

REPORT TO CABINET

19 January 2016

Cabinet Member: Councillor Gareth W Roberts

Subject: Consultation on the future of Y Frondeg

Liaison Officer: Olwen Ellis Jones

Decision sought

- I. Develop Option 5, namely a new accommodation model for adults with learning disabilities on Y Frondeg site.
 - II. Bring the use of Y Frondeg registered residential home to an end, following the completion of the new accommodation development.
 - III. Transfer the site to a housing association partner to work in partnership to develop a new accommodation model.
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Local Member's opinion

Thank you for the opportunity to respond. For many years the residents of Y Frondeg have lived in accommodation that is below standard of living in today's society. I believe this would be the best step forward to give the residents a good standard of life, also the staff to work in a modern environment.

Introduction

Since 2013 the Council has been holding discussions with Y Frondeg registered residential home service users, families and staff, and with the local community, about their aspirations for the future of the service for adults with a learning disability. Following this work and further research by officers 6 options were identified to be considered as future provision on the site.

On the 14th July the Cabinet decided to hold a formal consultation on the future of Y Frondeg home. The option favoured by the Council was Option 5, namely to develop a new accommodation model for adults with learning disabilities on the Frondeg site.

Following the Board's decision, a formal consultation was held on the future of Y Frondeg residential home, Caernarfon between 14 September 2015 and 30 October 2015, in order to find the stakeholders' and the public's opinion on Option 5. Five other options were also noted, and an opportunity was had in the consultation to express a view on them. (The six Options are listed on page 3 of the 'Information Pack and Questionnaire', **Appendix 1**)

A report on the consultation's results is included in **Appendix 2**. An engagement exercise was held in September, 2013 but this report relates specifically to the Formal Consultation held recently.

The results are divided into two parts:

- The first part is an analysis of the questionnaire results provided (**Appendix 2a**).
- The second part is the themes presented in correspondence by organisations and individual separately to the questionnaire (**Appendix 2b**)

Reasons for recommending Option 5

The recommendation was made on the following basis:

- Y Frondeg registered care home is a traditional model of service.
- A significant investment is required for the building.
- The current model does not comply with the Welsh Government's or Gwynedd Council's vision for services for adults with a learning disability.
- Option 5 would comply with the Welsh Government's and Gwynedd Council's Learning Disability policy principles, and the requirement of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014. It would also offer a service which could be more sustainable for the future, cost effective and would give consideration to the financial challenge facing the Council.

- Option 5 would contribute towards planning for a future increase in demand, and would provide an opportunity for some service users who are currently receiving care outside the county to return to Gwynedd to live.
- Option 5 would provide an opportunity to develop expertise in Gwynedd to support individuals with profound and complex needs.

There is more detailed reference in the Cabinet Report (14 July), 2015

In order to implement this recommendation it is important to emphasise that it is not the intention to bring the current use of Y Frondeg to an end until the new development has been completed..

Relevant considerations

During the consultation, a number of relevant considerations were highlighted by the respondents. A summary of the issues raised during the consultation period have been presented thematically. (**see Appendix 3**)

Equality Impact Assessment

In accordance with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 an equality impact assessment on the proposal was made. (**see Appendix 4**). The assessment highlights the potential impacts and the arrangements in place to respond. It may be noted that the assessment on the whole has identified potential impacts positively. The proposals would lead to an improvement in terms of equality for users. However, there are potential negative impacts from the proposal, in particular due to a decrease in the number of assistants to be employed as a result of plans to restructure the workforce.

After full consideration, it is concluded that the strategy and action plan will greet the potential impacts.

In addition, there are procedures in place to ensure that the situation is being monitored and reviewed regularly. As a result, we are confident that the findings of the assessment are current and relevant to the decision sought.

Next steps and timeline

Should the Cabinet decide to choose Option 5 as the way forward work on the next developmental steps will start immediately. A Partner for development and collaboration on appropriate designs will need to be identified and confirmed. Initial discussions with Housing Associations are promising in being able to identify a partner.

