

Report Cabinet Member for Adults and Vulnerable People

Cabinet – 20 October 2016

THE RELOCATION OF WHITETHORNS INTENSIVE DAY SERVICE (MORRISTON) TO ACACIA ROAD, WEST CROSS

Purpose:	To relocate Whitethorns Intensive Day Service (WIDS), Morriston, to Acacia Road, West Cross (formerly a Learning Disability Respite Service)
Policy Framework:	Single Integrated Plan Corporate Plan 2016-17 Social Services and Well Being Act 2014
Consultation:	Access to Services, Finance, Legal, Corporate Building and Property Services, Unions, Human Resources, Care Management, Health.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: (1) Whitethorns Intensive Day Service relocates from a leased building in Morriston to Acacia Road (Council owned) in West Cross.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whitethorns Intensive Day Service (WIDS) is a day service for adults with a learning disability, who require high levels of support due to their complex and challenging behaviours. The current base in Morriston is leased from Charles Cole/Angletop and the next available break opportunity under this lease is dated 10th November 2016 which has already been exercised. In 2014 as part of the respite review, Acacia Road, which provided respite for adults with a learning disability, was de-commissioned. The building, owned by the Council, is no longer used as a respite facility and is currently vacant. This offers an opportunity to relocate the service to Acacia Road which will provide a better suited environment with more indoor and outdoor space for the service.
- 1.2 This report proposes that WIDS relocate to the vacant building in Acacia Road which provides a better environment than the current building

based in Morriston. WIDS will continue to deliver the same level of service, with the current revenue budget attached to the service. The existing premises budget for Acacia will be used. Savings will be made from cessation of the lease, likely to be seen in 2017/18. The current lease rate is £12,650 and with insurance, the total £13,475.14 per annum.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 WIDS provides a 5 day service to adults with a learning disability in Swansea, who require high levels of support due to their complex and challenging behaviours. The service provides daily activities that encourage people using the service to engage in ordinary community activities, learn daily living skills and interact socially with their peers and services and facilities in the community. The service has a high staff ratio to support people using the service to manage their own behaviours, communicate and be included in everyday activities. The service also enables family carers to have a break from caring and to go out to work during the day. Activities are carried out in the base but also across Swansea.
- 2.2 The Service is currently based in a leased building in Morriston, with limited outside space or parking and the main entrance is through the car park of the adjacent flats. The building is on two levels and has two main rooms for activities.
- 2.3 Although the service is very effective in supporting people to engage in activities, the environment does limit the number of people who can attend on a daily basis and the range of activities. There is a long corridor that can become a bottle neck at busy times of the day and can lead to increased anxieties and behaviours.
- 2.4 The building in Acacia Road, based in West Cross has a number of advantages over the Morriston site. It offers more rooms for smaller group activities or one to one sessions and skill development for daily living tasks. There are more exit and entry points to manage the arrival and departure of people using the service, avoiding the chance of a bottle neck which can lead to increased challenging behaviours. There are better shower and toilet facilities and more storage. Visits have been made by staff, service users and family carers to the site to plan how the building and its layout can be used to both continue and develop the service.
- 2.5 The site has an enclosed garden at the rear that can be used for outdoor activities such as gardening as well as relaxation. Parking can be shared with West Cross Day Service which is situated next door. This ensures that the neighbours in the cul de sac are not affected.
- 2.6 Morriston does offer a range of shops within easy access. However the site in West Cross is also close to local shops, pubs and a community

centre and only a short drive to Mumbles itself. WIDS already engage in activities in the West Cross area, such as beach cleaning which provides people using the service to experience working together, and contributing to the local community.

- 2.7 There is opportunity to work closely with West Cross Day service, which also provides support to people with a Learning Disability. By planning and developing activities jointly or offering people who use either service to join in activities, a wider range of activities and social opportunities can be offered. It is recognised that these will need to be appropriate to the needs and skills of people using both services (Risk assessment and management plans would be in place which is part of the usual practice of services). There is the opportunity for both services to use both buildings, transport and staff where beneficial and where it can help develop the services provided, for example sharing staff skills, knowledge and links to other services and established relationships within the local neighbourhood.
- 2.8 WIDS supports people to manage their behaviour and develop skills with the aim they move on to lower level support, including West Cross Day Service. By relocating next to West Cross Day Service, there can be smoother transition arrangements.
- 2.9 This proposal has been shared and discussed with service users, carers, staff, unions, social workers and Health staff and overall the response to the move has been positive from all. There are a number of themes coming from the consultation with carers. The building is seen as more suitable in offering better space, small rooms for individual work, use of a garden, a safer environment and offers shower facilities. A number of people using WIDS are familiar with the building having used it for respite in the past or are familiar with the area. Carers can see the benefit of the location in that it still offers access to shops but also for local walks. For some carers the location is nearer to their home. The main concerns raised by some family and paid carers is the increase in travelling and the impact this may have on the person using the service, the start and finish times of the service and the impact on the family (e.g. transporting their relative, getting to work). For paid carers, there may be an impact on staffing costs. The service manager and transport manager have already started to look at bus routes, costs and times of the service to mitigate any adverse impact. The service has always been flexible in start and finish times. Parents of one service user do not agree with the move but the service manager is working with them and the care manager to look at arrangements or alternative options. Officers are therefore confident that this individual issue can be resolved. Carers have stated that as long as the service remains with the same staff team they are happy to support the proposal. Most carers had no concerns with their relative adapting to the changes provided they are supported to do so. Any transition to the new location will be planned over a few months and at the pace of each person using the service.

