

FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2022

Report of the Executive Director – Adult Social Care & Health

Consultation and Engagement of the Learning Disability Day Opportunities
Service Redesign

1. Purpose

1.1 A report was presented to Cabinet on 10 March 2022 which sought approval to launch a 12-week consultation on two options for the future delivery of day opportunities for people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic. Following Cabinet approval, the consultation took place between the 28 March 2022 and 19 June 2022.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Committee of the results of the public consultation and provide an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to submit comments to Cabinet for consideration in making its decision.

2. Information and Analysis

2.1 Our aim is to support Derbyshire people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic to live the lives they want to live – safe, fulfilled lives in their local communities.

2.2 Feedback from people with a learning disability and / or who are autistic who we support told us they wanted to live safe, fulfilled lives as independently as possible in their communities with equal access to opportunities and services such as social and leisure, housing, jobs, health and transport. The proposals are also informed by the recent White Paper ‘People at the heart of care’ which sets out a vision for adult social care that has people and families at its heart.

2.3 Our emphasis is on future planning for independence including helping people to gain valuable daily living skills and confidence so they can explore options for how they might want to live and be supported.

2.4 By working with people and their families, we aim to help them to achieve their ambitions, progress and develop, leading to:

- Better informed choice
- Increased employment rates
- Increased community and digital inclusion
- Effective contingency planning

2.5 Alongside the principles of the Care Act 2014, the recent White Paper 'People at the heart of care' is driven by people with experience of Adult Care and promotes the approach we wish to take in Derbyshire in terms of person-centred support, co-production, independence and enabling people to live as part of their community.

2.6 The options for consideration within the Cabinet report were:

- **Option one – new model**

People are choosing alternatives to DCC day centre provision either for part or all of their services. The proposal is to support more people within the community to achieve greater independence and reduce the amount of building based traditional day service from DCC. Those with complex needs could access building-based day centres where appropriate.

Enhancing the Community Connector service to help support people with learning disabilities and/or who are autistic to use all opportunities available to them; this may include travel training, employment opportunities, social activities, direct payments, private voluntary and independent provision, voluntary work, digital support, relationship building, community groups, education, learning and work experience. Increasing them from 18 to 25 full time connectors as well as an additional manager.

Introducing a new Support Service Team, who would work alongside Community Connectors to provide more intensive support to people and their families for up to two years.

Dynamic Commissioning. Being proactive in identifying gaps in provision for day opportunities. Working closely with the private, voluntary, and the independent sector to encourage the development of creative ideas.

Encouraging micro providers and people using pooled budgets through direct payments to access local, shared support where appropriate.

Discontinue using eight day centres in a three phased approach and consolidate the remaining building-based day services across four centres:

- Alderbrook (High Peak)
- No Limits (Chesterfield)
- Outlook (Erewash)
- Parkwood (Amber Valley)

- **Option 2 – existing offer**

The alternative to the proposed new model is continue with the current twelve traditional building-based services.

2.7 Appendix 2 has further details of the proposals

2.8 The consultation undertaken incorporated current and previous attendees and their carers including the carers of those young people with Special Educational needs, together with private and voluntary organisations offering day care across Derbyshire.

2.9 Colleagues from the Adult Care Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team arranged 9 face to face meetings (two were subsequently cancelled due to lack of demand) and 5 virtual meetings (1 was cancelled due to lack of demand). These were hosted by the Service Director of Adult Social Care Transformation and Partnership, and participants were given the opportunity to comment on the proposals under consultation.

2.10 People were also directed to Derbyshire County Council's Consultation webpage which gave information about the proposals and links to either the standard on-line questionnaire or an easy read version.

2.11 The consultation used quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather people's views about the proposals. Officers enabled as many people as possible to take part, by offering a range of ways in which they could share their views:

- Current attendees and previous attendees with a learning disability and / or who are autistic together with their carers received an introductory letter detailing the arrangements for undertaking the consultation and the proposals for consideration