The consultation process on the future of the Y Frondeg is only the first step. More works needs to take place to enable planning and identify prospective tenants.

It is intended to establish a Focus Group with the main stake-holders by the end of March 2016 in order to co-produce suitable provision and purposeful accommodation for adults with a learning disability.

Further Steps

Further work with individuals and families to identify the prospective tenant for whom the new development will be suitable. We have already confirmed that there will be a place for Y Frondeg home current users in the new development.

The Focus Group is a means to develop a service which ensures the voice of the service user, places the person central to the process and develop an innovative service for adults with a learning disability in Gwynedd.

Conclusions

The outcome of the consultation showed a mixed response to the proposal to develop a model of modern and appropriate for accommodating 16 adults with learning disabilities.

Responses to the questionnaire were received from 57 individuals with a convincing majority of 47 (82%) of respondents supporting option 5. 5 (8.8%) of the respondents who supported option 2, 1 (1.8%) supporting option 4, 1 (1.8%) supporting different options than offered with 3 unanswered. The formal consultation is seeking views and opinions of the stakeholders on the preferred option by the Council. Whilst there was support from many to developing a dedicated service there were also a

number of comments expressing concern with the new model. Comments were received commending the provision at Y Frondeg with many concerned about the effect of any change. There were 11 responses from families of Y Frondeg service users, 5 supported option 5, 5 supporting options to adapt Y Frondeg and one who did not express an opinion.

Modifications to the Y Frondeg home would mean a significant investment but in implementing this, the service would not correspond with the Wales strategy or the Council's vision.

It will be necessary to ensure that attention is given to all the issues that have been raised before and during the consultation.

It is intended to establish a focus group with the stakeholders in order to jointly produce a suitable provision and ensure input from a range of individuals to develop innovative service.

Is necessary to ensure future services that corresponds with legislation, strategy and policies in learning disabilities area and which is sustainable and which takes into account the financial challenge facing Gwynedd Council.

Option 5 is an opportunity to develop a new service which will provide an opportunity for adults with a learning disability both currently and in the future to receive support that puts the person at the center and promotes their independence.

Statutory Officers' opinion

Chief Executive:

Although change is not always easy, in this case, the reason for change is obvious and is being supported by the overwhelming majority of those who responded to the consultation. We need to accept this challenge now and move on to the key steps of identifying a suitable partner and create a detailed financial package that would ensure the realization of this development.

Monitoring Officer:

Following completion of the consultation period the Cabinet is now in a position to come to a decision as to the future of the home. It is therefore necessary to weigh up all the factors which are relevant to the decision including consultation responses and the result of the equalities impact assessment.

The intention to transfer the site to an operative partner is highlighted as a means of achieving the preferred option. Further work will be required on this aspect as it moves forward to ensure that the arrangements for appointing a partner and the conditions relating to any transfer are legally correct and protect and promote the interests of the Council and its expectations as to the use of the new development.

Head of Finance:

There has been no change in the issues / financial figures for option 5 since the previous report was submitted to the Cabinet on 14.07.15. At that time, I noted -

- A proper consideration of the relevant business case was made, and a prudent assessment of the investment suggested savings of £143,000. We must venture in order to achieve savings, and this will involve sizeable capital investment by Gwynedd Council to develop a new model of supported accommodation near Frondeg, and a financial risk is attached to this course of action.
- Achieving the savings depends on the Learning Disability Service filling the new units (16 places in total, with 10 already at Frondeg). The Cabinet will doubtless ask the Adult Department to take appropriate steps to mitigate the risk of vacancies.
- In addition, since the asset is owned by our 'partner' in the initiative, arrangements such as a legal charge, to ensure that the property will be available for the appropriate purpose, should be explored, as a condition of a 'grant' to the 'partner'.

The above points are still relevant and key to the financial success of the enterprise.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – ‘Information Pack and Questionnaire’

Appendix 2 – Report of the Consultation results

Appendix 3 – Further Considerations

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment