



ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 JUNE 2021

PROVISION OF SHORT BREAKS AND SUPPORTED LIVING SERVICES
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULTS AND COMMUNITIES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update and to seek its views on the consultation on proposed changes to the provision of in-house short breaks services. The report details the outcome of the pre-consultation engagement undertaken with those who access the Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service based at the Cropston Drive site in Coalville, which has been completed in advance of formal the consultation which commenced on 10 May.
2. The Committee is asked to provide comments which can be shared within the report on the outcome of consultation due to be presented to the Cabinet on 20 July 2021.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

3. In June 2018, the Cabinet agreed recommendations for long-stay residential services at The Trees in Hinckley continue to be provided subject to reconfiguration and refurbishment of the existing building. It also agreed that a new short breaks service be developed on the Cropston Drive site to replace the existing Smith Crescent short breaks service.
4. 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 Smith Crescent/ Cropston Drive site. Plans for the site were subsequently approved by the Cabinet in June 2019.
5. On 8 March 2021, the Committee received a report which outlined proposals for the future use of the Trees Residential Care Home in Hinckley, and development of the site at Cropston Drive in Coalville and confirmed its support for the planned consultation and engagement with those who accessed services on these sites. On 23 March 2021, the Cabinet subsequently agreed that the Director of Adults and Communities be authorised to commence a consultation exercise on the following proposals:
 - i. To close Smith Crescent in Coalville as a place for the provision of short breaks and for short break provision to be provided at the following three locations in Leicestershire - Hinckley, Melton, and Wigston;

- ii. To expand the existing facilities at The Trees in Hinckley 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 Drive site in Coalville pending the outcome of consultation which would inform revised development proposals for the site.
6. The Cabinet noted that the consultation proposal had changed slightly from that outlined in the report and would now involve initial engagement with the 17 service users who usually access the Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service to ensure that the views of those most affected by the proposals were able to have additional time and input into the overall consultation. The Cabinet also noted that formal consultation would follow in May. A further report is to be submitted to the Cabinet in July 2021 regarding the outcome of the consultation and a proposed way forward.

Background

7. In June 2018, following a consultation on in-house short breaks services in Hinckley and Coalville, proposals to reconfigure the Trees in Hinckley and to develop a replacement Short Breaks facility on the site occupied by Hamilton Court residential care home and Smith Crescent Short Breaks Service (known as the Cropston Drive site) in Coalville 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 that care home following a period of refurbishment. This also resulted in the decommissioning of Hamilton Court residential home, which closed in August 2019.
8. The refurbishment of The Trees was completed in December 2020 at a cost of £1.1m on the basis that the former permanent residents had expressed a wish to return to the home. The refurbished aspect of the building provides accommodation for up to eight individuals with associated communal space and staff accommodation. The Department remained actively involved with residents and their families during their temporary alternative placements. However, following reviews of their care and support needs all those who previously resided at The Trees made the decision to remain in their alternative accommodation.
9. There has also been a failure to achieve an economically viable bid to develop the previously agreed proposals for the Cropston Drive site. This, along with the completed refurbishment of The Trees, and the opportunity to review its intended use formed the basis on which previously agreed decisions have been reviewed.
10. Given that The Trees is not required by former residents and that the existing proposals for the Cropston Drive site cannot be achieved within current funding, a review of the options available has been undertaken. The outcome of the review recommended that extending the Short Breaks Service at The Trees to accommodate 12 service users was the preferred option. This was because the development at The Trees would meet the needs of people that access short breaks, it would provide operational efficiencies, and this model of care followed successful models adopted elsewhere in the County (Melton, Oadby and Wigston).
11. The remodelled facilities at The Trees will provide specialist accommodation for those who currently access the Council's Short Breaks Service and offer an

opportunity to fully utilise existing accommodation that is already available, without the need for further additional investment to develop additional provision. The current and proposed in-house service availability is outlined in the tables below:

