

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 NOVEMBER 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

OPTIONS FOR CHANGE - TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR CARE SERVICES

Executive Summary

This report follows the report entitled “Options for Change – Towards a Strategy for Care Services” which was presented to Cabinet on 23 July 2009. (Included at Appendix 1)

It outlines how the consultation process which was requested by Cabinet has been carried out, and gives a summary of the consultation feedback for each area of service. It then suggests options for each area of service, which are based on the information within the original report and an analysis of the consultation feedback.

This involves a key decision which was first identified in the Forward Plan dated September 2009.

1 Background

- 1.1 The report “Options for Change – Towards a Strategy for Care Services” was presented to Cabinet on 23 July 2009. It detailed the outcome and conclusions of the Design and Viability Project which was requested by Cabinet on 10th December 2008, and requested approval for a consultation process on the conclusions to take place.
- 1.2 The resolution of Cabinet was “that a full and comprehensive consultation process on the conclusions and options contained within the Options for Change document be undertaken, in accordance with the rationale set out in the report now submitted.”
- 1.3 This consultation process has now been completed and the responses received are attached as Appendices 3-5. Appendix 3 contains those responses which were completed on the formal template; Appendix 4 comprises those returned on the Easy Read template, and Appendix 5 contains responses which were submitted as letters, emails or in any other format.
- 1.4 A summary of the responses to the conclusions for each area of service is provided in the body of this report (Section 4). However, this summary is not a full statistical analysis of the information rather an overview of the opinions expressed.

It is always difficult in a summary to ensure that all consultees' views have been represented in a way that will satisfy those consultees. However, full responses are attached for information so that Cabinet can assure itself that the summary is a fair representation of the responses received.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 The consultation ran between 10th August 2009 and 30th October 2009 – 12 weeks and 4 days, which is within the requirements of the Compact Code of Good Practice on Consultation. It should be noted that some concern was expressed in meetings with the Trade Unions that the period was not long enough, given the complexity of the issues.
- 2.2 Comprehensive details of the Consultation Process are attached as Appendix 2.

3. Consultation Summary

The following is a summary of responses to the consultation; this information is set out in more detail in Appendix 3 -5.

Individual responses	19 templates 38 Comments/emails
Individual staff members	10 templates 7 comments/emails
Staff Groups	9 templates 2 comments/emails
Stakeholder Groups	10 templates 4 comments/emails
17 Focus Groups - (Mental Health, Physical Disability, Older People and Carers) which were attended by 202 people	2 templates containing Focus Groups' views 1 comment/email

A substantial proportion of the responses received expressed views about the Personalisation Agenda rather than, or in addition to, the conclusions about the future direction for the in-house Care Services. This was also reflected in the questions asked during the Briefing sessions to staff and to people who use services; this was not the case with Partner Agencies. This has highlighted the continuing need to promote the Personalisation agenda within the Department and with people who use our services and the general public.

Many responses assumed that the conclusions being consulted upon would lead to the closure of the unit which they used, and the cessation of that service. Therefore those responses focussed on the need for that particular resource to be retained.

Many of the comments submitted referred to the high quality of service which people felt that they received at the moment, and expressed anxiety about the possible deterioration in quality or continuity of provision if services were changed.

A number of responses discussed the need for services which are not currently provided by the in-house provision - for example, intermediate care for people with mental health needs, and for those with dementia, and which are not therefore in the immediate remit of this piece of work. The information will however be shared with commissioning colleagues to inform future strategies.

4. Responses to the information contained in the report.

- 4.1 Most respondents thought that the information was accurate and had been collected appropriately, although there were concerns from some people about the speed with which the research had been carried out. The engagement process was felt, generally, to be a positive exercise which could be used as a tool in ongoing assessments and reviews. A number of people felt that the report was overly complex and there were some people who felt that the language was at times inappropriate – for example, the use of the term ‘conclusions’ caused some confusion and implied that decisions had already been made. The intended use of this term was to refer to conclusions of research project, not conclusions of the Council.

The majority of respondents felt that the report reflected the current policy direction both nationally and locally.

There were some comments that the exercise had raised people’s anxieties about the future of the services they received, and this was reflected in letters and individual comments which were submitted.

5. Responses and Options for Service Areas

(‘Service Areas’ are defined in accordance with the structure of the original report. The page numbers given in each section refer back to the original report (Appendix 1)

5.1 Transport (p36-37)

The responses to the Transport conclusions were mixed, and there appeared to be some confusion over the range of conclusions presented. However, the general themes were:

- The need to ensure people’s safety
- People need to feel secure and confident in the service
- Reliability of the service is critical
- The specialised nature of the service needs to be recognised.

