)  | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| CONSTRUCTION (3)  | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| FURN & EQPT (5)   | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| DESIGN FEES (6)   | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| OTHER COSTS (7)   | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>0.0</b>   | <b>0.0</b>     | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        |
|   |              |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Authority to Spend required for this Approval           | TOTAL        | TO MARCH       |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|   | £000's       | 2020<br>£000's | 2020/21<br>£000's | 2021/22<br>£000's | 2022/23<br>£000's | 2023 On<br>£000's |
| LAND (1)  | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| CONSTRUCTION (3)  | 248.0        |                | 248.0             |                   |                   |                   |
| FURN & EQPT (5)   | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| DESIGN FEES (6)   | 40.0         | 20.0           | 20.0              |                   |                   |                   |
| OTHER COSTS (7)   | 20.0         |                | 20.0              |                   |                   |                   |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>308.0</b> | <b>20.0</b>    | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        |
|   |              |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme) | TOTAL        |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|   | £000's       |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
| LCC Borrowing   | 0.0          |                |                   |                   |                   |                   |
|   | 308.0        | 20.0           | 288.0             |                   |                   |                   |
| Total Funding   | 308.0        | 20.0           | 288.0             | 0.0               | 0.0               | 0.0               |
| <b>Balance / Shortfall =</b>                            | <b>0.0</b>   | <b>0.0</b>     | <b>288.0</b>      | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        | <b>0.0</b>        |

Parent Scheme Number: 32453/000/000

Title: CHILDREN'S HOMES REFURBISHMENT WORKS

#### 4.4.4 Financing costs

The proposals are financed through the re-allocation of £1.5m for a programme of Children's Homes refurbishments, from existing resources within the capital programme and incorporated into the budget approval provided by Executive Board in February 2020. The refurbishment which is the subject of this report is the first in a rolling programme of refurbishments to be brought forward subject to priority and cost

#### 4.4.5 Revenue Implications

No additional revenue costs are expected to arise from this project.

#### 4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 The approval of this report constitutes an 'Executive (Significant Operational) Decision' and as such will not be subject to 'Call-In'.

4.5.2 Technical support and design services have been provided by NPS Leeds Ltd.

4.5.3 There are no other legal implications or access information issues arising from this report.

#### 4.6 Risk management

4.6.3 Risk will be managed through application of 'best practice' project management tools and techniques via the City Council 'PM Lite' risk methodology.

- 4.6.4 Project management resource from City Development and Childrens and Families is tasked with ensuring the project remains within the predetermined risk tolerances.
- 4.6.2 A joint risk log will be developed with LBS to ensure all construction related risks for the project are identified together with the relevant owner of the risk.
- 4.6.5 The Council's project risk log will continue to be maintained and updated throughout the project and escalation of any risks that sit outside of the agreed tolerances will be managed via the Projects and Programmes and Regeneration teams of City Development alongside the Childrens Residential Services Project Team.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Leeds City Council's children's homes residential provision requires a refurbishment programme to address the current condition issues and to improve and modernise the feel of the homes.
- 5.2 The proposed refurbishment project at Easdale children's home has been designed to promote a homely environment, whilst also meeting national guidance for living standards in children's homes. The project will be managed by Children's Services in conjunction with Leeds City Council's internal service provider (LBS), and the authority's joint venture partners NPS. The work has been designed and specified in partnership with the children's home staff and other key stakeholders. The cost of the accommodation, and necessary supporting works, will be met through capital scheme 32453/EAD/000 to the value of £308,000.
- 5.3 The scope of works at Easdale children's home, for June 2021 delivery, has been developed through continued consultation with the appropriate stakeholders.

## **6 Recommendations**

The Chief Officer, Resources & Strategy is requested to provide;

- i) Authority to spend £308,000 from capital budget 32453/EAD/000, for the refurbishment of Easdale Children's Home.
- ii) Authority to appoint Leeds Building Services to carry out the works in accordance with Contracts Procedure Rule 3.1.4

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.