

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Children's Services
<b>Date:</b>	28 January 2011
<b>Title:</b>	Changes to the in-house provision of Residential Children's Homes
<b>Reference:</b>	2336
<b>Report From:</b>	John Coughlan, Director of Children's Services

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#### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out proposals for the changes to the level of provision of Residential Children's Homes within Hampshire Children's Services.
- 1.2. The proposals contained within this report are derived from the Commissioning Strategy: Children in and on the edge of Care, which details how Hampshire Children's Services Department will meet the Sufficiency of Accommodation Duty for Looked After Children. Primarily that residential provision for under 12s should be phased out with priority given to ensuring appropriate family placements for these younger children.
- 1.3. To achieve the change requires the closure of Crossways, a children's home for six children age 9 to 12 years and a phased change to the Statement of Purpose of Godbey House to care for an older age group of young people.

#### 2. Contextual information

- 2.1. Currently there are seven children's homes registered to provide placements for up to 41 children in Hampshire. Twelve places for under 12s and 29 for teenagers.
  - Godbey House: Hayling Island  
Six places for children aged 9 -12 on admission with a planned length of stay of between one and two years. Primary focus on placement with foster carers or return to their immediate or extended family.

- Glendalyn: New Milton  
Six places for young people aged 12 -16 on admission and one emergency bed. Primary focus is to return to own or extended family or preparation for independence.
- Milesdown: Winchester  
Six places for young people aged 12 -16 on admission. Primary focus is to return to own or extended family or preparation for independence.
- The Green House: Chandlers Ford  
Six places for young people aged 12 -16 on admission. Primary focus is to return to own or extended family or preparation for independence.
- Cypress Lodge: Basingstoke  
Four places for young people aged 12 -16 on admission. With primary focus on offering a smaller group environment for young people who are seen as not responding well to larger group settings.
- Crossways: Old Basing  
Six places for children aged 9 -12 on admission with a projected length of stay of one to two years. Primary focus is on preparing children for placements with foster carers or return to their own or extended families.
- The Mead: Odiham  
Six places for young people aged 12 -16 on admission. Primary focus is to return to own or extended family or placement with foster carers.

2.2. Demand for children's residential care placement:

- The average age on admission to residential care is 13 years 7 months
- The average stay is 1 year 7 months
- The average age of placement ending is 15 years 1 month
- In addition to the 41 in-house placements, approximately 20 placements are purchased in the private or independent sector for the adolescent age group, mostly due to the Hampshire children's homes being full.
- A high proportion of those children admitted to the under 12s units could and should be placed in foster families who have the skills and capacity to care for their complex needs or if more specialist support could have been provided to prevent placement breakdown that brought them into residential care.

- Only 10% of children placed during the 2008 - 2009 period made successful transition into family placement despite two children's homes (12 places) specifically offering placements to younger children with the purpose of preparation for family placement. Evidence that once in residential care it is difficult to then move the children back to family placements.
- Crossways has had a lower occupancy level than the other children's homes over the last three years reflecting an over provision of residential placements for the under 12s.

2.3. Hampshire's policy is to place in a family environment whenever possible and research tells us that foster care seems to be in general safer and less likely to produce difficult behaviour and emotional problems than the children's home environment.

Our analysis has led to the recommendation that there is a need for an increased number of places for residential care for older children, particularly when residential care is a positive choice to meet their needs, but there is no longer a need for residential care for younger children.

- 2.4. Crossways has been selected for closure because it is one of the two units (Crossways and Godbey) which is presently for under 12s. The County has six of its seven residential children's homes north of Chandlers Ford with only Godbey House in the south of the County. In addition, the Crossways building is in need of major re-furbishment.
- 2.5. The six children presently placed at Crossways will be moved on in line with their care plans, the majority of which are requiring fostering or a supported return to their own family. The children will not be moved because of the plans to close Crossways and the home will only be closed when the children's plans have been implemented in line with their needs.
- 2.6. Ofsted require three months notice of de-registration of the children's home.

### **3. Finance**

3.1. This paper follows:

- The Cabinet report: Efficiencies and Expenditure Reductions: Transforming the County Council 26 July 2010 and;
- Executive Lead Member for Children's Services report: Ongoing Budget Reductions Within Children's Services.

The latter identified a need for £150,000 savings in 2011/12 in placement services for Looked After Children and that consideration be given to the provision and suitability of our children's homes to meet the needs of some of the Looked After Children. That a reduction of 16 FTE residential staff be achieved which would necessitate the re-providing of a children's home with other more suitable placements.

