

## CABINET

12 JULY 2016

### REVIEW OF THE LORDSWOOD COMMUNITY HUB

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brake, Adult Services

Report from: Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services

Author: Jackie Brown, Head of Social Care Business Unit

#### Summary

This report provides information relating to the Community Day Activity Service for adults with a learning disability, known as the Lordswood Community Hub, and its sustainability in the current economic climate.

The report provides Cabinet with feedback from the public consultation relating to the proposed closure of the provision (following Cabinet's approval on 8 March 2016 for consultation to be undertaken on the proposal).

#### 1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 This report supports the Council Plan priority "Supporting Medway's people to realise their potential". It promotes the following way of working "Giving value for money".
- 1.2 The information in this report provides Cabinet Members with an overview of the service and the proposal to decommission the service as it is no longer financially sustainable in the current economic climate, as set out in the savings proposals in the revenue budget 2016/2017 agreed at Council on 25 February 2016.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Lordswood Community Hub service is provided for adults with a learning disability who formerly attended the Strood Day Service, Greatfield Lodge before its closure.

Service users meet at Lordswood Leisure Centre before they start their day of community activities. Activities include cooking, bowling, swimming and library, bingo, shopping - using public transport, dancing, art, sing & sign; as well as full days out in the summer. The activity programme is refreshed every few months to take into account seasonal changes.

Transport is provided by Medway Council. The transport service collects people from their homes and takes them to the hub and at the end of the day, returns them home.

2.2 Originally, 26 service users used the service; this has now reduced to 12. The service is provided to the 12 service users as follows:-

- Monday – 6 service users
- Tuesday – 9 service users
- Wednesday – 7 service users
- Thursday – 7 service users
- Friday – 9 service users

The Lordswood Community Hub service actively seeks to promote greater choice, opportunity and independence in the way in which each service user decides to use their day.

2.3 Two full time Support Workers are employed in the provision; annual leave and sickness is covered by agency staff.

2.4 Four driver/escorts are employed for 25 hours per week each to provide the transport service. Drivers work 2½ hours in the morning and 2½ hours in the afternoon. They also take the vehicles for any repairs or planned maintenance needed.

2.5 The total cost of the service for 2015/16 was £192,344, a daily rate of £97.34 per service user. It is, therefore, clear that the cost of the service in relation to the number of service users is no longer financially viable.

2.6 The introduction of an alternative and appropriate service, such as a Group Direct Payment would enable service users to carry out the same type of activities in the same groups, if they so wished. This would ensure the service users continue to achieve their outcomes and promote choice, opportunity and independence.

However, a Group Direct payment is not the only alternative option for Service Users; there are also other day care provisions available.

Social Work teams will work closely with the Service Users and their families/carers to identify an alternative provision, which meets the Services Users eligible needs and achieves their desired outcomes.

2.7 The proposed rate of the Group Direct Payment for each service user is £45 per day. This rate is comparable to day services for service users with dementia.

Based on the days activities that service users are currently in receipt of, the annual cost of this service would be £88,920.

This is a potential cost reduction to the council of £103,424.

2.8 It was, therefore, proposed to Cabinet Members on the 8 March 2016 that the necessary steps are taken to decommission the Lordswood Hub.

2.9 There are clearly implications for staff working at the unit if this proposal is carried forward.

### **3. Options**

3.1 There were three options available with regard to the proposal:

- Option 1 – Do nothing and continue providing the service at its current cost.
- Option 2 – Decommission the service without carrying out a consultation.
- Option 3 – Follow the Local Government Association's guidance and formally consult on the proposed changes.

3.2 Cabinet Members decided to consult (option 3), details of which are set out in paragraph 4 below.

### **4. Advice and analysis**

4.1 As this proposal to close a service provision directly affects service users and staff the proposed consultation was vital.

4.2 The information below provided analysis for Cabinet on 8 March 2016 to make a decision whether or not we should consult.

- Option 1 – Continuing to provide the current service in the current financial climate is no longer sustainable. The cost for each service user is disproportionate to those receiving similar services.
- Option 2 – The LGA guidance advises that we should consult if proposed changes have an impact on service users. This proposal has a direct impact on service users and staff and if we choose to implement the proposed charge without consultation, it is extremely likely to cause significant complaints by both the public and the trade unions.
- Option 3 – By following LGA guidance and carrying out a consultation, whilst complaints may still occur, the ability to advise that a meaningful consultation has been carried out will enable the authority to respond appropriately and the outcome of the consultation will enable Cabinet to make an informed decision.

