

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
24TH APRIL 2008

Recommendations from the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
5th March 2008

Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre – Consultation by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust

The consultation on the future of the Lea Castle Centre has been prepared by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust, in conjunction with Worcestershire Primary Care Trust.

Lea Castle Centre is currently a site where services are provided for people with Learning Disabilities. The use being made of the Lea Castle Centre by NHS Primary Care Trusts has been steadily in decline. The Primary Care Trusts in the West Midlands that had previously purchased the vast majority of places at the Lea Castle Centre have been looking to provide alternatives, usually in supported housing accommodation with specialist input from professional teams based in the community.

Members noted that as a consequence of the reduced usage, it was becoming increasingly costly to keep services running at the Lea Castle Centre with the excess of expenditure over income at some £3 million per year. It was also noted that current national policy for the care of people with learning disabilities was now focused on meeting individual needs in ordinary housing with intensive support in the community.

Members discussed, in detail, the potential implications of each of the three options proposed by Coventry and Warwickshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) which are:

1. Do nothing
2. Close the centre
3. Develop services on site to make the centre viable

The Chairman advised that, in her capacity as Vice-Chairman of the County Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, members of the County Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had visited the Lea Castle site to view the condition of the area. The Committee were advised by the Chairman that many of the buildings on the site were boarded up.

A Member advised the Committee that a meeting had been held at the Kidderminster Town Hall to advise parents and carers of residents of Lea Castle Centre of the proposals for the future of Lea Castle Centre. Feedback from parents indicated that they felt that there had not been enough planning for future accommodation for service users resident at the centre.

Members noted that ,in addition to some 30 residents at Lea Castle Centre, there were also some out-patient services run from the site, such as the Child Psychology Service and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

Members felt that, at present, the Lea Castle Centre did not present a pleasant environment for the residents of the site to live within and were concerned that, should the staff at the centre seek alternative employment, as a result of the proposals, it could force the Primary Care Trust to close the site ahead of schedule.

The Committee discussed the needs of the service users resident at the Centre and felt that, ideally, they should be placed within their local communities and that no closure should take place until alternative, suitable, accommodation had been found for each service user.

Members agreed to recommend that option 2 be put forward as the preferred option of Wyre Forest District Council. However, Members felt that there should be some safeguard for service users and their families to ensure that, when looking for alternative accommodation, the Primary Care Trusts should take into account the views of those affected.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

Option 2 of the consultation document, entitled “Finding the Right Solutions: The Future of the Lea Castle Centre” be recommended to the Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust subject to a condition that, in seeking alternative accommodation for the residents of the Lea Castle Centre, any alternative placement must be acceptable to the family of the individual and must be agreed and in place before the closure.