

Heworth Family Centre – Supplementary Note

Heworth Family Centre – the case for using it for young people's activities.

The Young People's Services (YPS) has responded immediately and admirably in taking on the Alternative Learning Programme (ALP) formerly contracted with Rathbone. The programme of intensive intervention with the most disengaged cohort of young people in the city requires a unique and independent safe setting for its delivery in order to gain successful outcomes for its users/clients. A youth work approach to learning has worked well in the delivery of ALPs and there will be many advantages in centralising the core business, staff and resources in one location.

Much thought and assessment by staff has gone into considering the merits of using an older building and in transferring from Nursery Drive in Holgate to the Heworth site. The latter is much larger, has the benefit of being fully equipped for IT connectivity, provides a large teaching kitchen and gardens, and offers the potential to house our people carriers, which we have to move from the James Street Depot.

Heworth Family Centre not only provides an appropriate base for the ALPs work but is also an ideal base for addressing the inadequate youth provision in the Tang Hall/Heworth sector of the City. The building could have young people's activities in the evening and twilight sessions, and support activities (Crossroads) for 16+ young people who have no clear route for employment or training. Our Network2 team will also be based there, if Members accept our recommendation to retain the building for a temporary period.

The proximity to the City Centre and good access routes (including buses and cycle routes) afford a suitable location for city wide activities such as Duke of Edinburgh's Award and work with Travellers. Both these groups have indicated that they would like to work from the location and there is adequate storage space for materials and equipment. The attractive grounds also add the opportunity to link with the soon-to-be-established outdoor learning zone. Links with St Nicholas Field and use for environmental activities form part of this proposal.

The new Integrated Children's Centre will also wish to make some use of rooms within the centre for specific activities as their own space is at a premium. This will assist us in building relationships for transition work with young people and families.

The Positive Activities for Young People programme, which is run in each locality through out the summer, would use the building for the east locality provision.

Heworth Family Centre – Alternative accommodation

An alternative property must satisfy the following criteria

1. Size. 400 to 500 sq.m
2. Easily accessible
3. Preferably stand alone
4. Enhanced by outdoor grassed area
5. Accommodate 20 (14 FTE) administration staff
6. At least 1 preferably 2 1:1 interview rooms
7. At least 3 good size rooms for group work
8. IT facilities for staff linked into the Council network
9. Ability for Young People to use computers for studies
10. Large capacity storeroom to house Duke of Edinburgh award camping equipment
11. Storage for two vehicles
12. Training kitchen for teaching life skills

There are no other properties within the Council's ownership that satisfy these criteria.

In addition the following points need to be taken into consideration if the Council were to pursue the option of procuring an alternative property outside the Council's ownership.

1. Planning consent will be required to D1 – non residential institution for any properties outside the Council's ownership that might be suitable. This would not be achievable within the required timescale.
2. The cost of installing an IT connection to link up with Council's network would be in the region of £15,000.
3. If the reuse of Heworth Family Centre did not proceed then it is likely that due to current market conditions the building would lie empty for some considerable period of time before disposal and costs would be incurred with security and possible empty rate liability, or, demolition costs.
4. The total annual running costs must not exceed £35,000

There are currently no properties outside the Council's ownership that would fulfil the above criteria. However, in terms of a long term solution to the accommodation requirements of Young People's Services this option will be investigated.