Current Service Availability

Carlton Drive, Wigston	7 beds
Melton Short Breaks, Melton	5 beds
The Trees, Hinckley	4 beds
Smith Crescent, Coalville	6 beds
Total	22 beds

Proposed Service Availability

Carlton Drive, Wigston	7 beds
Melton Short Breaks, Melton	5 beds
The Trees, Hinckley	12 beds
Smith Crescent, Coalville	0 beds
Total	24 beds

Pre-consultation Engagement

12. In advance of the launch of the formal consultation, discussions with people who are directly impacted by these proposals have taken place so that their views can be captured in a consistent way. This was also done to ensure that key considerations are captured and can be highlighted separately to the wider consultation responses.
13. Family members/carers of those people who currently use Smith Crescent have been contacted to arrange either a telephone appointment or a face-to-face meeting to discuss the proposals. Face-to-face discussions have been made possible by holding these in a building deemed to be Covid safe by the Council's Health and Safety Team, ensuring appropriate personal protective equipment and social distancing measures were adopted.
14. A total of 15 discussions were held with relatives/carers of people who use Smith Crescent, covering 16 of the 17 people who would usually access the service. Seven took place over the telephone and eight face to face. The family of one person who has previously used Smith Crescent advised that the person they support already accesses The Trees therefore no further engagement was required. The key areas of discussion focussed on:
 - The proposal to close Smith Crescent;
 - The future use of The Trees;
 - How best to engage with those who use Smith Crescent to ensure where possible they can contribute their views to the consultation;
 - If the proposal went ahead, what transitional arrangements would need to be considered for people to access alternative services;
 - Any other feedback or comments that were important to highlight.

15. In respect of the proposal to close Smith Crescent, 73% of relatives/carers disagreed with the proposal and 27% agreed. Views were expressed both in terms of the existing building remaining open, and/or a replacement being built on the existing site.

“This is very sad, Smith’s is close and handy for us.”

“It’s rubbish, we really need it as there is nothing else around here. Don’t let Smith’s shut.”

16. On the future use of The Trees, 53% thought that the refurbished facility should be used for Short Breaks, 40% did not articulate a specific view, and 7% thought that the building should be used for something else.

“It should be used for short breaks. I understand why the Council is doing this.”

“It makes sense to use something that is already there that is currently empty. We did think previously that redeveloping Smith Crescent would be a luxury, but were happy to go with this at the time.”

17. It is important that the views of people who use Smith Crescent are able to be explored as part of the consultation. Discussions with relatives/carers took place as to how engagement could be facilitated with people who use the service. The feedback from these discussions can be summarised as:

- Easy Read questionnaire for the individual to complete independently;
- Support to complete Easy Read questionnaire;
- Unable to engage, even with advocacy or support;
- Would prefer that the proposal is not discussed with person due to the detrimental impact it would have in advance of any formal decisions being made;

18. A sensitive area of discussion focused on what transitional arrangements would need to be in place should the proposal be taken forward. It was reiterated that the proposal was subject to formal consultation and that no decisions have been made. The purpose of the discussion was to understand in more detail the individual circumstances and impact a potential change in service would have. Suggested approaches included:

- The need for short visits during the day for lunch/tea were discussed as was the need for an overnight visit on which to build confidence and trust in an alternative service. 93% of people advised that this should be in place.
- Video tours of the alternatives to be made available and shared – 47% of people would like to have these made available.
- Visits to The Trees and/or the other in-house short breaks services at Melton and Wigston were requested – 67% of people requested these.
- Staff from Smith Crescent to support individual service users as part of their transition.

19. It was important that relatives and carers were able to express their views on the proposals and the impact that this will have on them personally. There was a wide range of feedback, some of which was very individual and very much relevant to the

person they directly support, others can be summarised in a few key themes. These include:

- The importance of a local service for people – 60% of relatives/carers expressed the view that there should continue to be a local service for people in North West Leicestershire/Charnwood.
- The rationale for the proposals – 40% of relatives/carers understood and agreed with the approach the Council was taking.
- Disappointment that a replacement facility was not being built on the site as this had previously been agreed by the Council – 40%.
- Distance/travel time to alternatives – 40% of relatives/carers expressed concern about the journey distance/duration. With half of these extremely concerned about the physical impact the additional distance/travel time would have on their relative and whether this would even be possible.
- The continued need for bookable short breaks services locally – 60% focussed on the importance of having access to bookable short breaks and that this was essential for them to be able to continue in their caring role.
- Praise for the existing staff team at Smith Crescent – there was widespread thanks to the staff team for the excellent service they have provided.

