

S23. CLOSURE OF ROWANS SHORT BREAK SERVICE

The committee considered a report by the Head of Social Work Adult Services providing an update on the decision to close the Rowans short break service and purchase an equivalent number of places externally (ref FC69). The report provided background information which highlighted that an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment had been undertaken. Information was also provided on communication and engagement work undertaken, alternative resources available, and the impact on service users and families. Deirdre Cilliers provided an overview of the report.

The committee asked how the required level of savings would be met if the Rowans Short Break Service was not closed. Deirdre Cilliers stated that the service would conduct a review of the available options and that services would be looked at in the round.

Members asked for an update on the engagement process undertaken. Deirdre Cilliers stated that, as highlighted in the report, there was a need for further engagement and that co-production was a possible way forward to develop the services which people need. She advised that she had met with parents of service users to discuss ideas for future services and that she was keen to get input from all parties as part of the comprehensive review.

The committee sought clarification on whether the Meadows was a comparable service. Deirdre Cilliers advised that the Meadows was local and that for some service users at the Rowans, their needs could be met at the Meadows. She highlighted that the key strength of the Meadows service was that it is local.

Further information was sought in relation to an event at the Sensory Centre on 4 November. Deirdre Cilliers stated that service providers in the area had been invited to promote the services they provide. This information would feed into the review and was part of the ongoing consultation process.

The committee discussed that most of the alternative resources highlighted in the report were not locally based. Deirdre Cilliers advised that one positive of the provision being further afield was to those who viewed respite as a 'holiday'. However, she recognised that for others more importance was placed on being near home and that this would be part of the review.

Members asked for an update on the acceptance of bookings for 2016, discussing that the public believed bookings were only being taken to December 2015. Deirdre Cilliers advised that bookings for 2016 were being taken but that she would look further into the matter and provide information after the meeting.

Decision

The committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the information provided in this update report regarding engagement with service users and carers;**
- (2) to note that the proposed closure of Rowans will not take place within the current financial year;**

- (3) to note that a full review will now be undertaken within the current financial year, and
- (4) to request that a report on the process of and lessons learned from the Rowans budget decision is submitted to a future meeting.

Councillor Chalmers rejoined the meeting following the conclusion of the previous item of business.