4.3 As a consequence of the analysis, the Cabinet agreed for the Council to carry out a consultation. As such, the Council carried out the consultation between 18 April 2016 and 10 June 2016.

## 5. Risk management

### 5.1 The following risks have been identified.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
The proposed closure of this service may not be received well.	<p>The Lordswood Hub was created when Greatfield Lodge was closed to enable service users to continue receiving a specified service.</p> <p>The closure of the Hub may cause anxiety for service users, their parents/carers and families.</p>	The proposed consultation will include meetings with those affected where alternative and appropriate services can be discussed. This could include, if the service user is willing to, the option of a Group Direct Payment that could allow service users to continue participating in their activities in their current groups.	C2
The council could be criticised for proposing the closure of a frontline service as part of its budget cuts.	Whilst it is recognised that the councils funding from Central Government is being cut, the proposed closure of a frontline service is not likely to be well received by Medway residents and the local press.	<p>The completion of the proposed consultation will not avoid this risk, but will ensure that Medway residents, stakeholders and partner organisations will be / of challenge due to the sensitive nature of charging for care.</p> <p>However, should the outcome of the proposal determine the hub be closed, the ability to advise that a meaningful consultation has been carried will enable the Local Authority to respond appropriately to any queries or complaints.</p>	C2
The proposed closure will deem employees roles at risk.	The proposed closure will deem that the support workers and Drivers/Escorts at the hub will no longer have roles at this service.	<p>The proposed consultation will include meetings with staff, HR and Union Reps.</p> <p>Alternative employment opportunities within the council will be reviewed.</p> <p>Redundancies will only be made as a last resort.</p>	C2

## 6 Consultation

- 6.1 The consultation exercise ran for eight weeks and was undertaken to inform people about the details of the proposed closure and to invite views so that the Council could better understand the direct impact of the changes.

The consultation included contacting and notifying:-

- Lordswood Community Hub service users and their parents/carers.
- Staff at the provision

- 6.2 Letters were sent to parents/carers of service users who attend the provision. The letter advised them of the proposal and invited them to two group meetings to discuss the proposal and enable questions to be answered.

- 6.2.1 In addition to the group meetings, people were offered meetings on a one to one basis, giving the opportunity to discuss the proposal and answer questions on an individual basis.

### 6.3 The Consultation Results

- 6.3.1 Response to the consultation was high, with 11 of the 12 service users affected by the proposed closure being represented by parents/carers.

- Six service users were represented by seven parents/carers at the group meeting on 26 April 2016.
- Four service users were represented by five parents/carers at the group meeting on Wednesday 18 May 2016.
- One response received by mail notified us to provide future information relevant to the service user's care and support needs to them by email.

- 6.3.2 On the 24 May 2016 all parent/carers were contacted individually by telephone to offer one to one meetings to discuss the proposed closure.

- One parent/carer requested a meeting to discuss Direct Payments.
- The remaining 11 parent/carers either did not want to meet anyone until the outcome had been agreed or did not respond to our message.

- 6.4 Appendices A and B provide Cabinet with notes taken at the group meetings. The main concerns identified at the meeting are detailed below.

#### 6.4.1 **We were asked why Greatfield Lodge was closed.**

Strood Day Opportunities Centre (Greatfield Lodge) was Medway Council's day centre for adults with learning disabilities.

On 12 September 2006, Members of the Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to set up a Task Group to review day care services provided by Medway Council for adults with a disability. The aim was to investigate how these services could be

improved and modernized in line with various Government White Papers.

The Member Task Group found the site of Greatfield Lodge to be limited by its topography, to have inadequate buildings, and to be expensive to run. Evidence determined that service users wished to access more mainstream opportunities but that this was not possible through the day centre.

On 22 April 2008, Cabinet accepted the following recommendations in respect of Greatfield Lodge:

- Current budgetary arrangements should be changed to enable Personalised Budgets (based on person centred planning) to be offered to individuals to move from traditional day services to community opportunities, offering more choice to people with a disability from April 2010.
- The Greatfield Lodge site should be vacated by day services. This would free up revenue streams to invest into personalised activities for eligible individuals.

