

Report of Acting Chief Officer for Early Years and Integrated Youth Support Service

To: Executive Board

Date: 26th August, 2009

Subject: Design & Cost Report

Scheme Title *ELFLC Seacroft Children's Centre Accommodation and Extension*
Capital Scheme Number 15600

Electoral Wards Affected:

*Killingbeck
 Seacroft
 Cross Gates
 Whinmoor*

Specific Implications For:

Equality & Diversity
 Community Cohesion
 Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

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

Executive Summary

This Design and Cost report requests that Executive Board give authority to incur expenditure on construction £819,350 and fees £180,650 to refurbish the existing Seacroft Children's Centre located on South Parkway and build an extension to enable the relocation of children, staff and services from East Leeds Children's Centre and the amalgamation of the two children's centres. There have been concerns about the suitability of the East Leeds Family Learning Centre (ELFLC) due to its age and condition and in March 2008 planning to relocate services from the building commenced. In February 2009, following major plant failures, the building became unfit for purpose and uneconomic to repair and a decision was taken to close the building. A report relating to the proposed demolition of ELFLC is detailed elsewhere on the agenda. The service provision to children aged 0 to 5 and their families from East Leeds Children's Centre is statutory. The extension and internal changes to Seacroft Children's Centre are required to ensure children's centre services are fully delivered in South Seacroft.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to request Executive Board to give authority to incur expenditure on construction £819,350 and fees £180,650 on the refurbishment and extension of the existing Seacroft Children's Centre to enable the relocation of children, staff and services from East Leeds Children's Centre and the amalgamation of the two children's centres. .

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The Childcare Act 2006 places the statutory responsibility on local authorities to develop and designate a Children's Centre in every community by March 2010. Centres have been developed in three phases, starting in the localities of greatest disadvantage. The core offer of a children's centre is a statutory part of the welfare state. Children's Centres designated in the 30% most disadvantaged localities must provide integrated early education and childcare, family support services, including parenting, health and social care, and access to information points around services for parents, children and young people, and job and training opportunities.
- 2.2 East Leeds Children Centre was a phase 1 children's centre within a 30% disadvantaged locality delivering these statutory services to children and families in South Seacroft based at East Leeds Family Learning Centre. It was one of the first 9 children's centres to be designated in the nation in 2004. In February 2009 the ELFLC building was declared unfit for purpose and uneconomic to repair and a decision was taken to close the building.
- 2.3 The refurbishment of ELFLC to create East Leeds Children's Centre was significantly funded by the Department for Education and Skills in 2001 as part of the Early Excellence Centre capital programme. The funding was subject to a memorandum of understanding to protect the use of the building to children aged 0 to 5 and their families for a period of 20 years. East Leeds Children's Centre was designated as part of the Early Excellence Centre Programme in 2001 and as a Children's Centre in 2004.
- 2.4 There have been concerns about the suitability of the East Leeds Family Learning Centre (ELFLC) due to its age and condition and in March 2008 planning to relocate services from the building commenced. In February 2009, following major plant failures, the building became unfit for purpose and uneconomic to repair and a decision was taken to close the building. A report relating to the proposed demolition of ELFLC is detailed elsewhere on the agenda.
- 2.5 The closure of East Leeds Children's Centre requires the re-provision of services for children and families within the locality of South Seacroft. Seacroft Children Centre is on a site which allows extension and is in close proximity to East Leeds Children's Centre. An extension to Seacroft Children's Centre and some internal works to the centre would enable the full core offer to be delivered to the reach area of both East Leeds and Seacroft Children's Centres.
- 2.6 In July 2009 Executive Board approved the injection of £1m into the Children's Services Capital Programme for the extension to Seacroft Children's Centre as part of the Capital Programme Update Quarter 1 report.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Design Proposals / Scheme Description

- 3.1.1 The Strategic Design Alliance have been commissioned and have produced a design which allows for the extension of Seacroft Children's Centre to re-provide the services recently delivered from East Leeds Children's Centre. The design rationalises space within the existing children's centre and adds additional space by way of a 220m² extension, this includes new community space, reception, toilets, and office and staff facilities. Additional car parking for staff and visitors is being provided and this is being facilitated by the acquisition of adjacent land in ownership of the council.
- 3.1.2 The project will involve a short period of closure when the internal refurbishment and alterations will take place and a period of closure while the site is divided to allow the construction of the new extension and the operation of the centre to proceed in tandem. All subject to strict Health & Safety regulation during the construction process.

5.2 Revenue Effects

It is proposed to allocate each Children's Centre a share of the Children's Centre revenue grant based on a fixed element for management and utility costs, and a variable element based on the number of children under 5 in the area served by the Children's Centre. In addition the Children's Centre will have access to a citywide outreach service.

REVENUE EFFECTS	2009/10	2010/11 and SUBSEQUENT YEARS
	£000's	£000'S
RUNNING COSTS		74.5
GSSG CC REVENUE GRANT		-74.5

5.3 Risk Assessments

At this stage there are no known issues relating to design, site conditions, planning and refurbishment.

6.0 Recommendations

Executive Board is requested to:

- give authority to incur expenditure on construction £819,350 and fees £180,650 on the refurbishment and extension of the existing Seacroft Children's Centre to enable the relocation of children, staff and services from East Leeds Children's Centre and the amalgamation of the two children's centres.

Background Papers

- Childcare Act 2006
- Early Excellence Centre - Memorandum of Understanding