

8 December 2021		ITEM: 11 Decision: 110591
Cabinet		
Adult Social Care - Provider Services Transformation		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin – Portfolio Holder Adults and Communities		
Accountable Assistant Director: Les Billingham, Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and Community Development		
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Council Adult Social Care is responsible for meeting the care and support needs of older and vulnerable people throughout the borough. Most care work is commissioned, and provided by external providers but the Council retains an internal team known as Provider Services. The current service includes Day Care and the meal delivery service.

Adult Social Care, in co-operation with health and the voluntary sector, has been delivering a transformation programme, which has resulted in new initiatives such as Local Area Co-Ordination, Community Led Support and Well Being Teams.

Well Being Teams' provide home care but work in place-based, small, autonomous teams that develop links within the local community to offer a more holistic care service – a new model of care. Reviews have shown improved outcomes for residents resulting from greater control and autonomy for both service users and staff.

Having successfully piloted the Wellbeing Teams approach in Tilbury and Chadwell, Provider Services will now move towards implementing the same approach across our directly delivered care services, upskilling the workforce to deliver more flexible and holistic care to residents with fewer handoffs between professionals.

Day Care services are currently delivered from three centres within the borough. Plans to improve the service offer will involve consolidating into one centre at Cromwell Road in Grays delivering a significantly enhanced service offer.

The meal delivery service has traditionally delivered hot meals to people across the borough. The proposal is to close this service and meet the needs of service users through alternative solutions within the community.

A paper was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny board on 17 June 2021 for members to comment on the proposals in this report.

Subsequently, the committee recommended that the services should not cease until a consultation had been held and individual plans for those currently receiving the service were designed through a collaborative approach with service users and their families/carers.

Consultation has been undertaken and the results are outlined in the report below.

In summary, through these innovative transformation proposals, a better and more comprehensive and more bespoke service offer can be delivered to residents at a cheaper cost.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1.1 Approve the plans for the service transformation, specifically:

- **Roll out of the Well Being Teams across Provider Services**
- **Rationalisation of day care to deliver a better offer from a single site**
- **New arrangements for meal delivery**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Adult Social Care has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014, to provide social care support to all eligible people within the local authority area. This includes residential and home care for older people and adults with a physical or learning disability, and adults who have a mental health diagnosis.
- 2.2 There is also a requirement that Adult Social Care meets the nutritional needs of people at risk as defined within the Care Act 2014.
- 2.3 The vast majority of care and support in Thurrock is outsourced to external providers but the Council does retain a number of services in-house. These services are grouped together as Provider Services and include residential care, extra care, home care, day care and the meal delivery.
- 2.4 The Council has an overarching strategic direction of travel for Adult Social Care, with a vision for all the main social care and health organisations to be working together to improve how support is provided to people in our communities. This is supported and driven through the Better Care Together in Thurrock Strategic Board.

2.5 This means providing better outcomes that are closer to home, holistic and that create efficiencies of support within the health and care system.

To achieve this better standard of care the following is required:

- Collaborative working with partners such as the NHS, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
- Providing choice, control and independence to all service users;
- Encouraging client defined solutions and empowerment for service users;
- Looking for more holistic solutions

2.6 Initiatives, including Local Area Co-Ordination and Community Led Support, have already been implemented and are seeing results that enable more self-determination for residents, and greater community involvement.

2.7 Well Being Teams deliver a new model of home care and support based on the Buurtzorg¹ model. Teams are small and self-managed, focusing on the client's perspective to provide care solutions that bring more independence and a better quality of life. The teams are upskilled to include healthcare tasks, and are more autonomous in nature, which makes for a more interesting role for staff. Service users are at the centre of the model allowing them to determine how and what care is provided.

2.8 Well Being Teams have been piloted in Tilbury and Chadwell for almost two years and current evaluation indicates a seven-fold reduction in GP appointments, a three-fold reduction in unplanned hospital admissions and high levels of client satisfaction. In summary, the Well Being Teams are providing better outcomes to service users.

