

# Oak Farm Proposed Service Changes

## Consultation Report

September 2024



# 1 Background and Methods

## Introduction

Oak Farm is a day opportunities service located in Ditton Priors, South Shropshire (WV16 6SS, nr Bridgnorth). Oak Farm services are commissioned by Shropshire Council and delivered by Bethphage, a charity that provides support to adults with learning and physical disabilities. The landowner of the site is the Ditton Priors Community Land Trust.

Bethphage has been working on its vision for future service provision over recent years and has established a strong vision to purchase their own site for future service provision in a new location. This means that there is now a need to review the current service and commissioning arrangements. An important part of this review is obtaining feedback from service users and their families, stakeholders, and the wider community. Currently the service is utilised by approximately 30 individuals.

A consultation was launched on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024, and ran through 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, to gather information prior to any decisions being taken about future service provision at Oak Farm. Shropshire Council requested that those who attend Oak Farm and a wide range of other stakeholders provide feedback to help determine what support might look like in the future, wherever that is offered. Questions and discussions were also focused on identifying if there should be a long-term relationship with Oak Farm or whether future options at other venues should be considered. The outcome of the consultation will also need to consider relative costs of services for individuals to ensure best value for money and financial sustainability ongoing.

The following options were presented to all consultation respondents:

### **Option 1: Oak Farm Day Opportunities run by Bethphage ceases and appropriate alternative support is identified for each individual**

Under this option the service at Oak Farm will finish. All individuals (along with their families and carers) will then be assisted to find the best alternative support available. This will be supported through a review.

There are different types of day opportunity support running across Shropshire. Each individual will have the chance to consider the support that best meets their needs, strengths and interests. This may include the new farm run by Bethphage, or other services and support based in communities across Shropshire.

### **Option 2: A new Day Opportunities provider is secured to deliver a service from Oak farm (subject to lease arrangements with landowner)**

Under this option, arrangements would be made to find a new provider to replace Bethphage at Oak Farm. Individuals would need to review their care

and support and discuss their future needs with a member of the Social Care Team.

Each individual will have the chance to consider how the new support arrangements best meet their needs, strengths and interests.

**Option 3: Support continues through an agreed move to the new farm location, which is Lower Sutton Farm, Sutton, Chelmarsh, WV16 6BQ**

Under this option arrangements will be made for individuals who are presently supported at Oak Farm to move across to the new Bethphage owned farm site. The support offered will be the same, although the site is different.

Each individual will have the chance to consider the support arrangements at the new farm to ensure that they best meet their needs, strengths and interests. Individual reviews with the Social Care Team will assist any individual who feels that they would like to move to alternative support.

Shropshire Council was transparent that its current preferred option is Option 1, but that the feedback collected during the consultation would inform any future decision making.

**Methods**

The consultation aimed to explore options for a new service and gather feedback from members of the public and stakeholders to inform future decision making. Thus, feedback of various kinds were collected during the consultation. First, individuals currently receiving support at Oak Farm received a paper Easy Read survey through the post with the option of using a pre-paid postage envelope to return the survey or handing it in to a member of Oak Farm staff to be collected by Shropshire Council officers.

An additional survey was also publicly available on Shropshire Council's Get Involved web pages, aimed at collecting the feedback of family and friends of Oak Farm service users, as well as professionals and any other community members who wished to respond to the consultation. This survey was publicised through the Shropshire Council newsroom and other communications channels.

Two events (one in person and one online) were also held, and notes were collected by officers summarising the feedback from these events. Additionally, one family of an Oak Farm service user sent detailed feedback via email. Finally, Bethphage submitted a detailed response to the consultation.

Quantitative survey results were analysed using MS Excel and are displayed where appropriate as Figures. Qualitative results were analysed for common themes, and where possible these themes are presented in Tables, with anonymised examples of comments provided to illustrate themes.

This report proceeds in the following sections:

- **Section 1: Background and Methods** (this section) provides an overview of Shropshire Council's current involvement with Oak Farm, its relationship with

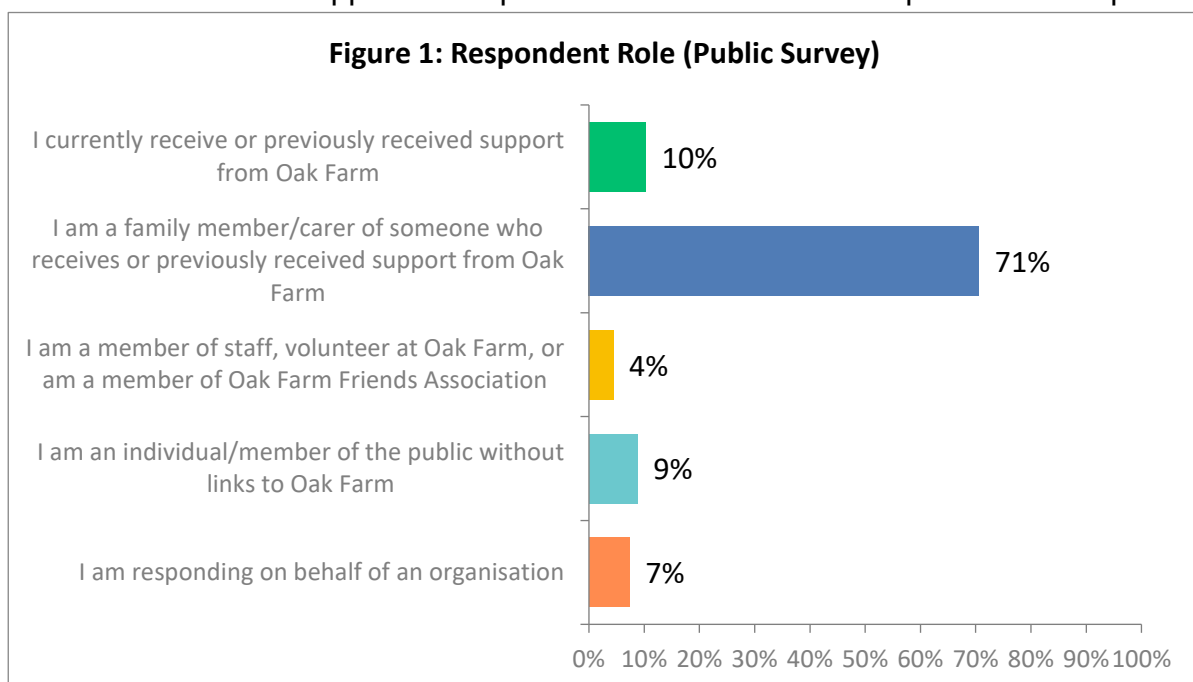
partners, and the changes that have required the council to set out proposed options going forward. It also provides an overview of the consultation process and the methods involved to collect public feedback.

