

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET - 5TH NOVEMBER 2009

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CO-LOCATION FUND BID FOR AREA TEAMS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the recent successful bid made to the Co-Location Fund for £927,000 of capital money. The report outlines the proposals, set out as part of the bid, to create Area Team offices in parts of the borough within which Children's Service multi disciplinary Area Teams will be based and deliver Children's Service from and asks for approval of these proposals.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Governments 'Children's Plan: One Year On' document announced the creation of a dedicated fund of £200 Million to support the co-location of children's services. In February 2009 bids were invited from all Local Authorities in support of the Cross-Government Co-location Fund for capital projects that would enable the co-location of two or more services for children, young people and families. The aim being that co-location can make it easier and simpler for people to access the services they need and assist those services in working together more effectively and efficiently for the benefit of their users.
- 1.2 The Government proposed to invest in between 50 and 100 projects across the country. The criteria for this funding being that:-
 - co-located initiatives are the product of a coherent wider area strategy
 - applications demonstrate that the investment in facilities will contribute to improving outcomes for local children, young people and families (including reducing inequalities) and more integrated delivery of services
 - applications demonstrate the sustainability of the proposals
 - project are deliverable within the timescales outlined, the intention being that facilities are ready so that services can be up and running in those facilities by September 2011.
- 1.3 A Wirral bid for £927,000 of capital money, to be match funded by £300,000, was submitted to the Department for Children, Schools and Families in April 2009 by the Children and Young Peoples Department (CYPD). The bid submitted by the Children and Young Peoples Department drew on the experiences developed as part of the Children's Workforce Development Councils (CWDC's) 'Remodelling Social Work Pilot', the development of the 'Guide to Integrated Working' and an internal review of 'Area Teams' carried out in the Autumn of 2007.
- 1.4 Area Teams were developed in 2006 as part of the formation of the Children and Young Peoples Department. While some services were identified as Wirral wide such as the Youth Offending Service or Children with Disabilities Service others, such as Social Care Fieldwork, Education Social Welfare, the Youth Service and the Education Psychology Service were aligned with Area Teams. In this way Area Teams brought together children's services professionals in one multi disciplinary team, focused on a specific locality in order to deliver services directly to the community. In

total 11 Area teams were formed aligned to the 11 Area Forum Areas. The Area Teams used the 'Guide to Integrated Working' in order to address how the teams should function in a multi disciplinary setting. However, these teams were virtual teams with the professionals remaining in their own services locations.

- 1.5 In the autumn of 2007 an internal review of Area Teams was commissioned by the Department in order to identify how well this model of delivering services was working. While there were a number of recommendations one of the clearest was that Area Teams needed to be co-located in order to function effectively. The reporting of this internal review provided a sound research basis for a bid to be submitted to the CWDC in support of one of the seven national 'Remodelling Social Work pilots' being offered at that time. The success of this bid, in early 2008, allowed the Department to co-locate the Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry Area Team alongside a Social Care Assessment Team in Well Lane Primary School from June of that year. The lessons learnt and the experiences developed from this pilot assisted in the preparation of the co-location bid, which is the subject of this report, submitted in April 2009.
- 1.6 The co-location bid submitted sought to co-locate multi-disciplinary professionals together in area based teams and sought to implement the philosophy and operational practices which underpin the 'Team Around the Child'. 'Team Around the Child' is Wirral's approach to implementing and embedding the Common Assessment Framework, Lead Professional working and improved information sharing, with the explicit purpose of delivering joined up, co-ordinated responses to children and families who have a level of need that requires co-ordinated services from more than one specialist service, termed 'additional needs'. This strategy seeks to ensure that children's needs are being met as early as possible by a range of children's workers. The overall aim is to join up service responses to ensure children's needs are best addressed in a proportionate, multi-disciplinary way.
- 1.7 The primary focus for the co-location of Area Teams in Wirral will be to provide a multi disciplinary prevention/early intervention response in areas of greatest need. This approach provides support for single-agency delivery of universal services and a multi-agency response to delivering services to children and families with additional needs in preventing, reducing or ameliorating negative outcomes for children and their families. Within Wirral's LAA these are shown as development areas, in addition to our statutory indicators, such as:-
 - More appropriate referrals to Children's Social Care
 - Reduced NEET
 - Reduced first time entrants to the youth justice system
 - Reduced teenage conceptions and improved sexual health
 - Reduced numbers of looked after children

