

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL SERVICES & HOUSING

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	1 JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	IMPROVING DAY CARE SERVICES: PROPOSAL TO MERGE THE ALBERT ROAD AND PHOENIX DAY CENTRES		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR EDEN	PORTFOLIO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SERVICE:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following a three month public consultation on the future of Council-run day care services for older people, this report provides the Committee with a summary of the feedback received on the proposed merger of the Albert Road day services and Phoenix Centres, the findings of an equality impact assessment of the merger, and updated options for the Committee to consider.
- 1.2 A full report of the consultation exercise can be found at Section 7 and Appendix 1. However, in summary, around half of all written consultation responses were in support of the merger. Concerns about the proposal came mostly from people currently linked to the Albert Road Centre, and related to the potential loss of a community facility in the north of the town.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee notes:
- (a) the findings of the Council's public consultation on the proposed merger of the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Care Centres noting that the majority of those consulted supported a merger; and
 - (b) the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment on the proposal, in particular the measures identified to mitigate impacts on some

protected groups.

2.2 Committee is thereafter requested to decide which of the options set out at section 5 is its preferred course of action.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council's programme of transforming Adult Social Care is designed to improve and modernise the delivery of services. The Council is committed to:

- protecting and supporting the most vulnerable;
- promoting choice and independence;
- enhancing the quality of services and facilities;
- basing service developments on the needs and expectations of service users, and those who may chose to use services in the future; and
- delivering value for money.

3.2 Since 2007, the Council has been transforming the way it delivers social care for older people, reflecting national best practice and responding to the changing expectations of elderly people and their relatives. As a result, provision for older people has altered considerably:

- More people are living independently because of a successful Reablement service - one that is recognised as a national best practice model.
- Oaktree House, Spey Road, Reading is now available providing extra care housing for 60 people. In the longer term the Council is committed to the development of up to an extra 180 extra care housing places, in line with its policy of promoting independence and choice. The policy adopted in 2008 commits the Council to developing extra care places across the Borough, including north Reading.
- The Willows has been developed into a local centre for both Intermediate and Dementia care.

3.3 One of the cornerstones of transforming adult social care - nationally and locally - is the personalisation of services. People who are eligible for statutory social care services are now offered greater choice and control over how they are supported than was the case previously. Individuals are advised what funding is available to meet their support needs (their 'personal budget') and given the option of taking this funding to purchase their own support (Direct Payments). People also have the option of asking the Council to arrange their services, but would be supported by a broker to identify which services would best meet their needs.

3.4 The personalisation of Adult Social Care in this way is resulting in a wider range of services being identified and taken up as part of older or disabled adults' 'support packages'. At the same time, more traditional support services are seeing a fall in demand. This results in the need for councils to review the services they provide or purchase so as to reflect service user preferences expressed through the way personal budgets are being used. This

consultation has therefore been about what existing and potential service users might want in the future.

4. DAY CARE SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

4.1 In Reading there are two Council-run day services for older people. Phoenix Day Services, based in Southcote Ward, has been a day service for older people from across Reading since the 1990s. Up to 45 clients a day can attend Phoenix Day Services. Many of them use Adult Social Care's in-house transport service to get to and from the site.

4.2 Albert Road Day Services is situated in Caversham (Thames Ward) and forms part of the joint site with the Arthur Clark care home. Up to 20 people can use the day care service daily. The building is a converted house, which is much smaller than Phoenix Day Services. Only the downstairs of Albert Road is used for clients as there is no disabled access to the 1st floor. The clients only use one large room which is also used as a sitting area/dining area and for any groups such as thai chi and yoga. Although the room is intimate and very welcoming there is very little space and inadequate toilet and bathroom facilities.

4.3 A recent survey of the building identified the following problems:

- The building is over 100 years of age and requires a major refurbishment to bring it up to modern day standards and energy efficiencies.
- Ground, first and second floor windows with Georgian wire glass installed adjacent to the external fire escape need to be accessed for fire rating, to make sure they provide the required protection to the escape stairway.
- Generally poor compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act as there is no accessible toilet and no passenger lift making much of the build inaccessible to ambulant disabled and wheel chair users.
- All WCs in all levels need to be refurbished and layouts optimised taking into account the needs of ambulant disabled people.
- Roof insulation is poor and needs upgrading.
- Overall the independent survey identifies £70k of works that are now required

The building contains asbestos. An asbestos inspection was completed in 2011 and indicated that there was no risk to health and safety provided the asbestos is not disturbed. A more rigorous assessment of the asbestos risk in the building cannot be carried out whilst it is still occupied. We have been advised, however, that any significant building work would be likely to disturb the asbestos and thus require the home to be vacated while the work is carried out

4.4 Albert Road shares a site with the Arthur Clark Care Home and is linked to it by a corridor. Albert Road has separate water and heating supply but is dependent upon the Arthur Clark building for electricity and an industrial kitchen. Depending on decisions on the future of Arthur Clark, a total capital

investment of around £400k would be required to bring Albert Road up to a decent building standard. This would cover reinstating separate utilities, a kitchen extension, installation of a lift, upgrading the small and inadequate bathroom/toilet facilities and those urgent works identified in the survey report attached as Appendix D to the report on the Arthur Clark Care Home. The service would need to close whilst works were undertaken.

- 4.5 Both facilities are highly valued by the clients who use the service and their families. On occasion - up to 5/6 times a year - service users from Albert Road already use the facilities at the Phoenix site. Typically this will be for social events that cannot be accommodated at Albert Road. The two groups have broadly similar needs and sharing the same facilities has not been a problem. The Phoenix Centre is situated in central west Reading and is around 3.5 miles from the Albert Road site. Some Caversham residents already use the service at Phoenix as it is better suited to their needs.
- 4.6 The services offer essential day respite to families and in many cases this helps the individual with support needs to remain at home longer because the main carer has regular breaks. In cases where vulnerable older people are living alone, the service offers much needed social interaction and helps prevent social isolation which can have severe adverse impacts on emotional wellbeing and physical health.
- 4.7 Over the last 9 months there has been a decline in the number of older people using Council Day Services. Neither service now achieves full occupancy on any day of the week. At Phoenix the average daily usage of people is 29 (with a capacity of 45). At Albert Road the daily average usage is 13 (with a capacity of 20). Officers believe this is because older people are choosing to use their personal budgets to buy different services - reflecting a shift in expectations and need.

5. OPTIONS

- 5.1 The following options to improve and modernise services have been identified by officers:

Option 1 - Continue with the existing facilities, accepting that significant investment of at least £400k will be required at the Albert Road Centre and that the facilities there may still not be capable of meeting future needs. This is the preference of existing service users at Albert Road.

Option 2 - Consolidate current respite and day care services at the Phoenix site. This would mean the service remained open although in a different location and would be in line with the Council's commitment to retain day care for older people (as expressed at a Cabinet Meeting in February 2013).

This option would entail some disruption in the short term, with Albert Road clients having to re-locate to Phoenix, but it is considered that this is manageable among this client group and the short-term disruption would be outweighed by the long-term benefits. Phoenix is a more spacious building

and can accommodate all existing service users. Both service user groups have similar needs. Detailed consideration would be given to transport issues. This would make good use of existing Council assets whilst maintaining standards of care.

This could be followed by a programme of co-development with communities of a modernised older people's service which offers a broader range of services and is provided from neighbourhood bases as well from a centre offering more specialist support. (These proposals are developed further in the report on the Modernisation of Day Care Services for Older People: Let's Talk Care.)

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 Proceeding with the Option 2 would contribute to the Administration's priorities for Adult Social Care, in particular:

- continuing to protect and develop services for vulnerable people in need, as well as making sure good preventative services are available in Reading, and developing an on-going programme of service change and improvement;
- recognising and supporting the importance of carers in the community and for the people for whom they care; and
- working with local partners and voluntary organisations to identify and support elderly people who are housebound or suffering from social isolation.

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

7.1 A three month public consultation was carried out (from 13 March to 14 June 2013) on the proposal to merge the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Care Services. Current users of the two services, their family/unpaid carers or other relatives, and staff employed at the centres were identified as the groups which would be most affected by the proposals. Accordingly, the consultation was designed to focus on involving these groups in the most meaningful way. Senior managers and Councillors attended a total of 6 group meetings with users and relatives to receive verbal feedback and take questions. Staff were also given the opportunity to give verbal feedback at specially convened meetings.