- 2.10 As noted above, the adverse impact on travelling to the base in West Cross for some people using the service and their families/carers will be considered and addressed. It should also be noted that a number of activities provided by the service are held across Swansea and people using the service and staff do and can travel directly there and back from their home. For some families, travelling will be reduced. It should be noted that WIDS support people from across Swansea.
- 2.11 Staff are in agreement to the move and within their Terms and Conditions are expected to work across Swansea. They are proactively considering effective ways of travelling which include car sharing, starting at the activity, using public transport with people using the service. The Service is also set up to be flexible in its start and finish times for both staff and people using the service and these can be adjusted (as happens when any new person starts the service).
- 2.12 Any relocation will be planned over a number of months to ensure refurbishment has been completed, that people using the service are familiar with the new site and transport arrangements are in place.

3. Equality and Engagement Implications

- 3.1 The proposal to relocate came from the opportunity to develop the service in a better environment with no change to the delivery of the service.
- 3.2 An Equality Impact screening (Appendix A) was completed on the proposal and concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment would not be required.

4. Property Implications

- 4.1 Corporate Property in conjunction with Legal was instructed to operate the available tenant break clause within the WIDS lease in April 2016. This notice has now been served and therefore the Councils occupation of the property must end on the 10th of November 2016. If the break notice had not been served at this opportunity then the Council would have been contractually obliged to remain at the property until the 10th of November 2021.
- 4.2 In theory the Council could stay at the property past the 10 November 2016 break date if the landlord were to agree. Some discussions have taken place with the landlord who has suggested that he may be open to continued occupation from the Council. However, if this were to be for a term of less than 5 years then he would look for an increased rent. No indication has been given as to how much extra rent would be required, but any additional rent over and above the current passing rent of £12,650 per annum is likely to be above Market Value, however, Corporate Property have not inspected the property or assessed what the current Market Rent may be. Furthermore it is highly likely that the

Council would have to be responsible for any associated legal costs which would be anticipated to be in the region of £1,500 - £2,000.

- 4.3 Upon lease termination the Council is also required to replace the floor coverings at the property, redecorate internally and remove any items it has fixed to the property. Corporate Property has not inspected the property to in order to assess the potential cost of these works.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There will be some financial implication to the relocation of WIDS to West Cross. Acacia Road will need some investment for refurbishment as it has been empty for over a year (although checks have been done on a regular basis by West Cross Day Service). There will also be some costs attached to any redecoration etc as referred to in point 4.3 (Appendix B).

- 4.2 Estimated costs for redecoration, reconnection of the I.T. system, the security alarm and telephone, garden clearance, fencing, and some adaptations are £5k. The service works closely with the Probation Service to provide redecoration and there is an in-house project (with service users) that provides gardening services which enable the cost to be kept down and also provides an opportunity for work experience. Costs will be kept under review and are contained within existing budgets.

- 4.3 Transport costs should remain the same as the Service covers the whole Swansea area and will continue to use the current buses and drivers attached to the service. The total current cost of transport is £76,459 per year. Routes will need to be reconfigured which may result in a reduction or small increase in costs. All transport routes are continually reviewed to accommodate new service users, people leaving, and sharing routes with other services (Appendix B).

- 4.4 A full year cost of savings from the rent and the insurance of the leased building in Morryston equates to £13,475.14

- 4.5 Revenue costs for WIDS would transfer with the service and continue to be reviewed as part of budget monitoring. There is a budget attached to Acacia road for utilities and insurance.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 In considering the recommendation to relocate the day service from Whitethorns to Acacia Road, the Council must ensure that it discharges its public sector equality duties. The Council must assess the impact of any relocation upon those service users with protected characteristics. An Equality Impact screening has been completed which has concluded that a full EIA is not required. Although consultation has taken place with existing service users and their carers, the Council will need to ensure that the consultation is sufficiently wide ranging and robust to enable the

Council to properly undertake an assessment of any potential impact on current and future service users and to take such mitigating action as is necessary to ensure that the proposal meets assessed eligible need.

- 5.2 City & County of Swansea's contracts of employment contain a provision that employees may be based at any location within the county's boundary. It would be good practice from an employee relations aspect to consult with and engage staff in the relocation process.

Background Papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A Equality Impact Screening Assessment

Appendix B Refurbishment and travel costs