

## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Modernisation of Short Breaks Services for people with a Learning Disability

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 16 November 2010

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Monahan

**CMT Member:** Director for Community Services

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**Key Decision:** Yes

**Ref:**

**Part:** 1

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### Executive Summary:

In accordance with the recommendations within the Cabinet Paper dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010 (Appendix 1), this report is to provide feedback to Cabinet in relation to the consultation process that has taken place about short breaks services at Welby and Colwill Lodge for people with a learning disability.

The consultation process took place over a twelve week period. A variety of approaches were adopted to ensure that users, their carers and stakeholders were afforded opportunities to provide feedback.

This report provides a summary of the outcomes of the consultations.

168 questionnaires were despatched and to date we have received 77 completed questionnaires (59 responses from people with learning disabilities and 18 from family carers). In addition a number of consultation events were held, and individual appointments also offered.

The majority of service users and family carers involved in the events and who currently use Welby wanted the unit to remain open. However a number of people also said they would consider using Colwill. Concerns were expressed about the proposed change to current arrangements and whether there would be capacity to provide both emergency and planned respite on one site, but many agreed that the move to personal budgets would offer alternative and more flexible options.

The consultation provided an opportunity to ensure that service users and carers were more familiar with the choices available to them and the range of services on offer and to give further reassurance that we would continue to purchase and provide good quality short stay provision.

The concerns users and carers have raised are appreciated and understood. We are confident that those people currently using Welby can be supported to access short breaks should Cabinet agree to the recommendations to close. We are also confident that the anticipated demand and additional emergency respite provision can be commissioned in the independent sector or delivered in different ways through personal budgets.

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**Corporate Plan 2010-2013 as amended by the four new priorities for the City and Council:**

The four priorities are Delivering Growth, Raising Aspiration, Reducing Inequalities and Value for Communities.

This report links directly to the Council's priorities of raising aspiration, reducing inequalities and value for communities.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land**

SW REIP have awarded the Council a capital grant specifically to be used to extend the service at Colwill Lodge with further capital from the Council identified and agreed. The proposals around Welby will lead directly to budget savings whilst ensuring no decrease in the amount of short breaks available. We estimate that the full year financial saving will be approximately £350k. An options appraisal will be undertaken by Asset Management on the building to consider its potential for future use if the decision is to de-commission.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed. The process has taken fully into account that people with disabilities require specialist support to access consultation (a variety of approaches were used including advocacy, and theatre group). Any alternative service will take into account the requirements of individuals e.g. for those with autism ensuring a broader commissioning pattern and more tailor-made provision.

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**Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

Whilst we are sensitive to the anxieties and issues raised in relation to the proposals, we are confident that those people currently using Welby can be supported to access short breaks should Cabinet agree to the recommendations to close.

Welby is in an outdated building and cannot support people with complex physical care needs. The SW REIP Capital Grant was awarded specifically to be used at Colwill. This funding will ensure increased capacity to 15 beds.

We are confident that the anticipated demand and additional emergency respite provision can be commissioned in the independent sector or delivered in different ways through personal budgets.

It is therefore recommended that:-

- Welby is decommissioned and respite care is concentrated onto the Colwill site.

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**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

1. Not to decommission Welby
2. Welby is an outdated building and cannot support people with complex needs. Providing alternatives e.g. commissioning in the independent sector (including emergency beds), use of personal budgets promotes choice and control for individuals.

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**Background papers:**

Cabinet Paper 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010 – “Modernisation of Short Break Services for People with a Learning Disability

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**Sign off:** comment must be sought from those whose area of responsibility may be affected by the decision, as follows (insert initials of Finance and Legal reps, and of HR, Corporate Property, IT and Strat. Proc. as appropriate):

Fin	SA/C oSFA C101 1 005	Leg	LT 9948	HR	MGI 010/ 002	Corp Prop		IT		Strat Proc	JK/ 238
Originating SMT Member: Pam Marsden											

## **MODERNISATION OF SHORT BREAKS SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY**

In accordance with the recommendations within the Cabinet paper dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 2010 (Appendix 1) this report is to provide feedback to Cabinet in relation to the consultation process that has taken place about short breaks services at Welby and Colwill for people with a learning disability.

