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26 June 2024

Our ref: River Garden, Auchincruive

Further to the issue you raised at FMQ on 20th June regarding the funding for the River Garden Residential Rehabilitation centre in Ayrshire.

River Garden was awarded £6.5m in February 2022 under the Scottish Government's Residential Rehabilitation Rapid Capacity Programme (RRRCP), to fund the expansion of its capacity from 7 beds to 56 beds. The RRRCP plays a key role in delivering the ministerial commitment to expand the capacity of residential rehabilitation in Scotland by 50% by the end of the parliament, as part of the National Mission to reduce drug deaths and save lives.

To date, River Garden has received approximately £3.5m of its RRRCP allocation, In addition, it has received £790k from the Social Innovation Partnership team within the Scottish Government since 2019/20, to support infrastructure costs and the social enterprise aspects of the River Garden project.

Several challenges have been encountered, prompting questions around the organisation's capacity to deliver, Officials have worked closely with the Board to seek a resolution, resulting in the Board agreeing a temporary pause to their capital funding until an external review of their processes has been completed.

The final report from this review has just been received so we are in a position of being able to work with River Garden to agree a future funding agreement and support them to deliver a sustainable future for the centre.

I attach the letter below which we have sent to river garden today confirming our position.

[REDACTED – S38(1)(b)]

CHRISTINA MCKELVIE MSP

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[REDACTED – S38(1)(b)]

Chair/Convenor of the Board of
Trustees River Garden, Auchincruive
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26 June 2024

Thank you for your email. I have been advised of this issue and the efforts made to date to support River Garden Centre in overcoming the challenges in ensuring long term viability and care inspectorate registration, This includes the agreement to curtail the expansion of project at 20 beds and the recent independent review undertaken by Ernest Young (EY).

[REDACTED – S33(1)(b)]

[REDACTED – S33(1)(b)]. Alison Byrne, Head of Drugs Division, and her team will work with you to ensure the funding is released as quickly as possible and ensure you are kept informed of progress.

[REDACTED – S38(1)(b)]

CHRISTINA MCKELVIE MSP