2.9 Provider Services plan to move to this Well Being Team approach – moving away from large traditional service areas to smaller, agile teams that can more readily adapt to meet the service users changing needs. This will involve a restructure of the service.

2.10 The service also plans to transform the way Day Care services are delivered and this will involve consolidating the current three centres into one, but with a greatly enhanced offer and more options for those who cannot, or prefer not to, attend a day care centre.

2.11 Provider Services took over the “Meals on Wheels” service from the Royal Voluntary Service two years ago and has continued to run the service in its traditional format. However, the number of service users has been steadily diminishing making each meal more costly. There are alternative solutions available within the community and subsequently the plan is to cease this

¹ <https://www.buurtzorg.com/about-us/buurtzorgmodel/>

service in its current format and to look for better solutions that are bespoke to the users' needs.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Day Care Service Transformation

- 3.1.1 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Day Care services ran out of three centres Cromwell Road, Bell House and Kynoch Court, with 85% of attendees transported to one of the centres via a Council minibus.
- 3.1.2 Bell House is a converted shop within a parade of shops in South Ockendon. It has no outlook to the front except to the shopping precinct, and the back leads out onto a loading bay. Above the shop are Council flats and there are other shops either side. This restricts the natural light to the building and prevents any garden/outdoor activities. It is unsuitable as a 21st century day care facility.
- 3.1.3 Kynoch Court is a sheltered housing scheme; Day care services are run from one of the communal lounges. Space is limited meaning activities are confined to a small space.
- 3.1.4 Cromwell Road is a much larger purpose built site with a number of rooms suited for a variety of activities. It has parking on site for minibuses, outside garden areas that could be further developed, and disabled facilities. Almost 50% of Day Care attendees already use this site.
- 3.1.5 All three sites have remained closed since March 2020 in line with COVID-19 safety requirements, and to protect the most vulnerable residents who attend them. In the interim, alternative arrangements have been made so that staff offer respite within the service users' home. This has been much appreciated, opening up opportunities to involve service users in different activities including linking in with others via online social media such as Face Time.
- 3.1.6 Moving forward, it is proposed to rationalise all day-care services on the Cromwell Road site. This will allow maximum use of the facilities at Cromwell Road and the continued operation of new respite and outreach activities outside the traditional 9am- 4pm period. A new increased menu of activities will be developed, alongside opportunities for informal carers and other community groups to meet and support service users and each other. Improved plans would include intergenerational opportunities – for example encouraging local schools/nurseries to take part in activities with the service users. The new programme will include support for people who would not traditionally have attended a day centre, through a Virtual Friendship Club.
- 3.1.7 By reducing the number of centres, resources can be concentrated into the one centre and around the new virtual offer. This will produce savings, which are incorporated into the overall restructure.

3.1.8 The Cromwell Road site requires some adaptations and refurbishment, which when completed, will create a more welcoming environment. Plans include:

- The removal of admin and other staff not involved in the work of the Day care centre
- Extending the kitchen area to allow more accessible space for service users to be able to cook and prepare food
- Dedicated rooms within the building for activities such as a pamper room, IT suite, quiet room and art & crafts room
- Landscaping and improving the gardens to enable more accessible space
- An outdoor gym area to allow rehabilitation activities.

3.1.9 There will also be greater emphasis on support for informal carers and opportunities for support groups and other activities to be developed. In this new model of day care, all current and future service users can be fully accommodated and the more flexible choice of service provision will again lead to much better outcomes for service users, ultimately giving them personal choice over their care in line with our collaborative communities approach.

3.1.10 During July and August 2021, a consultation with service users was undertaken and previous users of the day care centres were contacted. Their future needs and view on reopening the service was discussed with them – the results are outlined in Appendix 1.

