

Summary Sheet

Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting Report – 6th June 2016

Title

Consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House children's homes and the agreement to the relocation of Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate.

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of Children's and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

Brent Lumley, Interim Responsible Individual - Children's Residential Service
Linda Harper, Interim Strategic Lead for Commissioning, Children and Young People's Service

Ward(s) Affected

All

Summary

- 1.1 Rotherham Council, as a developing 'Child Centred Borough', has a strong resounding ambition to move away from the legacy of poorly performing 'inadequate' services to a position of strength and confidence, which is reflected in the intention of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate to be rated 'outstanding' by 2018.
- 1.2 As part of this ambition Rotherham Council has reviewed the care offered across the whole of its residential care services for young people in order to ensure all those looked after by the authority, who are in need of residential care, receive the best possible care now and in the future.
- 1.3 Rotherham Council's 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018' identified that too many Rotherham looked after children live in residential care and that more children need to be placed in a family based setting.
- 1.4 Following the approval of the Sufficiency Strategy, a comprehensive review of residential care was instigated which involved: children and young people, including young inspectors and the Looked After Children (LAC) Council; parents and carers; and a range of professionals who work with children who have complex needs. The findings from the review (Appendix 1) inform proposals within this report.

- 1.5 In order to provide additional assurance regarding safeguarding and quality of service, Rotherham Council has employed additional interim specialist management to provide support and direction to enable existing residential services staff to deliver improvements.
- 1.6 Rotherham Council has ensured that relevant stakeholders, which include: children, young people, parents, social workers, education and health partners and elected members have all contributed to informing the recommendations within this report.
- 1.7 The Council currently has three children's homes. Silverwood is the one remaining home that provides long-term care for male and female young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Cherry Tree House and Liberty House provide long term care and short breaks, respectively, for children with disabilities and their families. In addition, Rotherham Council has three leaving care accommodation and support services in a property adjacent to Silverwood (formerly known as the Annexe); Hollowgate; and Nelson Street, which provide care to young people transitioning from residential care to semi-independent living.
- 1.8 The key issues for each of the establishments are covered within the main body of the report and have informed the recommendations below.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Commissioner:

- 2.1 Agrees to commence consultation on the proposed closure of Silverwood Children's Home and Cherry Tree House.
- 2.2 Agrees that a further report on the outcome of the consultation in relation to Silverwood Children's Home and Cherry Tree House and be submitted for Commissioners and Cabinet decision at the first available Cabinet Meeting following the conclusion of the consultation.
- 2.3 Agrees to retain Hollowgate Leaving Care Accommodation.
- 2.4 Agrees to the re-location of the Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate, that the building is decommissioned, remains closed and is returned to the Corporate Property Unit.
- 2.5 Agrees to continue the short breaks provision at Liberty House.
- 2.6 Agrees to retain the adjacent property to Silverwood Children's Home, whilst the current residents' care needs are reviewed.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 - Strategic commissioning review of residential care, leaving care services, residential, respite services for children with a disability and homeless provision for young people (redacted version for personal information)
- Appendix 2 - Silverwood and Cherry Tree Ofsted Inspection History

Background Papers

- Children's and Young People's Service Improvement Plan, 2015
- RMBC Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

Commissioner decision required

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

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1. Recommendations

It is recommended the Commissioner:

- 1.1 Agrees to commence consultation on the proposed closure of Silverwood Children's Home and Cherry Tree House.
- 1.2 Agrees that a further report on the outcome of the consultation in relation to Silverwood Children's Home and Cherry Tree House and be submitted for Commissioners and Cabinet decision at the first available Cabinet Meeting following the conclusion of the consultation.
- 1.3 Agrees to retain Hollowgate Leaving Care Accommodation.
- 1.4 Agrees to the re-location of the Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate, that the building is decommissioned, remains closed and is returned to the Corporate Property Unit.
- 1.5 Agrees to continue the short breaks provision at Liberty House.
- 1.6 Agrees to retain the adjacent property to Silverwood Children's Home, whilst the current residents' care needs are reviewed.