These themes lead to reluctance to outsource transport to the independent sector, but a guarded agreement to the suggestion for the service to

become part of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC). However, considerably more work would need to be done on the feasibility of this suggestion.

Several individual comments refer to the need for travel training and a wish to have a range of options to meet individual transport needs.

Several responses requested further clarity over the various options; several made suggestions for improvements to the current services.

As in all service areas, any such suggestions will be considered separately as part of the continuing drive to improve quality and efficiency of services in the immediate future.

The Corporate Change Team has carried out a piece of work which recommends the amalgamation of the Department of Adult Social Services and the Children and Young People's Transport Services; this will be reported to Cabinet on December 9th. This recommendation does not conflict with the consultation responses and the option recommended by this report, is, therefore, that subject to the decision made by Cabinet on 9 December, the two services amalgamate.

In the meantime work will continue to identify further efficiencies in the service.

5.2 Supported Living (p37-40)

The majority of responses to the conclusions focussed on the suggestion of moving towards a floating support service. Although there were some examples given of good experiences of such a service in the independent sector, the main response was concern over issues such as standards, continuity of staff, the availability of appropriate support and exactly what the term 'floating' meant. An assumption was made in many responses that floating support would automatically mean less support. There was some reference made to the importance of good needs assessments. A number of responses expressed concern about the reference to a possible reduction in attendance at day centres, as day centres were felt to be beneficial to many people.

There was little response to the two options suggested for the future of the service, that is, to pursue open tender or to become part of a LATC. That which was received favoured the LATC.

The cost differential of this service as compared to that in the independent sector indicates either that there are efficiencies to be achieved in the delivery of this service or that the council is providing inequitable services for people. Therefore, the option proposed is that further work is carried out on the realignment to achieve these efficiencies taking account of the Consultation feedback, including a number of comments about the

realignment proposals. Following that realignment, a further proposal will be put before Cabinet regarding the future of this service.

5.3 Intermediate Care/Respite (p41-42)

This section refers to the services provided at Poulton and Pensall House. The conclusions about these services have generated a high level of interest, and the consultation feedback spans a wide range of views.

Broadly speaking the response from partner agencies has been positive towards the proposals.

Professional staff working within the NHS who currently work in the Intermediate Care Services have been more cautious about the idea of providing intermediate care in independent nursing homes, citing dilution of skill mix and inefficient use of professionals' time in travelling between homes. However, service redesign is due to commence with rehabilitation and enabling services across health and social care which will support efficient discharge from hospital and developing a more integrated focus to these services.

Concerns are also expressed about the quality of care in some of the independent homes.

There have been a number of letters from people who use, or who have had experience of, the services provided at the two homes, which express satisfaction with the current service and a high level of anxiety about any future changes. Confidence in and familiarity with, the staff and building, are key themes.

1110 people have signed petitions requesting that the Council review its conclusions about these two homes. (752 in respect of Pensall, 358 in respect of Poulton). (Appendix 6)

Whilst it is acknowledged that the level of service provided by Pensall House and Poulton House is good (in the case of Pensall House, deemed to be "excellent" by Care Quality Commission), the unit cost comparison and the market situation leads to the conclusion that these services could be transferred to the independent sector and realise substantial savings. Cabinet will be aware that the Poulton House building does not meet current standards (as determined by the Care Quality Commission) and that a new Extra Care Housing Development has been built adjacent to the site which will provide 70 properties, with a mixture of affordable rent and shared ownership. All properties will be appropriate for people with dementia. Therefore the option proposed by this report is that further reports be brought to Cabinet which outline the commissioning strategy for Intermediate Care Services, and the provision of respite care for older people.

Any decision on Pensall and Poulton House will only be taken when the information in these reports has been fully considered.

5.4 Mapleholme (p43-44)

Opinion was divided about the suggestion to move the service which is currently provided at Mapleholme to Pensall House. There were concerns about continuity of service in terms of staff. Aside from this, whilst many people agreed that Pensall House is in a more pleasant location, they expressed concerns about the availability of local amenities, for which Mapleholme is ideally suited – e.g. shops, swimming baths, etc. Many people also expressed concerns about the accessibility of Pensall, particularly if people were users of public transport.

The majority of respondents were in favour of more flexible access to respite care, and many saw the extension of the voucher scheme as providing that flexibility, although a minority wanted to be able to continue the current booking arrangements.

