

**REPORT TO: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE ON  
2 DECEMBER 2009**

**SUBJECT: CO-LOCATED CHILD PROTECTION UNIT**

**BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the development of the Co-Located Child Protection Unit and seek permission to go to tender in order to further progress the project.

1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to the consideration of Capital and Revenue Budgets and long term financial plans

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1 It is recommended that Committee:-**

- i) notes the progress to date on the Co-Located Child Protection Unit; and**
- ii) agrees that the project be tendered and accepted if within agreed budget.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Members will recall from the reports submitted by the Educational Services Resources Manager on Capital Budgets that the Co-Located Child Protection Unit has been progressing steadily this financial year. In June 2009 a project team was established with representation from all three clients; The Moray Council, Grampian Police and NHS Grampian.

3.2 Members will recall that a report was submitted to Policy and Resources Committee on 25 August 2009 from Head of Estates (para 30 refers). The report was to approve in principle the use of a site in Elgin to facilitate the Co-Located Child Protection Unit. Also to instruct the Head of Estates Services to negotiate terms for the future ownership and joint occupation of the property by the Council, Grampian Police and NHS Grampian.

3.3 On 2 October 2009 the Grampian Police Joint Board met and approved their contribution of £500,000 towards the Capital Cost of this shared services project.

3.4 Estates Services have proposed a lease agreement between NHS Grampian and the landlords, the Moray Council and Grampian Police, for the office accommodation.

3.5 A report will be submitted by the Head of Estates Services to Policy and Resources Committee on 15 December 2009 informing members of the proposals concerning the lease and ownership arrangements for the building

involving the three partners. Revenue costs will also be submitted within the report to Policy and Resources Committee and it is estimated that these can be contained within the current budget.

- 3.6 The Planning Application for the new building was recently submitted to Development Control. The project will shortly be at a stage to go out for tender, and Members' approval is sought to progress to tender and appoint a contractor within budget to commence construction. Originally construction was proposed to commence early April 2010, however confirmation of the external financial contribution towards the capital costs has taken longer than anticipated and therefore put the project back by eight weeks. Construction is proposed to commence beginning June 2010, with a completion for spring 2011.

#### **4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

##### **(a) Single Outcome Agreement/ Service Improvement Plan**

The proposed Co-Located Child Protection Unit is in accordance with the Single Outcome Agreement Local Priority 6, Young People – ensuring effective early intervention and improving the life chances of looked after children.

##### **(b) Policy and Legal**

The Council has responsibilities towards children in need of care and protection through the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

##### **(c) Resources (Financial, Risks, Staffing and Property)**

###### Financial

It has been agreed in principle between Council and Grampian Police that the development costs of providing a new facility be met equally.

The total building cost of the project, including equipment is estimated at £1,000,000. This figure is likely to vary once the Council has received the tenders.

The Council has allocated £500,000 in its Capital Plan for 2009/10 and as identified in this report and in the capital report to Children & Young People's Committee on 7 October 2009 (para 7 refers), the majority of this budget will need to be carried forward. This request is being considered as part of the capital plan review process.

###### Risks

The co-located unit presents an opportunity to develop working practices locally in the protection of vulnerable children. The project has been commented on favourably by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education in their consideration of child protection services in Moray.

Planning Application refusal will have a significant impact to the project.

Detailed costing for the construction comes in higher than first initial estimates and above the approved budget for the capital build.

Grampian Police Joint Board does not approve the tender and appointed contractor within the allocated timeframe and this causes delay to the commencement of construction. However, the main risk around this point surrounds the timing of Police Boards and Grampian Police have advised that the risk can be mitigated, if required, by the setting up of a Police Board Sub Committee to consider tenders.

#### Staffing

The Social Work staffing for the co-located unit are already employed by the Council and work at the moment in temporary premises at the Elgin Police Office.

#### Property

The property implications are detailed above in this report.

#### **(d) Consultations**

In preparing this report, consultations have been undertaken with Alastair Keddie, Chief Executive, Deborah Brands, Principal Accountant, Rhonda Geddes-Stewart, Senior Personnel Adviser, Georgina Anderson, Solicitor, John Black, Head of Estates Services, Ron Phillips, Property Manager, Alison Hannan, Project Officer, Nick Goodchild, Educational Resources Manager, Community Services Senior Management Team, and senior managers from Grampian Police and NHS Grampian involved within the Moray Child Protection Team. Where comments have been received, these have been noted within the report.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The Co-located Child Protection Unit project is proceeding as a collaborative venture between Moray Council, Grampian Police & NHS Grampian. The project by now reached a stage where it can go out to tender and permission is sought from Committee for this.**

ITEM:

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Services

Background Papers: with author

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