7.2 People also had the option of completing a consultation questionnaire, which was available to the wider public in addition, both online and in paper copy. The consultation was promoted through press conferences and releases as well as at appropriate public meetings and local conferences taking place during the consultation period.

7.3 Around half of the 260 people who submitted a formal consultation response agreed with the proposal to merge the two services. Concerns about the proposed merger were raised through a petition started by a local resident,

initially in relation to the future of the Arthur Clark Home next door to the Albert Road Centre but then extended to cover both services. Concerns about the proposal to merge the two services included loss of a Caversham based service, the disruption to older people's routines and established relationships, reduced choice, increased travel time, and the risk of a larger service having an impersonal feel.

- 7.4 Those in favour of the merger liked the idea of opportunities to mix with a wider group, valued the prospect of improved physical facilities for people with particularly limited mobility, and felt the merged service with more people attending would have a more certain future. Albert Road users who indicated they would be willing to transfer to the Phoenix Centre were reassured by the prospect of at least some other service users or staff members moving with them, and transport support being available including to those not using Council transport services at the moment.

A full consultation report is attached at Appendix 1.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The NHS and Community Care Act (1990) imposes a duty on local authorities to carry out an assessment of need for community care services with people who appear to them to need such services and then, having regard to that assessment, decide whether those needs call for the provision by them of services. This duty has been refined by subsequent legislation and guidance but the services which the local authority is under a duty to provide remain broadly defined. There is discretion as to how services are provided or arranged, and a growing expectation that budgets will be devolved to individual service users as provided for in the Health and Social Care Act (2011).
- 8.2 Although the Council is not proposing to close a service in this case, it has committed to developing a culture of 'working better with you' by increasing the involvement of service users and residents in decisions about the future of services. For this reason, and in order to identify any particular issues relevant to the local authority's equality obligations (as set out below), a three month public consultation has been held on the proposed merger.
- 8.3 Members are under a legal duty to comply with the public sector equality duties set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In order to comply with this duty Members must positively seek to prevent discrimination, and protect and promote the interests of vulnerable groups who may be adversely affected by the proposal to merge the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Services. Members must therefore give conscious and open minded consideration to the impact of the duty when reaching any decision in relation to the future of both centres.

9. EQUALITY IMPACTS

- 9.1 The Albert Road and Phoenix Day Care centres offer services for older people with support needs, and also benefit family/informal carers of elderly people in the Borough, many of whom are older themselves. Current users of the services would all meet the definition of disabled under equalities legislation. The majority of service users and staff employed at the centres are female.
- 9.2 The option to close the Albert Road Centre and merge the service with that at the Phoenix Centre would therefore impact disproportionately on older people, disabled people and women as compared to the general population. No other disproportionate impacts on protected groups have been identified.
- 9.3 Ways of mitigating the equality impacts have been identified. Following personal reviews, Albert Road service users and their families could be supported to choose other services from a personalised shortlist of alternatives. The Phoenix Centre offers a very similar service but in more accessible premises. Other voluntary and community group services might be preferred by some users who chose to stay closer to the Caversham area, including support delivered at home, such as domiciliary care, befriending and sitting services.
- 9.4 Dedicated care management support would be available in preparation for and throughout any transfer into different services, including a settling in period and appropriate reviews thereafter. There has been extensive engagement with staff and trades unions. Support is available to help Albert Road staff be matched to alternative vacancies within the Council, or take up redundancy packages on the Council's standard terms.

A full Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 2.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Revenue Implications

- 10.1 The two current day services for older people as described are provided by the Council with an approved (gross) budget of £457k. Consolidating the two services could generate savings of around £72k pa.

Capital implications

There would be no capital outlay required under option 2 of consolidating the two services. Under the alternative option of maintaining two centres, and subject to the Committee's decision on whether to close the Arthur Clark home, a capital outlay of at least £400k could be required to upgrade the Albert Road Centre. There is no budget available within the Council's capital programme and if works were undertaken further prudential borrowing would be required at a cost of around £30k per annum to support this borrowing.

Value for money

- 10.3 In the review of any service, there needs to be a consideration of whether value for money is being delivered. The Council is currently offering day care services for older people from two centres, neither of which is being used to full capacity and the trend is a decline in demand. Consolidating the two services would increase efficiency and deliver economies of scale, even after some increase in the costs of transporting users to and from one centre rather than two.

Risk Assessment

- 10.4 Detailed work and an extensive consultation have been carried out to examine these options. Whilst there is a degree of risk with any change this has been mitigated by the work undertaken in developing these proposals.
- 10.5 There would be no capital outlay required under the option of consolidating the two services. Under the alternative option of maintaining two centres, and subject to the Committee's decision on whether to close the Arthur Clark Home, a capital outlay of at least £400k could be required to upgrade the Albert Road Centre.

SUPPORTING PAPERS

Appendix 1

Proposed merger of Albert Road and Phoenix Day Services:
consultation report - June 2013

Appendix 2

Proposed merger of Albert Road and Phoenix Day Services:
Equality Impact Assessment dated 06/06/2013



Proposed merger Albert Road & Phoenix Day Centres

Consultation report – June 2013

Executive Summary

A three month public consultation on a proposal to merge the Albert Road Centre and the Phoenix Centre, both Council-run day care services for frail elderly people, generated a total of 81 written responses. This included 73 questionnaires returned in hard copy or online and 8 separate letters. Verbal feedback was given at 6 dedicated consultation meetings with service users and their relatives. Comments were also fed in through a simultaneous consultation on modernising day care services for older people run under the banner of 'Let's Talk Care' which included 23 public, community or interest group meetings. Staff employed within the two day centres were also offered the opportunity to give verbal feedback at meetings with managers.

Around half of the people who returned consultation questionnaires agreed with the proposal to merge the two services. A quarter disagreed, and the remaining people were either unsure about the proposal or did not indicate their views. Concerns about the proposal to merge the two services included loss of a Caversham based service, the disruption to older people's routines, reduced choice, increased travel time, and the risk of a larger service having an impersonal feel. Those in favour of the merger like the idea of opportunities to mix with a wider group, valued the prospect of improved physical facilities for people with particularly limited mobility, and felt the merged service with more people attending would have a more certain future.

Albert Road users who indicated they would be willing to transfer to the Phoenix Centre were reassured by the prospect of at least some other service users or staff members moving with them, and transport support being available including to those not using Council transport services at the moment. However, people currently using the Albert Road Centre and their relatives expressed a preference overall for that centre staying open.

Background

Reading Borough Council offers day care services for frail elderly people from two locations - the Albert Road Centre in Caversham and the Phoenix Centre in Southcote. Although both continue to receive positive feedback from the people who attend and from their family members, demand for the services has been falling. At Albert Road, on average only 13 places out of 20 are now taken up each day. At Phoenix, the average attendance is 29 out of 45 places.

Albert Road Day Service is based in a converted house. Although the building is intimate and welcoming, there is very little space and inadequate toilet and bathroom facilities. People with disabilities can only access parts of the property. The Albert Road building shares a kitchen and utilities supply with the Arthur Clark Care Home on the same site. Because of both the cost and the disruption to residents which would be involved in upgrading the Arthur Clark building, a separate consultation is being carried out on the possible closure of the home. It would cost an estimated £400k to bring Albert Road up to a decent building standard. This would cover reinstating separate utilities, a kitchen extension and upgrading the small and inadequate bathroom/toilet facilities. The service would need to close whilst works were undertaken.

The Phoenix building in Southcote is much larger and offers more flexibility. Up to 5 or 6 times a year, service users from Albert Road are invited to use the Phoenix site for social events that cannot be accommodated at Albert Road. The people who use the two day services have broadly similar needs and sharing the same facilities has not been a problem.

In February 2013, Reading Borough Council's Cabinet agreed to launch a public consultation on the proposed merger of the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Services. The advantages of this would be a saving on running costs and making better use of a large purpose-built building with spare space. Transport would be provided for people who need it to get to the Phoenix Centre.

This consultation ran alongside a broader consultation on the modernisation of day care services for older people under the banner 'Let's Talk Care'. This broader consultation was designed to capture views on expanding older people's day services to offer more flexible facilities in addition to traditional day care, and identified a network of neighbourhood centres for older people as the preferred option for the future.

What we consulted on

We asked people to tell us:

- What they most valued from the day service
- What they valued least about the day service
- What would make the day service better
- Whether they agreed in principle with the proposal to merge the Albert Road and Phoenix day services

- What their concerns were about the proposed merger (if any);
- What support would help the Albert Road service users transfer to the Phoenix Centre; and
- If there were other issues about this proposal which people would like the Council to consider.

