



CABINET – 23 MARCH 2021

PROVISION OF SHORT BREAKS AND SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

PART A

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with an update on changes to the County Council's short breaks and supported living services and to seek approval for the County Council to consult with services users on revised proposals to:-
 - i. Close the existing Smith Crescent short break service;
 - ii. Utilise the whole of the Trees in Hinckley for the provision of short breaks on the basis that previous residents of the Trees have indicated that they would not wish to return;
 - iii. Withdraw the previously approved proposals for the development of the Cropston Drive site in Coalville pending the outcome of the consultation which would inform alternative proposals for development.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that:
 - a) It be noted that the previous residents of The Trees in Hinckley have indicated that they wish to remain in their current accommodation and not return;
 - b) The Director of Adults and Communities be authorised to commence a consultation exercise on the following proposals:
 - i. To close Smith Crescent as a place for the provision of short breaks and for short break provision to be provided at the following three locations –Hinckley; Melton and Wigston;
 - ii. To expand the existing facilities at the Trees for the provision of short breaks taking the total number of beds at the site to 12;

- iii. To withdraw the current proposals for the development of the Cropston Road site in Coalville pending the outcome of consultation which would inform revised development proposals for the site.
- c) A further report be submitted to the Cabinet in summer 2021 regarding the outcome of the consultation and the proposed way forward.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 3. The utilisation of the short breaks service at Smith Crescent had been in decline prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The building has a number of accessibility challenges which cannot be addressed cost effectively and impacts opportunities to maximise occupancy. The Consultation exercise will enable the Council to understand whether the needs of the current users of the Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service can be met elsewhere in the County.
- 4. Former residents of The Trees have taken the decision not to return to the newly refurbished facility and remain in their alternative setting. Using this accommodation for the provision of short breaks alongside the Council's other short breaks services in Melton and Wigston would provide the Council with sufficient capacity to meet the needs of those eligible to access these services.
- 5. The provision of long-stay services at The Trees is not in line with the strategic direction of accommodation based services for adults, where there is a targeted shift away from residential care to a broader range of personalised options such as supported living.
- 6. There has been a failure to achieve an economically viable bid to develop the previously agreed proposals for the Cropston Drive site. This along with completed refurbishment of The Trees and the opportunity to review its intended use forms the basis on which to review previously agreed decisions.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

- 7. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on 8 March 2021 and its comments are set out in Part B of the report.
- 8. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, the consultation exercise will commence on 31 March 2021 for a period of six weeks. The outcome of the consultation will be reported back to the Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 June 2021 and to the Cabinet in summer 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- 9. In June 2018, the Cabinet agreed for long-stay residential services at The Trees in Hinckley to continue to be provided subject to reconfiguration and refurbishment of the existing buildings:

- a) long-stay residential services at Hamilton Court in Coalville be closed and the residents be supported to find appropriate alternative accommodation;
 - b) a new short breaks service be developed on the Hamilton Court/Smith Crescent site to replace the existing short breaks building; funded from discretionary capital funds;
 - c) that the use of the Hamilton Court/Smith Crescent site for supported living continue to be explored.
10. On 8 February 2019, the Cabinet approved funding for the 2019/20 to 2022/23 capital programme including £3.7m for the redevelopment of the North West Leicestershire site (Smith Crescent/Cropston Drive). Plans for the site were subsequently approved by the Cabinet on 25 June 2019 to include the redevelopment of short breaks services, supported living accommodation and Community Life Choices (formerly known as day services) facilities at the Hamilton Court/Smith Crescent site.
 11. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report regarding the provision of short breaks and supported living services at its meeting on 8 March 2021.

