

REPORT TO CABINET

DATE: 15th OCTOBER 2026

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

KEY DECISION

**Cabinet Member for Health Adult Social Care – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor
Pauline Beall**

Integration of Community Day Options and Allensway Centre for Adults with Learning Disabilities and Complex Needs

Summary

Community Day Options (CDO) currently delivers community-based day opportunities for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs from Stockton Business Centre, Ragworth Community Centre and Billingham Forum. Allensway Day Centre is a Council-owned, purpose-designed and fully accessible building with capacity to accommodate additional service provision.

A report was presented to the Corporate Management Team (CMT), and it was agreed that a consultation should be undertaken with people accessing the service and their families and carers regarding the potential relocation of CDO to Allensway Day Centre and the integration of the two services. The proposed integration aimed to improve accessibility, increase opportunities for people accessing the service, strengthen community inclusion and maximise the use of council assets. Consultation findings indicated strong support for the proposal, with respondents highlighting the importance of maintaining relationships with familiar staff, access to a wider range of activities, improved facilities and opportunities for greater social interaction.

The proposed integration would bring the two services together within a single, integrated day opportunities service based at Allensway Day Centre, while maintaining existing staffing levels and implementing measures to support people throughout the transition. This report presents the findings of the consultation and seeks a decision on whether to proceed with the proposal.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)/Decision(s)

The recommendation is based on the positive consultation findings, the anticipated benefits for people accessing the service, and the opportunity to deliver a more integrated and sustainable day opportunities service.

Recommendations

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Cabinet to relocate CDO to Allensway Day Centre and integrate the two services.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Adults, Health & Wellbeing, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and the Chief Financial Officer, to take all necessary steps to implement the approved service model, including consultation, engagement with trade unions and staff, and any consequential organisational change processes.
3. Note that through the outcome based review approach, a new model design, and implementation of a more integrated approach, people will get a wider range of opportunities and there will be more options to grow and develop the experiences for people. Financial savings were not the driver for this review, but it has provided the opportunity to delete vacant posts, without reducing staff numbers and as such there will be £150k in savings.

Detail

1. The Council has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014 to meet eligible care and support needs for adults and carers. Day opportunities are a key component of this responsibility, supporting wellbeing, independence, social inclusion and meaningful daily activity for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs.
2. The report is related to two Council-run day opportunity services for adults with learning disabilities and complex needs:
 - a. Allensway Day Centre, a Council-owned building with capacity to support increased service delivery.
 - b. Community Day Options (CDO), which currently delivers community-based activities from Stockton Business Centre (provided by the Council), Ragworth Community Centre (provided by Onsite Building Trust) and Billingham Forum (provided by Tees Active Ltd). Currently, people attending the Forum have been relocated Allensway Day Centre as a result of building work and are unlikely to return before a decision is made by Cabinet.
3. The integration would combine the two services into a single, integrated day opportunities service, with all staff working collaboratively from one location. Several anticipated benefits of an integration of the services include:

- a. Improved access to a fully accessible and purpose-designed building.
 - b. Increased opportunities for community participation.
 - c. Access for activities currently limited to individual sites, including Enterprise Crafts and Rebound Therapy.
 - d. Development of future initiatives such as horticultural activities, social enterprise and a community café.
 - e. Greater workforce resilience through co-location of staff.
 - f. Improved opportunities for progression, volunteering and independence for people accessing the service.
4. The proposal has been informed by previous engagement with people who access the services and their families and carers, alongside an accessibility survey which was carried out in 2025. The feedback highlighted challenges at some locations and limitations in available activities, including cooking and enterprise crafts. This proposal also reflects the positive experiences of individuals temporarily relocated from Billingham Forum, including the development of new friendships, increased community participation, effective joint working between staff teams, and consistently positive feedback from both staff and people accessing the service.
5. Nonetheless, it was recognised that some people may find change challenging, particularly where routines, buildings or transport arrangements are altered. Therefore, a consultation with people accessing the services and their families was undertaken before a final decision is made by Cabinet.

6. Consultation methodology

- a. The consultation was undertaken between 7 July and 5 August 2026.
- b. The consultation sought to understand the factors that were most important to people when considering the proposed integration including:
 - i. The importance of maintaining friendships and social connections.
 - ii. The importance of continuity of support from familiar staff.
 - iii. The significance of attending services in familiar environments.
 - iv. Willingness to participate in activities delivered from different locations.
 - v. The type of support required to help people manage change and transition successfully.
- c. An accessible consultation survey was developed using easy read language and visual response options to maximise participation by people with learning disabilities and complex needs. The survey was uploaded to the Council's on-line platform

Citizen Space. An easy read letter was sent out to people accessing the service to inform them and their families and carers of the consultation. Support was available from staff and independent advocacy where needed to ensure people could understand the questions and express their views.

