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## £15m health centres boost for inner city

By DAVID MARSH

HEALTH and child care services in some of Leeds's most deprived inner-city neighbourhoods are to receive a £15.7m boost.

The council has been given the go-ahead to build three centres providing a wide range of services in Harehills, Chapeltown and Kirkstall.

They will be built under the Private Finance Initiative programme, under which the private sector will build and maintain the buildings for up to 25 years in return for annual payments.

Mix

Coun Mark Harris, executive councillor for customer services, said: "This is exciting news. A great deal of work has gone into developing these plans, and now we'll be able to continue working with the three communities to ensure their new centres get the right mix of services.

"These new joint service centres will be at the heart of communities, easily accessed by public transport, and will bring together many council services with a number of services from our partners in the health sector.

"Leeds City Council is committed to putting our customers first, and making sure our services meet their needs – these centres represent another important step."

The Yorkshire Evening Post's long-running Life In Leeds series has highlighted the problems facing some of the city's poorest communities and their need for improved services and facilities.

Work on the first of the new centres could now begin before the end of 2005.

In Harehills, the proposed centre will include a doctors' practice and out-patient, diagnostic and day surgery facilities.

The council also hopes the new development will boast an integrated children's centre, a replacement library, social care and other local authority services.

These facilities will be developed as part of a larger mixed use redevelopment including shops, leisure, offices and possibly housing.

The Chapeltown scheme proposes day surgery and intermediate care, a new library, social care services and area management staff.

The proposed Kirkstall joint service centre will link up with a major redevelopment of Kirkstall District Centre being planned by a private developer.

david.marsh @ypn.co.uk

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