

Written information requested at the Stonehaven District Community Council Meeting on 27th July 2021 – Stonehaven Vaccination Centre Programme.

Background – Invercarron Resource Centre

Invercarron Resource Centre is owned by Aberdeenshire Council but operationally managed by Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP). Pre-Covid the venue was a base for HSCP staff and the Partnership ran a 2-day per week in-house day service and contracted an Alzheimer day care service one day per week. There were a number of organisations that ran independent groups and/or held meetings at the venue. The IRC Committee ran several activities from the site, such as tea and coffee mornings, craft group and board games.

The HSCP no longer require to use the building for their services. This was the situation pre-Covid. This is due to staff moving to the refurbished Viewmount base or continuing to work at home and due to a reduction in demand for older people's day-care and Alzheimer Scotland withdrawing from providing the dementia day service. The HSCP will continue to provide a service to the existing service 4 users of day-care, but on a more individualised basis. An alternative service is being sought for the previous Alzheimer service.

There was initial engagement in March 2020 with the IRC Committee about this situation and they were invited to participate in a review to determine the future of the groups and activities not provided by the HSCP. While the HSCP do not require the building, it is acknowledged that it provides a venue to host activities that are important to older people's well-being. This review didn't commence due to Covid-19 but was re-started in June 2021. However, the situation changed within in a matter of weeks when the Vaccination Programme Board made the decision to site the Vaccination Centre in Stonehaven.

The main contacts for each independent organisation were written to and offered support to identify an alternative venue. A community link worker has been allocated to support the organisations. There is a meeting with the Committee on the 16th of August to discuss a way forward.

The Vaccination Programme

By March 2022, the HSCP have a new statutory duty to take on several primary care services, including the vaccination programme, previously provided by GPs at their practices. This is a national directive and is a requirement of the HSCP. The venues that HSCP require are for delivering future vaccinations to all adults and pre-school aged children. School vaccinations will be delivered in schools, but co-ordinated and organised from the Vaccination Centre, including drop-ins for missed appointments. An estimated 22,000 people will require vaccinations in the Kincardine and Mearns area. This situation is not going to change and a permanent site is required. It is not best use of public funds to refurbish a building to the required clinical standards and then move elsewhere. Funding is only available to March carry out refurbishments, so a permanent site requires to be in place by March 2022.

There is no time to build or extend a building with the planning permission and logistics involved in this and the cost would be prohibitive, plus there is an issue with available land in Stonehaven. Temporary structures such as portacabins are not suitable for provision of a permanent service and NHS Grampian will not approve temporary structures for delivery of the programme.

The Vaccination logistics team have assessed several buildings in Stonehaven, including the Housing Office at Allardice Street, the Invercarron Resource Centre, the Town Hall, the Community Centre and Forest View. None of these sites are ideal and all have disadvantages.

The criteria required in relation to the building is:

A large space for delivering the vaccines, one way flow through the site with separate entrance and exit, a reception, a waiting area, a post vaccination area, staff welfare areas, changing area, secure storage, PPE storage, waste storage, office space and toilets, including disabled toilet for public use. Provision of parking spaces for blue badge holders.

The Invercarron Resource Centre has been assessed as the site most suitable to meet these requirements with minimal refurbishments. While we acknowledge that the parking situation is not ideal, off-site parking is available. There are also 5 allocated parking spaces that can be utilised for parking for people with disabilities, though this is likely to reduce to 3 if hatching is required. There is a bus stop outside Invercarron at Dunnottar Junction and the 107 and 26 buses stop there. The A2B dial-a-bus can be booked for Stonehaven town centre journeys everyday Monday to Friday, except Tuesday.

As we progress with the vaccination programme and there is less pressure to deliver the Covid-19 vaccine in a short period of time, we plan to provide a hub and spoke model. This means that while Invercarron will be the main centre of operation for vaccination provision, but some provision will be temporarily provided in some of the smaller communities. This will lessen pressure on the site as the main resource.

The Council legal advice is that the use of the Invercarron Resource Centre rests with the HSCP and vaccine delivery is an operational matter. If the Partnership no longer requires the Centre for day services and can re-purpose it for other statutory functions then this would make best use of existing resources. While we acknowledge that the Centre is very important to the people that use it, there are other resources where the activities can be provided as there aren't any specialised requirements that other venues in Stonehaven don't have.

The advice from Council Planning is no change of use consent would be required. The current use would fall under use class 10 and so would the intended use.

Process

The Vaccination Logistics Group were provided with properties to consider by Property colleagues from NHS and Aberdeenshire Council, plus HSCP colleagues. A record of sites viewed and the outcomes is kept by the Asset Management team. The preferred site option was taken to The Vaccination Board for discussion and ratification.

The properties that did not meet the criteria and the rationale:

Stonehaven Leisure Centre

This is not considered a long-term solution. There is a high number of demands on the building from individuals and groups, as it offers specialist facilities e.g., swimming pool, gym, sport courts.

Town Hall

This is not considered a long-term solution. It is used by community groups with specific demands on the building, in relation to its facilities and use. There would be an adverse impact on the local economy and town centre if there was a loss of the events held there e.g.

- Sound and lighting system
- Staging
- Pantomime
- Stonehaven folk festival
- Hogmanay ceilidh

The Community Centre

The building is not suitable as the space is too small to facilitate patient flow and the corridors are too narrow. There was an accessibility issue to the largest area identified, therefore not suitable for people with disabilities. The size of the welfare facility for staff is too small and in addition there was a lack of storage for PPE and other supplies.

Forest View Learning Disability Day Centre

There is some space on site, but it is insufficient in size. Included is the establishment of a Public Dental Service at this site, for which funding has been provided by NHS Grampian for the conversion of an area of the building. The Learning Disability Service has already provided the Scolty Centre in Banchory for the Vaccination Programme and it would be disproportionate to expect them to provide another Centre, with the ensuing detrimental impact on people with learning disabilities.

Conclusion

The HSCP have a priority requirement to deliver a vaccination programme for Stonehaven by March 2022. A permanent site will have to be in place by then as continued funding is not available for further refurbishment and we require to start delivering vaccinations to the Stonehaven community. Several sites have been assessed and discounted through either a lack of suitable space or because they provide facilities that aren't available elsewhere. The Invercarron building is the best site for the provision of the space required with minimal refurbishments. The parking situation is not ideal, but spaces for blue badge holders will be provided and there is public transport and a Dial-a-Bus service available. We acknowledge that the people that use Invercarron are upset by this decision, but the organisations that use it have been offered support by the HSCP to access alternative venues.

The risk is that if the community do not wish the Vaccination Centre to be sited at Invercarron and no other option, that is acceptable to the community, with the required space inside the building and the ability to be ready by March 2002, at an acceptable cost is available that Kincardine and Mearns residents will have to travel to other vaccination sites. The closest site is Banchory, however providing an additional estimated 22,000 appointments will put pressure on the size of resource that has been identified for only the Marr community. This may cause a delay in vaccine provision or necessitate travel to another site in Aberdeenshire.