



LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Summary

Purpose of report

1. A report being considered by the County Council's Cabinet on 25th June 2002 outlines proposals for the medium term future of County Council homes for older people.

Recommendations

2. The report recommends that residents, carers, staff and partner agencies be consulted on proposals to:
 - a) Retain seven homes, based on Primary Care Trusts and housing authority boundaries, in the ownership of the County Council. The aim is to develop further partnership working with the NHS and local housing agencies and to achieve the right balance between residential care, health and housing services for older people.
 - b) Transfer the ownership of seven homes as going concerns to independent providers, with safeguards to ensure that residents can continue to live in those homes, and with protection of the conditions of employment to assist staff who will transfer.
 - c) That the outcome of this consultation is reported back to Cabinet in September 2002.

Implications for Residents, Carers and Staff

3. The proposals in the report are about potential transfer of the ownership of some County Council homes to the Independent Sector. There are no proposals to close any of the homes for older people. If, at the end of the consultation process, the Cabinet does decide to transfer some homes it would not expect the direct care of residents to be affected. Residents would be able to stay in their current residential home and be cared for by the same staff who would be able to transfer to the new owners.

The Need for a Strategic Plan

4. The Council's aim is that older people in Leicestershire receive the highest quality residential care. Key objectives of these proposals are to sustain and develop the Council's commitment to providing community care services in partnership with other agencies, and to maintain overall the current number of places available in residential care homes.
5. The report is also prompted by the new National Care Standards for Care Homes, which require all existing homes to meet updated premises standards by 2007. The Cabinet wishes to develop a strategic plan for the role and scale of directly provided residential care homes for older people, ensuring that all residential buildings meet registered care standards within the required timescales.

Why These Proposals?

6. The County Council is committed to providing and commissioning the highest possible quality of residential care for older people, and delivering more integrated health, housing and social care services for older people. There is a need to maintain the current number of residential places in the county for older people, and it is also important to maintain stability in the social care market.
7. These objectives need to take account of what can be afforded. It would cost the Council £ 2.5 million to bring all of its fourteen homes for older people across the County up to the new Care Standards and up to the quality required. The transfer of seven homes would retain the current level of residential care places and ensure that, with appropriate safeguards, residents in those homes would continue to have high quality care in all residential care homes throughout the County.

Options for the Future

8. The report considered three possible options for the development of the strategic plan:

- a) Transfer all homes

The advantage of this approach is that it would maximise the potential income from the transfer of homes as going concerns, and produce the most savings in future running costs for the Council. However, the advantages listed in (c) below would not be achieved.

b) Retain all homes

This position was considered to be untenable as a medium to long-term policy due to the investment required to meet the new National Standards. This option would not save running costs, and in view of the cost differential with the private sector, could not be justified within the Best Value evaluation that the Council is required to apply to services.

c) Retain a number of homes and transfer others

This option was identified as having the advantage of releasing resources that can be reinvested in other services by providing income from the transfer, and saving some future running costs. The report also identified the following advantages from maintaining a mix of County Council and independent homes. In summary this option:

- (i) Provides flexibility and options for the development of residential care.
- (ii) Provides further opportunities for partnership working with NHS and other agencies.
- (iii) Permits the County Council to monitor the pattern of demand for residential care (including predicting demands and trends).
- (iv) Enables the County Council to respond more flexibly to market changes and retain some direct control over the provision of care in the future.
- (v) Enables the County Council to retain expertise in residential care management.
- (vi) Provides greater local choice for service users
- (vii) Assists the County Council in achieving best value in terms of maintaining choice, quality and mixed economy of care.

Proposals about which home to retain or transfer

- 9 The Council currently directly operates fourteen homes, four of which are unrefurbished. The proposal about which homes to retain or transfer is not a reflection upon the quality of care provided in those homes. The proposals are based upon detailed criteria including; location; occupancy; site value/capital value; running costs; future maintenance and investment costs to meet care standards.

Homes proposed to be retained

- 10 The report proposes consultation on retention of the following homes:

Tillson House, Coalville;
Woodmarket House, Lutterworth;
Kirby House, Leicester Forest East;
The Limes, Hinckley;
Curtis Weston House, Wigston;
Catherine Dalley House, Melton;
Huntingdon Court, Loughborough.

Homes proposed to be transferred

- 11 The report proposes consultation on the transfer of the following homes;

The four unrefurbished homes

Harvey House, Barwell
Hadrian House, Thurmaston
Shelthorpe House, Loughborough
Holmes House, Wigston

The following refurbished homes

Thornham Grove, Ibstock
Loudoun House, Ashby
Lenthall House, Market Harborough

What Happens Next?

- 11 It is proposed that the views of residents, carers, staff and partner agencies would be sought, and reported back to the Cabinet in September. A series of consultation meetings for residents and carers are being arranged, as are staff meetings in each home. The Cabinet will take the outcome of the consultation fully into account before a decision is reached.

Copies of the full report to the Cabinet can be obtained from

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