- **Section 2: Respondents** presents the number and types of responses to the consultation received from the surveys, as well as laying out some of the demographic characteristics of respondents.
- **Section 3: Preferred Options** analyses the responses to both surveys laying out which options respondents prefer and why.
- **Section 4: Impacts of Options** presents the results of survey data analysis and common themes around responses about how each of the proposed options might impact Oak Farm service users, their families and carers, and other key stakeholders.
- **Section 5: Additional Feedback** summarises the responses to open-ended questions aimed at better understanding the needs for future provision of services to current Oak Farm service users.
- **Section 6: Conclusion** provides a summary of the key findings from the overall analysis of feedback and offers some conclusions based on the evidence.

## 2 Respondents

A total of 88 survey responses were received. 68 of these were in response to the public survey, and 20 were Easy Read surveys returned to the Feedback and Insight Team. Demographic information discussed in this section of the report will refer to the respondents of these surveys separately.

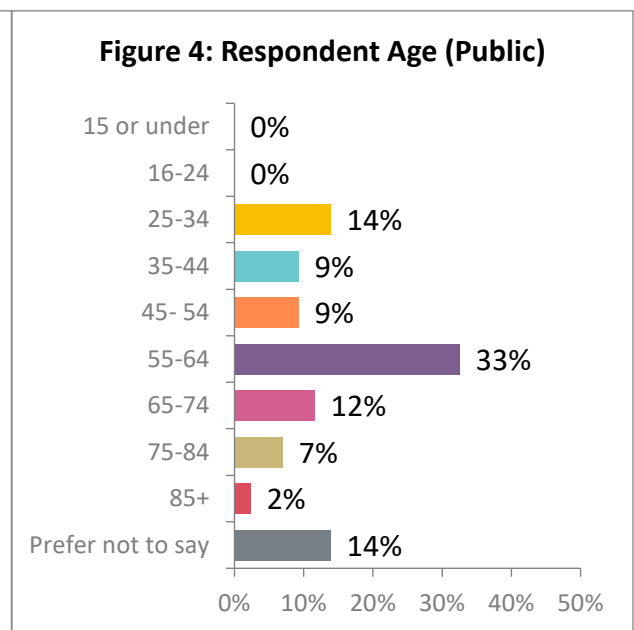
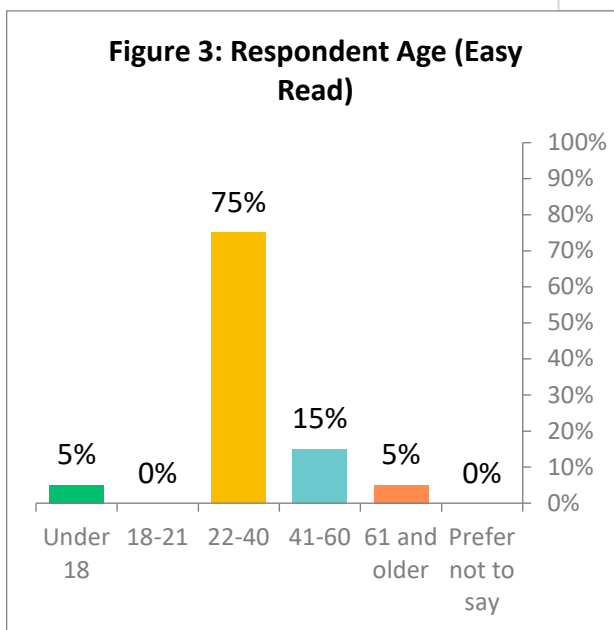
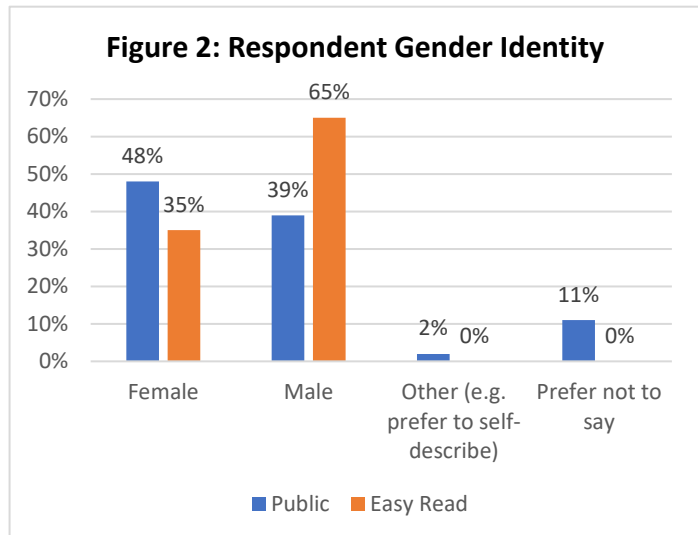
Most of those responding to the public survey (48, 71%) are family members or carers of someone who receives support (or who has received support in the past) from Oak Farm (see Figure 1). Seven individuals who currently receive support or who have received support in the past from Oak Farm also responded to the public



survey, as did six members of the public without links to Oak Farm. Three of

staff/volunteers at Oak Farm responded, and five respondents representing organisations also completed the survey. Only one respondent, however, identified their organisation (Bethphage). All of the respondents returning the Easy Read survey identified themselves as service users of Oak Farm.

