

Changes to In-House Residential and Short Breaks Services Report Consultation Summary

1. Introduction

A formal eight week public consultation was held on proposed changes to residential and short break services provided by Leicestershire County Council. The consultation commenced at 2pm on Monday 19 February and ran until midnight on 15 April 2018.

The aim of the consultation was to gather feedback on Leicestershire County Council's proposed changes to residential and short break services for people with learning disabilities in Hinckley and Coalville. The consultation was specifically interested in views on the following proposals:

- To support the 11 residents living at Hamilton Court and The Trees residential services to access suitable alternative accommodation/services.
- To close the 6-bedded short breaks service at Smith Crescent in Coalville and support the 23 individuals accessing the service to make use of short breaks facilities elsewhere in the county.
- To expand short break facilities at The Trees in Hinckley through the closure, reconfiguration and refurbishment of The Trees (Ashwood and Beechwood).
- To continue to directly provide overnight short breaks services and end direct provision of residential care due to market gaps and availability respectively.

2. Consultation Activity

Several engagement and promotion methods were employed throughout the consultation period to encourage and support involvement, with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging people to give their views on the proposals.

Promotion of the consultation was heavily targeted towards ensuring individuals, relatives and staff directly affected by the proposals and direct contact was made with these cohorts. Wider promotion with key stakeholders via email, along with web based promotion, including information on Leicestershire County Council website, social media (Facebook and Twitter) was also undertaken.

Feedback was facilitated by a survey which was available to complete online via Leicestershire County Council's website, or on paper. Supporting information was provided within the consultation document and consultees were prompted to read the supporting information prior to completing the questionnaire. A combined questionnaire and information document was also available on the website and distributed on request. A dedicated phone number and email address was publicised in all relevant communication and promotional material.

In total 94 users, relatives, staff and other stakeholders attended face to face meetings/ workshops where the proposals were discussed and 107 completed questionnaires were received.

Consultees	Face to face (workshops, meetings etc.)	Completed questionnaire
Individuals directly affected by the proposals (users and families)	53*	38
Staff at Hamilton Court, Smith Crescent and the Trees	30	15
Social care organisation or care professional	11	9
Public	N/A	37
Other stakeholders	N/A	6
Unspecified	N/A	2
TOTALS	94	107

* Numbers are higher than the number of people directly affected due to the likelihood that multiple feedback methods were used and multiple family members responded.

The consultation and proposals were covered by local media prior to and during the consultation. Local media coverage and dates are set out below:

Publication/ Media Outlet	Date(s)
The Coalville Times	9,16, 23 (x2) February 2018
The Hinckley Times	7 February 2018
The Leicester Mercury	7, 16, and 21 February

The consultation was promoted in advance of and during the consultation period to stakeholders and partners including:

- Healthwatch
- Voluntary Action Leicestershire
- West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
- East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group
- Leicester City Council,
- District and Borough Councils across Leicestershire
- Adult Social Care contracted providers including residential care supported living and community life choices
- Children and Families Services
- Adult Social Care Commissioning Teams,
- Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Partners were asked to distribute information about the consultation to relevant and appropriate networks and partners. Healthwatch publicised details of the consultation in their

Newsletter, VAL promoted the consultation across their networks and North West Leicestershire District Council shared information internally.

2.1 User and Carer Engagement:

Six targeted workshops were held specifically for those directly affected and their relatives and staff. Information about the meetings, the consultation and how to provide feedback along with a paper copy of the questionnaire were sent directly to over 200 relatives/ carers. Paper copies of the questionnaire, including easy read versions were also available at all of the services. Information was produced and distributed including frequently asked questions, a transition case study and staff guidance to support individuals affected by the proposals. Information and communication was focussed around providing reassurance and explaining how the changes would be managed effectively by understanding the needs of each individual.

Three workshops were arranged across the county for current users of in house Short Breaks (Melton Short Breaks, Carlton Drive and the Trees) indirectly affected by the proposals. These were organised on different days and times of the week to accommodate different circumstances, invites were sent directly to families who use the services and posters were displayed at all short breaks sites. However, there were no attendees to these workshops.

In week two of the consultation contact was made to all relatives offering one to one meetings with Mr Blunt CC, Lead Member for Adults and Communities and the Director of Adults and Communities. Following this offer, eleven one to one meetings were held (plus one conference call with the Director).

Independent advocacy was available to support individuals who were directly affected by the proposals to maximise their involvement in the consultation. Four individuals via their relatives requested advocacy and were supported to express their views and wishes in relation to what is important to them and how the service they receive facilitates this.

