

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Subject: CLOSURE OF ROWANS SHORT BREAK SERVICE
Meeting: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date: 15 OCTOBER 2015
Author: HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK ADULT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the decision to close the Rowans Short Break Service which was taken at Council on the 11th February 2015. This was part of the budget saving options contained in the Revenue Budget Framework Report, which identified that closing the Rowans would save £100,000 to the budget for 2016/2017. Council Members acknowledged that if suitable alternative provisions could not be found in partnership with service users and families then a report would be brought back to Members for further scrutiny and discussion.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An internal review was carried out by the service in 2014 relating to the provision of respite/short breaks for adults with a learning disability and the services provided by the Rowans Short Break Service. Although it was recorded that the service is one of excellent standard and regarded highly by service users and carers, it remains one of very high cost which did not benchmark favourably in financial terms when compared with similar external provision (see 4.3). The Review Report included options for change but stated further work would be required with service users and carers should any decision on changing the Service be taken.
- 2.2 A comprehensive Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment was undertaken by the service when the option to close the Service was put forward. This acknowledged that a change in provision may be unsettling and anxiety provoking for service users and carers. The report indicated that further work on reviewing services in consultation with users and carers would be required.
- 2.3 At the Council's Special meeting held on 11th February 2015 savings proposals for 2016/17 were agreed. These included a proposal to save £100K through developing alternative provision to the current respite service delivered at the Rowans. It was acknowledged at the meeting that some of the proposals were still subject to consultation. The meeting also agreed that if, after the due process of consultation and engagement, any particular savings proposal was to be changed or delayed, the service would determine how the shortfall would be covered within their budget and refer to Members if this would require a change in Council policy.

3. COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT WORK

3.1 Following on from the decision taken by Council Members regarding closure, staff in Adult Services have communicated this decision to the 53 families who use the Rowans. This has taken the form of:

- 21st April 2015 - A letter from the Service Manager to each service user and carers conveyed information that the Council had decided to progress the option of closure of the Rowans.
- Two meetings hosted at Enable with groups of service users and parents were held on 28th April and 1st May 2015 at which Senior Managers from the Council were invited and they explained the rationale behind the proposal to close the Rowans.
- 30th July 2015 – A further letter from Head of Service to each service user and carer was sent in relation to the Council Deputation and the communication within Council with the Provost and the Chief Executive.
- Community Care Teams have begun meeting individually with service users and families to review their service provision and explore options of alternative respite. Approximately one third of these meetings have now taken place.
- 27th August 2015 - Head of Service and Service Manager met with parents to discuss their complaints and anxieties surrounding the closure of Rowans. A further meeting has been arranged for the 28th September with representation from the Parent Community.

4. ALTERNATIVE RESOURCES

4.1 The “Meadows/PSS” currently offers a similar respite/short breaks facility in the same location as the Rowans. It is a 4 bedded facility and is a registered service with the Care Inspectorate. People who use The Meadows do have more complex needs and as a result it may not be suitable for all of the service users needing respite. This is the only service in the local area which is comparable with the Rowans.

4.2 A short life working group “Developing opportunities around adults with Learning Disabilities short break/respite” has been established in partnership with the Short Breaks Bureau. The group has explored other potential alternatives for service users and families which has been collated and circulated to all Community Care Teams to assist and furnish Community Care Workers with more information to support individuals in the transition process. An event has been organised at the Sensory Centre on the 4th November whereby external providers will come along and hold information sessions to enable parents to ask questions and chat with other alternative organisations.

4.3 Chart of alternative resources and costings:

NAME	LOCATION	COST (per week)
Rowans	Larbert	£2275
The Meadows (PSS)	Larbert	£1467
Nickirian	Glenrothes	up to £2092
Badaguish	Aviemore	£1568
Highbarrwood (Enable)	Kilsyth	£1344
Mavisbank (Quarriers)	Glasgow	£1255
Clannalba Respite	Biggar	£3600
Upper Springland (Capability Scotland)	Perth	£1386
The Beeches (Redwoods Caring Foundation)	Edinburgh	£1611
Glamis House (Leonard Cheshire)	Glenrothes	£1410

5. IMPACT ON SERVICE USERS & FAMILIES

- 5.1 Many service users and families have been and remain opposed to the planned closure of the Rowans. They are seeking an opportunity to more widely engage on the issue of the shape of Learning Disability services and to participate in looking at alternatives in the round.
- 5.2 The Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment acknowledged that the personal financial contribution would be higher for service users and families wishing to use alternative service provision. In order to mitigate this a full financial assessment will be undertaken with service users changing providers to assess the impact. It was also recognised that some service users' needs and wellbeing may improve with a change in service provision. Notwithstanding that, for many service users, the change in service provision is unsettling.
- 5.3 Parents would like to have further discussion about the future of the Rowans and to be included in work around future service provision and the financial implications of change.
- 5.4 There is concern for some carers about utilising services further away and they are keen to discuss the timing of the closure as the Budget savings agreed by Council are for 2016/17.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Although engagement with Community Care Workers has begun with service users and families, there has been little uptake on suggested alternative short breaks. Parents are anxious and continue to press for engagement on future service provision.
- 6.2 In response to these concerns, it has been recognised that as the savings are only due to be made in the financial year 2016/17, the Rowans will remain open for the remainder of this financial year. A full review will now be undertaken in this timescale. This will be led by the Service Manager and will include partner agencies. This work will involve the participation and engagement of all families who access a Learning Disability Service and will look at service provision locally in the round – including day and respite services. As part of that process, financial options and targets will be considered. Transparency and communication are paramount to achieve mutual outcomes which are person centred and needs led whilst achieving current Council savings within the restricted financial climate. Once completed the outcome of the review will be reported to Members.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to:

- 7.1 Note the information provided in this update report regarding engagement with service users and carers;**
- 7.2 Note that the proposed closure of Rowans will not take place within the current financial year.**
- 7.3 Note that a full review will now be undertaken within the current financial year.**

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HEAD OF SOCIAL WORK ADULT SERVICES

Contact officer: Nikki Harvey, Service Manager – Social Work Adult Services
 Ext. 4134
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