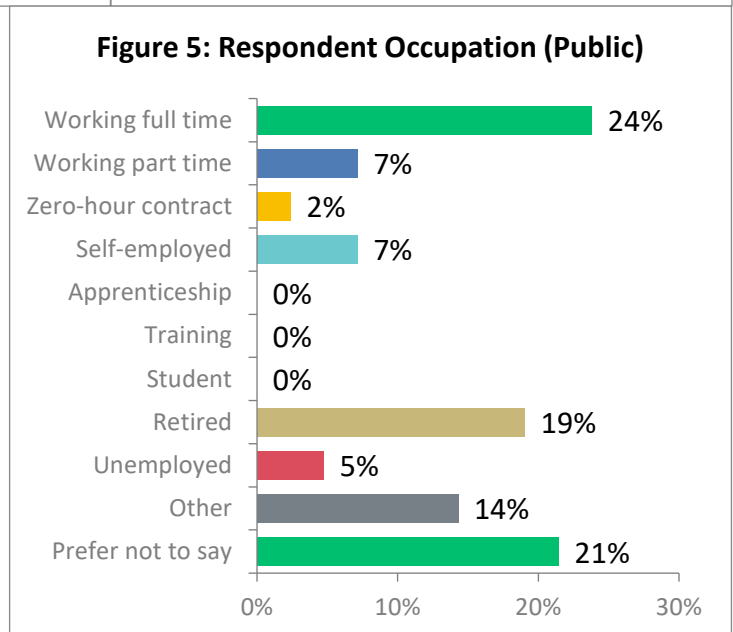
More respondents returning the Easy Read survey identified themselves as male than female (see Figure 2).



The opposite was true for those responding to the online survey.

All respondents to both surveys identified themselves as White (British; Irish; Welsh) or said that they preferred not to say what their ethnic origin is.

The majority of respondents to the Easy Read survey were relatively young – between the ages of 25 and 44 (see Figure 3). In contrast, a majority of respondents (54%) to the public survey were over the age of 55 (see Figure 4).



When asked to classify their occupation, the largest percentage of respondents to the public survey identified

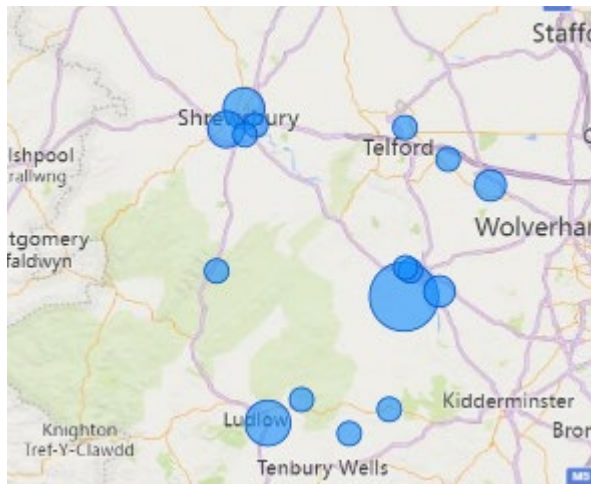
themselves as being in some form of work (i.e., full time, part-time, self-employed, or zero hours contract). **See Figure 5.** Two respondents to the Easy Read survey said that in addition to living in Shropshire, they also work in Shropshire, and two respondents to the Easy Read survey said that they represent a voluntary group or organisation in Shropshire.

Only six respondents to the public survey identified themselves as having a disability. 19 of the 20 respondents to the Easy Read version of the survey said that they have a disability.

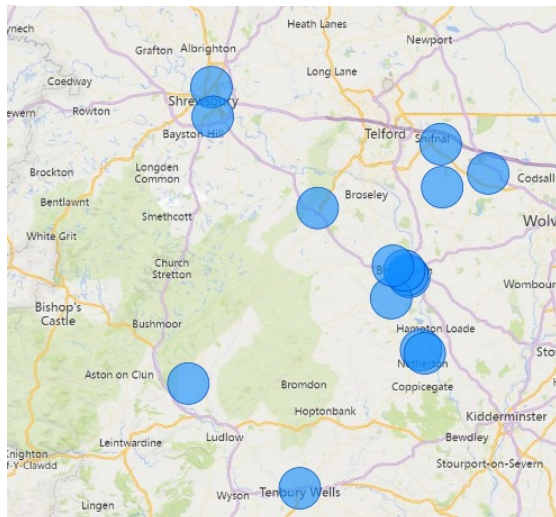
Respondents to the public survey were mostly located in South East Shropshire, though there was also a grouping of respondents who identified themselves as living in the Shrewsbury area (**see Image 1**).

For Easy Read respondents, there was also a concentration in the South East of the county, but it is clear that some of these respondents using Oak Farm are traveling some distance to access the service (**see Image 2**).

**Image 1: Public Survey Respondent Location**



**Image 2: Easy Read Survey Respondent Location**



Indeed, when asked how far they travel to visit Oak Farm, 50% of respondents to the Easy Read survey (10) said that they travel more than 10 miles, and 45% said they travel between 4 and 10 miles (one respondent said they didn't know how far they travel).

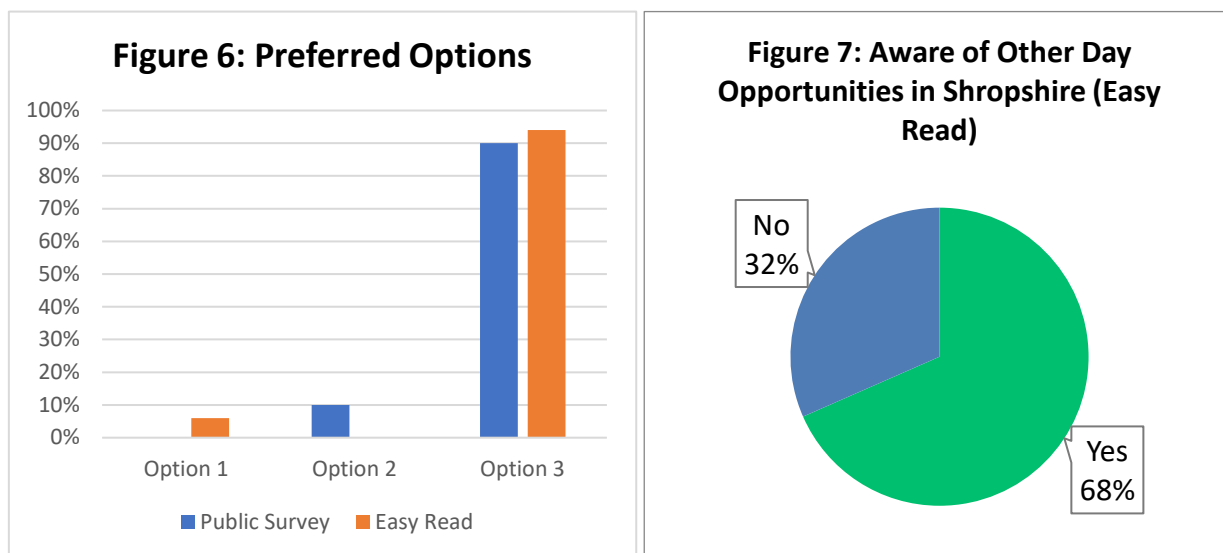
### 3 Preferred Options

In brief, the options proposed in the consultation were:

- **Option 1:** Oak Farm Day Opportunities run by Bethphage ceases and appropriate alternative support is identified for each individual.
- **Option 2:** A new Day Opportunities provider is secured to deliver a service from Oak farm (subject to lease arrangements with landowner).
- **Option 3:** Support continues through an agreed move to the new farm

location, which is Lower Sutton Farm, Sutton, Chelmarsh, WV16 6BQ.

While Shropshire Council made clear that its preferred option is Option 1, a majority of respondents to the public survey (90%, or 44 out of 49 respondents answering this question) said that Option 3 is their preferred option going forward. Additionally, 17 out of the 18 respondents to the Easy Read survey said that Option 3 was their preferred option (see Figure 6).



When asked whether they are aware of other day opportunities they might use in Shropshire, a majority of Easy Read respondents said they are (68%, or 13 of the 19 answering this question).

### Further Comments on Preferred Options – Public Survey

Public survey respondents were asked if they had any further comments to make about their preferred options. 43 respondents provided more detailed responses to this open-ended question. These responses were analysed for common themes, which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes – Public Survey Respondents' Additional Thoughts on Preferred Options	Count	%
Bethpage/current staff to continue to provide service	18	23%
Oak Farm provides a safe and supportive community for service users	17	22%
Positive comments about the current delivery at Oak Farm	12	16%
Positive step forward to move to the new location	10	13%
Lack of investment at current site by Shropshire Council	9	12%
Do not want to lose the service	5	6%
Do not want the facility to move location / new location is not suitable	3	4%
Other	3	4%

18 respondents to the public survey said that they wanted to see **Bethpage and the current staff to continue to provide the service**. For example:

- “Bethphage has a proven record and its staff and helpers known to be reliable.”
- “My son... has attended Oak Farm for 17 years. It has been the only day care provision that he has happily attended. He has serious anxiety and OCD problems and combined with autism, he finds life extremely difficult. However, the staff at Oak Farm are so in tune with [my son's] needs that he actually feels comfortable with them.”
- “I believe that Bethphage provides the highest quality care in the area, meeting both the physical and mental needs of our family member. The benefits of the care they provide have been a key factor in the improvements we've seen in [name redacted] and maintaining that same high standard of service in a stimulating environment is our top priority. I think it's reasonable for all service users to move to the new farm first, followed by 1:1 reviews, allowing for more informed decisions about their future care. While I appreciate the time constraints, fully understanding the needs of each individual case is crucial to ensuring the best outcome.”

Relatedly, 17 respondents noted that **Oak Farm provides a safe and supportive community for its service users**, and 12 respondents made more generally **positive comments about the current delivery of services at Oak Farm**. Five respondents also stated simply that **they do not want to lose the service**.

10 respondents said that they felt a **move to the new site run by Bethphage was a positive step**. For example:

- “Although option 3 is further away, we feel that it provides the best possible opportunity for the growth of this type of operation and that all users will benefit from this.”
- “Option 3 is the only option that can provide continuity of care to the adults with learning disabilities who attend. Moreover, the new farm has improved facilities and has plans to offer places to live something lacking within Shropshire.”

Nine respondents noted that the current site has suffered from a **lack of investment in Oak Farm by the council**. For example:

- “I am aware that Ditton Priors CLT have restrictions and control over the operation of the current site at Oak Farm which has hindered the development of the services and operations that were on offer, such as the need to seek permission to use the facility for a meeting, after 5pm or to open up the facility for community use. The facility itself has deteriorated to extent that some areas became unsafe, and the service users had to relocate for a time, this wouldn't exist at the new location and the need to provide the maintenance provision would no longer rest with Shropshire.”