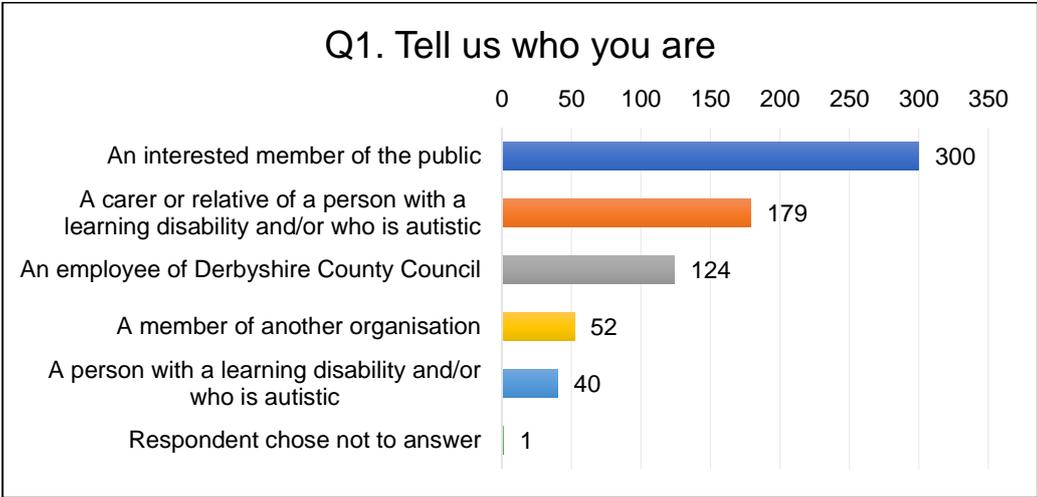
- Carers of young people identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) were sent a letter detailing the consultation and the ways in which they could share their views
- Private and voluntary sector day care providers in Derbyshire were sent an email informing them of the proposals and ways to take part in the consultation
- Offering the questionnaire in different formats, such as an easy read version if this was more appropriate
- Completing the questionnaire online (both in easy read format and standard version)
- Requesting a paper copy of the questionnaires via the Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team and sending in comments using the standard or easy read postal questionnaire
- Opportunity to write to the Council via a letter or a dedicated email address
- Telephone interview for those people having difficulty completing the questionnaire
- Being signposted to further information on the Derbyshire County Council website www.derbyshire.gov.uk/learningdisabilityredesign which gave an outline of the proposals and the ways in which people could share their views
- Media releases which were issued at the start and during the consultation encouraging people to take part and these were published on the county council's website. We also promoted the public consultation on a variety of corporate channels.
- Virtual meetings using Microsoft Teams. 4 virtual public meetings took place at various times of the day/early evening to enable as many people as possible to share their views and ask questions about the proposals
- Current day centre attendees and their carers were invited to face to face meetings. There were 7 meetings across Derbyshire giving people an opportunity to ask questions and express their views to the Service Director, Group Manager and members of the Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team.

2.12 The results of the public consultation have been collated and is now available by way of Appendix 3 and summarised in this Report.

2.13 There were three distinct approaches to the analysis of the qualitative material from the public consultation.

- a. Information gathered during face to face and virtual meetings
- b. Information gathered from letters, emails, and telephone calls
- b. Qualitative information contained in the online and paper questionnaires, both the standard and easy read versions.

2.13 Below is a summary of people responding



2.14 In total 2269 comments were received about the consultation. SECT themed the responses from all qualitative information, from the questionnaires, letters, emails, telephone calls, and meetings. Overall, 667 standard questionnaires and 29 easy read versions were completed. 244 people agreed with the proposal to redesign the offer, 429 disagreed with the proposal to change the offer. This was across the range of respondents including the general public, staff, carers, and people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic.

2.15 The Adult Care Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team analysed the responses, please see appendix 3 for detailed information.

The main themes are highlighted below:

Agreement with proposal

Some respondents agreed with the proposal to retain the four building based offer; to increase the community connectors and develop a Support Service Team. Within these numbers a smaller number agreed but with some reservations. These generally reflected a view in favour of retaining all twelve of the centres for those still wishing to attend, including those wishing to return to them, but that these should continue to be run alongside the proposals to increase the number of Community Connectors and the development of a Support Service Team.

Alternative suggestion

Some respondents utilised the open text boxes to make alternative suggestions to the proposals.

Barriers to change

Some respondents wished to inform of the issues they as carers and/or people with a learning disability and /or who are autistic would face, rendering the first proposal unviable for them.

Consultation

Some of the respondents indicated that they felt that the consultation was not inclusive enough.

As part of the consultation, we wrote to everyone that currently attends and have previously attended a Derbyshire County Council Day Centre. We also promoted the survey with carers of young people with special educational needs and the private, voluntary, and independent sector. The survey was on our website with standard and easy read versions available. We held face to face consultation meetings in each locality and virtual meetings including evening sessions for those unavailable during the day.

Covid

The consultation responses included those where there was some lack of clarity as to the proposals laid out in the Cabinet Report in contrast to the experiences that some individuals had with service provision changes and disruption during lockdown with Covid restrictions.

During the consultation meetings we ensured that any issues which related to covid restrictions in contrast to the current situation were clearly identified as separate issues before discussing the two options for future delivery of day opportunities being consulted upon and seeking views on this.

Disagree with the proposal

Some respondents simply disagreed with all the proposals.

Finance

Some respondents felt that these proposals did not consider the financial implications for the County Council going forward.

Future viability

Some respondents were concerned that should the redesign be agreed, this would bring into question the long-term viability of the four remaining centres.

Impact on people with a learning disability and / or who are autistic and carers

Participants told us of the negative impact that these proposals would have on them as carers and/or people with a learning disability and / or who are autistic. It was clear however that a proportion of the impact was supposed and was based upon the experience people had during lockdown with Covid restrictions. Further and as with impact on carers, some were more specific in reporting the impact on physical health, again supposed, and experienced during Covid.

