

16 September 2020	ITEM: 12 Decision: 110529
Cabinet	
Procurement to Provide Autism Specialist Support – Medina Road	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor James Halden – Portfolio Holder Children and Adult Social Care	
Accountable Assistant Director: Les Billingham – Interim Director, Adult Social Care and Community Development	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris – Corporate Director, Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to request that Cabinet agree to the proposed service model of care at Medina Road development and agree the procurement of this new service.

As the development of the specialist autism unit progresses the report details options that have been explored before seeking approval from Cabinet for the care and support provision enabling adults with autism to remain in Thurrock and maximise their independence within the community.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **For Cabinet to agree the future design of the service model to support people living in Medina Road**
- 1.2 **For Cabinet to agree to commence the procurement of support for Medina Road and delegate authority to award the contract to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock Council's Adult Autism Strategy detailed the lack of long term residential or supported housing services for adults with autism within

Thurrock often resulting in people being supported outside of the borough away from their families and communities resulting in an increase in financial cost to the authority.

- 2.2 Due to the outstanding Ofsted reports for the local specialist schools attracting families to move to the area the numbers of young people with autism are increasing. Thurrock's Adult Social Care's Market Development Strategy demonstrated a growth in people living with moderate/severe Learning Disabilities compared with the national average. There is an expected 13% increase in the number of people aged 18-64 with autism in Thurrock over the next seventeen years with high numbers of younger people coming through the transition process from Children's Social Care
- 2.3 A "Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund (CASSH Fund)" bid to develop a specially designed housing scheme within borough for young people with autism was successful and in partnership with Peabody Trust (formally Family Mosaic) a site was identified at Medina Road, Grays.
- 2.4 The development of the scheme at Medina Road includes:
 - 6 self-contained units of autism friendly designed accommodation
 - Access to a private outdoor space (patio/garden) for each unit
 - Small lounge/common room for residents
 - 1 unit of accommodation for the on-site care and support team.
- 2.5 The scheme is nearing completion and the focus has turned to confirming those individuals who are suitable and wish to live within the scheme. To be eligible to live in the scheme the resident must be 18 years or older, have a diagnosis of Autism and have a local connection or live within the borough.
- 2.6 Adult Social Care are working alongside adults and young people approaching transition who meet the criteria and have shown an interest in moving into the scheme. This includes those currently living in residential or supported housing outside of the borough who would like to be repatriated to Thurrock.
- 2.7 The vision for the scheme is to support people with Autism to live a full and independent life. This will be achieved through a detailed assessment which will include specialist care and support service and where appropriate, education, vocational and employment opportunities. The assessment of need will result in an individualised care plan for each person; this will cover every aspect of the person's life. The services detailed below illustrate the range of options that will be available to meet those identifies needs. It will be expected that the person, their family and individual support will link together to ensure that the right service is accessed or bespoke services are developed. Bringing together different services such as Inspire, specialist day opportunities and the World of Work will encourage the development of life skills and support community presence for each individual.

Inspire is the integrated education and skills offer working to provide educational pathways for Thurrock residents. There are a range of learning opportunities available linked closely to the adult education offer. This supports local residents to gain employment and training opportunities and recognise that learners have a range of challenges that makes learning difficult. The individuals who will live at Medina Road will be able to access a person centred pathway, as appropriate, which addresses their individual learning needs. Everyone living at Medina Road will be offered access to Inspire will have the opportunity to be assigned a skills / life coach who will produce an Education and Health Care Plan specific to their needs to focus on independence with the right levels of support.

Specialist day opportunities support individuals to gain life skills which will complement the support delivered at Medina Road and provide opportunities to access the local community, participate in social activities and build relationships. Those who access this service will have individual 'All About Me' sessions to develop a response programme of support to enhance life skills and opportunities for independence.

The World of Work enables people, where appropriate, to become ready for work through individual learning, support with volunteering and work opportunities together with links to Jobcentre Plus. The courses and service offered enhance the person's confidence understanding of work and volunteering, support to write a CV together with individual job coaching.

Supporting people with Autism can be complex, the people living within Medina Road will require significant levels of support. It is important therefore to ensure that each person, through their individual assessment has every opportunity to develop life skills and independence as fully as possible with the right levels of support.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Care Act 2014 promotes individuals rights to choice and control over their day to day life including where and whom they live with. This autonomy allows those who require support from social care to maximise their own potential and achieve a good life by choosing what is important to them within a safe environment. This is reflected in the aim of Medina Road for people living with autism to live as independently as possible within their own home for life.
- 3.2 To ensure that the service is successful, there will be two elements to support those who live within the scheme, housing related support and care and support. The housing related support will assist the tenants with housing related matters such as rent, paying utility bills, upkeep of their homes and accessing their entitlements whilst the care and support will provide personal and emotional support where needed.
- 3.3 The vision for Medina Road is to support adults with Autism within the Thurrock Community. As Autism is a spectrum condition, this means that it

can affect people in different ways. Some people with Autism also have a dual diagnosis including Learning Disabilities and Mental Health. To maximise inclusion for those who meet the criteria a specialist care and support provider will be required.