Staff who co-located as part of the CWDC 'Remodelling Social Work Pilot' were without exception positive about this from the outset. They shared the vision of integrated services providing better outcomes for children. We have evidence from monitoring work carried out in our Central Advice and Duty Team that referrals received from this Area are more likely to be appropriate compared to those received 18 months ago. This indicates firstly that children who are in need of protection are being identified more quickly and their needs responded to by appropriate agencies. Secondly, that children and families are receiving more preventative and early intervention services within this area under the 'Team Around the Child' framework. The pilot Area Team having a central base within the community allows for better links to the neighbourhood pathfinder and enhances the ability of the Team Leader and members of the team to engage with the community.

1.8 As the co-located team has developed, staff have been clear in their view that they have benefited from a greater understanding of the roles of others. Due partly to being co-located and partly due to team meetings and team development involving both co-located and associated Area Team members. The value of this greater awareness and understanding is significant in ensuring that children and families receive the most appropriate services. Co-location has enhanced communication between team members. While this is usually informal it is significant in ensuring proactive provision of services. Staff who co-located in June 2008 state that they feel part of the Area Team and have an increased sense of purpose. Co-location has also allowed for more effective monitoring of multi-agency provision. While this is still developing it will allow for a greater understanding of a community's emerging needs as well as providing a better understanding of how individual children's needs may be best met. Co-location in itself is not the only answer to improving integrated service delivery and information sharing, but it does provide the space within which agencies become more aware of each other and the basis for further development. In addition, the very positive outcomes of a co-location pilot for a health visiting team in a Children's Centre has informed the design plans for Wirral's health visiting service.

1.9 Co-location may best be achieved within existing buildings, which are already accessed by the public and other professionals. The Wirral bid proposed some locations which have subsequently been disregarded following feasibility studies. Currently the proposals are as follows:-

- Four Area Teams to be based alongside the South and West Districts Social Care Teams on the site of the Former Pensby Park Primary, now the site of Pensby Children's Centre.
- One Area Team to be based alongside a Social Care Assessment Team in Well Lane Primary.
- One Area Team to be based within Seacombe Children's Centre.
- One Area Team to be based on the New Brighton Children's Centre site.
- One Area Team to be based on the Eastway Primary School site alongside the satellite Children's Centre.
- Two Area Teams to be based in the Birkenhead area, the exact location of which is still to be agreed.
- One Area Team to be based in the Woodchurch area, the exact location of which is still to be agreed.

In seeking to establish Area Teams within existing sites where ever possible it is intended that some economies of scale are achieved and that resources are shared with the current occupants. This approach ensures that the community is aware of the presence of the Area Team and the services it provides from day one.

To support the creation of Area Teams and the establishment of an integrated model of working it is important that ways of working are reviewed, and that appropriate and efficient working environments are created. Much of the work undertaken by the Area Teams is of a 'flexible' or 'agile' nature, and the new locations will as far as possible, reflect this in workplace design and IT provision. Localised working – and the co-location of Area Teams – sits within the Council's wider Administrative Accommodation Strategy and, in particular, the Office Rationalisation programme. Sharing of available space will be pursued wherever possible, particularly where similar needs for localised working can be identified elsewhere in the Council and/or in partner agencies.

1.10 Area Teams and locations are as follows:-

	District	Area Team	Proposed Location	Co-located with an Assessment Team
1	South	Bebington/Clatterbridge	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
2		Bromborough/Eastham	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
3	Birkenhead	Bidston & St James/Claughton	Birkenhead location (to be agreed)	Yes
4		Prenton/Oxon	Birkenhead location (to be agreed)	Yes
5		Birkenhead and Tranmere/Rock Ferry	Well Lane Primary	Yes
6	Wallasey	Liscard/Seacombe	Seacombe Children's Centre	No
7		New Brighton/Wallasey	New Brighton Children's Centre	No
8		Leasowe/Moreton East & West/Saughall Massie	Eastway Primary School & Children's Centre	No
9	West	Pensby and Thingwall/Heswall	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
10		Hoylake/Meols/West Kirby	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
11		Irby/Frankby/Greasby	Woodchurch location (to be agreed)	No

1.11 Within the bid in order that the proposals were sustainable a balance was made between the needs of the community and the cost of co-location. The proportionately higher ongoing running costs associated with small teams have to be balanced by the relative needs of the community it serves. In agreeing Area Team locations, where need is significantly less, Area Teams have been grouped together. Where the needs of the community are pronounced the benefits of having an Area Team located within it outweigh the proportionately higher costs associated with this method of service delivery.

1.12 Early in June 2009 the Children and Young Peoples Department was advised by DCFS that its bid for capital money was successful. This led to the feasibility studies outlined being undertaken and the development of the proposals contained within this report being put forward.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The capital cost of the proposed project is a total of £1,227,000. This comprises £927,000 from the Co-location fund and £300,000 from Formula Capital, School Modernisation Capital, Children's Centre Capital and Extended Schools Capital. This local 'match' funding is within existing approved programmes.

2.2 The bid put forward supports the Strategic Asset Review in particular the Administrative Buildings Change Programme. In seeking to co-locate staff on existing under utilised sites services are brought together and office space is freed up allowing for properties to be vacated that have been identified for disposal e.g. two sites occupied by Social Care staff in Moreton will be vacated as a result of the Co-location project. Moves will be prioritised and supported in accordance with the overall programme for office rationalisation and reported to the Strategic Asset Review Board.

2.3 Further work is required as part of the project in identifying and agreeing some revenue budget re-alignment from existing service budgets in order to provide for the needs of staff located within Area Teams.

3. Staffing Implications

3.1 There are no staffing implications arising from this report. The staff that form Area Teams are drawn from existing service establishment.

3.2 The capital programme will be managed by existing staff in the Children and Young Peoples Department and Technical Services Department.

4. Equal Opportunities Implications

4.1 There are no high negative impacts arising from the Equality Impact Assessment completed as part of this report.

5. Community Safety Implications

5.1 The co-location project supports the delivery of a multi agency response to the needs of children, families and members of the local community and as such should lead to improved outcomes for children and families in Wirral.

6. Local Agenda 21 Implications

6.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

7. Planning Implications

7.1 Planning implications arising from this report will be the subject of planning applications should cabinet approve the recommendations of the report.

7.2 The roll out of the co-located bases is aligned to the Administrative Buildings Change Programme.

8. Anti-poverty Implications

8.1 Improving preventative services and co-ordinating multi-agency services will improve outcomes for children in the most deprived areas of Wirral.

9. Social Inclusion Implications

9.1 The proposals outlined above support children and families and promote social inclusion and community cohesion.

10. Local Member Support Implications

10.1 Not all wards on the Wirral will have an Area Team based within them due to Area Teams being based upon Area Forum areas rather than individual wards; also due to the need to produce a sustainable resource in some areas of lower need Area Teams are grouped together.

10.2 Area Teams and locations are as follows:-

	District	Area Team	Proposed Location	Co-located with an Assessment Team
1	South	Bebington/Clatterbridge	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
2		Bromborough/Eastham	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
3	Birkenhead	Bidston & St James/Claughton	Birkenhead location (to be agreed)	Yes
4		Prenton/Oxton	Birkenhead location (to be agreed)	Yes
5		Birkenhead and Tranmere/Rock Ferry	Well Lane Primary	Yes
6	Wallasey	Liscard/Seacombe	Seacombe Children's Centre	No
7		New Brighton/Wallasey	New Brighton Children's Centre	No
8		Leasowe/Moreton East & West/Saughall Massie	Eastway Primary School & Children's Centre	No
9	West	Pensby and Thingwall//Heswall	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
10		Hoylake/Meols/West Kirby	Pensby Children's Centre	Yes
11		Irby/Frankby/Greasby	Woodchurch location (to be agreed)	No

11. Background Papers

- 11.1 Guide to Integrate Working, September 2006.
- 11.2 A Review of Wirral's Children's Service Area Teams, August – October 2007.
- 11.3 CWDC Remodelling Social Work Pilot Bid, October 2007.
- 11.4 Children and Young Peoples Plan, 2006-2008.
- 11.5 Wirral Co-location Fund Submission, April 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) Cabinet agree the approach outlined in the bid
- (2) That Cabinet approve for further work to be undertaken in order to develop scheme and estimates for the proposed sites.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services