

**Report to the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools**  
**Report to the Leader of the County Council**  
**Report submitted by: Interim Executive Director for Children and Young People**  
**Date 6 and 10 February**

**Part I**

Electoral Divisions affected:  
All in Preston, South Ribble  
and Chorley

**Restructuring of the Residential Overnight Break Service for Children with Disabilities Service - Outcome of Consultation on first phase**

(Appendices 'A' to 'C' refer)

Contact for further information:

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**Executive Summary**

This report requests approval to implement the first phase of the replacement of the County Council's existing in-house overnight break provision with new, high specification facilities. This forms part of the wider Strategy for Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities, which was approved in March 2013, following an eight week period of consultation with stakeholders.

In October 2013 the Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools approved a period of consultation to identify the preferred site, from the two options, for the first build, and the area that this provision will serve.

The period of consultation has been completed and this report presents the outcomes of the consultation and subsequent recommendations.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and Standing Order 25 has been complied with.

**Recommendation**

The Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools are recommended to approve:

- (i) the location and building of the first new Short Break Unit for Children with Disabilities on the following site: Lynnhurst , Stanifield Lane, Farrington PR25;
- (ii) the area served by the new unit to be Preston, South Ribble and Chorley; and

(iii) the closure of the existing units at The Bungalow, Maplewood and Longcopse which serve Preston, South Ribble and Chorley areas once the new unit is functional.

## **Background and Advice**

In March 2013 a programme was approved to replace the County Council's existing in-house overnight break provision with new, high specification facilities, in accessible locations, which better meet the range of needs and demands of children with disabilities. This proposal was part of a wider review of the County Council's strategy for providing short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. This decision followed a 12-week consultation on the proposals which received a wide range of responses to inform the short break strategy. The recommendation accepted was for the building of 4 units, subject to ongoing review that would reflect the future demand for the service. It was proposed to implement the first phase of the restructure by identifying the first site, revisiting and confirming the specification for the building to ensure the needs of the children, young people and families are met to the highest standard and commencing construction as soon as the necessary surveys and building regulations are completed. This phased approach will allow for the process to be monitored and assessed and any improvements identified, applied to the further builds.

It was agreed that further reports would be submitted setting out recommendations for the location of the new units. This was the subject of a report approved in October 2013 leading to a period of consultation to gather views on the proposed sites and area to be served by the new facility.

The first location had been identified as Preston and the South areas. This was chosen in order to address issues around the current units serving this area, in particular longstanding structural problems with the Maplewood building located in Bamber Bridge. In addition, the restrictions of size and capacity to provide the necessary specialist equipment within the Bungalow unit to meet more complex needs, also supports the plan to build in this area. The third existing unit identified to merge into the new build is Longcopse, which also serves the South area.

Other considerations to be taken into account in selecting the specific sites were:

- proximity of new overnight units to accessible travel routes/public transport;
- adequate parking facilities reflecting the need for sufficient accessible parking bays and covered entrances.

A site search had been carried out and a number of potential sites identified. Taking into account the above criteria and also factors such as outside space for activities and general environment the two sites recommended for consultation were:

- Lynnhurst, Stanifield Lane Farington. A former Adult Social care facility which was declared surplus in March 2013.
- Rydal House, Chorley Hall Road, Chorley. A former Children's Integrated Services facility declared surplus in January 2007.

Following approval in October 2013 a period of consultation has been carried out to gather the views of stakeholders on the issues of location and areas to be served by the first new unit.

### **Summary of Consultation responses**

There have been 37 responses received by questionnaire.

The overwhelming response in relation to the preferred site for the building of the new provision has been in favour of the Lynnhurst site. Reasons given have included:

- better accessibility due to proximity to motorways, less traffic congestion in the area, more central location, good parking and access options;
- potential of environment/grounds to provide exciting opportunities for the children and young people to access a range of physical activities, outdoor experiences, horticultural activities;
- potential of grounds to be utilised to provide more family/communal activities;
- quieter and more private surrounding environment;
- provides greater security.

Lynnhurst 29    Rydal 1    Either site 6    Neither site 1

The response in relation to the proposed area to be served has indicated an overwhelming acceptance of the merger of the 3 named existing units into the new build.