Finally, three respondents were clear that they were **not happy with the move to the new location** and/or didn't want to see Oak Farm close.



- “People are being coerced to chose the Chelmarsh option when they have voiced they wish to continue at Oak Farm.”
- “We live in Ditton and Oak Farm and its services have become a big part of our community. It would be sad to see it close.”
- “Oak farm, should be put out to tender, to be farmed again hopefully by a local new entrant in to farming.”

### **Further Comments on Proposed Options – Easy Read**

Easy Read survey respondents were also asked whether they had any comments to make about the options they chose. These responses can be grouped into three categories.

**15 respondents said they are looking forward to moving to the new farm.** For example:

- Three respondents said: “I would like to go to the new farm.”
- “It's exciting. Hopefully all my friends will go to the new farm, new poly tunnels and new greenhouses to work in. Hope all the guinea pigs and alpacas come to the farm.”
- “Easier to access as closer to home. Feel reassured with familiar staff. More confidence things will be fixed sooner.”
- “Big kitchen, big garden, the new farm is nice and happy.”
- “Excited to move to new farm, being with friends, having same animals.”
- “Looking forward to the new farm run by Bethphage staff at Sutton Farm.”
- “I liked it - it has a nice space and I liked the buildings. I'd like to carry on seeing my friends and the animals.”
- “The new farm looks good.”
- “I find the school (Brown Clee) so noisy here. The new farm is peaceful.”
- “I can't wait to move.”
- “It will be better to move to the new farm. More activities to do and better to move around more.”
- “My family and I happy to go to the new farm with Bethphage. Lower Sutton Farm.”
- “Closer to family as they live in Highley. Lowers my anxiety as familiar staff. More confidence that things will be fixed sooner.”

One respondent did not say whether they wanted to move or not but did detail **why they like going to Oak Farm.**

- “I have been at Oak farm for quite a while. I like the activities I do there, I enjoy working with the animals and the plant work. I am just finishing a cooking course and will cook a meal. I am treated as an adult by the staff, my opinions matter to them and they make lots of effort to help me understand.”

Two respondents said they are **feeling unsure about the proposed options:**

- “Not sure.”

- “Unsure about which option to choose. I would like to support my family at the moment. New adventure looks good my family comes first.”

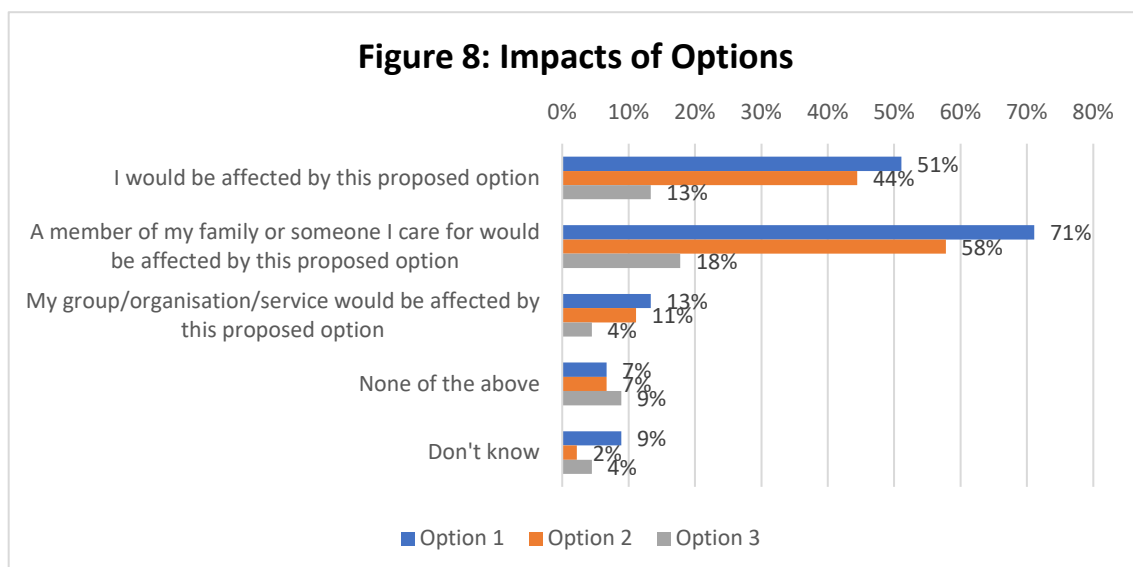
### Feedback from Bethphage on Options

In response to the consultation, the CEO of Bethphage submitted a detailed letter of feedback on the proposed options. An excerpt from the letter clarifies that Option 3 is the preferred option this organisation. The letter also reiterates some of the points made elsewhere in the consultation that continuity is an important aspect of the needs of their service users.

- “I hope that everyone who wants to move to the new site at Chelmarsh will be able to join us and be part of developing the site so that it meets people’s individual outcomes, builds on their current strengths and supports further growth and greater independence in areas where more support is needed. Option 3 would provide the best security and outcomes for the people who currently come to Oak Farm and as we and the people we support are currently working across both sites, we already know that the feedback is overwhelmingly positive with people and their families, who want to be part of the new farm. During times of change people with LD/A need certainty and continuity and to have support from people who know them well during this time will only help them to feel safe, settled and able to continue developing.”