### **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1. Plymouth City Council has delivered a residential short break service in two in-house units: Colwill and Welby. In addition the independent sector has provided a number of residential beds for people with complex needs.

This report describes the feedback from the consultation events that have taken place and makes recommendations taking into account the views of those people involved.

#### **1.2 Welby**

Welby offers a city wide service, has 10 beds and the occupancy figures show that the demand is mainly for weekend breaks for carers. The building is outdated and cannot support people with complex needs.

#### **1.3 Colwill Lodge**

Colwill Lodge is a purpose-built facility with 10 beds, which provides a city-wide service for planned respite care / short breaks for carers.

1.4 The Council has been successful in a bid to South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (SW RIEP), We have secured external grant funding of £250,000 from SW RIEP and £80,000 from the Capital receipts (with contingency funding if necessary) to extend the service at Colwill Lodge to increase the support available from 10 to 15 beds. The full project has been presented to the Capital Programme Board and received approval.

The new service will incorporate the 10 beds currently available and extend the building to include:

- 5 more self contained apartments/flats designed to extra care standards fully Disability Discrimination Act compliant and with the facility to enable people to bring their own care staff if required.
- Staff sleeping area and communal space
- Provision of planned bespoke short breaks for people with complex needs living with family carers.

**The redevelopment of the Colwill site provides the opportunity to realise the benefits and efficiencies achieved through re-provision of in-house short breaks from a single site.**

## **2. INDEPENDENT SECTOR**

There is further capacity in the independent sector to provide short breaks if required and to respond to emergency requests. In addition, as part of our strategy to promote choice and control, a range of options for short respite breaks has already been developed – for example, we have developed a Carer's Voucher Scheme whereby carers can be issued with vouchers to enable them to choose directly their preferred provision.

## **3. CONSULTATION**

3.1. A 12 week consultation period was initiated following Cabinet's decision on the 13th July 2010. The focus was to gather views about the following proposals:

- Combining residential short breaks onto one site at Colwill Lodge.
- Consulting with service users and family carers about the development of other alternative options to residential short breaks that take into account the development of personal budgets.

The methodology encompassed a range of initiatives to gather feedback:

- Consultation events
- Questionnaires
- Feedback from the councils website
- 1:1 visits
- Advocacy support

### **3.2. Consultation process**

Consultation with all users and carers has been undertaken and supported by staff from the Learning Disability Partnership and Adult Social Care Commissioning Team. The consultation also involved appropriately skilled external facilitators experienced in working with people with learning disabilities.

Accessible letters and questionnaires containing information regarding the proposal was sent to 84 people with learning disabilities who use residential short breaks services, with a separate letter sent to their family carer(s). This information set out the key facts and possible options for the future inviting ideas and comments in the form of a questionnaire.

3.3. The following is a synopsis of the consultation:

- The consultation process began on the 26<sup>th</sup> July and ended on the 19<sup>th</sup> October.
- A series of three consultation events were arranged at a variety of locations.

- A webpage link for comments was established and promoted.
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board (which includes service user and family carer representation and a range of key stakeholders from the independent and statutory sector) has received a presentation on the proposals and advised of the consultation process.
- Advocates have been supporting people through this process and a session specifically for service users took place.
- During the consultation an independent person arranged by the council was present to ensure the process was carried out fairly and that people's views and opinions were recorded. She has also contacted/visited individual family carers at home when requested.
- Letters were sent out to all family carers who had not attended the consultation sessions advising them of the last consultation date in September and offering them the opportunity of other sessions or 1:1 appointments.

#### **4. CONSULTATION OUTCOMES**

##### **4.1 Written Questionnaires**

168 questionnaires were despatched and to date we have received 77 completed questionnaires (59 responses from people with learning disabilities and 18 from family carers).