- d. Additional engagement activities were undertaken with people accessing the service and their families and carers, with support from staff at Allensway Day Centre.
- e. A total of 66 responses were received through the consultation process, including responses submitted through the online survey and feedback obtained through additional engagement activities.
- f. The findings were analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively to assess the extent to which the proposed integration aligns with the priorities and preferences of people accessing the service.

7. Consultation Findings

a. Importance of Friendships

- i. All respondents (100%) indicated that being with their friends at the day service was very important to them. No respondents selected any negative response. This demonstrates that maintaining existing friendships and social networks is a significant consideration for people accessing the service.
- ii. This finding supports the rationale for integrating the services, as operating from a single location can create greater opportunities for people to expand their social networks and engage with a wider range of peers. The proposal also builds on the positive experiences and friendships that have developed during the temporary co-location of the Billingham Forum group at Allensway Day Centre.

b. Importance of Familiar Staff

- i. Eighty-nine per cent of respondents stated they were very happy to spend time with staff they know well and a further 11% were happy. No respondents expressed a negative view.
- ii. The results identified trusted relationships with staff as an important aspect of people's experience of the service. In response, the proposed model maintains existing staffing levels and includes measures to support continuity of support during the transition period.

c. Importance of Familiar Buildings

- i. Whilst respondents valued familiar environments, responses were more varied. Sixty-seven per cent selected "very happy", 22% selected "happy" and 11% were indifferent. No respondents selected sad or very sad.
- ii. This suggests that familiarity with buildings is important but may be less significant than maintaining relationships with friends and staff. The findings indicate that changes to the location of services may be acceptable when appropriate support is provided and important relationships are maintained.

d. Visiting Different Locations

- i. Respondents were positive about attending activities in different places. Eighty-nine per cent selected "very happy", 6% selected "happy" and 6% were indifferent. No respondents expressed negative views.
- ii. This finding is particularly significant because the proposed integrated service is based on an outward-facing model that promotes participation in community activities, partnerships with local organisations, volunteering and skills development. The consultation results indicate strong support for this approach.

e. Support Required During Transition

- i. When asked what would help make changes easier:
- ii. 67% identified support from their keyworker or a member of staff
- iii. 22% requested visits.
- iv. 6% requested advocacy support.
- v. 6% did not answer the question.
- vi. The responses demonstrate that people place greatest importance on reassurance and support from familiar staff. This reinforces the transition approach identified within the previous report, including phased implementation, individual transition plans and support from trusted staff members.

f. Feedback from families and carers

- i. Feedback obtained through additional engagement activities was predominantly positive. Families and carers welcomed the opportunity to view Allensway, discuss the proposals and understand how support arrangements would be maintained. Many commented positively on the building, facilities, accessibility and future opportunities available through the integrated service.
- ii. Key benefits identified by families and carers included:
 - Improved accessibility and facilities.
 - Opportunities for increased social interaction and friendship development.
 - Greater choice of activities and learning opportunities.
 - Access to future initiatives such as gardening, arts, café-based activities and volunteering.
 - Continued support from skilled and familiar staff.

- g. Some concerns were raised regarding transport arrangements, changes to established routines, noise levels, group sizes and maintaining continuity of support. In most cases, these concerns reduced following discussions with staff, attendance at open days and visits to Allensway.

8. Analysis

- a. The consultation findings show a consistently positive response across all areas explored. Importantly, no respondents selected "Sad" or "Very Sad" in response to any survey question, and feedback from families and carers was similarly positive.
- b. The strongest messages arising from the consultation were:
 - i. Opportunities should be provided for people to maintain existing friendships and develop wider social connections.
 - ii. Continuity of support from familiar staff is a priority.
 - iii. People are willing to participate in activities delivered from a range of community locations.
 - iv. Improved accessibility and facilities are viewed positively.
 - v. Changes should be carefully planned and supported through a structured transition process.
 - vi. Families and carers value opportunities to remain involved and informed throughout implementation.
- c. Feedback from additional engagement activities suggests that concerns about change often reduced once people had visited Allensway and understood the proposals in more detail. Many participants expressed confidence in the future direction of the service and recognised the potential benefits of bringing the services together.

Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

9. An Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA) was completed with the findings from the consultation. The assessment found that the proposed integration is expected to have an overall positive impact. The EPIA identified several anticipated benefits, including:
 - a. Improved access to a fully accessible and purpose-designed environment
 - b. Increased opportunities to participate in vocational, enterprise and therapeutic activities
 - c. Increased opportunities to develop independent skills and community participation
 - d. Improved social inclusion through expanded friendship networks and community connections.
10. The EPIA also considered potential adverse impacts associated with the proposal. Areas identified included anxiety related to change, travel arrangements, increased noise level and disruption to established routines. Planned actions include individual transition plans, visits and taster sessions, support from familiar staff, quiet and low-stimulation spaces within Allensway, and ongoing engagement with people accessing the service, families

and staff throughout implementation.

11. The assessment further identified a positive impact on people who may experience socio-economic disadvantage through increased access to vocational learning, enterprise activities, volunteering opportunities, community participation and the development of employability skills. Future service developments, including horticultural, hospitality and enterprise opportunities, are expected to further support confidence, skills development and economic participation.
12. Overall, the EPIA concluded that the proposed integration is expected to improve accessibility, strengthen social inclusion, enhance opportunities for independence and community participation, and deliver positive outcomes for people accessing the service. No major equality concerns were identified that would prevent progression of the proposal, provided that the identified mitigation measures are implemented and monitored throughout the transition process.

Corporate Parenting Implications

13. Whilst the proposal relates to Adult Social Care services, there are implications for young people with learning disabilities and complex needs who are in transition from Children's Services and may access Allensway Day Centre in the future. In line with the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities, and the ongoing work to strengthen transition arrangements across Children's and Adult Services, the Council will continue to work closely with the Transitions Team, schools, young people and their families to support effective planning for adulthood. This will include early engagement, person-centred transition planning, opportunities to visit Allensway, taster sessions, involvement in transition reviews and access to information about future day opportunities. The integrated service model is expected to provide greater access to a wider range of activities, social opportunities, independence skills and community-based experiences, supporting positive outcomes for young people as they move into adult services.

Financial Implications

14. As an outcome based review savings of at least £150,000 are expected to be made by deleting vacant posts from the staffing structure, in line with the savings included as part of the Powering Our Futures Transformation Programme. Actual staffing numbers are not expected to be reduced, and no redundancies are expected to be made.
15. Allensway Day Centre is in serviceable condition with minor maintenance requirements. Transport modelling indicates no increase in costs. Additional support and reassurance from staff can be offered for service users in the new transport arrangements.
16. There has been no negative feedback on the interim arrangements from the families or carers of the Billingham Forum Group following the temporary move to Allensway Day Centre.

17. All staff working in CDO and Allensway Day Centre have standardised job descriptions which enable them to work across all sites as required by the service.

Legal Implications

18. It is not proposed to reduce the level of service provided to people accessing the service and the proposal to integrate the services will not therefore impact upon the Local Authority's legal duties under the Care Act 2014. Changing the location of the provision of the services can lead to potential challenge, but adequate engagement and assessment of ongoing needs will mitigate any impact on people accessing the service and families and prevent potential challenge.
19. The Council has developed a mobilisation plan to ensure appropriate engagement with people accessing the service, staff and key stakeholders subject to the decision from Cabinet.

Risk Assessment

20. Some concerns were raised regarding travel arrangements, anxiety associated with change, sensory considerations and disruption to established routines. A structured transition programme will be implemented to support people accessing the service, their families, carers and staff throughout the integration process.
21. Individual transition plans will be developed ensuring that support reflects personal needs, preferences and outcomes. Site visits, taster sessions and support from familiar staff will be arranged to reduce anxiety and build confidence.
22. Transport arrangements will be reviewed and redesigned in consultation with service users and their families to minimise any potential disruption arising from the changes.
23. Environmental improvements within Allensway will create a welcoming and inclusive setting, including the provision of quiet and low-stimulation spaces for individuals who may require additional support.
24. Workforce capacity will be maintained throughout the implementation period to ensure continuity of care, effective transition support and ongoing service delivery. Staff will continue to receive supervision, appraisal, mandatory training and access to professional development opportunities.
25. Ongoing engagement with people accessing the service and their families, staff, trade unions and partner organisations will continue throughout implementation to identify and address emerging issues and ensure that the benefits of the integrated service model are realised.
26. Regarding Ragworth Community Centre and Billingham Forum, officers from Asset Team meet with Onsite and Tees Active regularly to discuss their operational and financial position.

Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

27. This service is not ward specific however, CDO hires rooms in Stockton Business Centre which is situated in Stockton Town Centre Ward (Councillor Pauline Beall and Councillor Paul Rowling); Ragworth Community Centre (Councillor Jim Beall and Councillor Barbara Inman) and Billingham Forum (Councillor Ann McCoy and Councillor Barry Woodhouse). CDO will be relocated to Allensway Day Centre, Ward Councillors include Councillor Ray Godwin and Councillor Sylvia Walmsley. Ward members in relation to this proposal were informed. Consultation with Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (Councillor Pauline Beall) was conducted. All members' briefing was also conducted.

Background Papers

28. Implementation Plan



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20implementation%2

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