## 4 Impacts of Options

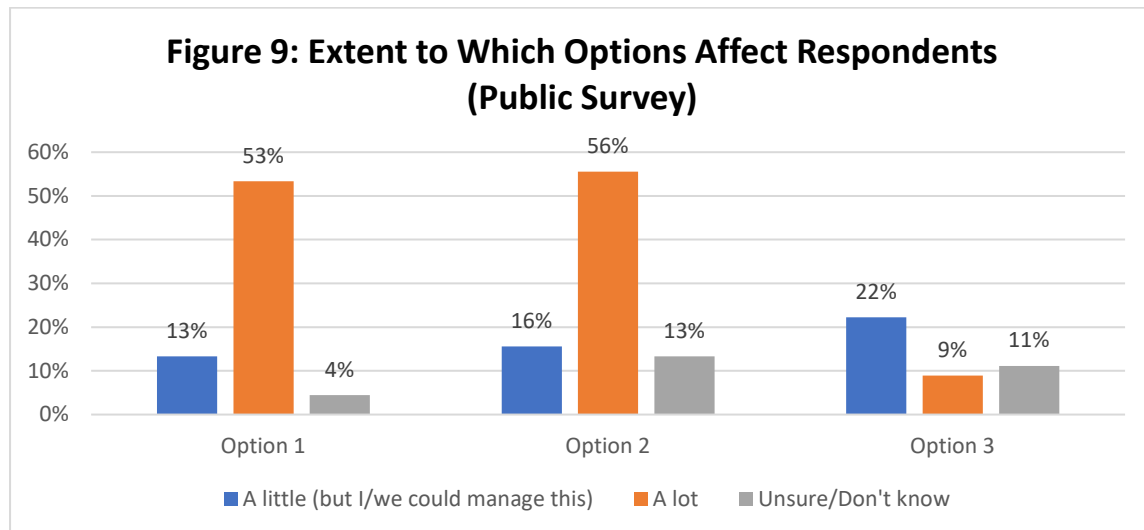
Respondents to the public survey were asked to answer questions about whether or not the proposed options would impact them, and to what extent. These responses are summarised visually in **Figures 8 and 9**, below.



In **Figure 8**, respondents were asked to tick all options that applied. A majority of respondents said that they or a member of their family would be affected by Option 1

should it go ahead. A large percentage of respondents also said that they or a member of their family/someone they can about would be affected by Option 2.

Respondents to the public survey were less likely to say that Option 3 would affect them, their family/people they care about, or their organisation.



**Figure 9** displays the results of a question for public survey respondents aimed at gauging the extent of the impact that they might experience from the various options proposed. Respondents could choose to just answer for one or two of the options, or for all three. A majority of respondents said that both Options 1 and 2 would impact them “a lot”.

Easy Read respondents were also asked about the impacts of the proposed options, but they were offered an open space to provide comments in response to this question, rather than selecting from a list of options. It was also assumed in this question that any impacts of the options that respondents would discuss would be directly on the survey respondent, rather than on their friends/family or organisation.

The question for Easy Read respondents was, “If Oak Farm closes, what will that mean for you?” Respondent replies are provided in full below, with any identifying information extracted. These responses have been grouped by main themes.

**Six Responses indicated that Easy Read survey respondents will be primarily upset if Oak Farm closes:**

- “If the farm closes I will not have anything to do and I will be lonely. I will not feel a valued person. I work when I go to Oak Farm and it makes me feel good.”
- “Very sad would miss my friends and staff.”
- “Upset, anxious. Would prefer to move to new farm with familiar people and friends.”
- “Sad if I couldn't still come to the farm.”
- “Very sad, lots of memories.”
- “I'd feel sad.”

**Nine respondents to the Easy Read survey indicated that would like to move to the farm run by Bethphage at Chelmarsh:**

- “New jobs at the new farm - Lower Sutton Farm.”
- “Sad if there is no farm, I'd like to move to Chelmarsh.”
- “Move to the farm.”
- “Because they get more animals.”
- “I'll be at the new farm which is closer for me.”
- “Stay at home or move to the new farm.”
- “I'll be happy.”
- “A new start and opportunities.”
- “Upset. Anxious. But would prefer to move to new farm with familiar people and friends.”

One respondent **simply stated how much they liked Oak Farm**, but didn't indicate how they would feel about its closure:

- ““The staff are brilliant at the farm. To be close to my family is very important to me.”

A further three respondents said that they **don't know** how Oak Farm closing will affect them.

Respondents to the public survey were also provided with an opportunity to further explain their responses about the impacts of the proposed options on them, their families or those they care for, or their organisations. 36 respondents answered this question, and their comments were tagged for common themes (with 68 incidents of themes tagged overall). These themes are presented in **Table 2**, with examples of some comments illustrating the themes provided below.

<b>Table 2. Themes – Public Survey Respondents’ Concerns about Impacts of Options</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Current location needs investment / new location and options 3 preferred	24	35%
Changing the provision will have a negative impact on individuals	18	26%
Concerns about Options 1 and looking for other services	8	12%
Concerns over consultation and understanding the needs of service users	7	10%
The current provision meets the needs of individuals	7	10%
Not confident another organisation could run the farm successfully	3	4%
Need to ensure support is provided including transport	1	1%

24 respondents said **that Oak Farm needs investment, or that the new location and Option 3 are preferred**. For example:

- “I am only ever as happy as my son. Oak Farm is the only place that he has ever felt at home where he trusts the staff and has made friends. If he is forced to give this up he will become a lonely recluse withdrawing into his shell absent from life, his quality of life and mental health will suffer. It is truly

important to him and us that Shropshire continues to support the farm and Bethphage at the new premises.”

- “Option 3 would make me really happy. I don’t want another winter at Oak Farm like last year.”

18 respondents, however, wanted to make the point that **changes to routine (whichever option is followed) will have negative impacts on individuals**. For example:

- “My son likes routine and sameness and he wouldn’t get this in either 1 or 2 it would have a great impact on his life he would become very anxious and start to withdraw into himself starting to cause mental health issues.”
- “If Oak Farm closes I would be concerned about the change in the routine for my relative that currently attends and the welfare of their mental health as Oak farm has been instrumental in their social and mental development.”

Eight respondents’ comments reflected some **concerns about Options 1 and looking for other services**. For example:

- “Option 1: In the past searching for outside activities locally has been incredibly difficult - hence our son attending Oak Farm which has been a great success. A change of placement to somewhere completely different with new faces would only result in anxiety and most likely a longer journey.”
- “Option 1: Will involve us as parents battling to ensure that our son has access to activities similar to those provided by Oak Farm for the same time periods. Based on past experience we know that these do not exist.”

Relatedly, seven respondents made the point that the **current provision meets the needs of individuals**. For example:

- “[Name redacted] has felt very secure at Oak Farm and is very attached to the staff, who are excellent at managing his anxieties/ epilepsy.”

Seven respondents **expressed concerns about the consultation** and questioned whether service users’ needs will be adequately understood as a result of the process. For example:

- “Options 1 and 2 are not options at all. The proposals for these two options are full of wishes and promises there is nothing concrete here at all. No training has been undertaken and there are no available carers nor any group queuing to take over Oak Farm. Neither of these options can be implemented in the available time frame if at all. Moreover, as said above. Option 2 is no option as Shropshire won’t spend/doesn’t have the finances to make the necessary repairs and maintenance on Oak Farm and further has not agreed rent increases with the CLT. Option 2 is no option at all....I fear that Shropshire council personnel with responsibilities for adults with learning difficulties have not familiarised themselves with what Oak Farm through Bethphage offers its users; nor has it implemented any program at all before unilaterally deciding that it’s preferred option is Option 1- on what basis? None

of the users of Oak Farm or their family and carers were asked to submit views before Shropshire determined that its preferred option was Option 1.”

A family member of a current service user also expressed concerns about the consultation process in a detailed letter submitted to the TellUs inbox in addition to her survey response. Her comments on the consultation were as follows:

- “In my opinion the form was not structured in a clear or helpful way to meaningfully collect our views and feedback. I very much appreciated the opportunity to speak with yourselves in the recent MS Teams meeting, though I also felt that the meeting could have been better structured to allow us to share our views and submit any questions to the staff members in attendance. The meeting could also have benefitted from the social care team being in attendance.”

Three respondents expressed doubt that **any other organisation could be found to fulfil the service provision at Oak Farm**. Additionally, one respondent pointed out that **transportation still needs to be considered** for service users.

## 5 Additional Feedback

Both public survey respondents and Easy Read respondents were asked to provide open-ended feedback about the future of service provision: “Do you have any suggestions or ideas for the future?” Respondents were also asked whether they had “any other comments to make” at the very end of each survey. Finally, public survey respondents were asked to comment on the impacts of the proposals on Shropshire Council’s Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA). The results of these questions are presented next.

### Public Survey Respondents – Additional Feedback

36 respondents to the public survey provided detailed responses to this question. Six clear themes emerged from these responses, which are summarised in **Table 3**.

<b>Table 3. Themes – Public Survey Suggestions for the Future</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Shropshire Council to continue to support individuals via Bethpage at the new farm	24	52%
Improved offer for individuals under Bethpage management at new farm	7	15%
Development of new offering to incorporate service users / assessments done after transition	6	13%
Consider transport options and accessibility	3	7%
Get additional financial contributions for the facility (e.g. families to contribute)	2	4%
Continue at Oak Farm / develop Oak Farms offering and facilities	2	4%
Other	2	4%

A majority of respondents to the public survey (24) expressed a desire for Shropshire Council to **continue supporting Oak Farm service users with a move to the new farm provision by Bethpage**. For example:

- “Transfer the service to the new location and embrace the fantastic opportunity that Bethphage are in effect offering Shropshire Council. In a few years time it will be a shining example of what can be offered.”
- “Option 3 gives a lot of scope for a future for me as an individual. I will have the opportunity to grow my skills.”

Relatedly, seven respondents indicated they think that the **new farm represents an improved/good offer** for individuals. For example:

- “Needs to be more social care options like this in Shropshire not less.”
- “It seems that Bethphage has lots of plans for the future and in taking on the new farm will be able to offer the service users more than is currently available at Oak Farm - respite care, supported living as well as evening social activities. They are looking ahead to improve services for their service users and this is very commendable. I feel we should support them with their project so that our son can lead a rich and fulfilled life with his friends.”

Six respondents made the point that **service users should be more involved in the decision-making process around options**. Connected to this, many made the point that assessments should only be done after the move. For example:

- “Allow the current users of Oak Farm to transfer over to the new Bethphage site without prior assessment. Assessment could then be done as part of the annual review process and would enable users to give an opinion on what is or isn't working at the new site.”

Three respondents made the point that future plans need to take into account **transportation and accessibility**:

- “Transportation should be considered as a group thing when traveling from Shrewsbury.”
- “I would really like for [name redacted] (and any other service users who want to) to move over to the new site. It is such an exciting development there that I feel will provide even more benefits alongside the continued level of care that Bethphage provide. This will only be possible if funding for transport and places remain in place.”
- “We are very excited by the new proposed plans at the new site and we know that [name redacted] will benefit from them. However, this is only possible if his funding and transport arrangements remain in place.”

Of those respondents who want to **maintain Oak Farm**, comments included:

- “Continue at Oak Farm.”
- “Maybe Oak Farm could provide outreach Services like Gardening for older Residents that can no longer manage their gardens, with proceeds going back to help maintain the Service.”

When asked whether they had any other comments to make, public survey respondents mainly reiterated themes in their comments that appeared elsewhere in the survey (**see Table 4**).

<b>Table 4. Themes – Public Survey Additional Comments</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Positive comments about Bethphage / current provision	12	34%

Preference for option 3 / do not consider option 1 or 2 appropriate	8	23%
Negative impact on service users if no provision available	7	20%
Shropshire Council needs to continue/invest in the current provision	4	11%
Shropshire Council need to better understand the needs of service users	4	11%

Most chose to reiterate positive comments about Bethphage and their service provision. Others reiterated a preference for Option 3. Some respondents made the point again here that they would prefer to see reassessments done after a move had been made to the new farm location, not before.

This is similar to the email feedback received from a family member of a current Oak Farm service users. Some excerpts of this letter are as follows:

- “Although we recognise the value in regular 1:1 assessments to identify evolving needs and preferences, we are concerned that the Shropshire social care team do not have capacity to carry out meaningful 1:1s with all service users in the very tight timeframe we have ahead of us (from now until December 2024). For this reason, our preference is for all 1:1s to take place in due course with every service user, **after** moving to and experiencing the new farm site. This will allow all service users, family members/ carers, and staff involved to make the most informed decisions about future care provision for each individual.”

Finally, public survey respondents were asked to comment on the impacts of the proposals in light of the Shropshire Council ESHIA (**see Table 5**). Many of the themes here are also touched upon elsewhere in the feedback received, but there is a slightly different emphasis here on the specific needs of the service users currently receiving support at Oak Farm.

<b>Table 5. Themes – Public Survey Feedback on ESHIA</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Need to continue the provision / positive comments about current provision	19	42%
Stability is important / negative impact of change on students and their families	10	22%
Need to understand and meet the needs of service users	9	20%
Clarify eligibility / funding for places	5	11%
Need to ensure the location is accessible / transport provided	2	4%

For example, while 19 respondents used this space to reiterate the importance of the provision, 10 also **emphasised the importance of stability, and the difficulty of change for many of these service users**. Relatedly, many of these respondents asked for **more clarity on the eligibility for a move to the new farm**, expressing concerns about whether the person they care for will be able to continue to receive support that is similar to what they have now. For example:

- “It seems ridiculous to increase the workload of social workers who are already in short supply when there is a possibility to transfer the current users to the new site and continue with annual reviews as previously.”
- “I implore Shropshire to reconsider its preference and instead to chose Option 3 and a move for all those current users who want it to move to Lower Sutton Farm. Maybe I have missed it but I have not seen any reference to the date that Shropshire will make a decision. Given the importance to the current users of this service and the confusion and uncertainty that this process is



creating for them all Shropshire is asked to publish its results long before the end of Bethphage's current contract end so that the users, parents and carers can plan accordingly."

- "I feel as though the council should support option 3 as everyone connected with Oak Farm sees it as an essential service and would be absolutely devastated if the person they are representing loses their place and funding."

### **Easy Read Survey Respondents – Additional Feedback**

When asked about what suggestions they had for the future, Easy Read respondents mainly said that they **would like to continue doing what they have been doing at Oak Farm**. For example:

- "Continue to support me to move to the new farm and support my transport needs."
- "I like outside activities. I am very happy at Oak Farm and have lots of friends and a special girlfriend. I would like to go to the new farm."
- "Happy living where I am and working where I am."
- "Keep going to the new farm with Oak Farm Staff. Doing gardening/mowing."
- "Would like to keep working outside, mowing lawn."
- "I'd like to go to the new farm."

Some respondents said that **would like broader opportunities in the future** as well. For example:

- "Moving out of home in the future."
- "Supported living in the future, I'd like to live at the new farm."
- "Go to short breaks at Derwen College to have respite care so can have time away from my mum and dad."
- "I'd like to explore supported living."
- I'd like to go to the new farm
- "Different/new activities. More opportunities to build independent skills."

When asked whether they had **any other comments to make**, many of the Easy Read respondents, like the public survey respondents, had **positive things to say about the current provision** and/or Bethphage and Oak Farm staff. For example:

- "Very helpful staff, good listeners. Really liked facetime sessions through Covid provided by Oak Farm staff."
- "I'm excited and my carer too."
- "The new farm. I'd like to go to the new farm so I can work with other people and be with my friends and staff I know."
- "The new farm is closer to my home. I want to stay with my friends."

One respondent talked about **other day opportunities** they had taken part in, but expressed a preference for moving to the new farm:

- "I do know about other day opportunities as I went to Green Acres before Covid, I go to the Sports village to a group which is good but it is not work. There are day centres I could go to or a group at Conover but these are activities to do but I like work. I would like to move to the new farm."

Once again, a couple of respondents expressed **interest in broader opportunities** as well:

- “I would like to meet new friends.”
- “I prefer to go to short breaks more than go to the new farm so that I can have some holidays away from my family.”

## 6 Conclusion

The consultation seems to have done a sufficient job of reaching the key stakeholders involved in the proposed changes to the current service provision at Oak Farm. There are around 30 service users at the farm at present, and at least 20 current service users have had the opportunity to express their views through survey feedback and at events. Additionally, many family members, carers, members of the community, and Oak Farm and Bethphage staff also expressed views as part of the consultation. Very many thanks are extended to all of those who took the time to respond to the consultation. These views will be considered and taken into account as final plans are drawn up for the future provision of the service.

The majority of respondents have shown a clear preference for moving the services to the new Bethphage-owned farm at Lower Sutton Farm, highlighting the importance of continuity and minimal disruption to the lives of service users. The feedback also underscores the significance of Oak Farm as a supportive community and the positive impact of the current service delivery by Bethphage. While they are a minority of views expressed, concerns about continuity of service after 1:1 assessments are carried out, as well as concerns about transport and accessibility should be addressed as a matter of priority with the carers of current service users.

**[month year]**

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