#### **6.4.2 We were asked why no new referrals are made to the Lordswood Hub?**

As people start the assessment process with Adult Social Care, it is identified that they want to do a combination of things as part of their care and support service; we encourage people to take control of their lives. We are no longer seeing the demand for traditional day care.

#### **6.4.3 It was felt by some of the parents/carers at the meeting that Council services are safer than private services or care being provided by Personal Assistants as part of a Direct Payment.**

Private providers are regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and must meet and maintain set standards. They are inspected by the CQC to ensure they are meeting the standards.

There are processes in place when employing Personal Assistants as part of a Direct Payment, to ensure they have any necessary or relevant experience. They are also required to have a DBS.

#### **6.4.4 Concern was raised about managing Direct Payments.**

While some people in receipt of a Direct Payment are quite happy and confident to manage their Direct Payment, it is recognised that this is not the case for everyone.

We have worked closely with local businesses and arranged for them to manage Direct Payments on behalf of service users. This alleviates pressure for people who want a Direct Payment, but do not want to manage it.

**6.4.5 We were asked to remember that the proposed closure would cause the service users a lot of stress and anxiety.**

It is clearly evident that the proposed closure has already caused stress and anxiety to parents/carers and some of our service users.

To reduce some of the stress associated with moving to a different service, we will ensure that enough time is given for Social Workers to complete a re-assessment of the service users' needs and work with the service user and their parents/carers to find alternative and appropriate care and support.

- 6.5 The feedback received through the consultation clearly demonstrated that no one agreed with the proposed closure.
- 6.6 Whilst it is clearly recognised and strongly understood that the closure will cause much anxiety to Service Users and their parents/carers, it is apparent that this service is no longer financially viable.
- 6.7 The cost of the Lordswood Hub is not equal to the cost of alternative day care provisions and in these financially challenging times, the authority is no longer able to fund this service.
- 6.8 New service users that start to receive care and support services from Adult Social Care are not typically receiving commissioned day care services through the council but are in receipt of a Direct Payment and purchasing their own care and support, therefore, it would be unlikely that we would see an increase in people using the provision if we were to allow referrals to the unit.
- 6.9 A Diversity Impact Assessment (Appendix C) has been completed in conjunction with the consultation to assist the Council in fulfilling the legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

The outcome of the DIA confirms that Service Users and Parent/Carers will be impacted by the proposal. The following actions will be carried out to mitigate the impact, should the Cabinet agree the closure.

- o All service users will be re-assessed by their Social Worker to determine their eligible needs; establish required outcomes and discuss alternative care and support provision.
  - o All parents/carers will be offered a Carers Assessment to determine if they can be further supported.
  - o To support service users and their parents/carers in the transition to a new service and aim to reduce anxiety, closure will not be immediate.
  - o We will work closely with staff employed at the provision, to find them alternative suitable employment within the council
- 6.10 Therefore, it is recommended to close the provision from 1 November 2016. This will provide sufficient time to support Service Users and their parents/carers through the transition to a new service. It will also allow us to fully support the staff at the service in finding alternative jobs.

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 Should the outcome of the proposed consultation lead to the closure of this service, with alternative and appropriate services provided to service users to meet their eligible needs, the council has the potential to make a cost reduction in the region of £103,000.
- 7.2 For 2016/17, the impact will be pro-rata from the date of implementation; therefore if we were to go ahead with closure from 1 November 2016, the cost reduction to the 31 March 2017 will be in the region of £43,000.

## **8 Legal implications**

- 8.1 Section 10.27 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 states:

In determining how to meet needs, the local authority may also take into reasonable consideration its own finances and budgetary position, and must comply with its related public law duties. This includes the importance of ensuring that the funding available to the local authority is sufficient to meet the needs of the entire local population. The local authority may reasonably consider how to balance that requirement with the duty to meet the eligible needs of an individual in determining how an individual's needs should be met (but not whether those needs are met). However, the local authority should not set arbitrary upper limits on the costs it is willing to pay to meet needs through certain routes – doing so would not deliver an approach that is person-centred or compatible with public law principles. The authority may take decisions on a case-by-case basis which weigh up the total costs of different potential options for meeting needs, and include the cost as a relevant factor in deciding between suitable alternative options for meeting needs. This does not mean choosing the cheapest option; but the one which delivers the outcomes desired for the best value.