Accept merger of 3 named units	36
Do not accept merger of 3 named units.	1

Further details are set out in Appendix 'A'.

### **Consultations**

An eight week period of consultation has been carried out. Stakeholders consulted have been:

- current service users: parents and carers of children with disabilities and children with disabilities;
- staff: both the staff of the three units proposed to merge into the new unit, and all staff employed by the ACERS Residential Overnight Break Service;
- commissioners of the service - Inclusion and Disability Support Service (IDSS);
- wider public and prospective future users: the consultation has been open to all interested parties but all responses received have been from parents, staff and commissioners.

Consultation included specific questions on the preferred site and approval of the existing units to merge as part of the new provision. Respondents were also asked to express views on any possible impact of this proposal on delivery of the service

and raise any questions. A Frequently Asked Questions section has been included, accessible on line and by hard copy.

Views have been gathered through using both on-line and hard copy questionnaires- email, letter and face-to-face meetings for parents and staff.

The collated views gathered are attached as a separate report (Appendix 'B' refers).

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

Risks involved in failing to follow the proposal outlined in the report are:

- delay in the implementation of the overnight break service with consequent increased costs and risk of failing to meet needs of children with disabilities who require overnight short break service;
- reputational risk to the County Council of delaying/failing to deliver on a decision to improve services.

### **Financial**

Funding for the replacement of the existing provision was approved in March 2013 of £7m. A group consisting from a range of Lancashire services including architects, designers and project management together with operational staff from the short break service has been developing the detailed building specifications. This is now being costed and will go to tender. The current estimate for the build is up to a maximum of £2.522m but will be reviewed during the tendering process with the aim of reducing costs further.

The level of investment needed puts at risk the ability to complete the originally proposed four units and this will be kept under review as part of the on-going strategy. No additional funds are likely to be available for the completion of this programme other than what is already available.

The revenue costs of running this new facility are currently estimated at £0.750m and still under review as the exact staffing establishment is still being finalised but it is not forecast to be significantly above the forecast presented in March 2013. Revenue risks identified include the following:

- additional transport costs due to a reduction in the overall number of sites;
- Nursing support costs required.

In both cases additional work is underway to quantify this risk. Savings forthcoming from closing existing sites are expected to contribute to any as yet unquantified pressures and no additional revenue budget is sought. In addition, any spare

capacity with the service will be utilised to supply provision to neighbouring authorities which are closing their own units.

### **Property Asset Management**

Corporate Property Group and Environment Directorate, Building Design and Construction are actively involved in the process of identifying the appropriate sites, carrying out the required surveys and building regulations, and agreeing the specifications/design of the new buildings.

The design team will also have discussions with the highways department in relation to access. Project Management also supported the consultation process with a range of information and presentations to parents and staff. Planning permission will be required for either site, all aspects of this requirement are being investigated but this remains a risk to delivery and timescales.

### **Personnel/HR**

Due to the proposal to relocate 3 existing units onto the new site there will be an impact on staff. Consultation with staff on the proposal in this report was carried out with staff from the three units proposed to merge on the new site.

A staffing structure for the new provision is in process of being developed by a group of service managers in consultation with HR. The final structure is influenced by the building specification and design and the commissioning specification agreed with Inclusion and Disability Support Service. It is envisaged that a new post of Assistant Unit Manager will be required and that there will be post reductions but some of these may be absorbed through unfilled vacancies and a programme of Voluntary Redundancy. The staffing structure would be subject to approval under the Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers and all personnel implications will be managed in line with LCC policies and procedures and subject to consultation with HR, staff and Trade Unions.

### **Legal**

The provision of improved facilities for the overnight break service will support the Local Authority in fulfilling their statutory duties of providing support to those children with disabilities assessed as requiring, and eligible for, respite care in a safe and appropriate environment.

### **Equality and Diversity**

Personalised systems have been used to enable children with disabilities, who are current service users, to respond to the consultation. An Equality Analysis has been completed and is attached at Appendix 'C'.

## List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Consultation Responses and Analysis	06/01/2014	Audrey Swann/Directorate for Children and Young People/(01772) 536108
Frequently Asked Questions		as above
Consultation Information and Questionnaire		as above
Equality Analysis	14/01/2014	as above

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A