3. Overview of Responses

The following responses were received during the consultation:

Method by which response was submitted	Number of responses received
Online Questionnaires	73
Paper Questionnaires	24
Easy Read Paper Questionnaires	10
Formal written responses (electronic or paper) and telephone calls	30

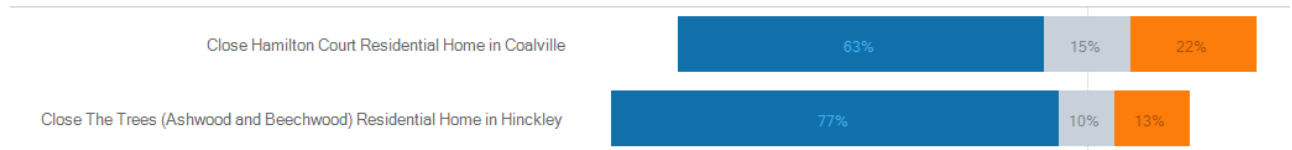
Petitions (number of signatures at close of consultation)	2 (4,025 and 127)
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3.1 Analysis of survey responses

Not all respondents answered all the questions in the survey. Analysis percentages exclude non-responses and “don’t knows” and are shown at the end of this report.

The graph below shows survey responses to the proposed closure by service:

Q3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the council's proposal to...?



Base = 100

Response (group)
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Agree

Comments that indicated support for closure of the residential services at The Trees, Hamilton Court and Smith Crescent can be summarised as:

- Importance of meeting the changing need of people who need services.
- The value of short breaks in supporting informal/ unpaid carers.

“There is a lack of resources for short breaks putting an increasing amount of pressure and stress on unpaid carers. Families would like to be able to confidently book their respite breaks without the stress of places not being available. It would also increase continuity for our service users to have increase capacity on 1 site rather than people having to change to a different site each time respite is booked.”

Support for the closure of Hamilton Court and Smith Crescent is based upon the buildings shortcomings.

“Sadly Hamilton Court is and always has been unfit for purpose. The amount of work required to bring it up to standard is better spent on building somewhere new and exciting. As clichéd as it is you really cannot make a silk purse out of a sows ear! I cannot comment on the Hinckley units as I don’t know them, but presumably they face the same challenges.”

“I understand this [Smith Crescent] is a converted semi-detached property. It’s not fit for purpose or the future.”

Comments that indicated disagreement with the proposed closure of The Trees (long stay) focused on:

- Concerns about the negative impact of change on individual’s wellbeing and how this change would be managed.
- The belief that the services are people’s homes.

- Concerns about a perceived lack of suitable, good quality alternatives.

“It is the impact on the Trees residents that we are principally concerned. The closure has not been thought through and the harmful effects it may cause, should this go ahead, it will have on the 7 residents at the Trees. They know this as their Home where the carers and staff at the Trees treat them like their own family. There may also be long-term consequences moving them from their Home. Forcibly evicting them away from their carers, the community in Hinckley where they are known and belong.”

Comments that indicated disagreement with the proposed closure of Hamilton Court focused on:

- Concerns about the negative impact of the change for the individuals concerned
- The belief that the service is people’s homes

“As a parent of a long term resident, I feel that the closure of Hamilton Court would be detrimental to the welfare and wellbeing of my son.”

Comments that indicated disagreement with the proposed closure of Smith Crescent focused on:

- Perceived high value and importance of the service.
- Concerns that the service should remain local to the person and not require significant travel to access by those who had been used to nearby service.

74% of survey respondents disagreed the local care market has sufficient capacity to meet existing and future demand for residential care accommodation if Hamilton Court and The Trees (Ashwood and Beechwood) were to close. 9% of respondents agreed and 19% neither agreed/ disagreed.

Comments that expressed disagreement were themed around perceptions that independent sector provision equates to poorer quality of provision in the independent sector; that the demand for services is increasing; the uncertainty of alternatives being available; and the negative impact of change for the individuals affected.

“As people tend to be living longer the need for more specialist accommodation and staff will be necessary, not less.

“There are no suggestions so far as to where the residents will go.”

Comments that expressed agreement mostly pointed to the availability of residential care in the independent sector.

“There are ample residential providers in the county. It’s important that residents receive a good transition”.

51% disagreed and 39% agreed with the proposed approach for supporting existing Hamilton Court and The Trees residents if the homes were to close. Comments that expressed disagreement tended to re-stated opposition to the proposals generally. Comments from those respondents who indicated support for the approach reiterated the

importance of taking an individualised approach to ensure people can cope with the changes as well as highlighting the challenges in supporting vulnerable people through change.

“Allowing each resident to choose where/how they are supported (with assistance from their family) is more in line with the Care Act...May allow more service users to choose supported living as an option”.

“To take any resident out of a home, that they have lived in for many years, will be traumatic and I should hope, you would do your very best, in their interest to find something even better than the place they have lived in.”

