

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 22 June 2015

Lead Member/Officer: Lead Member for Social Care (Adult and Children's Services)/Head of Community Support Services

Report Author: Head of Community Support Services

Title: Future Provision for Service Users from Aberwheeler Nurseries

1. What is the report about?

To share the process and progress to date with respect to the future provision of services for service users of Aberwheeler Nurseries, including details of communication with relevant stakeholders, outcomes from social care assessments of service users, details of the costs of commissioning work opportunities at Aberwheeler Nurseries and any other costs incurred by DCC

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide information for Members with regard to how the future needs of service users of Aberwheeler Nurseries will be met following the ending of the contract with the staffing agency.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members comment on the information provided and note the generally positive outcomes for the individuals involved.

4. Report details.

- 4.1 As part of the modernisation agenda for social services, and the need to provide services at a reduced cost, a group made up of service users (from across work opportunities), carers, staff, managers, elected Members and 3rd Sector chair has been meeting to explore how work opportunity services for adults with learning disabilities could become more effective and efficient.
- 4.2 In December 2014, the group received a report from the Head of Adult & Business Services advising that, due to the increased costs being requested by the agency which provides the service's staffing, there was a need to make alternative arrangements for providing a service to those individuals who were currently attending Aberwheeler.
- 4.3 The group explored a number of options for maintaining a service and, while they did not agree with closure of the site, accepted that the current nursery business and the rising staffing costs meant that alternatives for individuals needed to be explored, although the Garden Control Service was probably viable for continuing.

- 4.4 In January 2015, service users and carers were written and spoken to as appropriate to advise them that alternatives would need to be explored for meeting their needs and providing them with suitable work opportunities. Elected Members were written to at the same time.
- 4.5 Between now and then, the Complex Disability Team have been working with individuals and their families to explore what those alternatives look like and to support people to transfer appropriately. It should be noted that the vast majority of individuals who attend Aberwheeler also attend other work opportunity services so this has not resulted in massive change for them.
- 4.6 Alternative arrangements are as follows:
- 7 people to continue with the garden control service in a new site in Rhyl
 - 6 people to attend the Woodlands Skills Centre in Bodfari
 - 3 people to attend Co-options (one has already moved)
 - 1 person has increased their attendance at Cefndy
 - 1 person has already moved to Taskforce
 - 1 person to attend Meifod
 - 1 person to attend the Golden Group
 - 1 person is working with job finding to finalise another job within the council.
 - 6 people are currently attending taster sessions in different alternative services before agreement is reached on what best meets their needs.
- 4.7 In relation to the Garden Control Service, arrangements have been made to transfer the base for this service to The Botanical Gardens in Rhyl. Given the fact that most service users live in the north of the County and some will be able to travel to the site independently, this will have a positive impact on their independence and wellbeing. While the final costings have yet to be confirmed, it is likely that the unit cost of providing this service will be less than £30 per day compared to the average Aberwheeler cost of £90 per day.
- 4.8 The cost of the Woodland Skills Centre, for 6 people, equates to £60 per day but there is capacity for an additional 2 places at no extra cost.
- 4.9 The cost of the Co-options Service equates to £75 per day, including 1:1 support. At Aberwheeler, this costs an average of £138 per day for the individuals concerned.
- 4.10 The Aberwheeler site contains greenhouses and polytunnels, although the rented portacabins will be removed. The site is rented from an individual and discussions are ongoing with him and his representatives to explore reassigning the lease to any interested community group who could make use of the structures to continue to provide a local nursery business.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The changes to the service support two of the Council's priorities. The new arrangements for individuals are supporting them to live as independently as

possible while also contributing to modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

As can be seen in relation to the figures for the costs of individuals' services, the costs of the new services are less than the costs at Aberwheeler, thus making a contribution to the savings required by the Council while not reducing services to individuals. The final amount in year will be affected by the decommissioning costs at Aberwheeler and full year savings will be reported as part of the budget process.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

Individuals with a learning disability are a group of people with protected characteristics. The changes in service would have had a negative impact on them if alternative services that adequately meet their needs were unable to be provided. However, as can be seen from the outcomes for individuals, this negative impact has been mitigated against. See Appendix 1.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

The decision to end the contract with the staffing agency is a delegated one to the Head of Service and was a response to unsustainable financial costs. As stated above, discussions took place with the working group exploring the future of work opportunities services and work undertaken with individuals and their families to ensure needs continue to be met.

9. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

There are no residual risks from a service perspective following the actions to mitigate impact on individuals.

10. Power to make the Decision

10.1 The NHS and Community Care Act 1990 places a duty on Local Authorities to assess social care needs. The National Assistance Act 1948 and Chronically Sick and Disabled Act 1970 provides for the provision of services to meet any eligible needs, including through 3rd party arrangements.

10.2 Paragraph 15.1 of the Council's constitution gives delegated authority to the Head of Service for commissioning and contracting across all adult services.

10.3 Article 6.3.2(a) of the Council's Constitution outlines scrutiny's powers with respect to reviewing and/or scrutinising decisions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions, whilst Article 6.3.4 (a), (b) and (c) details scrutiny's powers in relation to reviewing Cabinet /officer decisions, services' performance and questioning Cabinet members or officers in relation to decisions taken.

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