20. Staff at Smith Crescent were also invited to participate in pre-engagement discussions. Nine members of staff attended face-to-face discussions, with a further two members of staff holding telephone meetings. Feedback can be summarised as:

- Recognition of the challenges of the existing building and that this is no longer fit for purpose;
- The proposal makes economic sense;
- An acknowledgement that there has been a clear decline in the use of Smith Crescent over recent years;
- Considerable worry about future job opportunities within the Council should the service close;
- A commitment to be involved in any service user transitions to alternative in-house short breaks services;
- The refurbished facility at The Trees should be used for short breaks.

Consultation

21. The six week formal consultation was launched on 10 May 2021 and is due to end 20 June 2021. The consultation comprises of a document narrating the details of the proposals, alongside a questionnaire. These are available via the Council's website at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/short-break-changes, or by post on request. An Easy Read version has also been produced.

22. The launch of the consultation was communicated directly with relatives of those individuals affected by the proposals, and paper copies of the consultation documents were distributed.

23. The consultation has also been promoted to:

- Employees of Smith Crescent;
- Elected Members;

- Trade Unions;
- Leicester City Council;
- Rutland County Council;
- Local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)
- Blaby District Council;
- Charnwood Borough Council;
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council;
- North West Leicestershire District Council;
- Harborough District Council;
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council;
- Melton Borough Council;
- Healthwatch;
- Voluntary Action Leicester;
- General public via social media posts on the Council's Facebook and Twitter platforms.

24. As at 20 May 2021 the Council has received 30 responses to the consultation.
25. The outcome of the consultation will be reported to the Cabinet on 20 July 2021 and a proposed way forward agreed.
26. The Committee is asked to provide comments which will be included within the report on the outcomes of the formal consultation and other engagement activities due to be presented to the Cabinet on 20 July 2021. As there is no Committee meeting scheduled to receive the full responses of the formal consultation prior to the Cabinet meeting, a copy of the Cabinet report will be circulated to all Committee members to enable them to submit further comments directly to the Cabinet.

Resource Implications

27. 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).
28. Staffing vacancies at Smith Crescent remain on hold whilst the service remains suspended. Existing staff remain temporarily redeployed in response to the pandemic and there is confidence that there are sufficient alternative options for them within the Department, should the service not reopen.
29. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the contents of this report.

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 Services
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1040&MID=6461#A167201>
- Report to Cabinet: 23 March 2021 - Provision of Short Breaks and Supported Living Services
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=6441&Ver=4>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

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

Mr Robert Ashman CC
 Mr John Coxon CC
 Mr Tony Gillard CC
 Mr Dan Harrison CC
 Mr Keith Merrie MBE CC
 Mr Trevor Pendleton CC
 Mr Nicholas Rushton CC
 Mr Craig Smith CC
 Mr Richard Allen CC
 Mr Peter Bedford CC
 Mr David Bill MBE CC
 Mr Stuart Bray CC
 Mr Bertie Harrison- Rushton CC
 Mr Ross Hills CC
 Mr Michael Mullaney CC
 Mr Ozzy O'Shea JP CC
 Mrs Amanda Wright CC

Equality and Human Rights Implications

31. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening document has been completed in relation to the consultation. The EHRIA has yet to be commented on by the Departmental Equalities Group, however a verbal update will be provided to the Committee at the meeting. It concluded that the recommendations should have a neutral impact on the services.
32. A further EHRIA will be produced following the consultation and presented alongside the Cabinet report on a proposed way forward.

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