2. Background

- 2.1 Rotherham Council has laid out a clear vision and determination to help the council secure a safe environment for young people and ensure good, sustainable services and regulation to restore healthy democratic leadership and accountability.
- 2.2 The vision is for Rotherham Children's Services to be rated outstanding by 2018 based on a robust service improvement approach, working with families and partners. A key action is to ensure that there are enough local placements of good quality suitable to meet the needs of looked after children.
- 2.3 Rotherham Council's 'Looked After Children and Care Leavers Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2015-2018' identified that too many Rotherham looked after children live in residential care and there is a need to have more children accommodated in family based placements. This will include children with disabilities and complex health needs. A small number of disabled children are more likely, however, to require residential care in the longer term in order to meet their complex needs. A recent strategic review of residential provision in Rotherham suggests that in-house residential provision in its current form is not the solution (see Appendix 1).
- 2.4 There is a need to ensure that the ambition of this authority to be outstanding

is the over-arching objective and this means better provision for children in care, with more local family based options. Rotherham Council has accepted the challenge and is working hard to increase the number of foster carers, as well as specialist carers who can support young people, with more complex needs. There are too many young people placed in residential care for too long. It is vital that the needs of children are continually appraised to facilitate the safe transfer of young people from residential care into family based placements. This will enable the authority to realise its ambitions to be an excellent 'Corporate Parent' and achieve the high aspirations it has to become a 'Child Centred Borough'. Increasing the cohort of foster carers, and developing their ability to meet complex needs will enable the council to reduce reliance on residential care and support the commissioning of secure placements for Rotherham children within their own community, wherever possible.

- 2.5 The strategic review of residential services was undertaken and completed in February 2016. This incorporated the views of: children and young people, including young inspectors and the Looked After Children (LAC) Council; parents and carers; feedback from elected members and a range of professionals who work with children who have complex needs.
- 2.6 The Council currently has three children's homes: Silverwood, a home for up to five young people with emotional and behavioural challenges; Cherry Tree House, which is registered to provide long term accommodation for up to five disabled young people; and Liberty House, a facility that provides short breaks for disabled children, young people and their families, who are their main carers. The review also included leaving care provision within its scope, which comprise: a three bedded home formerly referred to as the Silverwood Annex; Hollowgate and Nelson Street, which were established to provide semi-independent living to help care leavers prepare for adulthood.
- 2.7 Silverwood is currently Ofsted graded 'good', however, a recent interim inspection found it was 'declining in effectiveness'. Notably, there were only two young residents at the time of the inspection. The recent inspection history is attached at appendix 2, which is indicative of inconsistency of quality and service delivered over a number of years.
- 2.8 As part of the review process, the care needs of the two young people currently resident in Cherry Tree House was comprehensively appraised. It was clear from this work, that the young peoples' complex needs could be better met both now and in the longer term within alternative high quality specialised provision.
- 2.9 The inspection history at appendix 2 shows that the home has consistently failed to operate at a level that is good.
- 2.10 The review also found inconsistencies in the quality of care and support with care leavers' accommodation, which are described in more detail below.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 Nationally, it is generally accepted that children's residential care should be used for only a very small proportion of looked after children. These would most usually be aged over twelve years and are likely to have been placed in residential care as a result of very complex emotional or mental health needs. These needs often lead to high levels of challenging or self-harming behaviours. The correlation between the type of need (emotional/behavioural) and placement choice i.e. a children's home, can in itself be stigmatising for young people, increasing social isolation and making social integration more difficult. This can only be countered if there is very sensitive and highly skilled support and care available for the young people as an integral part of the placement offer.
- 3.2 It is well documented that unless the residential provision is of extremely high quality the very risks from which Local Authorities are seeking to protect their children can be exacerbated and increased. This is particularly true of provision for disabled children because once they have been admitted into residential care, they are far more likely than non-disabled children to remain there for the duration of their childhoods and for some, well into young adulthood and beyond.
- 3.3 Prior to October 2015 the council had five children's homes, however there have been significant and long standing concerns about the quality of care provided to the homes' young residents. These concerns, combined with an assessment of the financial viability of the homes in the short, medium and long term, have already resulted in the closure of Woodview and St. Edmund's Children's Homes.
- 3.4 The pattern of Ofsted inspections awards four ratings at a full inspection (Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, and Inadequate). For an interim inspection, the home is measured by different grades of effectiveness (Improved Effectiveness, Sustained Effectiveness, and Declined Effectiveness).
- 3.5 The appointment of an interim Head of Service for residential homes resulted in an intense period of focus from mid-October 2015 across all the homes operating at the time. The management arrangements within all the children's homes were strengthened and a range of other professionals were engaged to support the ongoing improvement strategy.
- 3.6 In order to strengthen, sustain and deliver an outstanding level of care, the Council would need to invest yet further additional resources to recruit permanently to improve the management arrangements and thus be able to quality assure service delivery in the longer term.
- 3.7 Staffing difficulties and absences have added further budgetary pressures, as posts have had to be covered using agency staff. Practical and practice challenges associated with the use of agency staff are that they often will not know the young people or the systems and processes in use, which can further compromise the quality of care being provided. All children and young people

need to develop positive relationships with their main care givers who are trusted individuals and are a consistent feature in their lives.