Resource Implications

12. On the 8 February 2019, the Cabinet approved funding for the 2019/20 to 2022/23 capital programme including £3.7m for the redevelopment of the North West Leicestershire site (Hamilton Court/ Smith Crescent – Cropston Drive).
13. To date £513,000 has been spent on Phase One of the Cropston Drive program, involving demolition of the former Hamilton Court building, design and enablement works. A recent tender for Phase Two works has been paused as tenders exceeded the current capital allocation.
14. Staffing vacancies at Smith Crescent remain on hold whilst the Short Breaks Service remains suspended as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Existing staff remain temporarily redeployed and there is confidence that there are sufficient alternative options for them within the Department, should the service not reopen.
15. The increase in Short Breaks beds at The Trees will be managed within existing resources, as the proposal is to change the current use of the newly refurbished eight beds from long-stay to short-stay. Existing staffing and operational running costs will be unaffected.
16. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

17. A copy of this report has been circulated to the following members representing the electoral divisions in North West Leicestershire and Hinckley areas:

Mr John Coxon CC
Dr Terri Eynon CC
Mr Tony Gillard CC
Mr Dan Harrison CC
Mr Trevor Pendleton CC
Mr Nicholas Rushton CC
Mr Sean Sheahan CC
Mr Michael Wyatt CC
Mr Peter Bedford CC
Mr David Bill MBE CC
Mr Stuart Bray CC
Mr Bill Crooks CC
Mr Michael Mullaney CC
Mr Ozzy O'Shea CC
Mr Ivan Ould OBE CC
Mrs Janice Richards CC
Mrs Amanda Wright CC

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PART B

Background

18. In June 2018, proposals to develop a replacement Short Breaks facility on the site occupied by Hamilton Court residential care home and Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service were approved. This would have given the Council sufficient short breaks accommodation in the County to meet demand and ensure that the long-stay residents of The Trees would be able to continue residing in the care home following a period of refurbishment.
19. Recent reviews of the care and support needs of former residents of the The Trees have been completed, leading to an opportunity to review the future use of the refurbished accommodation at the site in Hinckley, which would enable the Council to achieve the necessary provision of short breaks beds, without the need for further additional investment.

The Trees, Hinckley

20. Following the outcome of consultation on proposals regarding in-house Short Breaks Services in Hinckley and Coalville in 2018, the refurbishment of The Trees to re-develop its long stay residential service offer was completed in December 2020 at a cost of £1.1m. The refurbished aspect of the building provides accommodation for up to eight individuals with associated communal space and staff accommodation.
21. The remainder of the building offers accommodation for up to four individuals previously utilised for the provision of a Short Breaks Service, associated communal space, staff accommodation and a Community Life Choices [CLC] service.
22. The refurbishment of The Trees had been completed on the basis that the former permanent residents had expressed a wish to return to The Trees following its redevelopment. The Department remained actively involved with residents and their families during their temporary alternative placements, however following reviews of their current arrangements, all have now decided to remain in their alternative setting as opposed to returning to the site.
23. Given that the Trees is not required by former residents, a review of the options available has been undertaken which included provision of standard residential care for people with a learning disability (the purpose of the refurbishment), consolidation of short breaks services on a single site, use as a step through service for young people transitioning into adult services and an assessment and crisis facility for people with complex needs as an alternative to hospital admission.
24. The outcome of the review recommended that extending the Short Breaks Service at The Trees to accommodate 12 service users was the preferred option as the development at The Trees meets the needs of people that access

short breaks, it would provide operational efficiencies, and this model of care follows successful models adopted elsewhere in the County (Melton, Oadby and Wigston).

25. There are currently 28 service users who would ordinarily access the Short Breaks Service at The Trees. Existing facilities dedicated to this - four beds - are sufficient to meet existing demand, although allows little room for any growth or development of the Service.
26. The Service at The Trees is currently suspended in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic. Existing staffing resources have been temporarily redeployed to support other areas of critical work, including the timely discharge of people from hospital who need care and support in their own home pending longer term arrangements being available.