How we consulted

The consultation ran from 13 March to 14 June 2013. The consultation was designed to involve people who used the day services and their families in particular, but was open to the general public.

Consultation material

A consultation questionnaire was issued to all users of either the Albert Road Day Service or the Phoenix Day Service, and the next of kin of all service users. The questionnaire was posted out with some background information, and advice on how to respond. This included a link for online completion of the questionnaire, a reply paid envelope for the return of paper questionnaires, and information about opportunities to give verbal feedback.

Consultation meetings

Senior managers and councillors met with service users, family members and staff on 6 occasions during the consultation. Meetings were offered on different days and at different times to give the maximum number of people the opportunity to attend. The meetings were conducted in an open format to give service users and relatives the space to raise any issues and concerns they had. In addition, managers held consultation meetings with day services staff.

Promoting the consultation

Personal letters were sent to all day service users and their next of kin as in advance of the formal consultation period. Senior managers also met with staff and were available to service users and relatives at a drop in event to let people know what to expect. A press conference was held alongside the publication of Cabinet papers proposing the consultation launch, and a press release was issued to mark the start of the consultation.

Papers were available online throughout the consultation period, and paper copies available on request from managers at the Albert Road Centre and the Phoenix Centre or from the Council's main offices.

Who responded

By the close of the consultation, 73 questionnaires had been returned either online or in paper form. 5 of these were from people who attended the Albert Road Day service, 23 from people who attended the Phoenix Day Service and 2 from people who used both services. In addition, consultation responses were received in the form of 8 letters, including a joint response from the trades unions Unison and Unite.

Service users, relatives and staff were also invited to give their feedback verbally at specially arranged meetings. These were well attended. Between 6 and 42 people attended each of the service user/family meetings and all members of staff had the opportunity to attend at least one consultation meeting.

What people most valued from the day services

Overwhelmingly, what people most valued about day services was the opportunity for companionship. People talked about the chance to chat, catch up with the friends they had made through the service, and also how much they enjoyed the company of the day services staff. People attending the day services described them as like special clubs which they were very happy to be part of. Some people felt strongly that the groups of people who use the day services had become communities in their own right.

Many users of the services appreciated the change of routine they got on the days they spent at a day centre rather than being at home. For some, this included getting freshly cooked meals on those days. Several people recognised the importance of company and mental stimulation on their day centre days in keeping them alert generally across the week. In terms of how people preferred to spend their time at the day services, physical activities and (adapted) exercises were the most popular, followed by trips out and then games and quizzes. Personal care services were important to some people, as was not having to travel too far to get to the day service they were using.

Family carers appreciated having services they could rely on and trust. Some used the days their loved one attended day services to catch up on errands - with a bit less juggling involved - and others made the most of a chance to relax. It was important to carers that there was a day respite service available which they could depend on which then meant they could be relatively worry-free on those days.

Staff most valued the job satisfaction they got from working within day services, but also spoke positively about the good atmosphere in the centres generally.

What people valued least about the day service

People had relatively few comments about things they didn't like. The lack of accessible toilets at Albert Road was raised most often, followed by a lack of space there generally. Across both services, people felt sometimes there seemed to be too

long a gap between activities and then the service could get quite dull. For some people, the food on offer wasn't really to their taste although still OK. Some people felt a lack transport for use during the day limited what the service could include, e.g. by way of trips out.

What people thought would make the day service better

There was a wide range of responses in terms of what activities service users would like to see more of. A general theme which emerged, however, was that people would like to see more people and so get more social contact out of their time at day services. This included suggestions that the services try to attract more volunteers, offer activities to appeal to younger older people, or possibly bring in more staff to be able to offer a greater choice of activities. The prospect of more people to talk to was what appealed to some service users about a possible merger.

Some people would like to see extended opening hours, with 'day' services going on into the evening. The more general point was made that lots of people would appreciate more flexibility around timings. Of the activities people would like to see more of, entertainment was mentioned most often, followed by more options around personal care and grooming. There were also several references to a need for better toilet facilities.

