

Appendix 2 - Diversity & Equality Implications

1. Introduction

Personal care, Day care and the meal delivery services are provided to people who are older and/or disabled, therefore the impact of making any changes to these services will disproportionately affect people with the protected characteristics of age and disability.

The extent to which they will be affected by the changes outlined in the report depends on the service used:

For people receiving care in their own homes, residential or extra care services, the new models of care will enable them to receive a more holistic service with greater choice and ability to determine the type of service that is important to them. The impact will therefore be positive.

2. Day care

People using day care services will be impacted by the reduction in day care centres, resulting in a reduced choice of venue for some service users and possibly longer travel times. A consultation with those affected by the change in venue was undertaken in July and August 2021.

2.1. Choice of venue

The breakdown in centre usage is as below, which indicates that almost half (49%) already attend the Cromwell Road centre.

	Total	Approx.
Bell House	18	17%
Cromwell Road	50	49%
Kynoch Court	36	35%
Total	104	

Therefore, the new proposals affect around 54 people who would need to attend a different centre from the one they attended previously. Unfortunately, seven of these people are no longer able to participate in day care leaving 47 people affected.

Due to the pandemic and forced lockdowns, many older and vulnerable people have deteriorated in both their physical and mental health. This has been recognised by many studies including Age Concern UK¹ who state:

¹ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2020/10/age-uk--research-into-the-effects-of-the-pandemic-on-the-older-populations-health/>

“Months of being cooped up at home have led to muscle weakness – ‘deconditioning’ as clinicians term it - and sometimes a reduced sense of balance, increasing the risk of falls.

The research also found evidence of new and emerging cognitive decline. In some cases, this might have happened anyway, but families told the Charity they feared it was exacerbated by the very difficult, often isolated conditions in which their loved ones were living, due to the pandemic.”

Whilst carrying out home visits during the pandemic Thurrock Council staff have reported that many service users have experienced the effects indicated in the Age UK report. Providing extra visits has enabled them and their carers to remain linked in, and many have expressed the wish for this to continue even when the service re-opens.

The consultation in July and August indicated that 33 (70%) of those attending Kynoch Court and Bell house would be willing to attend another centre meaning that 14 (30%) indicated they would not or were not sure.

Of these 14, 8 were either no longer able, or no longer wished, to attend a centre Only 5 people indicated that the distance was too far and all had alternative supportive arrangements in place.

Individual needs assessments and conversations will need to be held with service users to determine a tailored plan to suit the individual. If people do not wish to attend the Cromwell Road site then other opportunities, including the virtual day care offer can be offered.

Moves to increase social outreach and linking up with virtual groups and connections will enable many to engage without having to physically attend the centres.

2.2. Travel

Prior to the pandemic around 85% of service users travelled to a centre using one of the Councils minibuses. The minibuses collect people from around the borough to attend their nearest centre. If there were only one centre open, that could mean increased journeys for those people who live further away from Grays. This could affect up to 55 existing service users plus any new users in future.

The chart below indicates pre Covid-19 service users who would need to change centres and the difference in mileage to be travelled.

Ref	Existing centre	Distance to existing centre from home (miles)	Distance to Cromwell Rd centre from home (Miles)	Difference
66364	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
34139	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
87713	Bell House	2.4	7.6	5.2

33011	Bell House	0.4	5.3	4.9
34006	Bell House	0.6	5	4.4
38169	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
3980	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
30155	Bell House	0.7	4.7	4
3949	Bell House	0.5	4.4	3.9
17124	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
16636	Bell House	1	3.9	2.9
14515	Bell House	2.1	4.4	2.3
8354	Bell House	2	3.8	1.8
90515	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
18909	Bell House	1.7	4.8	3.1
78245	Bell House	1.7	4.2	2.5
22411	Bell House	4.1	2.6	-1.5
1253	Kynoch Court	4.1	3.2	-0.9
69167	Kynoch Court	5.9	1.2	-4.7
29736	Kynoch Court	0.3	5.9	5.6
19466	Kynoch Court	1.7	6.5	4.8
960	Kynoch Court	3.9	4.6	0.7
36799	Kynoch Court	3.4	4.1	0.7
82048	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
88088	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
29758	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
67439	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
92523	Kynoch Court	1.3	7.1	5.8
37204	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
69436	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
76248	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.7	5.9
82943	Kynoch Court	2	7.8	5.8
86848	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.8	6.2
85440	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.4	5.8
P177253	Kynoch Court	2.3	7.6	5.3
75465	Kynoch Court	1.4	7.2	5.8
88800	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.4	5.6
75020	Kynoch Court	1.2	6.7	5.5
74661	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.8	5.5
87781	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
89221	Kynoch Court	1.5	7.1	5.6
80839	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.5	5.6
84660	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
22634	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.8	5.9
31135	Kynoch Court	3.3	9.2	5.9

The differences range from a reduction of 1.5 miles to an increase of 6.2 miles.

The average is an increase of 4.7 miles for Kynoch Court and 3.3 miles for Bell House service users. At an average speed of 30 miles an hour, this will add an average of less than 10 minutes to each journey, although with traffic this could be considerably more.

Many service users enjoy the bus ride to and from the centre and view this as an extension of their time together with others.

The proposed changes to how day care services will run from Cromwell Road will help to mitigate this impact. Plans include extending the hours into weekends and evenings – this will allow the minibuses to make an increased number of shorter journeys.

An extended programme of activities will mean that service users can choose a morning, afternoon or evening session rather than having to attend for the whole day. This improved menu will run alongside the virtual offer enabling a “Mix & Match” approach so that more choice is available.

3. The meal delivery service

The service has been running for more than 25 years and is largely delivered in the same format i.e. a driver delivers a hot meal and dessert to the service user and checks on their welfare and 89 service users regularly have a daily meal delivered.

In a recent survey, (August 2021) 73% of current service users indicated that they could make their own meal or are already receiving a service which could be adapted to enable someone else to do it for them.

A report of all service users indicates that 24 people (27%) have no other services commissioned from the Council. There is a danger that this group of people could be particularly disadvantaged, however, plans are underway to assess all service users and assist them to either move to an alternative provider or to review their existing care package to cover meals.