- 8.2 Where a consultation is necessary in the interests of fairness but is not actually held, if there is a third party challenge it is likely that a court could hold the change of practice or policy involved to be unlawful.
- 8.3 Medway Council has a legal obligation under section 149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations between those with a protected characteristic (pregnancy and maternity, age discrimination, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to the proposed closure of the Lordswood Community Hub and that to support Service Users and their parents and carers in the smooth transition to a Group Direct Payment, as set out in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 of the report, or an alternative provision that meets the Service Users eligible needs, with the aim to minimise anxiety, that the closure takes effect from 1 November 2016.



## **10. Suggested reasons for decision(s)**

- 10.1 Whilst it is clearly recognised and strongly understood that the closure will cause much anxiety to Service Users and their parents/carers, it is apparent that this service is no longer financially viable.
- 10.2 The cost of the Lordswood Hub is not equal to the cost of alternative day care provisions and in these financially challenging times, the authority is no longer able to fund this service.
- 10.3 New service users that start to receive care and support services from Adult Social Care are not typically receiving commissioned day care services through the council but are in receipt of a Direct Payment and purchasing their own care and support, therefore, it would be unlikely that we would see an increase in people using the provision if we were to allow referrals to the unit.
- 10.4 Closing the provision from the 1 November 2016, provides sufficient time to support Service Users and their parents/carers through the transition to a new service. It will also allow us to fully support the staff at the service in finding alternative jobs.

### **Lead officer contact**

Jackie Brown, Head of Social Care Business Unit, Gun Wharf, 01634 332363,  
[jackie.brown@medway.gov.uk](mailto:jackie.brown@medway.gov.uk)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A – Notes from Lordswood Day Care Centre Meeting - Tuesday 26 April 2016
- Appendix B - Notes from Lordswood Day Care Centre Meeting – Wednesday 18 May 2016
- Appendix C – DIA

### **Background papers**

- Budget report to Council – 25 February 2016  
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=15761>
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014  
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=16938&PlanId=251>



## Appendix A

### Notes from Lordswood Day Care Centre Meeting - Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2016

#### Medway Council Officers:

**Jackie Brown – Head of Social Care Business Unit**

**Michael Hood – Self Directed Support Team Manager**

**Michelle Lofting – Research and Information Manager (notes)**

On 8th March a paper went to cabinet. Initially there were 45 attending this service, there are now only 12. We need to look at how we can make the best use of the resources we have. This might mean doing things differently.

The group were told a bit about direct payments which could be an option for some.

There was real concern among those that had attended the meeting about the work needed to employ someone. “We are a lot older than you do you think we could employ someone via direct payments?”

*The group were informed that this is only a suggestion as we had heard from staff that families were keen to keep with the existing arrangements and those attending the session had made friends.*

The group went onto to say that it was important that their children had a chance to mix with others and not just do things on their own.

*You can either have an individual direct payment or pool your direct payment with others. This could mean that your child/family member currently attending this session could continue to meet with their friends and still do the same activities. The only thing would mean they would not have a base and they would need to sort out transport.*

The group felt if the council continued to run the sessions at least they had piece of mind because they keep an eye on how things are running. “We are not sure a private company would do the same checks as the council”.

There were a number of comments from family members at the meeting that the council had already made up its mind to close the facility. “Our children can’t speak for themselves so we have to stand up for them. Also you have made no reference to that fact that we also contribute to the cost of their care.”

“The adults that come here like their routine and being with their friends, they can’t communicate their feeling and they certainly can’t cope with change, it needs to be a gradual thing. They like their routine and they don’t understand the value of money.”

*The group were offered examples on what a group direct payment could look like.*

“They need routine, be with the same people and do the same activities.”

*We could look to see how that could happen in terms of showing you examples of what the direct payment could look like. At the moment the current set up is not a good use of money so we need to look at how things could be done differently. We need to ensure we are getting the best price.*

“Do you run any other activities like this one?”

No

“We would prefer to use a council run service because we know it’s a safe environment. “

*Another option is to look at other providers we could take you out to visit them to see what you think.*

“That’s fine but it would take months for my brother to get around to all the sites because he can’t deal with change and then further months for him to adjust to somewhere different.”