3.1.11 The consultation clearly highlights the value of the increased “sitting service” which provided support to many people, both during the lockdown and ongoing. This involves staff providing support to service users in their homes allowing respite to their carers; activities undertaken during the visit encourage cognitive stimulation and increased mobility. The transformation programme will enable this service to expand. A new dedicated activity co-ordinator will assist residents to access the virtual day care offer by supporting with ICT. This will open up more opportunities for service users to mix and match activities and enable an increased focus on choice and holistic, person centred support.

3.2 Meal Delivery Service

3.2.1 It is a requirement that Adult Social Care meets the nutritional needs of people at risk as defined within the Care Act 2014. For many years, this duty was discharged through a contract with the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) who have traditionally run the “Meals on Wheels” services across the country for many years. However, there is no statutory requirement to meet the nutritional needs of people in this way. RVS handed back their contract to Thurrock Council in April 2019, as they no longer provide this service; Thurrock was the last site operated by RVS in the country and today there are only a handful of services left which continue to be operated by local authorities.

- 3.2.2 The Council has continued to run the service in the same format for the past two years. The service operates out of a purpose built Council owned building in Corran Way, South Ockendon that needs a large refurbishment investment to meet required standards. However, it is in use for only 4-5 hours per day and not suitable for adaption to other use, therefore it does not represent a good use of resources.
- 3.2.3 Service users pay a fee of £4 per meal but the cost of providing the meal is much higher; based on the total number of meals delivered in 2020-21 the cost to the Council is around £9 per meal. The service is therefore heavily subsidised with current overall costs of around £190K per annum.
- 3.2.4 The high cost of delivering the service is mainly due to its declining popularity, with fewer than 90 regular service users. This represents a reduction of 26% in service users over the past six years and is likely to be the result of newer and more desirable options being available including online food services and improved supermarket delivery of “ready meals”.
- 3.2.5 During July and August 2021 a consultation exercise was carried out whereby every service user was contacted by a social worker to carry out a review of their nutritional needs and individual circumstances. The outcomes are shown in Appendix 1
- 3.2.6 The consultation has identified that of the existing 89 users at the time only 24 had no alternative support in place. Each of the 24 will be individually assessed and suitable alternative solutions will be sought through community solutions or provision within the other services thus ensuring the council still meets its statutory requirement to relevant service users. There are private services available including micro-enterprises and community groups.
- 3.2.7 In the unlikely event that no other alternatives can be sourced or in the case of an emergency, a meal could be delivered from the Friendship Café at Piggs Corner or day care services at Cromwell Road, or from Collins House. Additionally, service users will be encouraged to attend the Friendship café where possible. This means that no service user is left without an alternative means of receiving a daily hot meal.

3.3 Financial impact

- 3.3.1 The move to the proposed new model of care to deliver a more holistic and integrated approach based around smaller teams has an additional advantage of delivering savings through a more efficient model of service delivery based on long term preventative relationships. However, this proposal is about transforming outcomes for service users and was not driven by efficiencies.
- 3.3.2 It is estimated that £349,000 of efficiency savings can be delivered through the new integrated teams approach and transformation of Day Care services, whilst delivering better care outcomes to service users. £190,000 of savings will be delivered by decommissioning the meal delivery service, and re-letting

the shop at Bell House will provide a further £15,000 of income per annum. This combined effect of the proposals will be to deliver a total of £554,000 whilst delivering better care outcomes for residents.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 New, transformed ways to provide more integrated and holistic care, with fewer hand offs, will provide a service than can deliver significantly better care outcomes for some of the most vulnerable service users in the borough.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation with affected service users has been undertaken. The results are outlined at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 Consultation with staff is ongoing as part of the formal consultation programme.
- 5.3 The Council's Health and wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny have been presented with two reports – on 17 June 2021, an initial report outlining proposals, and 4 November 2021, outlining the consultation results.

