

ANGUS COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND LEARNING COMMITTEE – 17 NOVEMBER 2020

TEMPORARY AMENDED OPERATING HOURS AT STRATHMORE CENTRE

REPORT BY KATHRYN LINDSAY – DIRECTOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND JUSTICE

ABSTRACT

This report sets out proposals to continue the amended opening hours for Strathmore Centre which is a respite centre for children and young people with complex and profound disabilities to allow provision of respite to meet their packages of care as assessed through Self Directed Support budgets.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the decision of the Chief Social Work Officer using her delegated powers to re-open and operate Strathmore Centre on a full-time basis between July-October 2020 following its closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- (ii) Approves the continued full-time operation of the Strathmore Centre from the date of this Committee until 31 January 2021; and
- (iii) Notes the work undertaken to support children and families during the Covid-19 pandemic and the flexibility shown by staff in delivering services.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030 and the Tayside Plan for Children, Young People and Families.

- Children are given the best start in life;
- Physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing is improved;
- There are more opportunities for people to achieve success.
- Our children and young people who experience particular inequalities and disadvantage will achieve health, wellbeing and educational outcomes comparable with all other children and young people.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Strathmore Centre is a part time residential respite centre for children and young people with complex and profound disabilities. It is part of the wider Children with Disabilities Service. The Strathmore Centre usually opens for 5 days every fortnight during term time and tends to close or offer limited outreach/day care support during the period between Christmas and New Year.

3.2 Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Centre was closed from March 2020 until 30 June 2020 when the Chief Social Work Officer, under her delegated power 10a (viii) (“to take final decisions binding on the Council in relation to a range of social work services provided by statute”) agreed that the Centre could re-open and operate on a full-time basis between July-October in order to provide ongoing, critical care respite to families as part of their self-directed support packages. This support has been vital to allow families to continue in their caring roles and would not have been possible without operating on a full-time basis as a result of the impact of infection control measures.

- 3.3 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 infection control measures and associated guidance, and given the complex needs of the children and young people using the service, the centre is running under capacity with a maximum of two children or young people overnight at any given time, alongside some additional day care. Additionally, there are some young people who require single use of the centre as a result of their needs.
- 3.4 Given current national guidance does not appear likely to change significantly over the coming months, it is highly unlikely that the centre will be able to offer the number of hours of respite support needed within the previous operating model. The current temporary operating model has worked well since July and staff have accommodated and continue to lend their support to the rota changes implemented to support the extended operating hours model.
- 3.5 Currently, there are 26 young people accessing Strathmore Centre for respite; with new referrals also having been received between July-October period. Each young person has an individual allocation of service varying from 7 overnights per year to 59 overnights per year depending on the assessed level of need. The current average number of nights required each month is 38. The respite night capacity under the usual, part-time model is a maximum of 20 nights per month (based on 2 young people in the Centre at a time). This figure would be less when factoring in the young people who require single use.
- 3.6 The respite packages in place for all of the young people who attend Strathmore Centre have been assessed as essential in order to support families to continue in their caring roles. The impact of being unable to provide these packages is great, and is likely to cause additional pressure on families, with the potential need for future crisis intervention.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 In order to continue to be able to offer residential respite to the maximum number of children and young people, whilst complying with the necessary infection control guidance, it is proposed that:

Strathmore Centre continues to be open on a full-time basis from date of committee until 31 January 2021.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The anticipated additional cost for this proposal is largely related to staffing. Specifically, there is an additional cost as a higher number of sleepover allowances will require to be paid. When open part-time, there are generally 20 sleepovers per month. Over the last 3 months, there have been on average 40 sleepovers per month. The cost of a sleepover is £84.06, therefore there is an estimated additional £1,681.20 per month required to support this. Over the full-time opening period (July 2020 to January 2021 inclusive) the total additional cost would be £11,768.40.

This total additional cost can be met within the current revenue budget. All staff are currently on relevant residential contracts.

There are no other anticipated financial implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Risk:** There is no significant risk related to the current proposals. However, should Committee be minded not to agree the proposals, the service would be unable to fulfil care packages for all children assessed as requiring respite support. This is likely to cause additional pressure on families. Such unmet need can result in the breakdown of existing support arrangements and the need for crisis intervention. This is not in children's best interests. The realisation of such risks would also carry significant financial implications for the Council should any of the children's circumstances deteriorate to the point that alternative care provision becomes necessary on an ongoing basis.
- 6.2 **Equalities Implications:** The issues in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). As the proposal is to continue with an extended service, there is no negative impact and an equalities impact assessment is not required.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 This report sets out the rationale for opening the Strathmore Centre as a full time respite centre, for a limited period, to meet the needs of children and young people who require respite at the centre.

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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