Cropston Drive, Coalville

27. The Hamilton Court long-stay residential care service closed in August 2019 following the transfer of the last three residents to alternative accommodation. The current Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service (based at Cropston Drive, Coalville) has remained largely suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic, with urgent short breaks services being provided at alternative in-house services at Carlton Drive (Wigston) and Melton.
28. Following the Cabinet's approval in February 2019 to redevelop the Cropston Drive site, a planning application was approved on 6 January 2020 in order for the future use of the site to comprise of the following:
 - a) Up to 16 self-contained supported living properties including wheelchair accessible and bariatric facilities (the actual number to be determined). Support will be provided via the County Council's lead contracted provider;
 - b) Six bed short breaks building with all rooms en-suite and accessible, with support provided by the County Council;
 - c) Suitable space and facilities to provide CLC (which is currently provided at Coalville Community Resource Centre) with support provided by the County Council.
29. The Cropston Drive site development has a capital allocation of £3.764m for the demolition and development of the services noted above. To date, £513,000 has been spent on Phase One of the Cropston Drive programme – demolition, design and enablement works.
30. Two tender exercises have been undertaken for Phase Two works. The first was abandoned due to substantive changes to the environmental requirements. The second failed to achieve a bid in line with the current capital allocation, leaving the development paused pending further consideration.

31. The original plans for Cropston Drive provided for an intensive development of the site. Should additional short breaks services be provided on the Trees site, there would be an opportunity to have a less concentrated development, focused on supported living and either a Transforming Care step through facility for people with complex needs or a young person's step through facility both of which have been highlighted as a requirement within the County.
32. In-house CLC services have significantly reduced during the pandemic due to their initial suspension and subsequent phased re-opening. It is currently unclear whether attendance will recover to previous levels, a review of these services may therefore be beneficial to determine the level of demand and the most appropriate model of support post the pandemic.

Proposals/Options

33. If short breaks provision is extended at The Trees, there would be no requirement for services to be provided at the Cropston Drive site. There are currently 17 service users who would usually access services at Cropston Drive, who could be offered an alternative at The Trees, Melton or Wigston, dependent on the most appropriate location.
34. The proposal is that all 12 beds at The Trees be utilised as specialist Short Breaks and CLC provision. This would enable the Council to consolidate its Short Breaks services to three sites, Hinckley, Melton, and Wigston. The emphasis being to ensure services are financially viable, maximising productivity, and focusing on providing tailored support for eligible people with complex and multiple needs.
35. Although formal engagement with people and families who use Smith Crescent short breaks has not yet begun, a desk top review has been undertaken indicating that the demand for a local service has reduced since the last formal consultation in 2018. Of those who would usually access the service, only 53% are local to the Coalville area, with the rest living closer, or as close to, alternative services. The previous formal consultation resulted in six responses of mixed view, with a proportion open to the proposal of closing Smith Crescent and using other short breaks services. The main theme being that availability of service was the important factor in supporting families to continue in their caring role.
36. The total capacity available on the basis of these proposals would equate to 24 beds (12 at The Trees, seven at Wigston and five at Melton). When considering average allocations per individual, a total of 858 bed weeks are required, versus a total proposed capacity of 1,248 weeks. Based on this, reallocating the refurbished beds at The Trees ensures both sufficiency of provision to meet current demand, as well as additional capacity to meet any growth in need for these services. It would also enable these services to continue providing urgent and crisis support as has been the case through the pandemic.

37. There are currently 17 people who would usually access the service, therefore the Council would be able to enter into individual discussion to ensure that it meaningfully gains their views and fully understands the impact of this change. Advocacy support would be accessed to ensure that any barriers to engagement are managed.

