

To: Leadership Board

On: 19 June 2024

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service

1. Summary

- 1.1 At the Leadership Board meeting on 1 May 2024, the planned closure of the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service on 7 June was noted by Elected Members, and it was agreed that officers would work with all stakeholders involved including service users, to develop options for the transition to a new model of support, with an additional £90,000 being earmarked from the Fairer Renfrewshire programme funding to support the development of a community led support model for people impacted by a brain injury and their families.
- 1.2 Furthermore it was agreed that further information on any proposal or allocation of funding would be brought to Leadership Board on 19 June 2024, subject to the agreed development work to be undertaken by the Policy and Partnerships service.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on that development work, with relevant background highlighted in Section 3 of this report. Section 4 sets out proposed next steps for the commissioning of a new support service for consideration by Elected Members.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Elected Members are asked to:
- Note the update provided in the report.

- Agree the proposal detailed in Section 4 to develop a new support model for people impacted by a head injury and their families
 - Agree the total allocation of £300,000 of Fairer Renfrewshire funding as set out at section 4.12 to commission this new service.
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3. Background

- 3.1 At the Leadership Board on 1 May 2024, Elected Members considered a Fairer Renfrewshire programme update which included information relating to the planned closure of the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service on 7 June 2024. It was noted within the report that the Council had provided some support to the delivery of the overall service in recent years, specifically through funding to support service users and their wider family to navigate the social and wellbeing impacts of a brain injury for a three year period from April 2021.
- 3.2 The paper indicated that there may be some potential for a local group of stakeholders to develop a new model of support going forward, which could ensure that the holistic support required by people impacted by a brain injury and their families can continue to be available across Renfrewshire. This included support around issues such as employability, income advice, health and wellbeing and social isolation, particularly given the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis.
- 3.3 Members of the board agreed that:
- officers should engage with stakeholders on the development of a new community-led model of support for people impacted by a brain injury and their families, with £90,000 funding earmarked from the Fairer Renfrewshire funding to support this upon final agreement and approval of the model in June 2024;
 - a report to be submitted to a future meeting of this Board on the background to the decision to cease funding for the brain injury service provided by Quarriers.
- 3.4 Elected Members are asked to note that a Petition for Judicial Review relating to the decision to decommission the Renfrewshire Head Injury Service has been raised at the Court of Session. It was served on the Council and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership on 4 June 2024. As this matter is now subject to ongoing legal proceedings, it would not be appropriate for the circumstances giving rise to those proceedings to be the subject of further comment within a Council board report at this time. This report therefore focuses on the work that has been progressed to explore the development of a new model of support for people impacted by a head injury and their families following the recommendations approved by the Leadership Board on 1 May 2024.

4. Update on development work undertaken in relation to new service model

- 4.1 In response to the recommendations made by the Leadership Board on 1 May 2024, the Head of Policy and Partnerships initiated a process of engagement with officers from the Health and Social Care Partnership and the service provider Quarriers. Work was undertaken to gather background information on the existing contractual arrangements, and specifically in relation to the decommissioning arrangements being progressed by Quarriers and the HSCP following the planned closure of the service on 7 June 2024.
- 4.2 Quarriers indicated during these meetings that a process of consultation with service users had commenced in relation to the potential development of a community led model. Engagement with a small group of service users and representatives was also planned involving senior officers from the HSCP and Children's Services following a request received.
- 4.3 The findings from the consultation conducted by Quarriers highlighted that existing service users were concerned about the perceived loss of the relationships they had formed whilst using the service – with trusted members of staff and with other service users and their family as part of a wider support network. It was clear that this was a significant immediate priority for service users, and whilst the consultation feedback also highlighted some other wider community opportunities that could be explored as part of any new community-led model of support, this would require to be developed over a period of time and with targeted support.
- 4.4 In the report provided to Elected Members on 1 May 2024, indicative funding of £90,000 was identified from Fairer Renfrewshire programme funding to support the development of this potential community led model. The paper also noted that it may be necessary for the earmarked funding to be utilised to support some form of transition arrangements to be put in place, and that longer term funding options to support the delivery of any new model would require to be developed.
- 4.5 In light of the feedback gathered from service users, specific engagement took place with the current service provider to develop an outline service specification which could be put into place by them to support the development of a new community model, over a proposed transition period from 8 June 2024 to end March 2025. This proposal was well developed and close to final agreement w/c 3 June.
- 4.6 The existing provider confirmed on 6 June 2024, that it would not be possible to secure staffing to ensure delivery of the transition support starting from 8th June. It was confirmed that existing staff involved in the delivery of the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service had moved to alternative posts within the organisation as part of the decommissioning of the service, and that the proximity to the closure date would not allow for other staff to be put into place to deliver this support.
- 4.7 Whilst it has not been possible to conclude an agreement with a specific provider or organisation to provide transition support, the work undertaken to date has allowed for a more informed position to be established by the Council on the views of key stakeholders.