Proposal to merge the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Services

Overall, around half of the people who submitted a formal consultation response (survey return) agreed with the proposal to merge the two services. A roughly equal proportion of the rest of the survey returns indicated opposition to the proposed merger or being undecided about the proposal.

People using the Albert Road service and their relatives were less likely to support the proposal to bring the two services together. Many said they were so pleased with the care they were getting at Albert Road that they found it difficult to believe this could be as good elsewhere. People with more severe physical disabilities and their family members were more likely to be in favour of the proposed merger as this would put all of the day service into fully accessible premises.

Concerns

The concern most frequently expressed about a possible merger of services was the impact of disrupting elderly people's routines and established relationships, and whether this could de-stabilise people's ability to live independently, perhaps with support from family carers.

People currently using the Albert Road centre would also be faced with getting to know a new facility and getting used to new travel arrangements. Journey times would probably increase for the Albert Road users, which would mean higher

transport costs for some, although not those who used the Adult Social Care transport service. Both users and carers from Albert Road believed longer journey times could be a source of stress. One carer drew attention to the particular difficulties she would face in managing school runs if her mother's travel times to and from day care changed.

People who knew the Albert Road Centre felt it would be a shame to lose such an intimate setting, although some did say that the lack of space for hoists limited how much people could get from a service in that location. Some felt that the Phoenix Centre has much less personality than Albert Road, and more potential to be a noisy and confusing environment because it's so much bigger.

Several people pointed out that merging the two day centres into a single service would reduce choice. Some Albert Road users and relatives were particularly concerned about the loss of a locally based service. There were also concerns from Caversham residents about whether a redeveloped site (if both the Albert Road centre and the Arthur Clark home were closed) could increase traffic congestion in the area.

People appreciated having activities in smaller groups where they were able to get to know others, and had concerns whether there would be less of this in a combined service.

Support to help Albert Road Service users transfer to the Phoenix Centre

People using the service at Albert Road identified some continuity in care staff as being the most important issue for them. Across both services, users and relatives valued the connections they had with existing staff and hoped that a merged service would preserve as many of these connections as possible.

Making sure that Albert Road users were supported in their new transport arrangements was also seen as very important. Some people who are currently transported to and from day services by relatives would want to start using the Council's transport service for the first time if they transferred to the Phoenix Centre. Users and relatives stressed that it would be important that the Council reviewed its in-house transport arrangements to cope with increased numbers, and try to keep journey times to a minimum for people.

Many people suggested familiarisation visits to help the users from both centres get used to new arrangements. For the Albert Road users, this would increase the number of familiar faces they see if they moved across to the Phoenix Centre as a permanent arrangement. Some people suggested that there be enough familiarisation visits for service users to try mixing in different groups, or setting up a buddy system for Phoenix users to help Albert Road users settle into the new centre. A few people suggested that making use of partitions in the Phoenix Centre to offer smaller spaces would be good for people used to more intimate surroundings.

Consultation feedback stressed the importance of offering service users reassurance and involving them fully at every stage of the transition into a new centre if the two centres were to be merged. Albert Road users used consultation meetings as an

opportunity to find out more about Phoenix and what was on offer there. However, some Albert Road users felt that transferring to Phoenix wasn't something they would want to do at all, and wanted to have choices around opting out of a merged day service and looking for alternative support closer to home.

Additional comments

There were several comments in the consultation feedback about the need to pay particular attention to the needs of people with dementia. These included suggestions about extra help for those with dementia to adjust to newer surroundings - such as recycling some of the furniture and furnishings from Albert Road into an expanded service at the Phoenix Centre if the Council brought the two services together. People also commented on the growing numbers of people with a diagnosis of dementia, including younger people, and the need for the Council to take this into account in their plans for the future.

Many service users and relatives pointed out that they knew very little about day care until this was discussed as an option with their social worker. There was a general feeling that the service ought to be promoted better and that this would help stem the drop in numbers choosing day care for their support. There was also a range of suggestions about other sources of funds which the Council could consider to refurbish the Albert Road building, including cutting other Council services or making more use of the upstairs of Albert Road for other services.

People questioned whether everyone's needs could be met through one centre, and suggested the Council should consider keeping two bases but offering more specialist care at one of them.

Several people who were familiar with the Phoenix Centre expressed concerns about the lack of parking facilities there and whether both this and traffic congestion could become bigger problems if the two day services were combined. They also drew attention to the poor signage to the centre, and asked if this could be improved.

People said that day care services for older people are important services, and they were keen for the issues to be debated publicly and decisions made in a transparent way.

Name of proposal/activity/policy to be assessed

Improving Day Care Services - proposal to merge the Albert Road and Phoenix Day Centres

Directorate: Education, Social Services & Housing

Service: Adult Social Care

Name and job title of person doing the assessment

Name: Janette Searle

Job Title: Service Development & Partnerships Manager

Date of assessment: 06.06.2013

Scope of proposal

What is the aim of the policy or new service?

The proposal is to improve day care services for older people across the borough by treating a single fully accessible centre - the Phoenix Centre - as the base for future development of the service. In the medium to longer term, the Council hopes to expand its day care offer for older people both by offering a broader range of services and by developing satellite services run from neighbourhood bases.

Day care services for older people are currently provided from two centres - the Albert Road Centre in Caversham and the Phoenix Centre in Southcote. Demand for both centres has been declining for some time, and neither centre is now used to full capacity. The Albert Road service is run from a converted house. Only the ground floor can be used by clients as there is no access to the upper floors for people with disabilities. Although the building has a welcoming feel, the space is inadequate for many group activities or, in some cases, for the delivery of personal care with dignity. The Phoenix Centre is a larger and more flexible space. Service users from Albert Road generally visit the Phoenix Centre several times a year for joint social events with Phoenix service users which cannot be offered from Albert Road.

This proposal is subject to the outcome of a three month public consultation and linked to a proposal to close the Arthur Clark care home, which is on the same site as the Albert Road centre and shares some facilities with the day service.

Who will benefit from this proposal and how?

Current users of the Albert Road Day Service would be supported to transfer to the Phoenix Centre (3 ¼ miles away) where their care and socialisation needs could be met to the same standard as currently but in fully accessible purpose built premises. By consolidating two under-used services, day care users across both current services, and carers who benefit from the availability of respite care, would be supported in future from a more vibrant and more sustainable service.

What outcomes will the change achieve and for whom?

- the safe and managed transition of Albert Road service users into the Phoenix Service
- the managed redeployment or release of staff according to the Council's procedures and policies, including training or additional support to those affected as required

Who are the main stakeholders in relation to this proposal?

- Current users of the Albert Road Day Service
- Current users of the Phoenix Day Service
- Carers and family members of Albert Road and Phoenix users
- staff employed at the Albert Road and Phoenix Centres
- Other elderly residents of the Borough, particularly those with care and support needs and based in the Caversham area, who may have wished to consider using the Albert Road Service in future (subject to availability of places at the time of need).

Impact of proposal

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on some racial groups

No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified, but person centred reviews will consider individuals' racial and ethnic backgrounds and how this could impact on transferring people from the Albert Road service in the most appropriate way.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No x Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on men and women, or transgendered individuals (including any issues in relation to pregnancy, maternity or marriage)

Of the current group of people using the Council's Day Care Services for older people, 56 % are women, and at Albert Road women make up 65% of people using the service. 70 % of employees at Albert Road and Phoenix are women.

These proposals therefore have a disproportionate effect on women rather than impacting equally across genders. However, the gender breakdown of those using and working at Albert Road (and Phoenix) broadly reflects that across elderly people's day care generally, and does not reflect any particular feature of how services are provided at Albert Road.

The regulations which govern the provision of care in residential settings should ensure that any personal care is delivered in a gender-sensitive way so as to respect users' dignity.

There has been extensive engagement with staff and trade unions about the proposed merger. Work has already started to identify vacant roles in other parts of the Council for Albert Road staff who wish to remain with the local authority to move into. These would be matched to the skills, preferences, and home locations of staff to avoid redundancies as far as possible, including the offer of training to prepare for new roles where appropriate. Where alternative roles could not be matched to individuals, staff would be offered redundancy packages on the Council's standard terms.

No negative or disproportionate impacts in relation to transgender, pregnancy, maternity or marriage have been identified.