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

- 6.1 **People** – *a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.*
 - 6.1.1 The new service and model of care provides a higher standard of service to older and vulnerable residents through the provision of a more holistic service, which allows them greater control over their lives. It will build on partnerships with community groups and greater integration between Health and Social Care.
 - 6.1.2 It will encourage a “right first time” principal through greater empowerment of service users in making decisions about their future.
- 6.2 **Place** – *a heritage-rich borough that is ambitious for its future.*
 - 6.2.1 A number of buildings will be vacated because of the restructure. These can be better utilised to meet the ambitions of the Council to use fewer public buildings whilst providing better services.
- 6.3 **Prosperity** – *a borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations*
 - 6.3.1 Increased training and self-managing opportunities for staff will be an attractive opportunity alongside opportunities to upskill. This will encourage aspirations and provide opportunities for self-improvement.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

Reductions in staffing in the new structure will result in annual savings of around £339k. Current vacancies and assimilations will reduce the need for redundancies; however, it will not be possible to completely avoid redundancies.

Closing the meal delivery service will result in annual savings of £190,000 i.e. annual cost of running the service including staffing.

A reduction in the use of buildings will be achieved. Bell House Day Care is accommodated in a shop in South Ockendon that, if vacated, could be let commercially. The meal delivery services operates from a building at Corran Way sits on land that could be developed or sold. Both buildings are assets maintained by the General fund and once vacated will be handed back to the Assets team. Additional savings are achieved through the reduction in building maintenance & utilities.

The savings identified will be included as part of the Council Medium Term financial strategy, and form part of the Department savings target.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
**Corporate Governance Lawyer &
Deputy Monitoring Officer**

Under the Care Act 2014 the Council has a duty to meet a person's eligible needs. In addition the Council has a general duty to ensure it promotes an individual's wellbeing, and to prevent and delay the development of needs for social care.

The services proposed to be transformed are non-statutory services, however the alternative measures proposed to be undertaken will ensure that the Council complies with its general duties and any statutory duty is met e.g. the provision of nutrition can be met through alternative options within the community or other existing services.

The Council has a duty to consult with service users, carers, providers and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the proposals. The consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at their formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient

information to enable them properly to understand the proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The Council must give conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees before making its final decision on the proposals.

As part of the decision making process, the Council must have “due regard” to its equalities duties under Section 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council in exercise of its adult care and support functions, must have “due regard” to the impact of the proposals on the equalities groups covered by the 2010 Act and consider how the proposals impact on them and the steps to be taken to mitigate any negative impact.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

A full Community Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal and has identified that people with the protected characteristics of age and disability will be disproportionately impacted. A separate report at Appendix 2 details the impact on service users specifically.

An assessment of the impact on workforce was also completed as part of the formal consultation process.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children

Increased use of the Cromwell Road site could affect parking and neighbours since the Centre sits in a busy residential street and has already been in use as a day centre for many years. It has a small car park but parking for staff is also available in a small Council carpark next to the Theatre just a few minutes’ walk away, whilst parking for minibuses will remain on site. The centre is self-contained and outside activities such as gardening will only be carried out during the day. The longer opening hours proposed will not be beyond 9pm. Therefore, it is unlikely there will be any extra noise impact for neighbours.

Health & Safety requirements for the building. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in new measures regarding social distancing and other requirements in workplaces. Health and safety requirements in a setting for older and vulnerable people will need to be even more stringent. An initial visit from the health and safety team has indicated there is sufficient space for the service to run but extra precautions around infection control will be vital. Advice from infection control specialists will be sought prior to opening, and ongoing training and monitoring of compliance will be essential. The Council’s health and safety team, public health and Directors Board will be required to sign off the proposals before the building can re-open in line with current practices.

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):

- HOSC Report – Provider Services Transformation, 17 June 2021
- HOSC Report – Consultation feedback on the meal delivery and day care services, 4 November 2021

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – HOSC Report 4 November 2021 – Consultation Feedback on the meal delivery and day care services
- Appendix 2 – Community Equality Impact Assessment

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Adult Social Care