

REPORT TO: SPECIAL POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 FEBRUARY 2015

REPORT ON: FURTHER RATIONALISATION OF FORMER FAMILY SUPPORT CENTRES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 81-2015

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report details proposals to further rationalise Social Work Department property provision in order to achieve savings and stream line provision of services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the former Family Support Centre in Bruce Street is closed and the functions delivered from the former Family Support Centre in Lochee and Dudhope Castle.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is estimated that the running costs for the Social Work Office in Bruce Street amount to £46,000 a year which will be saved.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

- 4.1 In January 2013 the Social Work Department amalgamated family support functions into the Care and Assessment Teams. This increased the capacity of the service to deal with statutory requirements acknowledging the increase in Child Care and Protection concerns and Looked After Children. These teams therefore respond to the needs of children for whom the Council has the highest Corporate responsibility and who also reach the highest tariff of risk and concern.
- 4.2 Following these changes the Department ceased to provide a standalone Family Support Service. This change meant that there was no longer a need to have the same spread of community facing Family Support Centres. At the same time a number of teams relocated to Dudhope Castle.
- 4.3 The main current use of the former Family Support Centres, including Bruce Street, is as a venue where Looked After and Accommodated Children have contact with their parents and some Social Work staff are also located there. The buildings are used as venues for individual work with children and for parent and child interventions. They also host various meetings in relation to children. Due to the sometimes sensitive and volatile nature of the work being undertaken there is an advantage to these contacts being held in a venue over which the Department has a high degree of control, to help prepare the facility and manage any problematic encounters. It is however recognised that other facilities need to improve their capacity to deal with such issues.

A number of the former Family Support Centres are not in good condition and increasingly the service is seeking opportunities to be co-located with partner agencies and a number of opportunities are currently being explored. The Family Centre in Whitfield has already closed and the model provided at The Crescent is viewed as providing positive opportunities.

- 4.4 Although the premises at Bruce Street are well used, the Centre in Lochee is larger with more rooms available to host contacts, family work and meetings. It is assessed that there is capacity to move the functions currently undertaken at Bruce Street into the Lochee building which has capacity to undertake all the contacts, family interventions and meetings required by both teams. Staff would continue to have access to the office facilities at Dudhope Castle for administrative tasks.

- 4.5 In the longer term (approximately 2 years) there are discussions underway to move both teams to a co-located facility. This would be a co-location with key partner agencies, such as Education and Health. There are a number of planned multi-agency developments in the City such as Coldsides Joint Campus development and the combined aim of savings and the creation of Hubs, better able to deliver combined services, means that the ultimate location of both these teams is likely to be within one of these co-located centres.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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