The relocation of this service cannot be determined until the outcome of the proposals about Intermediate and Respite services for older people are known. However this report proposes that the current 'Take a Break' Scheme is extended to all people who use Mapleholme, and that other alternatives are explored as personalised budgets become more available.

5.5 Meadowcroft (p44-45)

There has been a strong response from the focus group which represented users and carers, which was opposed to the conclusions of the report. Main concerns were around the quality of provision in the independent sector and concerns that a 'monopoly' situation would raise costs in the sector. Many people have had difficult experiences in the past which influence their views. There was a general feeling that care close to people's homes was not a major factor for consideration; preference was for familiarity with a service and confidence in the provision.

Whilst welcoming the principle of offering choice in the delivery of respite services, concerns were raised by Partner agencies about the readiness of the market to provide the range of services required.

A petition with 1045 signatures has been submitted. (Appendix 6).

Concerns have been expressed through the Advocates about the detrimental effect which any move would have on permanent residents at Meadowcroft.

Cabinet will be aware of the new development currently being built on the site of Mendell Lodge which is also in Bromborough, and will have 49 tenancies, all of which will be appropriate for people with dementia.

The suggested option for this service is given in part 5.8.

5.6 Fernleigh (p45)

There was a positive view of the current services provided at Fernleigh by both people who used the service and professional partners; the overwhelming response was that the service ought to be developed as a joint provision by Health and the Council, although a small minority saw it as a health resource.

The option proposed in this report is that the review of this service which is currently underway and being led by NHS Wirral should continue and report its findings to a future Cabinet. This review will involve close working with the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust.

5.7 Residential Care (p46-48)

This refers to care provided at Girtrell Court, Sylvandale and Manor Road. The outcome of the Consultation supports the conclusion that the people who currently live in these units should be enabled to move into more independent living situations although there is less certainty over whether this service will be best delivered by independent sector or a Local Authority Trading Company.

The option suggested by this report is that work continues with individual people to help them to prepare for independent living, whilst at the same time, consideration is given to the current residential staff being realigned to provide an appropriate support service in accordance with the agreed structure for the existing supported living service. Implementation should be deferred until a decision is made about the feasibility of developing a LATC.

5.8 Dementia Care (p48-49)

There was broad agreement for the conclusion regarding dementia care; however a number of people expressed doubts about utilising the Poulton House site as a centre, because of transport and access problems. Some responses, both from individuals and organisations, suggested that services should be based in community settings rather than specific building bases. Several responses suggested utilising the skills and expertise already existing in Meadowcroft and developing that as a centre rather than looking for new sites.

Taking into account the consultation responses reported in Appendices 3 - 5, this report suggests the option of retaining some bed capacity at Meadowcroft and incrementally changing its focus from bed based to community based services, whilst further work is done to develop robust alternatives for respite and intermediate care services. Commissioning work is underway to progress this strategy, which will directly impact upon

the final recommendation for the number and locations of Dementia Centres.

5.9 Day Services (p50-56)

This section generated the largest number of written responses from consultees, particularly those people who currently use services. 25 letters were received from people who use Mental Health Services at Prenton and Union Street, expressing their views on what they saw as proposals to close the centres. Petitions were signed to this effect by 139 people who use Prenton, and 25 people who use Union Street. (Appendix 4).

There was great anxiety in all areas of day care that services might be lost, and concern that reasonable alternatives would not materialise. Many comments referred to the positive experiences which people had at day Centres, and staff referred to the benefits of combining, rather than segregating, services, and working more closely with partner agencies. However, there was some support for moving some services into the community, as long as quality was not compromised.

There was some uncertainty for some respondents in respect of the Bridge Building Service, but generally it was perceived to be a positive proposal, particularly by professionals and partners. Further information was requested.

The response to the idea of developing a LATC and the development of Social Enterprises was broadly favourable, with many responses being extremely positive and enthusiastic, but it was felt that more information was needed, and there were concerns from staff and Unions and others about long-term commitment to such a venture.

The option suggested is that the Community Bridge Building proposal is explored further. The Mental Health Recovery Services should remain as part of the Day Services portfolio, all of which should be considered for transfer to a Local Authority Trading Company.

6 Local Authority Trading Company

A number of Councils are exploring the viability of setting up a trading company to operate provider services in response to the personalisation agenda. The rationale behind this is to promote the flexibility of services that are more able to respond to changes in people's demand once they are in control of their own resources.

The Government is seeking to encourage a "more dynamic and entrepreneurial public sector" that will increase quality, diversity and choice in the delivery of services. A trading company, with increased autonomy creates a number of opportunities that might otherwise be restricted if services remain within Council control.