- 3.2. The 2010/11 cash limited budget for Crossways Children’s Home is £638,000. The average budgeted placement cost at Crossways is, therefore, £106,300 per year. The average cost of an Independent Fostering Placement for 9 to 12 year-olds is currently £48,000 per annum. However, due to the complex needs of some of the children currently placed at Crossways, it is possible that alternative fostering placements could cost in the region of £65,000 per annum (e.g. if a singleton placement is required). Assuming that this would be the maximum cost for each child, this would result in a minimum net saving to the revenue budget of around £248,000 per annum as summarised in the table below.

	£'000
Crossways 2010/11 revenue budget	638
Less estimated cost of six additional purchased fostering placements	390
<b>Net estimated saving</b>	<b><u>248</u></b>

- 3.3. This estimated saving has been factored into the 2011/12 budget growth proposals for Children Looked After, which is covered in a separate report on this agenda.
- 3.4. In the longer term the full capital receipt from the sale of Crossways will be required to re-invest in the Children’s Residential Service. Some of the homes require major re-furbishment to bring them up to standard, others are too large and not in the best location to maintain young people’s connection with their communities, families and education, when this is desirable.

#### 4. Performance

- 4.1. Crossways was judged by OFSTED as Satisfactory in 2009 but Good in June 2010.

#### 5. Other key issues

- 5.1. The implications for the staff are that 15 people will be directly affected by the closure of Crossways Children’s Home. There are opportunities for staff to be slotted in to similar vacancies in other children’s homes across the county. For those who cannot be slotted in to a suitable alternative, voluntary redundancy will be offered, then redeployment. It is anticipated that compulsory redundancies will be minimal but cannot be ruled out. Any redundancy costs will be factored into the next round of budget planning.

#### 6. Future direction

- 6.1. The Commissioning Strategy for Children in and on the edge of Care and the Residential Strategy was agreed by Children and Families Management Team in October 2010.
- 6.2. The resulting Commissioning plan involves developing a project plan for the following work streams:

- Workstream i - Services that will reduce the care population to a steady state of 1,100:
    - Support foster care;
    - Family and Friends routes as an alternative to becoming Looked After;
    - Intensive Support Service (ISS);
    - Support to foster carers to prevent placement breakdown.
  - Workstream ii - Fostering services that clearly define what will be provided in-house and what will be commissioned from Independent Fostering Providers (IFP's) including emergency out of hours provision.
  - Workstream iii - Supportive lodgings and tenancy schemes providing a range of options to meet the needs of care leavers.
  - Workstream iv - Residential Strategy which incorporates the following aspects:
    - residential provision for under 12s to be phased out with priority given to ensuring appropriate family placements;
    - children who are placed in residential care must be placed explicitly where this is the preferred choice;
    - use of external residential placements will be commissioned rather than relying on spot purchase;
    - explore, in the light of closure and role re-orientation of the residential homes for under 12s, potential re-location and re-provision of some of the estate, should potential capital receipts allow.
- 6.3. Changes cannot be effected within current resources unless the size of the residential estate is reduced and there is a consequent reinforcing of services at the edge of care and within foster care. The closure of one of the homes for younger children should be seen as a priority to release resources to take forward a wider placement strategy. Residential provision for under 12s should be phased out with priority given to ensuring appropriate family placements.
- 6.4. It is estimated that six children's homes are required for children and young people over 12 but further work is required to review the statement of purpose of Godbey House and ensure the location, building and staff skill set is appropriate to meet the needs of the older age group.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1. Crossways Children's Home is closed on 15 April 2011 subject to the children being placed elsewhere in line with their care plans. (Time lines attached – Appendix 1 )
- 7.2. Godbey House's Statement of Purpose be reviewed to provide care for older young people than presently stated.
- 7.3. Estimated savings arising from the closure of Crossways children's home be retained within the Department to support the overall budget pressures for children look after.
- 7.4. That approval be sought from the Executive Member for Policy and Resources that 100% of the capital receipt to be used to support the wider residential children's home capital investment strategy.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>OR</b>	
<b>This proposal does not link to the Corporate Strategy but, nevertheless, requires a decision because:</b>	
<i>NB: Only complete this section if you have not completed any of the Corporate Strategy tick boxes above. If it is not applicable, please delete.</i>	

*NB: If the 'Other significant links' section below is not applicable, please delete it.*

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

**IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

**1. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

1.1. None

**2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. None

**3. Climate Change:**

3.1. Closure of the home will contribute to Hampshire County Council's reduction of carbon footprint/ energy consumption.