Is there a negative impact? Yes X No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people with a disability

All the users of both the Albert Road and Phoenix day services would meet the definition of disability per the Equality Act 2010 on account of their frailty. Some have additional specific disabilities or long term health conditions. This places restrictions on the range of open to them for meeting up with others and giving family carers the opportunity to take a break. Person centred reviews of the support needs of all Albert Road users would help them to choose alternative services. This should in general give people the option of alternatives delivered from premises which are better suited to their needs as the Albert Road building was not purpose-built for supporting people with disabilities.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No Not sure X

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people based on their sexual orientation (including civil partnership)

No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified, but person centred reviews will consider individuals' sexual orientation and how this impacts on transferring people from the Albert Road service in the most appropriate way.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No X Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people based on their age

Closure of the Albert Road centre would mean 37 elderly people having to transfer into alternative services. They are likely to find this change unsettling and worrying. Some would have to travel further from home to access alternative services, such as day care at the Phoenix Centre. Adapting to new surroundings would probably be difficult, at least to begin with, and some disruption to care would be inevitable as people adjusted to new care workers.

Some social connections would also be disrupted as it would be unlikely that all Albert Road users were able transfer into alternative support on the same days as their current companions. Evert effort would be made to co-ordinate transition around friendship groups, however, whilst also reflecting variation in the support needs and personal preferences of users.

The advanced age of the Albert Road users means that many are being cared for at home by family members and friends who are also elderly. Disruptions to respite care could put these elderly carers under additional strain. They would probably take time to develop confidence in a new setting so as to get the most from their break from caring.

The wider impact is that closure of the Albert Road Centre would reduce the number of day care places available to frail elderly people in Reading. The Phoenix Centre has sufficient capacity to take all current users across both settings, and the demand for day care has been in decline for some time. For people with a strong Caversham connection, however, there would be the loss of a local service which may have been of interest to them in future.

Is there a negative impact? Yes X No Not sure

Describe how this proposal could impact differently on people on account of their religion or belief

No negative or disproportionate impact has been identified, but person centred reviews will consider individuals' religion or belief and how this may impact on transferring people from the Albert Road service in the most appropriate way.

Is there a negative impact? Yes No X Not sure

Assessment of the Equalities Impact of the proposal

- | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. No negative impact identified | Go to sign off | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Negative impact identified but there is a justifiable reason | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

You must give due regard or weight but this does not necessarily mean that the equality duty overrides other clearly conflicting statutory duties that you must comply with.

Reason

- 3. Negative impact identified or uncertain** X
What action will you take to eliminate or reduce the impact? Set out your actions and timescale?

If the decision was taken to close the Albert Road Centre, all service users there would have personal reviews of their support needs to help them manage the transition to the Phoenix Centre or into alternative services.

The Phoenix Centre offers a very similar range of services and activities to what is available at Albert Road, although with greater choice because the premises are more flexible. It is approximately 3 ¼ miles from the Albert Road Centre. Albert Road users who transferred to the Phoenix Centre could be assisted with transport to and from the centre if they needed this.

Albert Road users who did not wish to transfer to the Phoenix Centre would have the option of alternative community based support to help prevent isolation and ensure family/informal carers can get a break. There are a range of services provided by the voluntary and community sector at locations across Reading, including lunch clubs, retirement clubs (which offer activities such as dancing, singing and playing games), health and wellbeing programmes and carer peer support groups. The level of support available within these services varies, but people who are eligible for day care services would have the option of engaging a personal assistant to help them access community services. Those who preferred to be supported at home would have the option of Domiciliary Care, befriending or sitting services as alternatives to day care.

Once alternative support arrangements were agreed, a transition plan would be put in place for each user based on person centred plans. This would include familiarisation visits and support to maintain friendships which could be disrupted by a move.

Independent advocacy support has been and would remain available for service users who would like this to help them make decisions.

How will you monitor for adverse impact in the future?

Dedicated care management support is already in place to support the people using the Albert Road and Phoenix day services, and any family/informal carers. Support needs are reviewed regularly through care management, and support packages revised as indicated by these reviews.

The Personal Budget Support Team monitors the availability of community based care services to meet local demand through its ongoing work to identify support services which will help individual Adult Social Care users meet the outcomes set out in their support plans. Any patterns of concern, such as difficulty in securing suitable provision are reported to the Adult Social Care Commissioning Team who can respond through their contract management and quality monitoring functions.

Signed (completing officer)

Janette Searle

Date: 06.06.2013

Signed (Lead Officer)

Date: