
Update on new children's residential homes

Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny
Commission

Date of meeting: 19 December 2023

Lead director/officer: Damian Elcock

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission will receive a presentation at the meeting on 19th December setting out an overview of progress in the development of two children's homes, Holly House and Hillview.

2. Recommended actions

The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission are invited to note the progress made on the development of the two homes.

3. Detailed report

Consultations were carried out as part of our Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2020-23, which sets out how Leicester City Council will meet its duty to provide and secure sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. It considered a range of development activity, including the need to expand in-house residential and foster care provision.

In February 2022 approval was given to develop two new children's homes, Holly House and Hillview supported by both capital funding and a successful bid for match-funding to the Department for Education.

The Holly House development comprises two, previously unoccupied, semi-detached houses owned by the Local Authority. Planning approval was granted for their conversion into a children's home with the capacity for five looked after children and building works commenced in March 2023.

Hillview is owned by the City Council and had been unoccupied since 2014. The existing building was unsuitable and did not meet the standards required of a modern children's home, therefore planning consent for demolition was sought and approved. The building has been demolished and the site is clear in readiness for a new build. Hillview will provide six additional residential placements for young people with more complex emotional and behavioural support needs due to their experiences of abuse and neglect. It is envisaged that the home would act as a "hub", providing training and meeting facilities for social care staff, foster carers, and professionals.

The design of the new buildings has been produced in consultation with managers of the residential service. The new homes have incorporated the best features of the

existing children's homes to inform the design of these projects. When the buildings are operational the young people who will live in the homes will be consulted about internal design and aesthetics, including personalising their own bedrooms.

Scrutiny will have the opportunity to receive a presentation including visuals showing progress including before and after pictures of the works at Holly House and floor plans relating to the new build at Hillview as well as an overview of timelines for completion and the offer provided by each home.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The capital programme has allocated funding of up to £2.2m for the development of the homes.

Martin Judson, Head of Finance, 37 4101

4.2 Legal implications

All works must be procured in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's own Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant planning permissions sought for both physical conversation works and any change of use.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, 37 1401

4.3 Equalities implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities (including the local authority and schools), have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

A new children's home should lead to positive outcomes for young people from across a range of protected characteristics by ensuring they are placed within the city and close to family. It will also help the council to meet its Placement Sufficiency duty and as part of our Social Care Placement Sufficiency Strategy will expand our own city residential provision and increase the opportunity to provide appropriate local care for young people.

Any consultation carried out going forward needs to be accessible and meaningful to those being consulted with. Further advice and guidance can be sought from the Corporate Equalities Team

Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Tel 454 4148