

**From:** Clair Bell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health  
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**To:** Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee – 16 January 2020

**Subject:** **OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION ON MINNIS COMMUNITY HUB**

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** Adult Social Care and Health Directorate Management Team Meeting – 11 December 2019

**Future Pathway of Paper:** N/A

**Electoral Division:** Birchington

**Summary:** Over the past ten years the Minnis Community Hub has made several changes to improve facilities in order to promote more efficient running and provide the best possible experience for service users. This has included significant investment to improve facilities with the aim of attracting different groups of people to make use of the building. The number of service users eligible to attend the Older Peoples Day Service has continued to fall.

**Recommendation(s):** The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT ON** the outcome of the eight-week consultation and the proposal to continue to deliver the day service but deliver it in another suitable building, (Westbrook House, near Margate). With this proposal, service users will be able to transfer as a group with the staff they are familiar with and within three miles of Minnis Community Hub.

## 1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has concluded the consultation on the future of Older People's Day Services at Minnis Community Hub in Birchington, Kent.

## 2. Background

2.1 Over the past ten years, the Community Hub has made several changes in order to promote more efficient running and the best possible experience for service users. This included significant investment to improve the facilities with the aim of attracting different groups of people to make use of the building. Additional funding was also put in place for a one-year Change Manager post to work in partnership with local community groups to develop the range of opportunities offered at the Hub.

- 2.2 Despite this additional investment, the number of users attending the Older People's Day Service has fallen from 79 in August 2011 to 21 in July 2019. The average number of service users attending every day is five. Staffing and running costs continue to be the same, but as there are fewer people attending the service, it has become less efficient to run.
- 2.3 The older people's day service delivered at Minnis Community Hub is delivered by Kent County Council (KCC). Unlike day activities delivered by community organisations, KCC provides a service for older people that meet the eligibility criteria for services under the Care Act. Older people that use the day service at Minnis Community Hub have higher needs than people who are able to access community-based day services or activities.
- 2.3 The Community Hub is also used by KCC's Adult Learning Disability service. This service was not part of this consultation and it is planned that it will remain at the Hub.

### **3. Consultation Proposal**

- 3.1 The proposal that was put forward as part of the Consultation held between 25 September and 20 November 2019 is:

**To continue to deliver the day service but deliver it in another suitable building, (Westbrook House, near Margate).**

- 3.2 With this proposal, service users will be able to transfer as a group with the staff they are familiar with and under three miles away from the Minnis Community Hub.
- 3.3 This proposal would provide all the facilities service users currently enjoy at Minnis, but with the potential for people to use more services in the future; such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy. In using Westbrook House, the pick-up and drop-off service provided by Thanet Community Transport could continue.

### **4. Consultation Process**

- 4.1 An eight-week public consultation on the future of Minnis Community Hub concluded on 20 November 2019. Service users, relatives/carers, staff, staff Unions, Local MPs, local councillors and KCC Members have been involved in the consultation meetings and their views have been collected and considered.
- 4.2 All public consultation documents were uploaded onto KCC's Consultation webpage and a dedicated email, phone number and freepost mailing address created to handle written responses and queries. As well as being available online, a total of **250** paper copy consultation documents and questionnaires were posted out to Minnis Community Hub, Westbrook House, local libraries in Birchington, Margate and Westgate-on-Sea. A poster about the consultation was also available at the above locations.

4.3 Feedback was received during the consultation, this included questionnaire responses as well as other types of communication. See the tables below:

Contact Type:	No.
Online Questionnaires	19
Paper Questionnaires	47
Emails	1
Phone calls	1
Letters	0
Written Proposals	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

Feedback From:	No.	%
Member of the public	27	40%
Service user	13	19%
Friend/Relative	13	19%
Staff member	4	6%
On behalf of an organisation	4	6%
Not known	4	6%
Other	3	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 5. Consultation Feedback Received – Key Themes

5.1 The feedback received falls into a number of key themes that are listed below. These themes are in the order of the most comments received ('People who do not want change' had the most comments and 'Westbrook is not appropriate and does not offer the same activities' the fewest comments):

- a) People do not want change.
- b) The service is not being advertised in the local community, leading to low attendance.
- c) The distance to Westbrook House will cause issues for people living and travelling from Birchington.

- d) There will be a greater need for services in Birchington due to the large housing developments planned in the area.
- e) The lack of new referrals to the service is contributing to the low attendance
- f) The building should be used more and opened-up to other community groups in Birchington.
- g) Westbrook House is not appropriate and does not offer the same activities.