*During the process your Social Worker will carry out a review to assess their needs.*

“We don’t have a Social Worker?”

“I think it’s unfair to cut this service”

*Just to confirm you could as a group continue to do the same activities if you pooled your direct payments. The only different would be that you do not have a base.*

“Well my child doesn’t really like the activities nor have friends here. She enjoys coming because of the staff, she would prefer to go shopping.”

“If we decide to go with a group direct payment, I don’t see how we could fund it if you can’t afford it?”

The difference would be you don’t have a base and you would sort out the transport. That would cut the cost right down.

“I can’t put my daughter through this I will keep her at home.”

“That wouldn’t be fair on your daughter she wouldn’t get a chance to mix with anyone else”

“The thing is the people who come here don’t like change. They get used to the staff. The staff understands their needs and know their quirks. Some of them can’t communicate very well. The staff here has got to know them and knows how to communicate with them, all that will be lost and they will have to start again.”

“If agency staff turn up my child doesn’t know them. They don’t know if she is unhappy or how she is feeling.”

*Even if the decision was to keep this place open you would still have different staff coming in perhaps to cover sickness or someone's holiday. Eventually, staff may decide to leave to work somewhere else. There will always be change and at times agency staff will need to be used.*

"Yes but the council carry out CRB checks and provide relevant training."

*Those providers working in the private sector would still have to do the same checks*

"Yes, but who checks them?"

*CQC would carry out checks on the provider and agency staff.*

"All the while to council are running the service, I take comfort from that. I know my child is safe and cared for and that I don't need to worry."

*Yes, but whoever runs the service there will still be checks. We would still carry out checks if you are paying for a service via direct payments.*

"Yes but we would be responsible because we put them there."

*The CQC will do random checks to ensure things are running as they should be.*

"There are five of us sitting here not one of you here today understand how we feel."

"We don't want Lordswood to close."

*There are a number of options for you to consider: Go to another provider or direct payments. We can show you other provision so you can see what it is like.*

"Say my child gets £45 per day for day care. If we don't employ someone and keep her at home can we keep the money?!"

*You may decide to take her out the money could be used for that. Your daughter likes shopping you could use the money to employ perhaps one of the current staff to take her to somewhere like Blue Water. The direct payment could also be used for things like that. You say she likes a particular member of staff and doesn't really mix with the other attending the session, this could mean one to one quality time.*

"For us it is so important that our children are happy."

"I have group direct payment it's used to go to the Balfour Centre that works really well."

"If this place is closing it would be nice to have timescales. We would need a lot of notice because our children do not adjust very well to changes."

"Since the letter came about the closure it has given us sleepless nights"

Agreed to send out paper work on direct payments.

*Shortly one to one sessions will be arranged for all the families who have members currently attending Lordwood. This will give an opportunity to look at individual impact and current needs.*

## Appendix B

### Notes from Lordswood Day Centre Meeting, Wednesday 18 May 2016

#### Medway Council Officers:

**Jackie Brown – Head of Social Care Business Unit**

**Michael Hood – Self Directed Support Team Manager**

**Michelle Lofting – Research and Information Manager (notes)**

On 8<sup>th</sup> March a paper went to cabinet. Initially there were 45 attending this service, there are now only 12. We need to look at how we can make the best use of the resources we have. This might mean doing things differently.

Greatfield Lodge, why did you close it? At the time there were over 100 users. What did they do with the money when they sold off the site?

*Nowadays people coming through the system want different options they want to do a combination of things.*

They sold off Greatfield Lodge, they closed Chattenden and now they are closing this place. There will always be people with special needs coming through the system so I don't know why this place has to close. I don't know why there are only 12 people using it.

I feel we are being scared into using Direct Payments. At the end of the day I want my son to attend a day centre. He likes coming here.

*There isn't the demand anymore for day centres. People don't want to spend all their time in a centre they want to do a combination of things. We just don't have the capital any more to keep places like this open.*

Why was Greatfield Lodge sold off? What happened to the money? They could have used it to build a purpose built building one place they could all go to.

You said people don't want to go to day centres anymore but there isn't any day centres left for them to go to. They don't have that choice so how do you know they don't want to go if you don't give them the option of going?

