

REPORT FOR DECISION



DECISION OF:	CABINET
DATE:	1 October 2014
SUBJECT:	Learning Disability Day Service Modernisation: Replacement of Wheatfields with alternative bases
REPORT FROM:	Cllr Rishi Shori, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kat Sowden, Head of Workforce Modernisation 0161 253 5406 k.e.sowden@bury.gov.uk
TYPE OF DECISION:	KEY DECISION
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/STATUS:	In the public domain
SUMMARY:	<p>The report seeks approval to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The holding of consultations over the relocation of services from Wheatfields in 2015 2. The required capital funding of the alternative facilities. <p>The proposal forms the final stage of the learning disability day service modernisation. This process has taken place over the last 10 years and will see the replacement of all large day centres with fit for purpose community core bases and outreaches throughout the Borough.</p>
OPTIONS & RECOMMENDED OPTION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proceed to consult and agree capital funding Formal negotiations on identified sites can proceed and refurbishment work can commence. Customers and families can be consulted and matched to alternative venues. Plans can be made for disposal of the Wheatfields site. The Wheatfields building can begin to be decommissioned as soon as appropriate avoiding further maintenance costs. 2. Do Nothing

	<p>Customers will be supported in an environment which is no longer fit for purpose. Backlog maintenance of a minimum of £300k would be required simply to keep Wheatfields functional. Further costs would be need to be incurred in respect of improving the environment to be safe and fit for purpose if customers were to remain there. Minimal work has been undertaken in recent years due to budget constraints and reluctance to invest in a building which did not fulfil the future vision of the service.</p> <p>Recommended Option</p> <p>Option 1 Proceed to consult and agree capital funding</p>
IMPLICATIONS:	
Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:	Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes
Statement by the S151 Officer: Financial Implications and Risk Considerations:	<p>These proposals outline the latest stage of the modernisation of the Learning Disability service.</p> <p>The proposals entail a capital cost of £519,146 (inclusive of fees & fit-out).</p> <p>It is proposed to fund these costs from the capital receipt arising from the disposal of the Wheatfields site.</p> <p>The Revenue Budget for Wheatfields stands at £205,546; this will remain pending the implementation of proposals, however £57,500 has been earmarked to cover costs during the disposal phase – e.g. utilities and security.</p>
Health and Safety Implications	Option 1 does not present any health and safety issues. Health and safety matters would continue to be managed in the same way as currently within the services concerned. Accessibility to buildings has been considered within design and development plans. Health and safety could become an issue at Wheatfields if the building remains and continues to deteriorate.
Statement by Executive Director of Resources and Regulation (including Health and Safety Implications)	The current Wheatfields site is no longer fit for purpose. These proposals outline the best way forward in terms of managing the Council’s property portfolio, and the modernisation of the service.
Equality/Diversity implications:	Yes (see paragraph below)

Considered by Monitoring Officer:	Yes
Wards Affected:	All
Scrutiny Interest:	

TRACKING/PROCESS

DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Strategic Leadership Team	Cabinet Member/Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet/Committee	Council	

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Learning Disability day service has been undergoing modernisation for the past 10 years. This modernisation has been undertaken in accordance with a number of national strategic documents, 'Valuing People' white paper (2001), 'Valuing People Now' (2009), and 'Valuing Employment Now' white paper (2009).
- 1.2 The modernisation of the service was formalised in the Modernisation Plan which was agreed by the Learning Disability Partnership Board in 2005. The plan outlined a vision to provide services which are local to where people live, integrated within communities, and involve people in meaningful activities which promote their choice, independence and control.
- 1.3 In accordance with the modernisation plan the service has moved from being delivered via 3 large segregated day centres and 3 outreaches in 1997 to 3 core bases, 10 outreach bases in the community, and a volunteering project. We still retain 1 large day centre (Wheatfields). These services support 190 people across Bury. In addition, the Physical Disability service which was previously delivered at Seedfield has now become part of the wider day service and has been reconfigured in 2013 and relocated to Castle Leisure centre as 'Restart' early in 2014.
- 1.4 The intention of the modernisation of the day service is to move completely away from the large segregated day centres and have the service entirely delivered via core bases, community outreaches, and meaningful project groups. Therefore work is continually underway to identify new venues which are ideally community based in areas where people with a learning and/or physical disability live. Relocation of customers at Wheatfields is the final stage of this piece of work.
- 1.5 There have already been 74 people supported to move out of the day centres over the past couple of years through the development of Sunnybank, Haymarket and Elton core bases, Church Lane and the Roc outreach and people moving out to the existing outreach groups at the Mosses, Elton, Topping Fold, Midway and the Bridge. In addition, during autumn 2014 11 customers will move into the new outreach at The Green and in early 2015 Ramsbottom core base refurbishment will complete and 11 customers will return to the former

Whittle Pike/Hazelhurst site in to new premises creating capacity for a further 4 places.