The comments from people with learning disabilities and their families have been collated and indicate that all those who responded value the service that they receive.

11 out of the 18 family carers did not approve the ideas for modernisation. 20 people with a learning disability also confirmed that they did not like the ideas proposed, but a further 17 people were positive about the ideas.

We had the following feedback from the questionnaires (service users):

- I want Welby to stay open and it is a good place
- I like to see my friends
- I like the idea of the new flats
- I want more to do and to be able to stay up late
- I like the idea of staying with friendly families
- I would like more information about using vouchers

We had the following feedback from family carers:

- Carers wanted reassurance around quality and safety of alternative provision

- The older carers who responded said that they rely on a respite service and thought they may not be able to cope if it was not available
- Carers were concerned about changes on their lives including being able to work, and they were also anxious about providers not knowing how to care for their relative.

#### 4.2. Consultation Sessions

The consultation events were arranged to give families and stakeholders an opportunity to discuss how the plans would impact on them and explore a range of alternative provision.

We arranged 3 events for families and stakeholders

**Event 1:** held on the 5<sup>th</sup> August

At the first event 20 people attended. The session was facilitated by an independent person commissioned by the Council to ensure that everyone had an opportunity to contribute to the event. In addition we arranged for comments boxes to be placed at all the events so people could post personal comments and views if they wished.

**Event 2:** held on the 7<sup>th</sup> August

21 people attended this event

**Event 3:** held on the 10<sup>th</sup> September

6 people attended this event with advocates.

#### **Feedback from the events involving family carers:**

- Carers did not want Welby to close, improved services should continue on both sites.
- Carers need a range of flexible short breaks that they can rely on.
- Carers would like more information about self directed support and personalisation.
- Carers wanted to be reassured that there would be enough short break provision to cover both planned and emergency need.
- Carers wanted their son/daughter to have better support to learn skills to move into supported housing at some future point.

**Event 4** On the 9<sup>th</sup> August at the Guildhall, 'Talk Back' Theatre facilitated an event to ensure that people with communication difficulties and complex learning disabilities could engage in the consultation process and reflect their wishes and views.

A further session was held on 12<sup>th</sup> October at Ridleys drop in centre for people with Learning Disabilities who do not use Welby or Colwill. This was

requested in order that a wider range of people had the chance to have their say about the proposals.

#### **Feedback from the event involving people with Learning Disabilities:**

- All 22 people who came to the event wanted Welby to stay open
- We like staying at Welby – we like the food, our rooms and our friends
- I like going on holiday with my family

However people had lots of ideas about how they would spend a personal budget including: holidays, going to London and visiting relatives.

#### **4.3. Website**

The council's website has been refreshed with a page for people to email their comments as part of the consultation process. All stakeholders were emailed and informed about the consultation and their views taken into account.

#### **4.4. 1:1 visits or sessions with families**

An independent person has undertaken a number of 1:1 visits with family carers in order to gather their views to feed into the consultation.

#### **4.5. 1:1 Visits by a care manager**

A social worker has been visiting families and service users who are using Welby to discuss personal budgets and self directed support. These visits have been positively received and some families and service users have shown interest in developing bespoke individualised care and support rather than continue with their current arrangements. These discussions are in the early stages and will inform the future commissioning plans.

#### **4.6. Advocacy**

A representative from the Older Carers Advocacy Project (SEAP) has been involved in the consultation events

The 'Plymouth People First' Self-Advocacy Service have been involved in supporting people with learning disabilities speak up for themselves, helping to interpret information and represent the views of people not able to attend sessions.

### **5. KEY ISSUES**

A further summary of the key questions, themes and issues raised by family carers and relatives over the consultation period is detailed below:

***Will there be emergency beds provided and where will they be?***



*We have not arranged this option as yet as the Cabinet have not made a final decision. However we will provide for emergency situations if a decision is made to close Welby. We will also ensure that any services that are commissioned in the independent sector are of a good quality and are monitored through the Adult Social Care contracting team.*

***If we have an emergency will we be able to use Colwill?***

*The Council will always respond to emergencies and would endeavour to meet your first choice of accommodation. We will also want to work with carers to develop contingency plans so that the likelihood of an emergency is reduced.*

***My planned respite gets cancelled because of emergency admissions how will this change if the plans are agreed?***

*If the Cabinet agree the plans we will also be commissioning some emergency beds in the independent sector in order to minimise the chance of planned respite being cancelled.*

***If Welby closes and I have my respite at Colwill how will I get to my activity in the evening?***

*We will help you to make arrangements to get to your chosen activity.*

***If Welby closes does this mean my son/daughter won't be able to have a short break so I can have respite?***

*No. The council is committed to supporting carers and we will meet your assessed need for respite care*

***When people get a personal budget will they be supported to find a suitable service that meets their need?***

*We will be further developing brokerage and support services to enable people to find the services to meet their needs through a personal budget.*

***If Welby closes will there be an equivalent number of respite beds/nights on offer?***

*Yes we will meet the assessed need for respite support.*

***We don't always know how much respite we are entitled to this seems to vary. Is there a way of providing more information and advice about what we can expect to receive from the council?***

*We will ensure that there is good accessible information and advice in a range of formats e.g. information leaflets, newsletters.*

***When will the new Colwill facility open and what will happen if there is a gap in service provision?***

*We are hoping that the new scheme will be open in summer 2011 and we will work with individuals and their carers to ensure that they have service in place either at the existing Colwill building, independent sector or through a personal budget should a decision be made by Cabinet to close Welby.*

## **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

The Council is required to have proper regard to its obligations under the equality legislation when considering the provision of services and in particular the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity in relation to the relevant equality duties.

An equality impact assessment has therefore been carried out to describe the impact of the proposals on the Council's ability to meet its duties. The assessment has provided assurance that we have addressed the impact of any changes to those that would be affected by the proposals.

## **7. LEARNING DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

An Extraordinary Meeting of the Learning Disability Partnership Board was held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010 involving service users, their representatives, advocates and other statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. A presentation was given to outline the themes gathered from the consultation process and to outline how Council officers had carried out the consultation.

The Board members have been fully involved and updated in relation to the consultation throughout the 12 week process. Some user representatives said that there was unhappiness about the potential closure, but members also confirmed that they believed the consultation process had been thorough.

## **8. STAFF CONSULTATION**

Managers have met with the relevant staff (and their representatives) and explained the decisions at Cabinet in July 2010 in relation to the consultation proposals. Staff were encouraged to feed back their views in a number of ways as described above (i.e. questionnaires, website etc.)

Staff have continued to be informed on progress of the consultation through staff and management briefings.

Unions have also been informed. Clearly at this stage no decision has been taken and therefore the Council is not formally consulting with them about their future employment.

## **9. SUMMARY OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATIONS**

The majority of service users and family carers involved in the events and who are currently using Welby wanted the unit to remain open.

However, a number of people also said they would consider using Colwill.

The consultation also raised concerns regarding access to emergency accommodation.

Understandably, people expressed their concerns about the proposed change to their current arrangements, but many agreed that the move to personal budgets would offer alternative and more flexible options.

**10. HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
TASK & FINISH GROUP – OCTOBER 2010**

The panel confirmed that the consultation process had been extensive and are recommending to Cabinet that the proposals regarding decommissioning of Welby alongside the increased capacity at Colwill Lodge be approved. Further development of Personal Budgets and the re-provision of residential respite also to be approved

**11. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:**

Whilst we are sensitive to the anxieties and issues raised in relation to the proposals, we are confident that those people currently using Welby can be supported to access short breaks should Cabinet agree to the recommendations to close.

Welby is in an outdated building and cannot support people with complex needs. The SW REIP Capital Grant was awarded specifically to be used at Colwill. This funding will ensure increased capacity to 15 beds.

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It is therefore recommended that:-

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