

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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UPDATE ON AUT EVEN AND THE TRANSFER OF SERVICES TO PARKLANDS

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Summary

This report provides an update to the Committee Members on the transfer of services from Aut Even to Parklands.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 Councils are under a legal obligation to provide or commission Short Breaks for children with a disability under section 7 of the Local Authority and Social Services Act 1970. Scrutiny in relation to short breaks falls within the remit of this Committee.

2. Background

2.1 Aut Even is a residential respite centre for young people with disabilities, based in Twydall. It supports children with learning disabilities with a range of needs from severe learning disabilities to complex sensory impairment, wheelchair dependent, and a range of children on the autistic spectrum

2.2 The service at Aut Even is provided within a building that has been adapted over the years in an attempt to meet the needs of children and young people with complex needs and disabilities. There are a number of structural challenges which prevent the service being provided to children with certain types of need. It is also preventing the service from expanding. In addition, further Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance issues were identified; along with the need for a new fire escape.

2.3 In December 2017, Cabinet approved the move of the short breaks provision from its current Aut Even site to Parklands, based in Gillingham, with the intention of not only enhancing the service but to manage the service within

budget (decision number 141/2017 refers). Parklands was originally designed as a purpose built residential centre for children.

- 2.4 The transformation of service provision within one building (Parklands) will offer:
- A five bedded provision for overnight short breaks;
 - The provision during term time of integrated short break and overnight services;
 - The provision of integrated short break and overnight services during school holidays;
 - A special needs playgroup facility between the hours of 09:00 hours 13:00 hours on weekdays;
 - Family assessments/contact assessment provision for Children with Disabilities between 09:00 hours and 13:00 hours;
 - An office base for outreach provision;
 - An after-school play scheme operating between the hours of 15:00 hours to 18:30 hours. This will be in term time only - Monday to Friday;
 - A holiday scheme, changing from the current all day provision to two sessions between 10:00 to 13:00 hours and 14:00 to 19:00 hours. This will increase the service we can offer to 20 children a day during the holidays and will reduce pressure that many families experience when schools are closed; and
 - A Saturday play scheme changing from the current all day provision to two sessions. As above this will increase the service we can offer and reduce pressure for families.

3. Update

- 3.1 The Parklands Centre has been refurbished to accommodate children overnight as well as providing the after school activity that currently takes place at Aut Even. The overnight short breaks service currently being provided at Aut Even will move to the Parklands site. The staff at Aut Even will also transfer to Parklands.
- 3.2 The project is now at the stage of final signoffs and the project has come in on budget. Once signoffs have been received the registration to Ofsted will be submitted. We anticipate this will be early in 2019.
- 3.3 The Ofsted registration process takes on average 16 weeks, therefore it is expected that the first children can start to use the centre from April 2019.
- 3.4 There have been slight delays in the project to ensure the health and safety of those that will be using the new facility, including vulnerable children and young people.
- 3.5 Fire risk assessments have already taken place and we are pleased that the centre has been given "high standard" rating.
- 3.6 The building has been refurbished and fitted with new equipment including 2 new profiling beds, three new high tech hoists.
- 3.7 Robust communication and engagement has taken place with families and based upon feedback it is expected that all families will transition to

Parklands. A series of tea visits has been planned to allow the 45 children currently using Aut Even to get to know their new facility.

- 3.8 An open day has been planned with the children an integral part of the event.
- 3.9 Further decisions will follow with regard to the disposal or re-purposing of Aut Even building.

4. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Project – non completion	The Ofsted registration will not be signed off in time.	Close monitoring and liaison with Ofsted	C2
Reputational Risk	Families may criticise the Council for the delay in delivering the project	Robust communication with families and stakeholders and ongoing engagement with Medway Parent Carer Forum	C3

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A consultation took place in 2017 which was detailed in the report submitted to Cabinet in December 2017. Communication continues with families and stakeholders and ongoing engagement with Medway Parent Carer Forum.

6. Implications for Looked After Children

- 6.1 There are no implications for Looked After Children.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 At its meeting on 19 December 2017 Cabinet considered a report on the future of short breaks provision for children with SEND and agreed option D, the relocation of Aut Even to Parklands at an estimated capital cost of £299,812. The 2018/19 capital programme includes £390,000 of SEND Capital Grant, representing the balance brought forward from previous years. The project to refurbish Parklands is to be met from this grant.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The legal and policy framework under which Short Breaks are provided is:
- *The Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children Regulations 2011* (aka Short Breaks Regulations) requires Local Authorities to provide breaks from

caring to assist parents and others who care for children with a short break from their caring responsibilities and to produce and review a Short Break Statement.

- *Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970* requires a Local authority to provide to a disabled child a short break when necessary to meet that child's needs.
- *The Children and Families Act 2014* seeks to ensure that children, young people and families are at the centre of decision making. It requires Local Authorities to offer families the choice of having a personalised budget to better enable them to have more control over the services they use.

8.2 There are important duties on the NHS to provide short breaks to disabled children with complex health needs and to co-operate with local authorities in the provision of short breaks generally, e.g. Children Act 2004 section 10, which requires local authorities and health bodies to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, and the NHS Act 2006 section 82, which requires NHS bodies and local authorities to co-operate to advance the health and welfare of their populations.

8.3 There are also limits to the kind of health related support that can be provided by a local authority. In particular local authorities are not permitted to act as a 'substitute NHS for children'. As such high levels of medical care (including nursing care) for children will be the responsibility of CCGs, not local authorities.

9. Recommendations

9.1 The Committee is recommended to note the report.

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Appendices

None

Background papers

None