Impact on colleagues

The consultation undertaken did not directly involve colleagues working for the Council, however as members of the public, such individuals have a right to voice an opinion on the proposals being consulted upon. Some participants identified themselves as colleagues working in day centres. However, some used the opportunity not to voice opinions on the proposals but rather talk about the impact the proposals would have directly on them as a colleague.

Further there was some concern within responses received from other participants as to what would happen to Council employees if the proposals were approved in due course.

Lack of information

Some participants reported feeling unable to answer some questions as they had not been given enough information to make an informed response.

It was important that we sought feedback during the consultation and listened to people's ideas, views, and suggestions to incorporate in future decision making.

We have gained very valuable feedback during the consultation process. All the responses received, and data obtained will be carefully considered as part of a comprehensive and robust Equalities Impact Assessment which will be prepared as part of the decision making process.

Lack of other opportunities

Some respondents reported that in their experience and understanding, there was not enough and good alternatives in the PVI to make the proposal of the redesign viable.

Length of support

Some respondents, in particular those who have already had experience of being supported by the Community Connector Service, felt that 12 weeks was not an adequate length of support.

Loss of community resource

Some respondents reported concern for the loss of a community resource, in particular where garden centres were part of the day service. We have also heard during the consultation how important community space is and the garden centres have scope to provide this. Whatever the decision is from Cabinet regarding the future of day services, we will be looking at how we could support community groups to utilise the garden centres and support links, friendships, and collaboration. We will continue to work to ensure that the garden centres remain part of the local community, accessible to all including people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic.

Loss of social support

Some respondents spoke about the social support that both people with a learning disability and / or who are autistic, and their carers received from peers and colleagues whilst attending the day centre and feared that this would be lost under the proposal to close some of the centres.

NAQ – Not answering the question

There were many responses in each of the open text boxes on the questionnaire that did not directly answer the question. SECT analysed the responses and coded them as a response to the consultation rather than a response to a question. However, there were some responses that were unrelated to the question or context of the consultation and so have been simply coded as Not Answering the Question.

Negative previous experience

Some respondents based their feedback and comments on negative previous experiences. Falling under two categories. 1) Experience of being supported through the Community Connector Service, and 2) Experience of lockdown and covid restrictions.

Reduction in service

Some participants reported already having seen a reduction in service and this having a negative impact. Fearing any proposal to close would lead to a permanent reduction for them.

Regardless of the consultation we have been assessing people's needs to ensure we are offering them a service which they want, and which suits their needs. These reassessments are not to reduce people's support, the aim was to complete a person-centred assessment and outcome focussed support plan. This involved exploring people's aspirations such as meaningful relationships, increased independence, and housing needs. We have pledged to review support plans for everyone that currently attends a day centre following the outcome of the Cabinet decision.

Respite for carers

Carers, clients, and others reported the importance respite plays in the lives of carers and told us that day centres are an integral part of respite.

We acknowledge and appreciate the needs and views of carers, and these are taken into account in the individual assessment and support planning. However, respite for carers can take different forms and needs to be balanced with the outcomes for people with a learning disability and/or who are autistic.

Travel implications

Respondents were concerned that should the proposal to close day centres be approved, there would be travel implications with clients having long journeys and distances to travel to access day opportunities. Further comments described poor transport links that exist in parts of the county.

2.16 The next steps are for Cabinet to consider the responses from the public consultation and the Equality Impact Assessment to decide on future delivery. This is an opportunity for Scrutiny Committee to make comments for the Cabinet to consider. The Scrutiny Committee should be mindful that the EIA, which has yet to be produced, will play a role in the decision making as it must be given due regard by Cabinet.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 There is no requirement in terms of consultation for Scrutiny Committee. The public consultation is outlined above, and further details can be found in Appendix 3.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Not applicable

5 Implications

Not Applicable

6 Background Papers

- 6.1 None

7 Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 - Implications
7.2 Appendix 2– Cabinet Report 10th March 2022: Learning Disability Day Opportunities Service Redesign
7.3 Appendix 3 –Consultation Report on the Future of Day Opportunities redesign in Derbyshire

8 Recommendation(s)

That Committee:

- a) Notes the responses to the public consultation
- b) Notes that all such matters will be considered and included within a comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Analysis which will be incorporated within a future Cabinet Report which will be presented in due course and further notes Cabinet will fully consider the EIA as part of its decision making.
- c) Considers responses to the Public Consultation and provides comments to Cabinet and the Equalities Impact Assessment for consideration when making its decision on the future delivery of the proposals for day opportunities for people with a learning disability and / or who are autistic.

9 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Analysis is being prepared to reflect the issues raised during the consultation process, which will incorporate comments from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.2 The Cabinet will need to have regard to the comments from scrutiny thereof in any decision making.

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Implications

Financial

1.1 Not applicable for Scrutiny Committee

Legal

2.1 Not applicable for Scrutiny Committee

Human Resources

3.1 Not applicable for Scrutiny Committee

Information Technology

4.1 Not applicable for Scrutiny Committee

Equalities Impact

5.1 Not applicable for Scrutiny Committee

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

6.1 Will be included within any future Cabinet Report

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental, Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

7.1 Not applicable