## 5.2 What people told us

### **a) People do not want change**

More responses were received on this theme than any other. Thirty-six people, of which eleven were service users, nine family members and four staff members, told us that they do not want the change and are happy where they are. Some responses are below:

*"I feel sorry because I love and enjoy coming here and I like the company. I feel worried about going to Westbrook as I don't like change at my time of life"*

*"the care is excellent, ... is very happy there, I hope they all go together, ... doesn't like change very much"*

*"these community hub members are very happy where they are, especially with the quality of care they receive from the existing staff"*

*"I don't know very much about Westbrook House, if you think it will be ideal for ... and his friends, it would be perfectly alright with me"*

The proposed option to continue to deliver the day service but deliver it in Westbrook House was chosen because it offers a solution to the issues highlighted in the Consultation Report, with the least impact to those service users and staff that are currently based at Minnis Community Hub. With this proposal, service users will be able to transfer as a group with the staff they are familiar with. The staff would be a consistent link with the service and will ensure that the service users are supported to settle in at Westbrook House.

### **b) The service is not being advertised in the local community, leading to low attendance**

The Project Team carried out some research into this matter and identified a number of articles published between 2015 and 2019 as follows: Birchington Parish Council Portal, Parish Council Community Magazine, Thanet Support Guide to Local Services, Birchington & Westgate Inner Wheel Club News, leaflets in local Libraries and Doctors Surgeries.

It was found however that there was limited presence on the KCC Website. This will be addressed once there is a decision regarding the future of the service in Minnis Community Hub.

**c) The distance to Westbrook House will cause issues for people living and travelling from Birchington**

Feedback was sent in by nineteen people, eleven of which were from members of the public, three from family members and one from a service user. The feedback highlighted the distance to Westbrook House and the need for transport to continue to be provided at Minnis Community Hub and if the service is moved, to Westbrook House. Feedback from a family member stated:

*“... has been going to the Hub for a short time. Westbrook would be nearer. I know that there are so few people going [to Minnis], it must be wasteful”*

Currently there are no service users that walk independently to the centre, all are transported by either Thanet Community Transport (TCTA), taxis or family. The proposal is to continue with this arrangement to Westbrook House.

There are currently thirteen service users who attend Minnis who live in the Birchington area and nine service users who live in Westgate-on-Sea, Ramsgate, Margate, Broadstairs and Canterbury areas. Therefore, the move would mean some service users would add a further eleven minutes (approx.) to their journey time and others would reduce their journey time by approximately eleven minutes.

**d) There will be a greater need for services in Birchington due to the large housing developments planned in the area**

Twelve responses were received from Members of the Public regarding the need for services to remain in Birchington, due to plans for the development of large numbers of new housing in the Birchington area.

The Project Team looked into this and identified that there are plans for 1,600 new houses in the Birchington area and 2,000 new houses in the Westgate and Westbrook area.

The service moving to Westbrook House will not disadvantage people living in the new developments as the service will be closer to the majority of new homes and there will be the opportunity to increase the numbers of people attending.

With all new large developments, agreements are negotiated between planning authorities and developers to secure a percentage contribution towards the local community infrastructure. This is called Developer Contributions and the funding can be used towards such things as parks, new schools and other community facilities required to support an increased population. These contributions are to reduce the impact of a new development and to make sure it does not place additional pressure on existing infrastructure.

#### **e) The lack of new referrals to the service is contributing to the low attendance**

Eight people commented on the low attendance at the service and linked this to a lack of referrals coming into the service, along with the lack of advertising reported above.

Figures were requested from the service for the period of between **1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019**. The figures received highlight the following:

- **27** Referrals were received by the day centre in a one-year period. This is equivalent to more than two referrals each month.
- Of the 27 referrals only **11** took up their offer of a place, with two on hold.
- **14** people did not take up their offer of a place.

The above figures show there were a reasonable number of new referrals received over the course of the year. The service at Minnis accepted all the referrals as appropriate for the service offered, 60% had chosen not to take up the place they had been offered. Feedback from a family member stated:

*“... lives about ¼ of a mile from the Minnis Community Hub. ... has been a service user for quite some time. ... enjoys the time there and says the staff are lovely but ... is often bored as there is often only three or four other elderly service users and not much in activities provided. I do feel that the lack of service users is down to KCC not promoting this service enough in an area where the elderly population is high”*

The older people’s day service delivered at Minnis Community Hub is delivered by Kent County Council (KCC). Unlike day activities delivered by community organisations, KCC provides a service for older people that meet the eligibility criteria for services under the Care Act. Older people that use the day service at Minnis Community Hub have higher needs than people who are able to access community-based day services or activities.

The day service is not available to people who are not eligible for services under the Care Act. This limits the numbers of people that can be referred, and the scope for advertising the service to members of the public.

#### **f) The building should be used more and opened-up to other community groups in Birchington**

There were seven responses received that queried why the Hub wasn’t used by more community groups, space rented out or groups merged to make better use of the building. Feedback received from a member of the public stated:

*“Falling numbers of service users is not a reflection of a reduction in need, we believe it is a reflection of the constraints placed on access and innovation at the Hub and the limited scope for change allowed to staff at the Hub. It*

*appears to many of us that KCC exerts a distant and inflexible grip on the Hub's services.*

*The consultation documents comment on the need for services to move with the times yet KCC has failed to move with the times and has failed to allow the Hub to adapt to changing expectations”*

Over the past ten years, KCC has made several changes at Minnis Community Hub in order to promote more efficient running and the best possible experience for users. This included investing a large amount of money in developing facilities in the building with the aim of encouraging other services to rent or share space within the Hub, particularly during the evenings and weekends.

A partnership agreement was developed with The Children’s Society (later the service was provided via Thanet Age UK). The Children’s Society based their very successful and well attended Intergenerational Project within the Minnis Community Hub. This partnership was in place for two years between 2013 and 2015 and utilised the building two evenings a week and at weekends, with over a hundred older and younger people accessing across their weekly sessions.

**g) Westbrook House is not appropriate and does not offer the same activities**

Five people (three members of the public and two family members) commented that Westbrook House is not appropriate and doesn't offer the same services as Minnis Community Hub.

The proposal to move to Westbrook House would mean that the service could continue to provide all the facilities service users currently enjoy at Minnis Community Hub, and with the potential for people to use more services in the future; such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Individual meetings will be held to agree personal care plans.

**6. Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 As part of the proposal to transfer the service, a formal 30-day staff consultation period will be initiated, and our recognised Trade Unions will be informed. The staff consultation will be managed by the Operational Management Team and Human Resources.
- 6.2 The majority of Minnis Community Hub day service staff would have the opportunity to continue to deliver the day service at Westbrook House. Service users and staff would be supported through the period of change and our recognised Trade Unions would be involved in the process.

## 7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The current budget spend on Minnis Community Hub for Adult Social Care is £189k; the majority of which is staffing costs. If the service is transferred to Westbrook House with the majority of the current staff, there may be a small reduction in overall costs.

## 8. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was included in the consultation documents in September 2019.
- 8.2 When asked about equalities in the consultation the impact on older people was commented on. These comments have been taken into account within the EqIA review and the updated version of this is available with the consultation report.

## 9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has concluded an eight-week consultation on the future of Older People's Day Services at Minnis Community Hub in Birchington. The consultation documents were available online and a total of **250** paper copy consultation documents and questionnaires were posted out to key community venues across the Birchington and Westgate area. We received feedback from 68 people, with the highest number of replies from members of the public (see 4.3 above).
- 9.2 The main concern raised by service users, families and staff during the consultation was focused around change for those currently accessing the older people's day service at Minnis Community Hub. We have listened carefully to what people have told us, however we believe that with the option proposed we will be in a better position to support the service to develop and offer new opportunities for those that use the service now and in the future.
- 9.3 A robust plan will be put in place to support the transition of the service users from Minnis Community Hub to Westbrook House. It is proposed that the majority of the current staff team would be moving with the service users, and because they know the service users very well, would be in a good position to support the transition and help settle everyone in.

## 10. Recommendation(s)

10.1 Recommendations: The Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **COMMENT ON** the outcome of the eight-week consultation and the proposal to continue to deliver the day service but deliver it in another suitable building, (Westbrook House, near Margate). With this proposal, service users will be able to transfer as a group with the staff they are familiar with and within three miles of Minnis Community Hub.



## **11. Background Documents**

Consultation on The Future of Older People's Day Services at Minnis Community Hub. [www.kent.gov.uk/minnisconsultation](http://www.kent.gov.uk/minnisconsultation)

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