- 1.6 The Green is an example of previous work in this area where a Council building which was under utilised, in disrepair and at risk of being lost as an asset has been retained. The project has cost in the region of £200k for extension and redevelopment to a community facility which will act as an outreach for the day service, a community venue and a café. In addition, the bowling team which was at risk of losing their facilities have been able to remain at the site with the potential to grow the resource in future years.
- 1.7 34 people who use Wheatfields need to be relocated to community bases which are fit for purpose in accordance with the modernisation agenda. Customers live in both the North and the South of the borough. Their collective usage is 127 days which equates to 25 places 5 days per week. People have differing needs and levels of complexity. As a result in order to fully accommodate customers in appropriate alternative bases and create additional capacity for new customers coming in to the service a combination of core bases (additional facilities for complex needs) and outreaches are required in Radcliffe, Whitefield and Prestwich. It is planned that the developments will have the capacity to provide 210 days which equates to 42 places, 5 days a week an increase of 17 places. In addition, a number of customers from Bury are currently transported across the borough to Wheatfields and a base more central to Bury would be closer to home for this group.
- 1.8 The Wheatfields site is situated in a residential estate. Land from the former Knowle Hill View site is adjacent and has already been redeveloped to supported housing.

2.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 A number of potential sites have been identified to replace Wheatfields. Initial scoping work has been undertaken to identify the feasibility and cost of refurbishment / development to make these fit for purpose. This work has been undertaken in conjunction with the Architects department and is based on detailed plans and estimates in relation to 3 sites and an estimate based on cost of previous extension / refurbishment in respect of a fourth site.
- 2.2 Work with stakeholders involved at the sites is at an early stage and will be progressed further once it is known whether funding for development/refurbishment can be confirmed.
- 2.3 Two of the sites build on the experience of The Green and propose to utilise bowling pavilions. This approach is designed to utilise an existing community facility where the bowling teams are not self managing and therefore are at risk of losing the facility. Discussions to date have been between Parks and Countryside service and Learning Disability Day Services.
- 2.4 Site 1 Bolton Road Park Bowling Green, Radcliffe
It is proposed to develop the current bowling pavilion at Bolton Road Park into a core base. This would utilise the existing building with some refurbishment to alter the internal layout and improve heating and lighting. Estimates for this building work are £81,478 including architects fees. A further £4k for fit out would be required.
- 2.5 Site 2 Hoyles Park Bowling Green, Bury
It is proposed to develop the current bowling pavilion at Hoyles Park into a core base. This would utilise the existing building with some extension and refurbishment to alter the internal layout and improve heating and lighting. Estimates for this building work are £144,268 including architects fees. A further £4k for fit out would be required.
- 2.6 Site 3 Fairfax Rd, Prestwich

It is proposed to develop the Council owned building currently rented by Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) into an outreach base. It has been indicated that this venue will become free in the near future. Plans would utilise the existing building with some refurbishment to alter the internal layout and improve heating and lighting. Estimates for this building work are £41,400 including architects fees. A further £4k for fit out and signage would be required.

2.7 Site 4 Core base Whitefield/Prestwich

The fourth site is yet to be confirmed. A number of options are currently being explored. Initial consideration was given to creation of a new modular build but initial cost estimates suggest this would be in excess of £700k to achieve. Therefore potential existing sites are currently being explored. For the purposes of allowing this business case to move forward so that work could commence on the other 3 sites it is suggested that a budget allocation of £240,000 be considered. This is on the basis of the costs from The Green which involved refurbishment, extension, re-roof, running gas to the building, and internal fit-out. Whilst this figure is only an estimate, when applied by Architects department to sites currently under consideration it would be sufficient to ensure the buildings were fit for purpose. It has a sound basis in terms of work during 2014 on The Green and is considerably less than a new modular build.

3.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

CAPITAL

- 3.1 Based on initial plans for the three known sites, Bolton Road Park Pavilion, Hoyles Park Pavilion, and Fairfax Road it is estimated that the modernisation would cost £279,146 including fees. A further estimate for a fourth core base site in the Whitefield/Prestwich area of £240,000 brings the total cost of alternative sites to vacate Wheatfields to £519,146. This estimated cost takes account of all building works including roof, heating, windows, and disabled facilities as well as redecoration. It is possible that an application could be made for some funding from the energy loan fund to support these redevelopments. The Green was successful in a £30,000 loan from this source which is repaid back over a period of years.
- 3.2 Architects figures include a consideration for contingency arising once work commences. This accounts for unplanned/unknown work. This approach was used with The Green and has been effective in ensuring that the planned budget was adhered to.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the first call on the capital receipt obtained from the sale of Wheatfields should be to fund the works required to the replacement facilities. Based on the market evaluation for the Wheatfields site, even if the full estimates including contingency amounts are required for the redevelopment/refurbishment work, disposal of the land at the estimated value would be sufficient to fund the proposed work.

REVENUE

- 3.4 The Wheatfields revenue budget currently stands at £205,546 per annum. Within the day service modernisation the approach has been to reconfigure the revenue budget of each day centre to cover the replacement core bases and outreaches developed to replace it. Once each base has been operational for 12 months this is reviewed and revenue budget has always reduced based on factors such as reduced transport for customers. This allowed the service to make savings each year. In respect of Wheatfields, initial profiling of the budget against four potential replacement bases indicates that this same approach could be taken so that revenue budget remains the same initially but could then be reviewed after 12 months with a view to making reductions where appropriate.

- 3.5 In re-profiling the Wheatfields budget in this way an allocation of £57,500 has been left against Wheatfields in Year 1 to account for ongoing utility and security costs until the site is disposed of. This figure is based on the evidence of the cost of retaining William Kemp Heaton in this way. If the site is disposed of sooner this figure could be reduced. Delays in disposal of the site beyond 12 months would increase this figure further and become an overspend as not accounted for beyond Year 1.

4.0 ASSET CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The proposal focuses on utilisation of existing assets and investing in them to make them more accessible and sustainable as a community resource. By disposal of one building which is not fit for purpose for the future, this proposal seeks to retain and develop four existing assets for the future. 4.2 The Wheatfields building is not fit for purpose In accordance with the Day Service vision, large day centres which distance people from their home community and incur significant commutes should be replaced with community based assets.
- 4.3 Due to budget pressures and in the knowledge that Wheatfields was not likely to be retained minimal repair and maintenance has been undertaken in recent years. Work has been limited to that absolutely necessary for the safety of staff and customers. As a result there is £300k of backlog maintenance if the building remains open into 2015/16. This would simply to maintain the building in its current state. If the building is to be retained in the longer term estimates would need to be obtained to establish the cost of bringing the building up to date and fit for purpose. The significant expenditure required to bring Wheatfields into an acceptable condition cannot be supported by a business case. Without the release of the site there is no clear source for capital funding of either backlog or future refurbishment work.
- 4.4 Given the above, the proposals are supported by the Head of Property & Asset Management.

5.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If this proposal proceeds care staff working within Wheatfields will transfer to outreach and core bases to support the customers transferred there. This practice has been ongoing within the day service as customers undergo transition from day centres to outreach bases and staff are familiar with the requirement to be flexible in this way.
- 5.2 In addition there are 2 part time Admin assistants (WTE1.1) who will also relocate to the new venues to continue to support the service.
- 5.3 There are 2 part time Domestic Assistants (WTE1.2) working at Wheatfields who may not be required to continue in their current role if this proposal proceeds. In the wider Day Service new posts of Building Support Workers have been created which ensures the buildings continue to be cleaned but also introduces a new role of supporting activity outside of the core Day Service operating time when buildings are rented out to other community groups. A decision has not be taken at this time about the nature of the posts that will be required, however if it is decided that Building Support Workers are required then these employees would be at risk of redundancy. Steps proposed to minimise redundancies include:
- Holding vacant posts elsewhere in the department which could be suitable as redeployment opportunities
 - Offering voluntary early retirement / voluntary severance to employees
 - Assessing the potential for bumped redundancies elsewhere within the service

- Seeking redeployment opportunities across the council
 - Providing re-training where this would enable an employee to be matched to a suitable alternative post
- 5.4 The department's track record of workforce planning in short timescales is good and robust protocols have been developed for supporting employees with high levels of success and minimal compulsory redundancy.
- 5.5 If it was not possible to successfully redeploy the 2 Domestic staff then VER/VS for these staff would incur a one-off cost in year 1 of approx £10,000 which could be found from surplus budget at Wheatfields.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Proceeding with this proposal poses a risk around the unconfirmed site in Whitefield/Prestwich. Although a site is not yet confirmed there are potential sites available and estimates have been based on these sites and on the cost of work in 2014 at The Green. Based on this, the figure assumed will be sufficient to cover refurbishment plans for an alternative core base. Delaying until a fourth base is confirmed will delay plans progressing and delay the release of the Wheatfields site. Relocating customers to alternative sites is a complex process and is ideally conducted in a phased way. This can be best achieved if alternative sites become available in a staggered way over a period of time. Delaying progress until all sites are confirmed would cause a 'bottle neck' both within Architects and within the service as all sites would be ready to progress at the same time. In addition, the longer Wheatfield's is retained the more likely further maintenance costs will be incurred on the building.
- 6.2 It is also a risk that Wheatfields site will not be disposed of quickly. If this occurs ongoing costs for utilities and security will continue to be incurred. These are estimated at £57,500 per annum. It is therefore proposed that early marketing of the Wheatfields site takes place once alternative bases are confirmed, funding for refurbishment agreed and transition planning for customers is in place.
- 6.3 Risk in relation to the transition of service users from day centres to the proposed new bases would be managed through the robust and well established transition process in place within the service. Careful planning and preparation along with risk assessment and detailed communication will be in place to ensure that individuals and their support networks are fully involved and in control of this process.
- 6.4 Doing nothing will fail to maximise the opportunity to work in partnership between Parks and Countryside and Day Services to strengthen communities and improve life chances for vulnerable groups.
- 6.5 Doing nothing will also mean that the future of the bowling clubs at Bolton Road Park and Hoyles Park is uncertain and the facility may have to close, removing a community resource.

7.0 CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 Extensive consultation with service users, families, and interest groups in relation to the day service Modernisation Plan has taken place over the past 8 years.
- 7.2 Discussions have already taken place between Learning Disability Day Service, Parks and Countryside, Asset Management and Architects to work in partnership on these proposals and they are deemed mutually beneficial to all parties.

- 7.3 If it is agreed for this proposal to proceed, consultation with key stakeholders including the current bowling teams at Bolton Road Park and Hoyles Park will be undertaken to seek their views. Bowlers, day service users, staff and the community will be invited to comment on the proposals and the design of the facilities.
- 7.4 Discussions around the fourth base will be able to be undertaken in knowledge of budget available which should allow them to progress more effectively than a more speculative discussion.
- 7.5 Implementation of these projects will be undertaken via the Authority's project management methodology. A Project Initiation Document will be developed with clear timescales and accountabilities. Work on the venues will as far as possible be planned and undertaken to minimise disruption to other users.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Equality Analysis indicates that these proposals will have a positive outcome for people with a learning and/or physical disability by providing an improved environment which integrates them with their local community. This should enable greater life opportunities and independence. The buildings being refurbished will have their accessibility improved which will benefit the public generally, especially those with disabilities. Carers of people with disabilities will also benefit from the people they care for being supported in an improved environment closer to their own community.

9.0 TIMESCALES

It would be proposed that negotiations with stakeholders concerned with the alternative venues take place October – December 2014 to confirm the plans for each venue.

Final specification of plans and procurement of contractors would take place January – February 2015 with work commencing thereafter.

The proposal is to vacate Wheatfield's on a planned basis as the alternative venues become ready for occupation and no later than December 2015.

Consultation with customers, carers and staff would commence once all venues are confirmed. This would enable them to make an informed choice about the best alternative base to meet their needs.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The Wheatfield's building is no longer fit for purpose and should be disposed of at the earliest opportunity. In accordance with the Day Service Modernisation the facility should be replaced with core and outreach bases which are more modern, fit for purpose, accessible, integrated into the community of the people who use the service, and sustainable in the future to meet the needs of existing customers and future demand.

Investment in four alternative bases would deliver this outcome and still generate a further estimated £340k surplus on the capital receipt beyond the cost of building refurbishment of the four alternative venues.

In addition, disposal of the site would avoid further maintenance costs incurring as the building becomes more dilapidated.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To proceed to negotiate with identified alternative venues to develop and finalise plans.
- 9.2 To proceed to inform, involve and then consult stakeholders.
- 9.3 To confirm capital funding for the renovation/refurbishment work as detailed within the report based on release of future capital receipt upon disposal of the Wheatfield's site.

List of Background Papers:-

Equality Analysis

Contact Details:-

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Wheatfields building:



The Pavilion at Clarence Park before work:



The Green at Clarence Park after work:



The Green at Clarence Park after work (internal):

