

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Temporary closure of The Hermitage, Billet Lane, RM11 1XL – Base for the Integrated Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jason Frost
SLT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls
Report Author and contact details:	Andrew Sykes, Service Manager for Disabilities, Adult Social Care
Policy context:	Government advice following the outbreak of Covid 19 virus in the UK
Financial summary:	There are no financial implications arising from this decision.
Relevant OSC:	
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Action is required following the taking of the decision so urgently as to justify exemption from being called in

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[X]
Connections making Havering	[X]

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This executive decision is seeking formal approval to temporarily close The Hermitage site.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Second Tier managers have the following relevant powers at Part 3 section 3.4 of the Constitution

- (a) To take any steps necessary for proper management and administration for their allocated portfolios.
- (b) ...
- (c) To manage buildings and facilities under their control including letting, hiring or otherwise permitting the use of such premises and property for occasional purposes...
- (d) To be responsible and accountable for all health and safety matters.

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

The Hermitage is the base for the Integrated Community Learning Disability Team (CLDT) which is managed by adult social care. NELFT staff (approx. 50%) are also based at The Hermitage as part of the partnership arrangements. Although The Hermitage is primarily a staff base it has a public reception and a number of clinics and well-being related services also operate from the site.

Public reception and clinics:

For the past two weeks, and as part of our implementation of measures aimed at delaying the spread of the Coronavirus all of our clinics held at the site (psychiatry and psychology) have been cancelled. This was put in place to protect vulnerable people with learning disabilities who attend the site, ensure we could comply with social distancing requirements and also ensure that risk to staff was minimised as far as is possible. The clinic remains operational but is now undertaken by using FaceTime and telephone based contact. The move to telephone based consultations has significantly reduced the footfall at our public reception. All other appointments (planned and unplanned) with social workers and other allied health professionals at the site has also ceased and these functions are now also being completed by telephone.

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Therefore our public reception function has largely ceased.

Staffing:

Also, for the past two weeks we have been reducing the staffing presence at the site in line with government advice, encouraging staff to work from home. We have ensured that a skeleton staffing presence has been available on the site to deal with any urgent matters or where visits are required. As of yesterday only 5 staff were based within the building.

Despite the reduction in physical presence, core functions are being maintained and the team remains operational but offering a reduced service prioritised at those in greatest need.

Decision being requested:

Physical staffing presence in the building has reduced to minimal levels (NELFT and LBH staff are now working from home or other sites) and footfall at the public reception has reduced to one or two enquiries per day following the cancellation of the clinics. This need can therefore be met temporarily via telephone. The team will remain operational and contact numbers remain unchanged. We will move to a crisis and emergency response, visiting only when necessary following an assessment of the risks.

I am therefore requesting the temporary closure of The Hermitage site to staff and to the general public from Thursday 26th March 2020 and until further notice. Senior NELFT management have been consulted and are in agreement with this course of action. This change is being made in response to recent government advice relating to Coronavirus (Covid 19). Every effort will be made to return to normal service delivery as soon as possible.

We remain acutely aware of how important and valued the services that operate from The Hermitage are but the general safety of the people we support, our staff and members of the public remains our priority and therefore this is felt to be a proportionate response.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Continuing to keep the Hermitage open. Rejected for the reasons above.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care has been consulted on all these service changes prior to the decision.

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Andrew Sykes

Designation: Service Manager for Disabilities

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.J. Syke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Signature:

Date: 25th March 2020

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The services delivered from the Hermitage are core social work and health functions.

These will continue to be delivered in alternative ways as set out in the Report. There is nothing in terms of the legal obligations of Social Workers to carry out face to face interviews in a physical building and the continuation of a service remotely will ensure that the Teams can continue to provide a core service.

The general duties of Adult Social Care Departments to carry out assessments and make provision are modified in the Coronavirus Act 2020, which is now in force. Therefore, to the extent that the service needs to move to prioritise the most urgent cases the legislation enables this to happen.

The Authority also has to bear in mind its duties to ensure the health and welfare of its staff and visitors to its premises and these steps are in line with those duties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report is requesting temporary closure of The Hermitage building to accommodate the government's advice on Coronavirus 19. There are no financial implications arising from this decision.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

The proposals contained in this report will directly impact on all staff that work at the Hermitage Centres who will be managed in accordance with the Council's published COVID-19 Managers Guidance.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

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The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out when a current or planned service/policy/activity is likely to affect staff, service users, or other residents. It is acknowledged that in emergency or urgent situations it will not always be possible to carry out an EqHIA in advance of a relevant activity, however, managers will undertake the required EqHIAs at the earliest opportunity. Where managers are already clear that protected groups/users will be impacted negatively by the intended activity, then this will be noted in the next paragraph and/or put into EqHIAs. Where the negative impact of the intended activity can be mitigated, this too should be set out in this report and/or the EqHIA.

In all situations, urgent or not, the Council will seek to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Barbara Nicholls

CMT Member title: Director for Adults Social Care and Health

Date: 25th March 2020

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____