

## **CABINET**

**15 DECEMBER 2020**

### **MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brake, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services

Report from: Ian Sutherland, Director of People – Children & Adults Services

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#### **Summary**

On 17 December 2019, Cabinet approved a consultation on the future provision of 147 Nelson Road, Medway Council's in-house Community Resource Centre for those who have social care needs because of their mental health. The centre provides a number of activities based at the centre as well as activities in the community.

Over recent years the service has been underutilised, numbers of people using the services are reducing year on year causing the Adult Social Care Service to question the viability of the service and how we might improve our community based mental health support offer.

Medway community mental health services approach to day services is in need of modernisation.

Opportunities were outlined in the original paper to provide support to people currently using 147 in alternative ways, whilst ensuring that the Council continues to meet its responsibilities.

This report was considered by the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 November 2020. The comments of this Committee are set out at section 5 of the report.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

1.1 Medway's vision for Adult Social Care is to 'Support the people of Medway to live full, active lives, to live independently for as long as possible, and to play

a full part in their local communities'. The six strategic aims are prevention, personalisation, innovation, partnership, integration and safeguarding.

- 1.2 In response to the Care Act (2014), Medway Council is working to give people more choice and control over the support they receive from adult social care.
- 1.3 The Medway Adult Mental Health Strategy 2018-2023 has been developed drawing on these national priorities. This joint strategy sets out the vision for improving outcomes for people with mental health problems in Medway and sets out how the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group, Medway Council and other local partners will work together to support people with mental health needs to live a fulfilled life and to avoid over dependence on formal services.
- 1.4 Reviewing the scope of the Council's in-house mental health community services provides opportunity to explore improved ways of working, while maintaining the Council's statutory duties to service users.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 On 17 December 2019, Cabinet considered a paper on the options available to provide sustainable community mental health support to the people of Medway.
- 2.2 The Consultation was conducted from 9 January to 5 March 2020. It included questionnaires, both online and postal options were available. We held meetings with all service users at the Resource Centre. We also held further open meetings with stakeholders which included family and friends of the users and, professionals from across Health and Social Care. We also carried out individual reviews with those who attend the centre accessing need and Care Act eligibility.
- 2.3 In March 2020, in response to Government's guidance on Covid we took the decision to close the centre and pause the consultation process to allow Adult Social care to focus on the pandemic. The centre was closed from 20 March until 3 August. During the closure regular contact was made with all Service Users. Support was provided via telephone contact and activity sets were sent to those who wanted them to provide meaningful activity.
- 2.4 In early June the Resource Centre began running small community-based groups in accordance with Government guidelines. Since the reopening, the centre has been supporting 38 people in groups of up to eight people five days a week.

### 3. Options

Option	Current Budget - Direct running cost (£)	Potential annual saving (£)
1. Do Nothing	£242.2k	Nil
2. Development of the Service	£640.1k (includes budget for CSOT)	£49k
3. Closure of the Centre	£242.2k	£118k + possible capital receipt from sale of the property

#### 3.1 Option 1: Do nothing

3.1.1 147 is popular with users, however, it is accessed by relatively small numbers and is not meeting a statutory need for most. In addition, elements of the service can be seen to duplicate what is offered by CSOT (Community Support Outreach Team), adult education and other mainstream leisure services. It is believed that if the centre closed, some existing users would no longer require social care services and others could have their needs met in more personalised ways, thus ensuring no one is left exposed.

3.1.2 The annual budget for direct expenditure on the service is £242.2k. The likely value of the building has been estimated to be higher than £100k from sale by auction.

#### 3.2 Option 2: Development of the service

3.2.1 An amalgamation of 147 Nelson Rd with CSOT and a broadening of the remit to possibly include learning disability could achieve economies of scale and reduce the need to purchase external day care placements. Further engagement would be required to discuss with service users what they believe would be of benefit for them. This option would focus on recovery which would include employment, volunteering opportunities as well a focus on integration into local community services such as leisure and culture. Community mental health day services will be more integrated into local communities. There would be a focus on people's strength rather than what someone cannot do.

3.2.2 This option would also focus on young people transitioning from children's services and the staff would work with the young person and their family to explain the focus on recovery, achieving the young person's full potential and ensuring they are connected to and with their local community.

3.2.3 Staff in the mental health community service would be further up skilled to be more outward and community focussed, supporting people in their journey toward readiness or maintain recovery with a focus on what they can achieve for the future.

- 3.2.4 In the new mental health community model there would be a focus on skills training to individuals' abilities to achieve their potential.
- 3.2.5 More people would be involved in meaningful activities and consequently it would be expected greater independence and therefore reduced dependence on adult social care.
- 3.2.6 People who use 147 Nelson Rd feel that a base and dedicated staff team is very important to their wellbeing and as part of the service model, community options will be delivered with the agreement that there will be dedicated base and access to community services.
- 3.2.7 The new delivery approach for community mental health services could be groundbreaking, creating a new way of partnership working with leisure and culture and community service that in the longer terms shapes opinions and behaviours of the public leading to improved mental health and improved integration into the local community.
- 3.2.8 The annual budget for CSOT is £397.9k. There is a small amount of income generated from client contribution.
- 3.2.9 Amalgamating the two services would mean the deletion of one full time equivalent Range 5 post generating a saving of £49k a year, although estimated one off forecast redundancy costs of around £42k would be incurred.
- 3.2.10 The current combined budget for the two services before any potential savings are realised would be £640.1k per year, although it is envisaged that this could be reduced and or re-invested to develop the service further.

### 3.3 Option 3: Closure of the centre

- 3.3.1 Closure would release the current budgeted direct expenditure cost of £242.2k per year, although this option could only be achieved by reconfiguring the service as outlined in Option 2 in providing a service function approach, rather than a building / centre approach. Set against this would be the ongoing cost of alternative provision of £124.6k and forecast one off redundancy costs of around £42k. It would also free up the site, which has a capital value likely to be in excess of £100k. For information, in accordance with Chapter 3, Part 5 of the constitution disposals above £100k would be matter for Cabinet.

## 4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 There is increasing evidence to suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the mental health of sections of the population differently, depending on their circumstances. The pandemic seems to have widened mental health inequalities, with the groups that had the poorest mental health pre-crisis also having had the largest deterioration in mental health during lockdown. (*Direct*

*and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on health and Wellbeing Rapid evidence review July 2020).*

- 4.2 The pandemic, and its continuation, is particularly critical for people with poor mental health. The sudden closure of 147 Nelson Rd during restriction has meant that a number of people have become unwell and this has put greater strain on individuals and their families.
- 4.3 The economic effects are also variable. There are some signs of increasing economic inequality, with more people on lower personal incomes reporting reduced income in the household because of the coronavirus. As lockdown has continued, people have been working fewer hours, and being less able to save for the future, while fewer people with higher incomes have been impacted financially.
- 4.4 Already, estimates are that half a million people are likely to experience mental health problems as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic.
- 4.5 Between April and August 2019 Medway's AMPHS (Approved Mental Health Professionals) assessed 259 people under the Mental Health Act. During the same period in 2020, 285 assessments were undertaken approximately a 10% increase in assessments.
- 4.6 The Centre provides support to a significant number of people over the age of fifty and has been supporting 26 people for over five years. It is acknowledged that a small number of people require long term support.
- 4.7 Of the 38 people who the service supports, the majority live south of the river in either ME4 or ME7 postcode.

Postcode	Attendance	%
ME1,2,3	7	18%
ME4	11	29%
ME5	4	11%
ME7&8	16	42%
Total	38	100%

## 5. Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 12 November 2020

- 5.1 The Assistant Director Adult Social Care introduced this report which set out the outcome of a consultation on the future of provision at 147 Nelson Road, the Council's in-house Community Resource Centre for those who have social care needs because of their mental health.
- 5.2 Three options had been consulted on:
- 5.3 Option 1 – do nothing  
Option 2 – development of the services

Option 3 – closure of the centre.

- 5.4 The Assistant Director advised that option 2 was the preferred option, whereby the service would be amalgamated with the Community Support Outreach Team (CSOT).
- 5.5 There was general support for option 2 amongst Members but comments were made that more detail was needed when the paper was considered by Cabinet and that the consultation had ended before the pandemic had begun.
- 5.6 Concern was expressed by some Members about the anxiety and distress the consultation had caused amongst people who used the service. The point was also made that future consultations involving vulnerable groups should be carried out so as to minimise the anxiety it can cause. In response, the Director acknowledged the anxieties this could cause especially for people with mental health issues. Option 2 would be a better model of social care and allow access to the same range of support available to others in the community.
- 5.7 It was considered that service users would probably welcome the broadening of the service.
- 5.8 A view was expressed that 147 Nelson Road had not been a failing service but rather had been run down and vacancies not filled. The staff who worked there had always been willing to provide additional services. As disposing the site would not have realised a high capital receipt then it was more financially prudent to pursue option 2.
- 5.9 It was suggested that it would be better to carry out a skills audit of staff and an appraisal of training needs in the light of proposed future of the service before pursuing the forecasted redundancy, particularly given the difficulties in recruiting to mental health posts. The Assistant Director advised that the existing skills of the workforce would be looked at before any redundancies were considered and service users would be involved in the development of the service. The Director added that he understood the concerns about what were fairly modest savings and he would look at how best to respond to this challenge when the matter was considered by Cabinet. The key was to maintain a level of investment while recognising there were alternative ways to deliver the service and support needed.
- 5.10 In response to a request that the Council's website provide more and cleared information about the Centre, the Assistant Director commented she had already started to look at this.
- 5.11 **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to recommend Option 2 to Cabinet and also that more detail be provided to Cabinet to reflect the fact that the consultation had ended before the pandemic had begun.

(In accordance with Council Rule 12.6, Councillors Murray and Price asked that their votes in favour be recorded.)

## 6. Comments of the Director of People – Children and Adults Services

- 6.1 In March 2020, in response to Government's guidance on Covid the decision to temporarily close the centre was taken and the consultation process was paused to allow Adult Social care to focus on the pandemic to ensure some of Medway's most vulnerable residents were provided with the care and support needed.
- 6.2 The mental health needs of the total population of Medway must be considered in the decision-making process and with the consultation ending before the pandemic begun, it is particularly important that attention is given to the impact that the pandemic will have on people's mental health.
- 6.3 The development of the service (option 2) will introduce a model of community based mental health support and will strengthen our offer for those suffering with poor mental health. This offer will be driven by a desire to provide good quality support in the community making good use of existing services.
- 6.4 Ensuring that our staff have appropriate skills, expertise and experience will be a vital element when developing the service.
- 6.5 It is envisaged that as the new service is developed, with support being provided in venues throughout Medway, the Centre's importance to the service will diminish.
- 6.6 The proposals contained in the report supports the development of an improved, outcome focused, needs led service that is envisaged will improve the service user experience.
- 6.7 Although the development of the service (option 2) does not produce significant savings, the proposed service has the potential to prevent more expensive care and support packages.
- 6.8 Over the next 6 months we will work with service users and colleagues across social care to develop the model of a community based mental health support offer. This offer will be driven by a desire to provide good quality support in the community making good use of existing services.
- 6.9 We will work with colleagues from across the Council including leisure to develop an offer that reaches into communities across Medway improving the demographic we support.
- 6.10 Community mental health day services will be more integrated into local communities, which will inevitably result in the use of the building at 147 Nelson Road reducing significantly and potentially no longer being required to deliver the service.

6.11 The development of the service will focus on people's strength rather than what someone cannot do.

## 7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Reputation	Could reflect poorly on us due to a change of the provision.	For everyone to be well informed of the rationale behind the suggested changes.	C3
Service Users	Changes may result in a decline in individuals mental health.	Change will be well communicated and managed with all our service users.	C3
Staff	Changes to staffing structure could result in redundancies or change of roles.	Change will be well communicated and managed with all our staff	C3

## 8. Consultation

- 8.1 The consultation ran from 9 January 2020 until 5 March 2020. Service users, the public, health professionals and staff were all invited to give their views on the proposals.
- 8.2 All service users were contacted by mail and invited to complete a survey. An online survey was published on the Council's website. Stakeholders were also contacted and directed towards the website. A printable version of the survey was also sent, to enable respondents to print out and post their responses if they wished.
- 8.3 There were 106 responses to the consultation. The numbers of each type of respondent are shown in the table below. Responses to each of the questions, and the comments received are shown in the rest of this section.
- 8.4 Three consultation meetings were held at the centre, two were exclusively for users of the service and their families, one for all stake holders and the members of the community.



8.5 Question - Are you responding to the consultation mainly as.

Type of Respondent	Count	%
**Someone using the day service	45	42.5
**A family member of someone using the day service	21	19.8
**A Medway resident	21	19.8
A professional partner (e.g. social worker, support worker etc.)	14	13.2
An employee/volunteer working at the day service	7	6.6
Ex-service user	3	2.8
A business currently operating out of the day service	1	0.9
Anonymous	1	0.9
Retired NHS worker	1	0.9
Total number of respondents	106	100

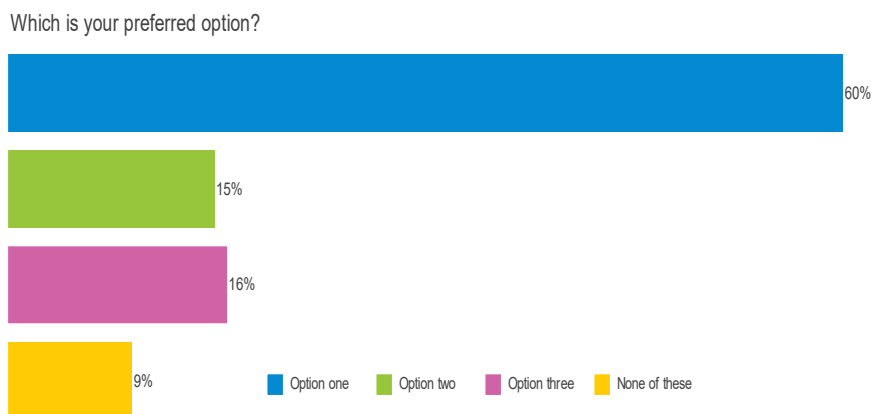
\* In total there were 106 individual responses,

8.6 Question - Which is your preferred option

- Do Nothing
- Develop the Service
- Close the Service

8.6.1 Overall, 60% of respondents agree with the option “Do nothing. Retain the current level of provision provided at 147 Nelson Road Day Service”.