*People want the option of doing different things and not just going to one place. There are day centres still about but not run by the council*

My son went to Greatfield Lodge, before that he went to Wharf Road and now here which is closing. He did loads of stuff at Greatfield Lodge like cooking and gardening, he loved it.

*They don't have to go to just day centres they might want to do a combination of things – direct payment is a way of doing that. For example they might want to go shopping one day. You could employ someone to take them*

No my child isn't doing that I have seen them in town. They don't look after them properly. It isn't right. When my child was at Greatfield Lodge they left him behind they didn't know until he walked through the door. They said 'oh there you are'.

My child was left too he got the bus home luckily I was home at the time.

*Direct payment is about giving choice.*

My brother likes coming here, he likes the social side of it he will miss his friends if this places closes.

*Numbers of people wanting to attend a day centre is going down we can't continue to fund this kind of support. It is not a good use of resources so we have to look at other ways. We want to encourage people to take control of their live. Direct Payments they can choose what they want to do and attend community based activities.*

*There is no reason why they can still meet as a group and still do activities. You could have a group direct payment and we will support you in that. By having the money you can chose what type of things they want to do and when you want it. You might want to use some of the money for an evening break so you can go out.*

I don't get care in the evening. If we want to go out in the evening we would have to ask friends and family.

We don't get to go out often either. I can't remember the last time we went out in the evening.

Yes, but we don't want just anyone looking after them.

*All providers are inspected.*

*A group direct payment means they could still do all the things they do as a group.*

My son goes out one day a week with a member of staff that used to work at Greatfield Lodge. He really enjoys it they do loads of stuff. That is just one day I think it would be difficult to find someone to do five days a week.

*We can help facilitate something like that. We would look at your budget allowance to see what it could possibly fund. You might end up getting more for your money if you poole your money together for some of the activities.*

*An assessment would be carried out to find out if your child's needs are still the same.*

Well this is fine – but I still want the centre to stay open and I know that is what my son wants too.

Will we still get five days' worth of support?



*A review of need would have to be conducted. In some cases this might increase and in some cases this could decrease – it depends on needs. There are no guarantees.*

Yes, but I need a break too.

*You can ask for a carer's assessment – the assessment will look at your needs too.*

*Once you have been assessed someone from the direct payments team would come out and talk you through possible options.*

We need day care – we would need help. If we try to take him out, we can't get him out of the car.

If we do have direct payments, would we have to pay the support persons expenses?

*No that would be included in the price.*

Do you have to be an employer? I don't want to be an employer. This could put a lot of people off doing direct payments.

*We have worked with local businesses so you will have support to help you with type of thing. You don't have to do it by yourself. There are some people that want to do it themselves – it's up to you. There is support.*

*In terms of need we want to give choice and direct payments allows that.*

I still wouldn't want to do the employer stuff.

*You don't have to it can be done for you.*

What about all the paper work?

*That could be done for you too.*

I have been told you pay rent and rates for this place is that true?

Yes, we do.

Why do you do that it doesn't make sense especially if you are closing this place because of lack of money. I don't understand that's madness. Can't you cut the cost you charge yourselves?

*It's not just about rents there are other costs to for example transport. This is our biggest cost.*

Well, I didn't have transport when he was at Greatfield lodge but then you closed that.

*That wasn't the case for everyone others did have transport cost.*

*People now coming through the system just don't want to come to day care centres. The drive isn't there anymore. This is not just Medway it's a national wide thing, people want more choice.*

Do people coming through the system ask if they would like to attend a day care centre? Then if they want a day care centre do you then refuse them?

*No, when needs are assessed the Social Worker will go through the options.*

*If direct payments are an option someone from the team then goes out. It's very rare when discussing options someone then says I want full time day care.*

Yes, but has this day care centre been offered as an option?

*No, not for the last three years.*

Well, that is why the numbers have been falling because you are not offering this place.

So many people have left over the years and you are not filling the place. Now it's just us left.

*Some folk move on because they want to do different things. They might see friends doing something different to this and think I want to do that too.*

*There are now only 12 people attending this centre and not all are doing five days a week. So it's difficult to sustain, we can't justify the expense. We must look at other ways. Direct payment can help facilitate different activities they want to do as a group.*

My son has a PA once a week this is working really well. When I talk to him about this place closing he gets really upset. Even if he went with his PA five days a week he would still want to come here. He enjoys meeting his friends and his pub lunches.

My son has speech problems if I tried to speak to him about this he would walk out of the room. He is a different person when he is here compared to at home. If we're down stairs he is upstairs. If we go upstairs he comes down stairs.

*As part of the consultation process we want to give folk an option to talk through the proposal during a one to one session.*

What is the point you will close this place anyway. Not many people are coming here because you are not offering it to other people. If more people came here then surely it would be more cost effective.

It has all gone wrong since you closed Greatfield Lodge and now you are closing this place.

*Not everyone enjoyed going to Greatfield Lodge, yes some did but not all. Some flourish others did not. We need to be mindful that everyone is different and their want and needs can be different.*

Lots of people have gone over the years my son doesn't see many of his old friends because everyone has now dispersed.

*That could be that people's lives have change – they might have been living with their parents at the time and have now moved on perhaps into supported lodgings.*

There isn't enough evening respite either – this is a worry.

Qualifications – will the carers have qualifications? We can't have just anyone looking after our children they are vulnerable.

*There are training course the PA's can attend. We can't stipulate that everyone has to have certain qualifications it depends what they will be doing. We do carry out checks the same as if staff were Medway Council employees. For example DBS*

I am not so sure – there was a member of staff who worked here, she was sacked and then ended up working for an outside provider. How can that be?

*The member of staff you are referring to was not sacked.*

*As much as we can we would manage possible risk. We do have a safeguarding procedure in place and we do carry our DBS checks. In the past we have prosecuted those who were not caring properly. We can't mitigate against everything that is not possible. We do try and manage risk as much as we possibly can.*

What about Shared Lives do you work with them? Is that an option?

*Yes, that could be an option. We are looking at what we can do to expand this area as it's very popular.*

What about supported living is that an option?

*Supported living is another option it depends on what the needs are.*

At the end of the day we are saving the council a lot of money because we are looking after our children at home.

*We will do what we can to support you*

No qualification this is a real worry.

*No one will be put with anyone without experience of working with a particular need. We have processes in place for that*

How long will this place be open for? How long do we have?

Are we going to have our kids at home for weeks?

*No, you would need to have a social worker review first to find out level of need. It will not be an overnight closure.*

*We know there needs to be a period of transition, and that some don't adjust to change easily we are mindful of that. We have a duty to provide support to those who are eligible which we will continue to do.*

Are there any other hubs like this one?

No

What about Birling Avenue – what is happening with that? Is that going to close?

*There haven't been any discussions about closing Birling Avenue, however, there are no guarantees about anything – things are being reviewed all the time.*

You should open the doors and let more people come here. You are pushing through a closure because it is not being used. Which is not true, you are not sending people here. It's a false closure. We are not leaving here fast enough so you are closing it now.

*We have to make the best use of resources its tax payer money. An example of cost would be if you think about the street you live in, for me there are about 30 houses. The money collected from that street for a year from council tax would cover the cost of just one person attending the day care centre for a year.*

Well, if you close the centre I don't want to read in a paper that you have spent money on a statue or something stupid that cost loads.

# Diversity impact assessment

## Appendix C

<b>TITLE</b> <i>Name/description of the issue being assessed</i>	Lordswood Community Activity Service – closure of provision
<b>DATE</b> <i>Date the DIA is completed</i>	13 June 2016
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b> <i>Name and title of person responsible for carrying out the DIA.</i>	Jackie Brown – Head of Adult Social Care Business Unit

### 1 Summary description of the proposed change

- *What is the change to policy/service/new project that is being proposed?*
- *How does it compare with the current situation?*

This service is provided for adults with a learning disability. Service Users meet at Lordswood Leisure Centre before they start their day of community activities. Transport is provided by Medway Council. The transport service collects people from their homes and takes them to the hub. At the end of the day, service users are taken home by the transport service.

There were initially 26 people using the service; this has now reduced to 12.

The Council is facing unprecedented financial challenges over the next few years and having reviewed the annual cost of this service in relation to the number of service users receiving it, it is clear the service is no longer financially viable.

It is therefore proposed that the provision is closed and alternative care and support packages are provided to Service Users to meet their eligible care needs.