3.8 Given the Council's need to deliver the best possible placement and care choices for these young people, this conclusion leads to a duty to identify and consider other ways to best provide services for these children and young people.

3.9 The key issues for each of the establishments are covered below and have informed the recommendations.

3.10 Silverwood Children's Home

3.10.1 Extensive and intensive improvement activity ensured that the immediate welfare needs of the young people resident in all the homes were better met, following the interim Ofsted inspection. However, despite the engagement of an interim Head of Service, a change of management, additional resources, specialist training and increased capacity, concerns have remained. While some progress was made it became clear that the required changes could not be fully achieved or sustained in a manner commensurate with the Council's ambition to provide its looked after children with the standard of care they both need and should expect. This position was crystallised in relation to Silverwood when despite the effort and investment, performance at the home declined.

3.10.2 In-house provision is only financially viable if unit costs are within a reasonable range of that offered by the best local external providers. Unit costs can only be kept down by sustaining high occupancy levels and due to the declining quality of care the occupancy at the home was very low towards the end of last financial year at 40%. This resulted in a very high unit cost when compared to similar provision elsewhere.

3.10.3 The dilemma for local authorities with in-house residential provision is that there is a risk that in order to keep occupancy rates high, young people may be placed too readily in residential care without other non-residential alternatives firstly being robustly explored. Alternatively, young people may be placed within in-house provision when in reality a more specialist external provider would be better suited to meet that young person's very individual needs.

3.10.4 The current living environment at Silverwood requires extensive improvement and refurbishment to bring it to the standards the Council would want for children in care. Reference to the need for improvements were made following visits to by Elected Members and Regulation 44 reviews.

3.10.5 Following the interim inspection remedial action taken included:

- Developing capacity of staff and managers to support young people with complex needs;

- Improving the rigour of care plan and risk assessments for young people;
- Escalating areas of concern to senior management effectively;
- Working collaboratively with other professionals in safeguarding young people.

3.10.6 Despite the above activity, performance declined as explained above at paragraph 2.7. The last remaining resident moved at the beginning of May to a foster placement that will better meet their needs. Due to the Council's strategy of reducing placements in residential care, coupled with the authority's aspirations for high quality support for the most vulnerable children, Silverwood Children's Home is now empty.

3.11 Cherry Tree House:

3.11.1 Cherry Tree House offers long term care to children with a range of complex disabilities. The home is currently rated by Ofsted as 'requires improvement' with a finding of 'improved effectiveness' following an interim inspection in March 2016. Following this inspection an action plan was developed to include:

- Strengthened management arrangements;
- Improving the quality of record keeping;
- Providing better training for the staff;
- Enhancing the voice and influence of the young people.

3.11.2 Despite the interim judgment that improvements have been made, the findings of the review of residential care in Rotherham is that in spite of intense intervention, it is a constant challenge to sustain improvements in the home. This, combined with low bed usage and increased staffing levels required to provide adequate care to the residents, renders continuation of the provision financially unviable, when compared with other similar provision elsewhere.

3.11.3 The continued low occupancy of Cherry Tree House does not provide value to the Council. Alternative placements have been sought for the two young people. One of the homes, who it is understood will be offering placements, has an Ofsted judgment of 'outstanding' and the other 'good'. One is in Doncaster and the other in Lincolnshire. The latter is the furthest distance at 30 miles from the centre of Rotherham. The decision to move the two young people currently resident has been informed entirely by what is in their best interests and has not been influenced by the proposal to consult on closure. The new provision which has been identified for them has been selected because of the increased life chances and opportunities that will be provided for these young people to meet their full potential as they near adulthood.

3.11.4 Cherry Tree House and Liberty House share the same building. The closure of Cherry Tree House will not adversely affect the services

from Liberty House. In the longer term this has the potential opportunity to further develop the site. It should also be noted that the Disability Family Support Service operates out of offices within this shared building.

