

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 16 June, 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Adult Social Care

SUBJECT: Refurbishment of Halton Borough Council
Care Homes

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide Executive Board with details of a proposed refurbishment programme to Halton Borough Council's four care homes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the proposed refurbishment programme for the Council's four care homes, as outlined in the report, be approved;
- 2) Council be recommended to include the proposed scheme within the capital programme, with a total estimated cost of £4.2m over three years, to be funded as outlined in paragraph 6.1;
- 3) a further report be presented to the Board, to provide details of the proposed refurbishment works, once the scheme has been developed.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton Borough Council did not have the ambition to run care homes, however when Millbrow care home was at risk of closure in 2017 because of financial viability and quality issues, a decision was made to purchase and take over the running of the home.

3.2 Over the course of 2017-19 Halton council acquired St Luke's and St Patricks dementia nursing homes. These were both privately owned and although it was recognised that there was good practice taking place within the homes there had been a significant and long-term lack of investment which impacted on resident and staff experience. These three care homes amount to 62.5% of the nursing beds in the borough, supporting residents with the most complex health needs.

3.3 The acquisition of these homes, along with Madeline McKenna residential home, elevated Halton council to the largest care home provider in the borough for older people.

- 3.4 Halton Council now has the opportunity to lead the sector, however to be able to ensure that we can provide the high level and the quality of care required to the most vulnerable residents within the borough, further investment is required.
- 3.5 This starts with providing outstanding care but ripples out to much more than this, with a focus on how the home feels to live and work within and how it is perceived by the community.
- 3.6 We need to ensure that our care homes are homely, safe, comfortable places to live, places that residents, their families and the local communities are proud of and want to reside in, visit and spend quality time with their loved ones. Places that the local community engage with, support and value
- 3.7 A good care home needs to be a place that basic human needs such as being kept warm, assistance with toileting, washing, eating and drinking are all physical needs are met , but also that residents mental and psychological needs are met and recognised as being just as important. We need to create homely spaces that residents are happy, content, stimulated, feel safe and loved, and can be treated as valuable individuals, within homely, colorful spacious buildings.
- 3.8 Much has been written about the impact an environment has on people's mood, how they behave and feel. Halton purchased the homes, with the exception of Madeline McKenna, when it was evident that the buildings had been neglected. Some of the homes have décor that is very tired, and furniture that was dated, mismatched and sometimes broken. All of the homes struggle with storage meaning that equipment such as hoists are visible in corridors and communal areas. In addition the bedroom areas are small with poor lighting, and gardens areas in all homes require attention so they can be fully accessible for meaningful activities. The current environments appear cold and impersonal, with more of an institutional feel than a homely feel.
- 3.9 It is clear that there needs to be significant investment in the care home estate to create the environments we want for our vulnerable residents and whilst money has been spent on firefighting the more serious issues, now is the time to review the estate needs as a whole and deliver on the long-term vision for what the care homes will look like.
- 3.10 Work has been completed to review the estate and initial plans drawn up to future proof the provision of care, ensuring the needs of the residents, families and staff will be met in eco-friendly environments conducive to providing quality care, future buildings whilst also balancing the need for Halton to retain and even increase their care home bed numbers, ensuring the future demand for care can be met, and the costs remain manageable whilst also considering the environmental impact of any buildings.

- 3.11 The proposed plans include building an extension at St Patrick's nursing home in Widnes and also a focus on the substantive buildings to create the environments we want for our most vulnerable residents within the borough. The plans increase floor space in the bedrooms so that care can be delivered with safety and dignity. They also include the making shared spaces lighter and more useable and creating rooms and areas that have purpose, such as sensory rooms and gardens.
- 3.12 As part of the proposed works, it is essential that we ensure the well-being of residents and minimise any disruption to their daily lives during the refurbishment. This will involve a timely consultation period with residents and their families to ensure any disruption during the refurbishment is minimised.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Care Act 2014 came into effect in April 2015 and replaced most previous law regarding carers and people being cared for. There is a raft of legislation and policy regulatory framework to protect people at risk from abuse, neglect and harm. Ensuring people are protected from harm by providing a safe comfortable environment for them to live is as important as any other domain.

5.0 SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Refurbishment will support care delivery should ensure that people's needs are met appropriately, their dignity is respected and maintained and support them to live fulfilling lives, reducing the risks of safeguarding incidents.

6.0 FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The work schedule is proposed to be undertaken over a three year period. The Initial costing is forecasted to be in the region of £4.2M. To date capital funding has been secured in the region £3.3M with further capital expenditure available over the next three years. In addition work is currently underway to explore additional funding opportunities including Liverpool City Region Green energy grants.

If the proposed works and funding is agreed in principle, Halton Borough Council will request contractors to tender for the work and a full implementation plan inclusive of detailed costings will be devised.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This work is part of overarching plan to ensure Halton can lead on the provision of outstanding model of care, and the development of a centre of excellence in Halton.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Care homes provide the venues and valuable opportunities, to work with local colleges and colleagues within children's services to support young people to volunteer. They offer work placements and support them to prepare for their future as an adult within our borough.

8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Since 2017, Halton Borough Council have acquired four care homes. The care homes provide employment opportunities for a number of people across a number of domains.

In addition, care homes are a valuable asset to the local population offering work placement opportunities for people from local colleges and partner organisations, and welcoming volunteers within all establishments.

8.3 A Healthy Halton

Our care homes offer critical and non-critical care and support to the most vulnerable people living within the borough. They offer a safe place to live, relieve their symptoms and improve their quality of life with dignity. The establishments also reduce pressure on local hospitals, GP's and other local services.

8.4 A Safer Halton

Care homes offer a safe place for vulnerable people to live. The proposed refurbishment will enhance people's experience ensuring people are protected from harm by providing a safe comfortable environment for them to live.

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The refurbishment programme will enhance the local areas. It will support vulnerable people to remain living within the borough, it is an opportunity to ensure buildings within the borough are sustainable, giving due consideration to all environmental issues. It will provide the community with bright, vibrant, eco-friendly buildings; buildings that the local community are proud of and want to visit, supporting the establishments to become social hubs within the local community.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 If we do not complete this essential work, there will be an ongoing risk to the delivery of good quality care within all care homes, and the ability to achieve our vision to improve and enhance the quality and provision of outstanding care for Older people.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

10.1 It has not been appropriate, at this stage, to complete an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

11.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

11.1 A decision is required as the outcome will result in the local authority incurring expenditure. The expenditure will provide valuable services to Halton residents, and enhance the care homes estate.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

12.1 No alternative options are available to support the improvement required for council owned care homes.

13.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

13.1 None agreed, subject to procurement procedures.

14.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

14.1 None under the meaning of the Act.