The proposed closure will also affect the following staff who work at the provision:-

- 2 x fte support workers
- 4 x .6 fte driver/escorts

### 2 Summary of evidence used to support this assessment

- *Eg: Feedback from consultation, performance information, service user records etc.*
- *Eg: Comparison of service user profile with Medway Community Profile*

A public consultation was carried out for eight weeks from the 18 April to 10

# Diversity impact assessment

June 2016 and included contacting and notifying:-

- The parents and carers of Adult Social Care clients that attend the provision.
- Staff employed at the provision.

Meetings were held with parents/carers and staff affected.

The meetings were held as group meetings and meeting were offered on an individual basis.

### 3 What is the likely impact of the proposed change?

*Is it likely to :*

- *Adversely impact on one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Advance equality of opportunity for one or more of the protected characteristic groups?*
- *Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't?*

*(insert ✓ in one or more boxes)*

Protected characteristic groups	Adverse impact	Advance equality	Foster good relations
Age	✓		
Disabilty	✓		
Gender reassignment			
Marriage/civil partnership			
Pregnancy/maternity			
Race			
Religion/belief			
Sex			
Sexual orientation			
Other (eg low income groups)	✓		

# Diversity impact assessment

## 4 Summary of the likely impacts

- *Who will be affected?*
  - *How will they be affected?*
- Clients using this service will be affected as it will no longer be provided.
  - Parents/Carers/Families will be affected as clients will no longer be able to attend this service.
  - Staff working at this service will be affected as their current roles will not be required once the provision is closed.

## 5 What actions can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impacts, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations?

- *Are there alternative providers?*
- *What alternative ways can the Council provide the service?*
- *Can demand for services be managed differently?*

To mitigate adverse impacts it is important that:-

- All people affected are notified of the proposals well in advance of the recommended closure and supported through this change.
- A review of the service users care and support needs under Care Act legislation are carried out by Social Workers to determine each clients eligible needs and how working together we can achieve their desired outcomes.
- Alternative provisions suitable for the Service User are identified. This could include a Group Direct Payment, to enable them to carry out activities, choosing whether they want to attend in the same groups.
- To ensure a smooth transition and reduce anxiety for Service Users and their parents/carers that the unit does not close immediately and time is given to move to their new service
- Identify whether there are any alternative suitable roles available for staff to enable them to continue working in the authority.

# Diversity impact assessment

## 6 Action plan

- *Actions to mitigate adverse impact, improve equality of opportunity or foster good relations and/or obtain new evidence*

Action	Lead	Deadline or review date
Carry out consultation with affected clients, parents/carers.	JB	
Carry out consultation with affected staff.	JB/AW/N H	
Determine suitable alternative care and support packages, i.e. Group Direct Payments or Individual Service Funds.	JC/AD	

## 7 Recommendation

*The recommendation by the lead officer should be stated below. This may be:*

- *to proceed with the change, implementing action plan if appropriate*
- *consider alternatives*
- *gather further evidence*

*If the recommendation is to proceed with the change and there are no actions that can be taken to mitigate likely adverse impact, it is important to state why.*

It is recommended to proceed with the closure of the Lordswood Hub with effect from 1 November 2016. Whilst it is clearly recognised that this will cause much upset and anxiety to Service Users and their parents and carers, the service is not financially viable and the costs are not equal to other day care provisions.

## 8 Authorisation

*The authorising officer is consenting that:*

- *the recommendation can be implemented*
- *sufficient evidence has been obtained and appropriate mitigation is planned*
- *the Action Plan will be incorporated into service plan and monitored*

**Deputy Director**

**Ian Sutherland**

**Date**

**13.06.16**

Contact your Performance and Intelligence hub for advice on completing this assessment

RCC: phone 2443 email: [annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk](mailto:annamarie.lawrence@medway.gov.uk)

C&A: (Children's Social Care) contact your normal P&I contact

C&A (all other areas): phone 1481 email: [paddy.cahill@medway.gov.uk](mailto:paddy.cahill@medway.gov.uk)

BSD: phone 2472/1490 email: [corppi@medway.gov.uk](mailto:corppi@medway.gov.uk)

PH: phone 2636 email: [david.whiting@medway.gov.uk](mailto:david.whiting@medway.gov.uk)

Send completed assessment to the Corporate Performance & Intelligence Hub (CPI) for web publication ([corppi@medway.gov.uk](mailto:corppi@medway.gov.uk))