- 3.4 The specialist team will be required to adapt and flex to the needs and wishes of those who will live within the scheme. As some of the nominated individuals might have previously lived within a residential care or never lived on their own the support required will need to adapt to complex and challenging behaviours which might include the requirement for 24 hours a day support whilst the individual builds confidence and life skills.
- 3.5 To support the vision for Medina Road, the design of the care and support will need to achieve the following:
 - work alongside each individual to achieve pre-determined goals such as life skills
 - Increase independence for service users
 - Assistance to access the local community for those who are socially isolated
 - Become part of the community that they work in and are aware of the resources locally.

- 3.6 As the support required for Medina Road will be specialist, the cost of this service will depend on the needs and complexity of each individual who lives there. The care will be structured to include a model based on core care hours and individualised hours. The core care hours will be included as part of the tender process, while the individualised hours will be commissioned based on need. The model is as follows:

Core tenancy support costs, which are paid for through Housing Benefit, supporting each individual to maintain their tenancy and day to day living.

Core care costs which will provide care hours to each person, the people who will live at Medina Road will have high levels of care needs, the core care hours will be shared across all six service users and this will be procured for the whole service. The core care hour's model is based on 1 member of staff to support 2 Service Users will have an estimated cost for two units of £116,000 per year therefore the predicted annual cost of 3 x £ 116k i.e. £348,000. In addition to this, there will be a requirement for a sleep in night staff member at an estimated cost of £58,000. The total cost of the procured contract will be estimated at £406,000 per annum (approx. £65k per unit), **this is considerably less than the cost of residential care** there might also be a need to top up individual costs but these will be determined dependent on need.

Individual care hours will be based on the individual need of each service users where there is a specific requirement for high-level specialist support for example where people may require one to one support to support their

complexity of need. These hours will be individually commissioned either through a spot contract or Direct Payments.

This report is seeking authority to go out to tender to identify a provider to deliver the above care requirements. By commissioning the model of support in this way, we will be able to control the impact of voids within the scheme. The final cost for the support element of the service will be arrived at through a competitive tender process based on quality and price.

- 3.7 We know from previous years and future demands that the numbers of people with autism coming into adult social care are growing. The projected growth in the prevalence of Autism is anticipated to be 13% over the next 17 years. We have reflected this in our Market Development Strategy 2018-2023. The range across the Autistic spectrum is from low level needs that do not require intervention from Social Care to very complex needs, where individuals require high cost packages. Most people with a diagnose of Autism who access Social Care also have Learning Disabilities or Mental Health challenges as well. Over the past five years we have seen the number and complexity of the condition has increased. In developing Medina Road, we are establishing a cost effective alternative for out of borough residential support for people who have autism. Due to the success of local schools such as Treetops and Beacon Hill, it is important that Thurrock responds and ensures there is local provision to deal with this demand. We have undertaken some further modelling work regarding future placement costs and the expected growth. We would anticipate therefore that if we do not create Medina Road as a viable alternative the budget pressures will increase over the next 3 to 6 years approximately by £225,848 per annum.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 For Cabinet to agree the future design of the service model to support people living within Medina Road.
- 4.2 Agree the procurement for 24 hour care and support for Medina Road.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Autism Strategy was subject to extensive consultation with partners, users and carers.
- 5.2 The proposal will be presented to Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 September 2020 and verbal feedback will be given to Cabinet.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The care and support provision of Medina Road impacts on the following priority:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay

- 6.2 The scheme will help deliver one of the objectives of the Autism Strategy, in particular;

Continue to encourage the development of a range of new and innovative housing options offering care and support.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

The funding for the project will be contained within the existing and future budget allocations as it forms part of the overall financial strategy for the departments.

This is part of the demographic growth requirements identified within the Councils medium term financial strategy, as the service should provide a more dynamic support model that focuses on improving independence, and therefore reducing costs overtime for individuals with very complex care needs.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Deputy Head of Law Social Care and Education

The Care Act 2014 came into effect in April 2015 and replaced most previous law regarding carers and people being cared for. It outlines the way in which local authorities should carry out carer's assessments and needs assessments; how local authorities should determine who is eligible for support; how local authorities should charge for both residential care and community care; and places new obligations on local authorities. The Care Act 2014 imposes a duty on local authorities to undertake an assessment where there is an apparent need for care and support. The Care Act 2014 also required local authorities to undertake transition assessments if a child, young carer or adult caring for a child is likely to have needs when they , or the child in their care turns 18. This is regardless of whether the individual currently receives any support from Children's Services.

Procurement of the service model as stated in the body of this report requires compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Medina Road enables some of our borough's most vulnerable residents to live as independent as possible. The specially designed scheme, and care and support will assist residents of Thurrock to remain local, supporting their dignity and respect by recognising their diverse needs and significantly increase the offer of choice

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

N/A

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board Papers, 15 June 2015 item 16 – Bid to the Care and Supported Specialised Housing Fund for housing for young people with autism
- Thurrock Council's Adult Social Care Market Development Strategy

9. Appendices to the report

- None

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