- Efficient & effective Councils can exploit their knowledge, skills and expertise in the open market place
- Customers are more able to make the best use of a 'mixed economy'
- Greater opportunities to develop 'shared, and therefore more efficient services' between the Council and other organisations
- More flexible supply capable of responding to changing patterns of demand
- Helps raise efficiency gains

The establishment of a LATC is not an end in itself. It may be the transition to further outsourcing and independence which is considered safer than a wholesale 'tender' for in-house service provision. The Company would therefore have time to develop its business skills in an increasingly competitive and flexible market and therefore stand a greater chance of success. This is clearly a sustainable benefit to people who use service and local employment.

The main challenge to trading is when customers no longer wish to buy the products on offer. This is a real risk to the traditional services the Council currently offers. A more independent organisation, albeit wholly or partly owned by the Council, is more likely to be motivated and equipped to respond to changes in customer behaviours than one which is part of a larger, more complex organisation like the Council.

The main benefit to trading has to be improved services and outcomes for people. This can be achieved by the re-investment of operating surpluses through more efficient deployment of resources (staff, buildings etc).

Trading does not automatically mean greater efficiency. What it does mean is that the new provider enjoys more freedom to adapt to changes in demand and deploy its resources in ways the Council would perhaps find more difficult.

In the light of the information gained from the consultation, and that provided in the original 'Options for Change' report, further exploration of this option is recommended.

This strategy demands dedicated capacity to undertake this exploration effectively. Key issues to address include: Project Leadership, Project Management, Legal implications, Section 151 implications, Commercial expertise, Industrial relations, Physical Assets. If the recommendation regarding the LATC is agreed, more detail about the scope of this work will be brought back together with any financial implications.

7 Financial Implications

A cost analysis of the research which preceded this consultation identified that savings amounting to approximately £3m could be saved per annum if all the conclusions of that research were implemented. Some further analysis of potential savings, subject to Cabinet decisions, will be included as part of the wider report on the Change Programme which will be presented to Cabinet shortly

Cabinet has already agreed (6th November 2008) savings in Transport and Supported Living of £360,000 and £694,000 respectively. The latter has proved difficult to realise without the proposals of this report being implemented.

If the recommendation to carry out a detailed feasibility study into the creation of a LATC is agreed, some additional resource may be required. This will, if necessary, be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

8 Staffing Implications

There are currently 37 staff working at Poulton House (31 Full time Equivalent – FTE)

30 staff work at Pensall House (24 FTE)

122 staff are employed in Supported Living Services (75.9 FTE); Realignment towards a ‘floating support’ type service is likely to lead to a reduction in the number of staff employed, and a redesignation of others.

9 Equal Opportunities Implications

The Services which are discussed in this report affect some of the most vulnerable people in the community. As part of the consultation, consultees were asked if there were any issues or barriers which needed to be taken account of in relation to ethnicity, disability, age, gender, religion and sexual orientation. Responses are included in the feedback in Appendices 3-5

10 Community Safety Implications

None directly

11 Local Agenda 21 Implications

None directly

12 Planning Implications

None directly

13 Anti Poverty Implications

Non directly

14 Social Inclusion Implications

None directly

15 Local Member Support Implications

People who use the services in this report live in all wards of the Borough.

16 Background Papers

'Options for Change – Towards a Strategy for Care Services' 23rd July 2009

17 Recommendations

That Members consider the following proposals:

- (1) Supported Living: Further work should be carried out on the realignment of the staffing structure to achieve efficiencies to bring costs in line with those in the independent sector. The realignment should take account of the Consultation feedback. Following that realignment, a further proposal will be put before Cabinet regarding the future of this service.
- (2) Mapleholme: The 'Take a Break' scheme should be extended to all people who use the respite service at Mapleholme. The relocation of the service should be deferred until a decision is reached regarding the provision of Intermediate Care.
- (3) Meadowcroft: Some bed capacity should be retained at Meadowcroft and its focus should be incrementally changed from bed based to community based services, whilst further work is done to develop robust alternatives for respite and intermediate care services.
- (4) Fernleigh: A report from NHS Wirral should be requested, to inform Members of progress being achieved in the review of the service currently provided at Fernleigh.
- (5) Residential Care: People who currently live in these units should be enabled to access alternative accommodation, preferably in their own tenancies. At the same time, the staffing structure should be realigned to reflect these changes.
- (6) Dementia Care: That a future report should be brought to Cabinet to update Members of the progress of the Commissioning Strategy for Dementia Care.

- (7) Day Services: The Council should undertake a feasibility study into the creation of a LATC.

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