- 4.8 From the initial engagement work undertaken, it has become clear that:
- Transition support for service users is considered to be required over a much longer period than originally anticipated following the closure of the Renfrewshire Head Injuries Service.
 - Longer term funding would also be beneficial in terms of securing a potential provider for this new service.
 - Whilst engagement with service users was undertaken by the previous service provider, further engagement will be required in order to focus on the specific priorities which should be delivered through a new service model and within the funding envelope which is potentially available to support this.
- 4.9 Based on the information gathered to date, it is therefore proposed that work is now specifically progressed to commission a new support service for a 3 year period. The core aim of the service would be to support people with a head injury and their families and to link to wider social supports available across Renfrewshire. Officers would seek to consult with service users on the draft service specification for the new service model directly, building on the consultation and engagement feedback gathered to date by other stakeholders. Subject to approval of this proposal, a procurement process would be initiated and progressed by officers.
- 4.10 As Elected Members will be aware, £90,000 of funding from the Fairer Renfrewshire programme was initially earmarked to support the development of a new model and transition arrangements required. From soft market testing undertaken to date it is anticipated that up to £300,000 of funding would be required to commission a new support service for a three year period.
- 4.11 To progress the procurement of a new service model on this basis, greater certainty in respect to funding requires to be agreed by the Council. In order to progress this procurement at the pace required by all stakeholders, it is proposed that an additional £210,000 of unallocated resources are provisionally allocated from Fairer Renfrewshire funding by the Leadership Board for this purpose, to provide an overall funding allocation of £300,000. It is recognised that the impact of this overall funding commitment specifically from Fairer Renfrewshire funding could be addressed through future budget setting processes moving into 2025/26.
- 4.12 Subject to the approval of this proposal by Elected Members, work will commence to commission the new service, and to commence the stakeholder engagement process during July 2024.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – Subject to agreement by Elected Members, £300,000 in total is available for allocation from the Fairer Renfrewshire Programme to provide immediate funding certainty to support the development of and transition to, a

potential to a new service for people and their families impacted by a head injury.

2. **HR & Organisational Development** – *N/A*.
3. **Community/Council Planning** – The Fairer Renfrewshire Programme is a key element of the work of the Council and its community planning partners to address poverty and inequality in Renfrewshire.
4. **Legal** – As indicated within section 3 of the report, the decision to decommission the Renfrewshire Head Injury Service is now subject to a Petition for Judicial Review. Due to the ongoing legal proceedings, advice was provided by the Head of Corporate Governance on the content information provided at this time. The Petition for Judicial Review and related court decisions could have further implications on the work being progressed at this time.
5. **Property/Assets** – *N/A*
6. **Information Technology** – *N/A*
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been considered in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. Whilst the content of the report is provided as an update on direction of travel in relation to the new community model, any new service developed would be subject to review and consideration in line with the Council's public sector equality duties.
8. **Health & Safety** – *N/A*
9. **Procurement** – Subject to the approval of the proposal outlined in this paper, the commissioning of the new support service would be progressed in line with all associated legal and governance requirements.
10. **Risk** – As set out in the report, this matter is now subject to judicial Review proceedings.
11. **Privacy Impact** – *N/A*
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – *N/A*
13. **Climate Change** – *N/A*

List of Background Papers

(a) none

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