81% of respondents agreed that there continues to be a need for the council to provide suitably accessible accommodation-based short breaks services in the county. 10% disagreed. Comments focussed on the importance of having the service, the value this has in relation to supporting carers, and the pressures on existing provision due to growth in demand.

There were mixed views with regards to the proposal to create eight fully accessible short break bedrooms by redesigning and refurbishing Ashwood and Beechwood following the proposed closure. 47% of respondents disagreed and 43% agreed.

Comments in support of the proposals pointed to the importance and growing need for short breaks. Support for the reconfiguration at the Trees was much higher than support for the proposals for the closure of the Ashwood and Beechwood (43% compared to 13%).

Comments indicating disagreement with the reconfiguration at Ashwood and Beechwood expressed opposition to the moves that would be required for current long stay residents.

3.2 Consultation Workshops and One to One Meetings

Six workshop sessions were arranged for relatives of those people directly affected by the proposals and staff working at the services. A total of 20 relatives and 30 staff attended these sessions.

All relatives of those directly affected by the proposals were invited to have a meeting with the Director of Adults and Communities Department and Lead Cabinet Member.

Eleven meetings took place, five with relatives from The Trees, five from Smith Crescent and one from Hamilton Court, plus one conference call with the Director.

All feedback from workshops and meetings was recorded and key themes were identified.

3.2.1 Relatives of residential care residents

The main themes from sessions with relatives of residential users included:

- Concerns that there are not suitable, good quality alternatives in the independent sector (particularly for the long stay services).
- Concerns about the process of deciding whether an alternative is right for the individual and the transition process.
- Loss of relationships with staff and other residents (this was specific to The Trees).

- Desire to stay local for the majority due to relationships with the community and other services accessed locally.

At the meeting with The Trees relatives on 5 March a request was made to hold a joint meeting for all relatives to attend as part of the consultation. A meeting was organised for 5 April. Two families made contact to confirm attendance (as requested in the invite) and on 4 April a decision was made to cancel the meeting (the 2 families who had booked had been informed the previous week that the meeting may be cancelled due to low attendance).

3.2.2 Users of short breaks at Smith Crescent:

There were mixed views held by those accessing short breaks services. Some opposed the changes due to the additional travel required and expressed the expectation that short breaks services should always be available locally. Underlying this were concerns about the ability of the individual(s) to cope with the extended travel due to their complexity of need, and the additional cost of transport. Others were more open to the proposal generally because they had previous positive experience of other short break services and some wanted to visit other services to determine which one(s) could meet their needs.

Consistently, users valued the service in supporting them to continue in their caring roles and they were concerned about any reduction in availability.

3.2.3 Staff

Staff at Hamilton Court and Smith Crescent expressed support for the closures of these services due to the limitations and challenges of the buildings. Staff had been supporting relatives of those in long stay services to explore potential benefits of a move.

Staff at The Trees also expressed support for the service reconfiguration on the basis that an increase in suitable short break beds is required and because of the challenges associated with the layout and facilities of the building. However some staff strongly opposed the proposal on the basis that the existing accommodation related to people's homes and that independent sector provision would be less satisfactory.

Staff in support of the proposals at The Trees expressed concerns that opportunities for improved outcomes for the individuals will be missed due to the concerns raised by families.

3.6 Independent Advocacy

Independent advocacy was available to the residents at The Trees (Ashwood and Beechwood) and Hamilton Court to ensure support was provided, in addition to what was available from staff and relatives and to maximise participation in the consultation.

Meetings and conversations took place with the four individuals who agreed/ whose family agreed to advocacy support for the individual, with their families and staff who know them well. The format of the discussions recognised the sensitivities associated with the proposals and focussed on things that the individual likes and dislikes about where they live, their physical environment and who they live with, their community, and opportunities and experience of change.

During these conversations none of the individuals expressed an interest or wish to move, although some areas of dissatisfaction were shared, it was not conclusive that a move would be preferred and individuals demonstrated a varied ability to cope with change.

Information obtained and reported by the independent advocate was broadly consistent with the information staff and relatives had provided throughout the consultation.

3.5 Petitions

The following petitions have been received:

A petition by Hinckley and District Mencap to stop "permanent residents at The Trees, Deveron Way from losing their homes" with 127 signatures.

An online petition to "Stop Leicestershire County Council evicting 7 vulnerable adults" with 4,025 signatures as of 15 April 2018.

The online petition remains open is expected to be submitted by 27 May 2018.

3.6 Other Communication

38. Throughout the consultation, regular communication was received by members of the Cabinet and Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee, County Councillors, the Council Leader, officers of the Council and the Director of Adults and Communities expressing concerns about the proposals. The table below shows a count of all types correspondence received during the eight week consultation period, by service.

Service	No. of submissions
The Trees (Ashwood and Beechwood)	21
Hamilton Court	1
Smith Crescent	6
All services	2
Total	30

A significant proportion of the communication came from relatives of those people directly affected by the proposals stating concerns about the proposed changes similar to what was communicated elsewhere throughout the consultation period.