Consultation

38. It is proposed to enter consultation with those who currently use Smith Crescent on the basis of no longer providing a Short Breaks Service at the site, with them being provided access to an appropriate in-house service elsewhere in the County.
39. The remodelled facilities at The Trees would provide specialist accommodation for those who currently access the Council's Short Breaks Service and offers an opportunity to fully utilise existing accommodation that is already available, as opposed to developing additional provision.
40. It is intended that the consultation exercise will commence on 31 March 2021 for a period of six weeks. It will follow the guidance set out in the Council's consultation principles, ensuring that it reaches all relevant stakeholders in appropriate formats, and is open and transparent in the use of information. It will take place in the form of a questionnaire, available to the general public of Leicestershire and published on the Council's website, as well as individual discussions with those directly affected. This will include people who access Smith Crescent (and their families) and staff who are employed there.
41. Although this would be a further consultation with this group on similar proposals to those discussed with them in 2018, it is important to articulate an updated rationale for the proposals and ensure certainty around the Council's future provision post Covid-19 pandemic.
42. Consultation will also be undertaken with the staff group currently employed at Smith Crescent Short Breaks site, who are currently temporarily redeployed to other critical roles within the Department as a result of the pandemic.

Consideration by the Adults and Communities Scrutiny Committee

43. The Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report regarding the provision of short breaks and supported living services at its meeting on 8 March 2021 in which it confirmed its support for the planned consultation and engagement on the proposals for the future use of the Trees Residential Care Home in Hinckley, and the potential development of the site at Cropston Drive in Coalville.
44. The Committee took account of comments received from two local members, Mr Wyatt CC and Dr Eynon CC. The following key points were also noted:

- Impacts to service user travel arrangements and ensuring adequate service provision across the County would be considered as part of the consultation process.
- If development plans at the Cropston Drive site were to be less intensive, consideration would be given to making appropriate use of the land space around the development, the effects to the borders and local neighbourhood, and ensuring adequate screening.
- Newer purpose-built units for short breaks including the newly refurbished units at the Trees Residential Care Home in Hinckley tended to provide better occupancy as the designs were often better suited to service user's needs.
- The Council and the NHS would work jointly to ensure good coordination of Transforming Care services to help provide people with the right accommodation and support in accordance with their needs. Despite a number of successes, it was recognised that even with support, transitioning between educational or hospital accommodation into supported living arrangements could be a significant change for some and this would need factoring into any plans to re-develop Transforming Care services.

Conclusion

45. The resultant impact of decisions taken by the former long-stay residents at The Trees and their families means the Council has purpose built facilities at The Trees site, Hinckley, for Short Breaks for up to 12 people. Alongside other existing provision, there is sufficient accommodation to meet the current needs and demand for these services.
46. Before embarking further on developing a new facility in the Coalville area, the views of people who use these services need to be considered and whether alternative proposals would achieve the same outcome.
47. The development of the Cropston Drive site will be paused whilst further work is undertaken to consider the future use of the whole site. Subject to the outcome of the consultation, proposals on the future utilisation of the site will be presented to scrutiny and the Cabinet in the summer

Equality and Human Rights Implications

48. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) was completed in relation to the recommendations to develop the site and was submitted, along with the recommendations, to the Cabinet in June 2018. The EHRIA identified a disproportional impact on people with learning disabilities, but that this does not amount to unlawful discrimination against anyone with a protected characteristic. It concluded that the recommendations should have a positive or neutral impact on the services.
49. A further EHRIA will be produced as part of the consultation process.

Environmental Implications

50. Environmental Implications will be a requirement for future tenders associated with the development of the Cropston Drive site and will form part of the tender evaluation process.

Partnership Working and Associated Issues

51. The provision and availability of local short breaks services enables the Council to support the work of partner agencies, including Leicester City Council and health agencies which now operate limited comparable services. This enables access to unused capacity, generating additional income to support service delivery.

Risk Assessment

52. An initial risk assessment has been carried out on the proposals and the resultant risks have been logged. This will continue to be developed throughout the consultation and reporting period.

Background Papers

- Report to Cabinet: 12 June 2018 – Reconfiguration of In-House Learning Disability Residential Accommodation
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5181&Ver=4>
- Report to Cabinet: 8 February 2019 – Provisional Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/2020 to 2022/23
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5600&Ver=4>
- Report to Cabinet: 25 June 2019 – Re-development of Disability Services in North West Leicestershire
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5604&Ver=4>
- Report to Adults and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8 March 2021 – Provision of Short Breaks and Supported Living
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MId=6461&Ver=4>