8.6.2 The graph below shows which option respondents preferred.



8.7 Question - Please explain why you have chosen that option.

8.7.1 Overall, most respondents were not in favour of making changes to how the day centre is currently run.

## 8.8 Comments from those currently using the service who chose option one

### 8.8.1 Comments about cost

*"It's still needed, but stop charging so much. Medway Council has taken it away from users by charging too much. More would use had it if it was not so expensive."*

### 8.8.2 General comments about liking the service

- "Because, I want it to stay the same. It's great."
- "I like the way it is."
- "I am happy with the way things are at 147 as I am comfortable and settled with the setup and would be too anxious with a lot of new changes."
- "Because I enjoy the activities and social contact"
- "Because having attended 147 for years previously more days than once a week it would be a shock if it was to close"

### 8.8.3 Negative comments about the service

- "If it's not used enough then change or add to its uses and advertise its services so people know they are there."
- "Waste of money for Medway Council. Only open to keep staff and manager in jobs."
- "This is work creation and a waste of resources"
- "Building is oppressive along with the unwelcoming staff team. Not offering anything different from community activities especially now there is no drop in facility and closed bank holidays."

## 8.9 The Consultation Meetings

8.9.1 Three consultation meetings attended by 78 people were held on the 11th and 13th February. The people attended included current and former service users, family members, health and social care professionals and local Councillors. The attendees were overwhelmingly in favour of the centre remaining open.

8.9.2 The arguments in favour the Centre remaining open included the uniqueness of the service that provides a safe space where people are accepted and don't feel threatened.

8.9.3 The small size of the groups and the staff's ability to manage challenging behaviour was cited as one of the major benefits. People spoke about the value of the relationships that service users form with staff and peers.

8.9.4 A number of people reported that although they enjoyed the various groups the real benefit was having somewhere to go to meet friends and feeling accepted by the group.

8.9.5 People were worried that if the centre closed there would not be anywhere else to go and they would become isolated.

#### Quotes

- *“It is small, feels like home, there are experienced staff, and you are not waiting days to see someone if you need help.”*
- *“By having a community resource that works would help reduce going to hospital would it not?”*
- *“I don’t think we have this resource anywhere else. This place does give that support and limits the chances of going to hospital.”*
- *“I tried out other groups and did not like them.”*
- *“Art and social groups. It is much more than that.... This place has helped me stay out of hospital and self-harming it takes my mind off things. Not sure what I am going to do without this place.... This is my lifeline.”*

## 9. Climate change implications

9.1 There are no significant climate change implications with this report.

## 10. Financial implications

10.1 The possible financial implications for the 3 options are set out in the table below.

Option	Current Budget - Direct running cost (£,000)	Potential annual saving (£,000)
1. Do Nothing	£242.2k	Nil
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10.2 In addition, there are possible one-off redundancy costs associated with Options 2 and 3, estimated to be around £42k. In previous years redundancy costs have been met from the severance reserve and therefore have not impacted the revenue budget.

## 11. Legal implications

11.1 The Local Authority has a duty to undertake a consultation with service users, members of staff and the wider community and a general duty to inform, consult and involve local people (s138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007). There is a further duty to consult in

accordance with s149 of the Equality Act 2010 where the change proposed is likely to impact upon members of the community with protected characteristics.

- 11.2 Case law has further clarified that consultation with users and relatives before closure of a day centre is usually required (R (on the application of) v Shropshire Council [2014] EWCA Civ 404). The consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage, must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response, and must allow adequate time for consideration and response. The general recommendation for the duration of a consultation is 12 weeks but shorter consultation periods may be appropriate according to the circumstances and issues concerned.
- 11.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been produced and is appended to this report (Appendix 1).

## 12. Recommendation

- 12.1 The Cabinet is asked to consider the comments of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out at section 5 of the report together with the Director's comments set out at section 6 of the report and agree Option 2 (Development of the Service).

## 13. Suggested Reasons for Decision

- 13.1 Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Medway Council remains vigilant in our support for residents and service users with Mental Health needs.
- 13.2 Progressing with option 2 and developing the service by firstly bring together the service at 147 Nelson Road and our Community Support Outreach Team will strengthen our offer during what is a difficult time for those suffering with poor mental health.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1 – Diversity Impact Assessment

## Background papers

[Cabinet, 17 December 2019 report - Community Mental Health Support \(147 Nelson Road\)](#)