3.12 Liberty House

3.12.1 Liberty House provides planned short breaks and overnight care seven days a week, for up to eight children aged between eight and eighteen years, who have physical or sensory disabilities, complex health needs and challenging behaviour as a result of their disability. The full inspection by Ofsted in September 2014 awarded the judgment 'good'. A more recent inspection under the new Ofsted Framework evidenced that Liberty House had maintained the 'good' judgement. The feedback from parents is that the service is outstanding.

3.13 Hollowgate

3.13.1 Hollowgate offers purpose built accommodation for young people preparing to leave care, comprising seven self-contained flats. Five are single occupancy and two are two bedroomed with one flat being adapted for disability. Young people can stay in Hollowgate for up to two years although this doesn't happen often.

3.13.2 The review described the facility as being neglected and it was clear that young people were not receiving the level of service they deserved from the council as the 'Corporate Parent'.

3.13.3 However, the review found that the resource had capacity to dramatically improve in a relatively short space of time. Young people involved in the review found that the building was more conducive to the council's aspiration for provision of good accommodation, and the staff team receptive to the need for dramatic improvement. There are now experienced managers in place and an action plan which is yielding significant improvements.

3.14 Former Silverwood Annexe

3.14.1 There are two young people aged over sixteen who are currently being supported to live semi-independently in what was known as the Silverwood Annexe. This is in fact an entirely separate three bedroomed facility adjacent to Silverwood that functions as independent leaving care accommodation and does not meet the criteria for Ofsted regulation as a care home. These young people will be supported by leaving care accommodation staff in the same manner as those employed at the Hollowgate facility who support young people to live semi-independently.

3.14.2 The young people will have access to the same 24-hour support they are currently receiving, so in practical terms will be unaffected by the proposed changes at Silverwood. Bringing this accommodation under

the remit of the Leaving Care Accommodation Team is felt to be a better arrangement for them, as the staff team have specific skills and experience in supporting young people in these circumstances. This arrangement will be kept under review to meet the changing needs of the care leaving cohort.

3.15 Nelson Street

3.15.1 Nelson Street offers semi-independent living for young people leaving care aged sixteen upwards. The property is owned by the Council and the support is provided by Council staff. The building is old, uninviting, in a poor state of repair and described by service users as 'depressing'.

3.15.2 The review determined that Nelson Street presented as a poor service and was castigated by one member of staff who stated; "*the unacceptable has become acceptable*". The young people accessing the service were not receiving the standard of support that would be expected from a 'Corporate Parent'. In light of the concerns in relation to the quality of support from Nelson Street, service users were relocated to Hollowgate, and the building is currently empty.

3.16 If approved, the proposed consultations will commence for 42 days from 7 June 2016 and are consistent with Rotherham Council's intention to ensure that more of the children in the care of the Council are looked after in family settings, such as foster care and where this is not possible, to be placed in consistently good or outstanding residential care.

4 Options considered and recommended proposals

4.1 To continue with existing arrangements, with new improvement action plans for Silverwood, Cherry Tree House and Nelson Street.

4.1.1 This would be inconsistent with Rotherham Council's strategy of reducing numbers of children in residential care and to ensure that when such provision is required, that it is of the highest quality.

4.1.2 As outlined above there have been considerable and costly efforts to ensure Silverwood Children's Home meets the exacting standards required. The 'declined effectiveness' judgement delivered in February 2016 for Silverwood demonstrates that these efforts have not been successful. The building at Silverwood is unsuitable as it requires extensive improvement and renovation and the training and development needs of the staff group are considerable.

4.1.3 The 'improved effectiveness' judgment delivered in March 2016 demonstrates that efforts have been successful, to a point, for the staff at Cherry Tree House. However, the training and development needs of the staff group remain considerable particularly in the context of the need to increase occupancy rates.

4.1.4 The level of investment required and the cost of keeping both

provisions empty while the required improvements are secured makes this option unviable and therefore not recommended.

- 4.1.5 The residential care review found that the provision of care at Nelson Street was inadequate and the building costly to modify. Young People in particular felt that there was little prospect of improvement in the immediate term and therefore retaining the provision is also not recommended.

4.2 To begin a period of consultation on the proposal for a planned closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House children's home and relocate Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate. Further, to retain existing provision at Liberty House, Hollowgate and the property formerly known as 'Silverwood Annex'.

- 4.2.1 The ambition of the authority as set out in paragraph 2.2 is to develop a children's service regarded as outstanding by 2018. In order to achieve this, the council will be seeking to develop the market so that more appropriate homes for children are available locally. As stated in paragraph 2.3, there are too many children placed in residential care and therefore a reduction in council run residential places is consistent with the wider strategy to ensure that more of the children in the care of the authority are looked after in family settings such as foster care.

- 4.2.2 The above is compounded by the findings of the residential care review and the history of performance for both Silverwood and Cherry Tree House, as measured by Ofsted ratings over the years, which can be seen at appendix 2.

- 4.2.3 Given the issues identified at 3.15 it is proposed that the re-location of the Nelson Street Leaving Care Service to Hollowgate be pursued. Further, given the improvements recently secured at Hollowgate and the consistency of good performance at Liberty House breaks facility, it is considered that these provisions would help the council to achieve its ambitions for children in care and care leavers.

- 4.2.4 There are two young people who reside at the property formerly known as the 'Silverwood Annex'. Given that the needs of these young people are being met, it is considered in their best interests for the provision to be retained and reviewed once the young people move on.

- 4.2.5 As the above accords with the council's high aspirations for vulnerable children and young people this is the option recommended.**

5. Consultation

- 5.1 As a matter of public law, any proposal to close a facility will require a reasonable period of engagement and consultation with those affected by such a proposal. Officers will undertake consultation with the following stakeholders and interested persons:

- Children and young people who are resident at the home (assisted by an independent advocate, if required); In this case the consultation will be with the young people who are resident in adjacent accommodation, who while not directly affected in terms of any change of placement, may nonetheless experience some change in their support arrangements;
- Parents, carers and connected persons of the above;
- Independent Reviewing Officers;
- Children's Rights Officer;
- Key partners such as Health, Education and in particular Special Schools with regard to Cherry Tree House;
- Police;
- Ward Councillors.

5.2 In addition, there are 33 members of staff across both children's homes who may be affected by the proposal and officers will engage with HR business partners in relation to the potential impact of the proposal on staff groups.

5.3 The purpose of the consultation is to garner the views and preferences of those consulted on the proposal and its implementation and to understand whether there are any possible unintended consequences of the proposal.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

6.1 A period of 42 days consultation is proposed as proportionate and reasonable in this matter. Subject to Commissioners agreement the timetable of consultation to be undertaken is outlined below:

- Consultation will extend for six weeks from 7 June subject to approval of the recommendations;
- A range of methods will be used for consultation;
- Consultation on the proposal to close will end on 19 July 2016.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 In 2015/16 the unit cost for a place at Silverwood peaked at £5,800 per week, per child. This amounts to £302k per annum, per child. The current unit cost for the young people residing at Cherry Tree House is £7,300 per week, per child, amounting to £380k per year, per child. These costs are considered prohibitive, when compared with other similar placements elsewhere. If, following consultation these homes were to close, the estimated net revenue saving would be approximately £815k in a full year. In addition, the relocation of the care leaving service from Nelson Street to Hollowgate, would accrue savings of approximately £187k in a full year. Therefore, the total value of the savings if, following consultation, the proposed recommendations within this report are implemented, would total approximately £1m in a full year, which would contribute to the council's demand pressures within the children's social care budget.

7.2 There are potential estimated one off costs relative to the above recommendations of approximately £225k in relation to voluntary severance. This cost would be met from the corporate voluntary severance budget.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 In addition to the legal requirements for robust consultation, as set out in Section 5, Rotherham Council has to ensure it complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Under section one of that Act the Council must, when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions, have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. In addition under section 149 of the Equality Act the Council must comply with the public sector equality duty which requires it to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 In dealing with this duty, the Council must have due regard in particular, to the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant characteristic that are connected to that characteristic
- Take steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different to the needs of persons who do not share it
- Encourage persons who share a relevant characteristic to participate in public life or any other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

8.3 Protected characteristics include disability, age, race, sex, religion or belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation.

8.4 Children's Homes are registered with Ofsted, and therefore their activities are regulated. Regulation 49 of the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 requires the responsible individual and/or the registered person, i.e. the children's home registered manager, to give notice in writing to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Ofsted as soon as it is practicable to do so if a registered provider proposes to cease to carry on or manage the Home.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are 33 members of staff which equates to 29.6 full time equivalent staff members at Silverwood and Cherry Tree House who may be affected by the proposals to close those homes.
- 9.2 The Council's usual policies and consultations apply i.e seeking to avoid redundancy through redeployment where possible, if a decision to close the homes takes place after the consultation process.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 There are no young people resident in Silverwood home. There are two young people aged seventeen currently accommodated in the adjacent independent accommodation. These young people will be consulted as part of this proposal.
- 10.2 At the time of writing, there are two young people resident within Cherry Tree House. It is predicted that these young people will move to placements better able to meet their needs within the next four weeks of this report reaching Cabinet. However if they are still in residence they will be consulted as part of this proposal.
- 10.3 The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), for the young person will be involved in any planned moves of young people. The IRO has a statutory duty to ensure that the young person's needs are taken into account.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 The council must comply with its duties under the Equality Act 2010, as set out in section 8 above. In addition, the council has a duty to fully consider the human rights implications for residents, staff and future looked after children.
- 11.2 The proposed consultation exercise and the production of an equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure the necessary information is available for the Commissioner when a final decision is made on the proposal.
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12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 Partners will be consulted as part of this proposal and other directorates who contribute to supporting the home will be informed.
- 12.2 Property services have been made aware of the proposal and that the property will need to be secured and may be surplus to requirements should this proposal proceed.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The areas for concern are fully outlined in section 3 above. Continuation of the current provision presents the following risks:
- 13.1.1 Inadequate care being provided to any future children in care who might be placed in either Silverwood or Cherry Tree House children's home.
 - 13.1.2 That in the event of a further inadequate inspection there could be a forced closure resulting in young people having to move from the home in distressing circumstances.
 - 13.1.3 The financial burden that would be incurred during the period required to bring the provision up to the necessary standard would risk the investments required to support other key elements of the Sufficiency Strategy such as developing 'Edge of Care' provision and enhancing the therapeutic services needed to support permanent alternatives to care for Rotherham's looked after children, such as Adoption and Special Guardianship
- 13.2 The risks associated with the closure of the last Council's mainstream residential provision are as follows:
- 13.2.1 There is a risk that there will be insufficient placement choice for the Borough's children. This risk is mitigated by the other elements set out in the Sufficiency Strategy, including growing the in-house fostering provision, growing and developing the independent fostering market locally to better meet local needs by enhanced commissioning arrangements and similarly maximising the potential to work with local and nearby providers of specialist residential care so that bespoke arrangements can be commissioned to meet individual needs.
 - 13.2.2 It is of note that despite the loss, in effect, of fifteen in-house residential beds that have resulted from the closure of Woodview and St. Edmund's and the freeze on admissions in Silverwood only four new residential placements have been made since December 2015. Of those that have been made in recent months none would have been considered suitable for admission to Silverwood in terms of the current 'Statement of Purpose'.
- 13.3 It has been evidenced that Cherry Tree House Children's Home is not able to provide the high quality of care to the young people with complex needs identified as requiring residential care. This is evidenced by the fact that the home has not been able to meet the needs of young people with complex disabilities who have had to be placed outside the borough. Despite a robust management response and low occupancy rates the home has not been able to make sufficient improvements nor demonstrate the ability to sustain improvements within a reasonable time frame and it is estimated that considerable additional investment would be required which cannot be justified.

13.4 Officers of the council are required to maximise resources and ensure that we get best value for money. The continued low occupancy and under-utilisation of the home means that it is not value for money. The proposed closure upon which consultation is based mitigates these risks.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director Children and Young People's Services

Approvals Obtained from:

Joanne Robertson, Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Simon Cooper, HR Manager

Neil Concannon, Service Manager – Litigation and Social Care, Legal Services

This report is published on the Council's website or can be found at:-

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories=>

Appendix 1 : Strategic commissioning review of residential care, leaving care services, residential respite services for children with a disability and homeless provision for young people (redacted version)



Appendix 2 : Silverwood Ofsted Inspection History

Recent Ofsted Inspection History Silverwood Children's Home		
Inspection Date	Inspection Type	Inspection Judgement
12/09/2013	Full	Good
03/03/2014	Interim	Good Progress
24/09/2014	Full	Inadequate
12/11/2014	Full	Good
30/06/2015	Full	Good
15/02/2016	Interim	Declined Effectiveness

Recent Ofsted Inspection History Cherry Tree Children's Home		
Inspection Date	Inspection Type	Inspection Judgement
31/07/2013	Full	Adequate
25/02/2014	Interim	Good Progress
05/11/2014	Full	Inadequate
05/01/2015	Full	Adequate
18/08/2015	Full	Requires Improvement
23/03/2016	Interim	Improved Effectiveness