

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by Acting Director of Social Work**

**Social Justice Committee: 14 June 2006**

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**Subject: Proposed Sale of Marelen House, 57 Drumry Road, Clydebank**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** This report seeks Committee approval to declare Marelen House surplus to the operational requirements of Social Services and the disposal of this property on the open market.

**2. Background**

- 2.1** In November 2000, West Dunbartonshire Council completed a best value review of residential care and respite services for adults with learning disabilities. This review was in line with the Scottish Executive review of services for people with learning disabilities "The Same as You?". Both reviews recognised the importance of housing and respite services in the lives of people with learning disabilities and their carers.

- 2.2** In September 2004 a report was presented to the Social Justice Committee. This report made 2 recommendations as follows:

“Committee is asked to approve the redesign of Marelen House to provide a 5-person respite service” and “to approve the capital expenditure required to refurbish the accommodation”.

- 2.3** Marelen House closed for refurbishment in April 2005 with the intention that it would re-open as a dedicated respite service. Due to design and tendering delays no contract has yet been entered into in relation to the refurbishment.

- 2.4** The Council meeting on 9 February 2006 agreed a savings proposal which involved not reopening the Marelen House facility and the service being provided elsewhere and achieving a revenue saving of £100,000 per year from 2006/07.

- 2.5** Consultation has taken place with staff, carers and Trade Unions.

**3. Assessed Need for Respite Services**

- 3.1** The use of residential respite services has increased from 1,100 nights in 2001 to 1,500 nights in 2005/06.

- 3.2 The projected need for additional respite services based on current trends indicates that the Council will require to provide approximately 3,000 nights per annum by 2007/08. The increased demand stems from several areas of need.
- 3.3 Young people with learning disabilities moving from children's services to adult resources during the next 3 years will significantly increase the need for additional respite services. The needs of older people with learning disability and those requiring emergency admissions will also increase.

#### **4. Model of Service**

- 4.1 A proposal has been developed which would allow respite services to be relocated in a new build facility in Dunn Street, Duntocher. This would be a joint venture with Knowes Housing Association and a care provider organisation.
- 4.2 This venture would provide 2,184 nights per annum for respite use. This amount of nights would allow the Council to revert to the original agreement with Choices Shortbreaks for 2 respite beds providing 728 nights per annum.
- 4.3 The proposed Dunn Street development together with a 2 bed facility at Choices Shortbreaks would provide the Council with 2,912 respite nights per annum.
- 4.4 In order to progress the new development a number of consultation exercises have been undertaken. These include: Trades Unions; the staff group; and the Carers' Group.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The disposal of Marelen House on the open market subject to a closing date will result in financial savings to the Council. It is anticipated that the annual target saving of £100,000 will be achieved through the redeployment of the Marelen staff group into existing vacant posts elsewhere within Social Work offset against the costs of providing the expanded provision with Choices Shortbreaks in 2006/07. From 2007/08 onwards the saving will be achieved through offsetting the employee savings noted above against the cost of the new provision at Dunn Street.
- 5.2 The cost of refurbishing Marelen House to a suitable standard is estimated at around £450,000. This figure is in excess of the original allocated capital of £300,000. Since the Council meeting of 9 February 2006 the capital budget has been realigned and £100,000 was provided for the reprovision with an alternative supplier.

- 5.3 The proposed new respite development will not require a capital contribution from the Council and therefore will free £100,000 from the committed capital plan for 2006/07.
- 5.4 This sale is likely to generate a significant capital receipt in excess of £250,000 to the General Services Account of the Council.

## **6. Personnel Issues**

- 6.1 Consultation has now taken place with all staff. This has also involved both the Trade Unions and Personnel Services. To date, 2 of the original staff group of 18 have left the service. 11 staff have been successfully re-deployed to existing vacancies and 4 are considering other options. 1 has expressed an interest in working in the new service.
- 6.2 Within West Dunbartonshire Council, Cornerstone Community Care currently provides respite services to learning disabled service users and their carers. It is proposed that this organisation, through an extension of their contract, becomes the preferred provider for the new Dunn Street respite service. Cornerstone's reputation within the Council is very high and their ability to provide flexible and low cost services within the context of best value has been consistently evidenced.

## **7. Consultation with Carers**

- 7.1 A representative group of carers have been working with Learning Disability Services since March 2006. This group contains 8 carers who represent respite service users across the whole authority the group includes representatives of those caring for adults with complex disabilities, carers of children in transition and a representative from Auchentoshan carers association. This group have had access to plans and will play a leading role in determining the exact specifications of the new development.

## **8. Conclusion**

- 8.1 The Council meeting of 9 February 2006 approved the reprovision of the respite service previously provided at Marelen.
- 8.2 Since then the capital budget for the project has been re-aligned and reduced to £100,000 as a potential contribution to the cost of setting-up the alternative provision.
- 8.3 The proposal contained in this report provides a way forward for residential respite services within the authority. It would provide almost 3,000 nights per annum, and the model of service delivery will generate the required target savings of £100,000. The new service is expected to be available by April 2007.

8.4 The proposal will realise a likely capital receipt of around £250,000 and free £100,000 from the committed capital programme for 2006/07.

**9. Recommendations**

9.1 That the Committee agree to declare Marelen House, 57 Drumry Road, Clydebank surplus to the requirement of Department of Social Services.

9.2 That the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services be authorised to sell Marelen House on the open market subject to a closing date.

9.3 That the Head of Legal and Administrative Services be authorised to conclude this transaction subject to the legal conditions that are considered appropriate.

William W.Clark  
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**Wards Affected:** 6

**Background Papers:** Social Services File

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