4. Summary and Conclusion

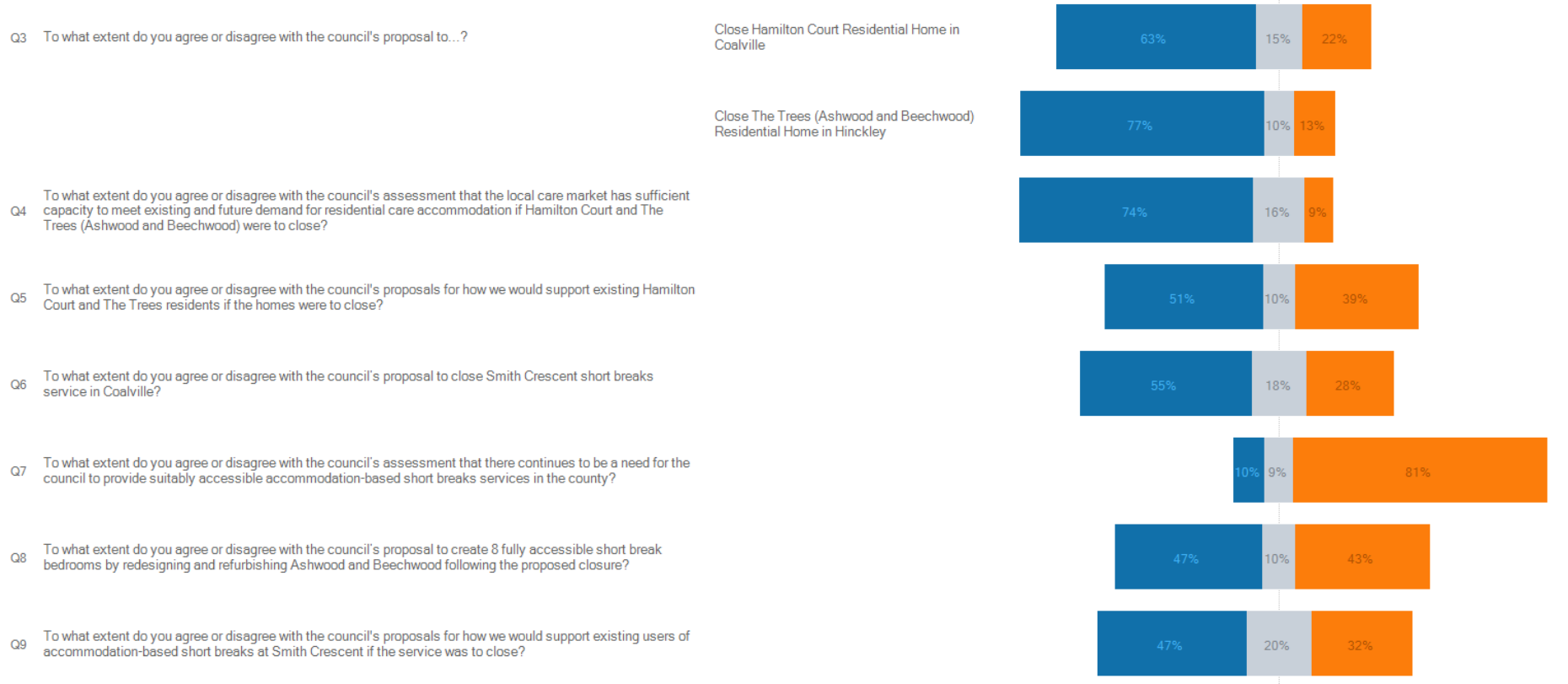
Feedback via all communication methods was broadly consistent. This is likely to be partially due to the sensitive nature of the proposals as well as the repeated communication with those directly affected.

The key themes from feedback received can be summarised as:

- Greater opposition than support for the proposals to close long stay residential services at Hinckley and Coalville.

- Greater opposition than support for the proposals to close Short Break Service in Coalville.
- Accommodation based short breaks services are valuable to those who use them.
- Expectations have been established due to the satisfaction, quality and convenience of existing service provision.
- More respondents disagreed than agreed with the council's assessment that the local care market has sufficient capacity to meet existing and future demand for residential care accommodation if Hamilton Court and The Trees (Ashwood and Beechwood) were to close.
- More respondents agreed than disagreed with the assessment that there continues to be a need for the council to continue to provide suitably accessible accommodation based short breaks in the county.
- Higher levels of support for the refurbishment council's proposal to create 8 fully accessible short break bedrooms by redesigning and refurbishing Ashwood and Beechwood following the proposed closure were received than for the closure of Ashwood and Beechwood.

5. Survey Responses



Base = 87 to 99

- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree