

NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Care Scrutiny Committee (version 26 August)
DATE OF MEETING	13 September 2011
TITLE	Response to the Consultation on the future of Hafod y Gest Residential Home, Porthmadog.
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PORTFOLIO LEADER	Councillor Wyn Williams
What needs to be scrutinised and why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consultation process and weighing up the responses that have been received. • The recommendations proposed following the consultation.
Is there anything else that the Scrutiny Committee needs to do?	To consider additional information regarding the proposed Extra Care Housing Scheme in Porthmadog.
What are the next steps?	To submit the recommendations to the Council Board on 11 October, 2011 and receive a decision on the way forward.

1. Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is:-

- To respond to the statutory consultation's conclusion on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home, Porthmadog.
- To outline the opportunities which exist to modernise the accommodation and care provision for older people in the Porthmadog area.
- To submit the recommendations of the Older People Services Transformation Project Board on the future of residential care and extra care housing in the Porthmadog area.

2. Vision

The Council's vision is based on the aspirations of older people in Gwynedd, namely to promote and maintain independence for vulnerable people and enable them to live in their homes for as long as possible. In order to do this, agreement has already been reached to increase the support that is available for individuals to live at home and also to increase the choice in terms of the accommodation that is available. The unavoidable result of implementing this vision is a reduction in the need for general residential care. The reduction is already clear in the number of empty beds that are in the county's homes. This has been acknowledged by the Council in deciding on the strategic direction that has been adopted and which is now being implemented.

3. Background of the consultation

3.1 Step 1 of the Strategic Review of Residential and Nursing Services was approved by the Council Board in February 2009. The purpose of the report was to assess the current service and to consider how the service should look in future. The main conclusions of Step 1 were as follows:

- Reduce the number of traditional residential beds
- Increase the number of beds in Extra Care Housing
- Increase the number of nursing beds (especially in some areas)
- Increase the number of beds for those with memory problems (residential and nursing).

As part of the Gwynedd Council Savings Strategy for 2010/13, savings schemes worth £1,300,000 by April 2012 were approved in the field of provision of residential and nursing care. Despite the slippage of the programme, the financial target remains.

Step 2 was approved by the Council Board in October 2010 and the main conclusions in Step 2 were as follows:

- to approve the proposal for the Council's use of residential and nursing care to be broadly in line with the All Wales average by 2015.
- to approve the interim step so that the Council achieves the All Wales average for 2008/09 by 2012/13, namely 22.4 residential beds per 1,000 of the older people population.

- 3.2 On 22 February 2011, following a report on the 'Strategic Review of Residential and Nursing Services for Older People' the Council Board resolved to:

“Authorise a formal consultation exercise on the future of Hafod y Gest, Porthmadog, and for the consultation to commence after submitting a detailed report on Extra Care Housing in the Porthmadog catchment area to the Local Extra Care Housing Area Forum.”

The report in question was submitted to the Porthmadog Area Forum on 15 March 2011.

4. **Hafod y Gest Home, Porthmadog**

- 4.1 Hafod y Gest is a registered residential home for 30 older people (65+). Of the 30 beds, there are two beds for respite care and six beds for older people suffering from moderate memory problems. As a consequence of the need to undertake building work to satisfy fire regulations, the maximum number of people that can reside at the home is now restricted to 20.
- 4.2 There are 20 permanent members of staff (full-time and part-time) and nine relief staff.
- 4.3 It was noted in the report submitted to the Board on 22 February, 2011, that there were certain issues regarding the condition of the Hafod y Gest building and the substantial expenditure requirements on the home. In June 2009, a composite report was commissioned by independent expert consultants to examine each aspect of the structure. Details of this work and the cost are shown in the table below.

Description	Amount	One-off / permanent	Capital / Revenue	Notes
Work to satisfy the fire risk assessment	£110,000	One-off	Capital	This is essential work so that the home continues to keep its registration for 30
Maintenance work over the next ten years	£572,000 (Work to the value of £462,000 of this should be undertaken soon)	One-off	Revenue	This is essential work
Upgrading the building to the current energy use standards	£198,000	One-off	Capital	
Adapting and extending the building to include en suite facilities	£1,320,000	One-off	Capital	This is not essential work but failure to implement this would mean that the home is not responding to the aspirations and expectations of future users

4.4 The cost per unit of Hafod y Gest Home as a 30 unit home is £457.94 per week. This is less than the average cost per unit in the Council's homes which is £564.76 per week. The figure of £564.76 is based on 88.1% use, which is the expected average for all of the Council's homes. In order to ensure that the Hafod y Gest Home meets the average figure, Gwynedd Council would need to prioritise and spend the substantial amounts as noted in 3.3 above.

4.5 The *Building for the Future* project had identified the need for extra care housing in Porthmadog in 2007. According to the needs assessment of traditional residential care submitted to the Council Board on 22 February 2011, there were 32 traditional residential beds too many in the Porthmadog area.

5. The Consultation Process

- 5.1 In the consultation on the future of Hafod y Gest residential home, Porthmadog from 22 March to 1 July 2011, two options were proposed, namely:

Option 1 - Invest in the existing home and improve it to a standard that would meet the aspirations of residents in the future.

Option 2 – Invest in developing Extra Care Housing and community services to support people to live at home but to close the existing residential home.

- 5.2 410 information packs and questionnaires along with the information leaflet 'Social Care is Changing', published by Gwynedd Council Social Services Department (Appendix 1) were sent to everyone on the list of stakeholders (Appendix 2) and anyone else who had contacted the Council to request information. At the beginning of the consultation period, the stakeholders and the local community in Porthmadog were informed of the consultation either by means of a letter, a formal notice in the press, press releases or at meetings.
- 5.3 Service users were offered the assistance of the North Wales Advocacy Service to participate in the consultation process. Five of the users decided to take advantage of this offer.

6. Conclusions of the Consultation

- 6.1 The consultation ended on 1 July 2011. There were 133 respondents to the questionnaire; a report was received from the Provider and Leisure Department and five letters and one telephone call were received.
- 6.2 The full results of the consultation can be seen in Appendix 3. As well as seeking opinion on the two options, a questionnaire was also drawn up. The main conclusions are outlined below.
- 42.1% of respondents had a connection with the home
 - 53.4% agreed with Gwynedd Council plans to assist older people to continue to live in their own homes.
 - This opinion was supported by several of those who responded, agreeing that Gwynedd Council should invest more in services to assist older people to continue living at home. 76.7% wished to see home care developing, 67.7% wanted to see a development

in the day care services and 51.9% wanted to see development of the intermediate care services.

- 41.4% supported Gwynedd Council's proposal to develop Extra Care Housing in Porthmadog.
- 61.7% believed that it was reasonable for Gwynedd Council to invest £462,000 in the short-term to maintain the Hafod y Gest building and £1,320,000 in future to adapt the home.
- 79.7% believed that the Council should invest in the existing home and improve it to a standard that would meet the aspirations of residents in the future, namely Option 1.
- 11.3% were in favour of developing Extra Care Housing and community services to support people to live at home but to close the existing residential home.

- 6.3 A report was received from the Provider and Leisure Department, responding to the consultation on behalf of the staff of the Home as well as the opinion of managers and senior managers within the Department.

Despite being supportive of the vision to promote independence and the need for new provisions which meet the needs of older people, the Department does express concern regarding several matters including the lack of definite plans for what would be available in place of the Hafod y Gest Home and concern regarding the future of the existing residents. The response also questions the cost of the adaptations to the building and the lack of information about the cost per unit at Hafod y Gest and other care provision.

The Department proposes that the nature of the existing provision within sheltered housing should be revisited as well as considering other models which maintain independence within communities such as *Enfys*. It is also proposed that the existing residential provision should be maintained within Hafod y Gest for a comparatively low capital cost until such time when alternative plans have been prepared.

- 6.4 The Report of the North Wales Advice and Advocacy Service on behalf of the five service users who accepted the offer to use the service notes how important the companionship of the other residents and staff is to them. Hafod y Gest was the first choice for the majority; however, two noted that they would like to live independently in their own homes but that that was no reflection on Hafod y Gest.

- 6.5 In addition to the above, five letters and one phone call were received which praised the care provided in Hafod y Gest Home and emphasised the need for new residential provision in the Porthmadog area.

7. Response of Porthmadog Town Council

- 7.1 Porthmadog Town Council decided, following a special meeting on 7 June 2011, not to fill the consultation's official questionnaire but rather '*Hold an opinion poll in the form of a questionnaire for all residents of Porthmadog regarding Gwynedd Council's consultation on the future of Hafod y Gest Home and their aspirations in terms of the care for older people of the area in the future*'. Appendix 4 includes the documentation received from Porthmadog Town Council.

- 7.2 Approximately 2,400 questionnaires were distributed by Porthmadog Town Council and 502 were returned. The response was very similar to the response received by the Council, namely, much praise for the care provided in Hafod y Gest. Of the respondents, 58.11% were in favour of investment in Hafod y Gest. The question was asked 'If it was decided to proceed with the Extra Care Housing, where should they be built?' 72.75% of the respondents stated '*on the existing site of Hafod y Gest*'.

8. Response to the consultation observations

- 8.1 Gwynedd Council is proud of the standard of care that is provided in the Hafod y Gest Home and this is reflected in the recent reports of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW).
- 8.2 The costs involved in securing the future of Hafod y Gest for a period of approximately 20 years, as noted in paragraph 3.3 of the report, can not be ignored. It is accepted that it would be possible to spend a smaller amount of money to maintain it temporarily but the building undoubtedly needs substantial expenditure to ensure that it responds to the expectations of residents for the future.
- 8.3 Concern was expressed in the consultation regarding the future of the existing residents of Hafod y Gest. 14 residents currently live permanently in Hafod y Gest with five people receiving respite care. From information collected between 9 and 13 July 2011, it would appear that there is capacity in local residential homes which would satisfy the needs of the current residents of Hafod y Gest and those receiving respite care and would also satisfy residential and nursing needs for the future. In the Porthmadog area, the current situation is as follows:

Home	No. of vacant beds (residential)	No. of vacant beds (nursing)	No. of vacant residential beds for people with memory problems	No. of vacant nursing beds for people with memory problems
Plas Newydd, Cricieth	1			
Pines, Cricieth			1	7
Bryn Awelon, Cricieth	4 interchangeable beds			
Madog, Porthmadog	0	1		
Bodawen, Porthmadog	1	5		
Plas Gwyn, Pentrefelin.	0	1	0	
Bryn Blodau, Llan Ffestiniog.	5	0		
Plas y Don, Pwllheli.	5	0		
Total	12(or 16)	7(or 11)	1	7

8.4 It is acknowledged that there is strong support locally to keep the home open. However, it is important to note that a significant portion of the responses received are also supportive of the principle of assisting older people to continue to live at home. A desire has been expressed to see developments in the fields of home care, day care as well as intermediate care. In addition, the Council has specific programmes to develop telecare, enablement and community schemes which contribute towards a package of options to support individuals.

9. The Council's Strategic Direction

- 9.1 Research by Einir Roberts, *O Lygaid y Ffynnon*, 2010 reiterates similar local and national work in the past and clearly shows that the residents of Gwynedd wish to receive services that support them in their own homes for as long as possible.
- 9.2 One of the key outcomes of the Gwynedd Council Three Year Plan 2011-14 is to ensure that '**vulnerable people and children are supported to live fulfilled lives**'. One way of ensuring that is that vulnerable adults have a choice of appropriate support to live independently in the community and a choice of suitable accommodation for their needs.
- 9.3 The main benefit of the Older People Services Transformation Project within the Care Programme will be increasing the choice of suitable accommodation available for older people in Gwynedd to enable them to live independently in the community.
- 9.4 It has been agreed that, by 2014, the number of residential beds in Gwynedd will be reduced to 599 and that 35 extra care housing units will be opened in Porthmadog.

10. Developing Extra Care Housing in Porthmadog

- 10.1 Recent discussions regarding providing Extra Care Housing in Porthmadog, mainly with Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, have included identifying a site and how the development will be funded. Cymdeithas Tai Eryri is of the opinion that developing the Hafod y Gest site would be the best option. In doing this, a scheme of approximately 40 units could be developed which would include 27 two bedroom units and 15 one bedroom units.

There is strong support (41.4%) to the Council's proposal to develop extra care housing in Porthmadog and 72.75% of those who responded to the Town Council's questionnaire favoured locating the extra care housing on the Hafod y Gest site.

- 10.2 The scheme's full cost would be £6.5m but this would mean unaffordable rent levels. In order to reduce them to a more reasonable level which would attract housing benefit payments, there would be a need for a contribution of some sort to assist Cymdeithas Tai Eryri with the costs along with releasing the site free of charge. Discussions to date suggest the need for a contribution of up to £1.5 million. A request has also been

received for the Council to release the site free of charge to Cymdeithas Tai Eryri.

- 10.3 Members will remember that the Extra Care Housing planning application at Llan Ffestiniog was not approved. The Board of Cymdeithas Tai Eryri has approved the submission of an appeal against the decision subject to receiving expert legal advice. It is anticipated that the appeal decision will not be available for at least six months.
- 10.4 Therefore, there is an opportunity now to consider an alternative use of the social housing grant allocated to that scheme and to transfer it, as and when needed, to assist with funding developments of extra care housing in Porthmadog and Bangor. In order for this to happen, permission would need to be sought from the Assembly to move the resources and, in initial discussions, they were open to receiving and considering an application to transfer the grant from Llan Ffestiniog with the aim of ensuring a viable scheme in Porthmadog and Bangor.
- 10.5 Presuming a decision will be made on the future of Hafod y Gest in October, Cymdeithas Tai Eryri anticipates:
- submitting a planning application in January 2012
 - receiving planning permission in April 2012
 - commencing work on the site in the summer of 2012
 - completing the scheme at the end of October 2012.

Similarly, it is anticipated that North Wales Housing Association will be able to start spending in the current financial year (2011/12) on the proposed extra care housing scheme in Bangor.

11. Key Considerations

11.1 To summarise the key considerations:-

- i) The consultation shows substantial support to the option of investing in the existing home and praises the standard of care found there
- ii) The consultation also shows support to developing extra care housing in Porthmadog and for that to happen on the existing site of Hafod y Gest.
- iii) A strong wish has been expressed to develop services which support individuals to live at home.

- iv) There are residential and nursing beds available in the area to respond to existing and future needs.
- v) In order to develop Hafod y Gest to be a home which would respond to people's aspirations in the future, there is a need for substantial expenditure (see 4.3).
- vi) The Council has already agreed to support more people living at home, increase the number of extra care housing and reduce the number of traditional residential beds available in Gwynedd.

11.2 When considering the two options which were the subject of the consultation, it is appropriate to set them against the strategic decision that the Council has already taken:

Criteria	Option 1 - Invest in the existing home and improve it to a standard that would meet the aspirations of residents in the future.	Option 2 – Invest in developing Extra Care Housing and community services to support people to live at home but to close the existing residential home.
Reduce traditional residential beds and become closer to the average for Wales (Decision of the Council Board on 12 October, 2010)	X	√
Increase the number of Extra Care Housing in Gwynedd (Decision of the Council Board, 17 February 2009)	X	√
Contribute to the savings target of £1.3m by April 2012 (Decision of the Council Board, 1 December 2009)	X	√

11.3 On the basis of these considerations, it is recommended that the existing use of the building as a residential home should cease.

11.4 The Equality Impact Assessment on the recommendations can be seen in Appendix 5.

12. Recommendations of the Project Board

12.1 On the basis of realising the Council's strategic objectives, the following is recommended:-

- a) To cease the use of Hafod y Gest as a residential home timed in accordance with the development timetable of the extra care housing on the site.
- b) To ensure that assessments of the existing residents of Hafod y Gest are held and to re-home the residents in accordance with their individual needs.
- c) To submit a report to the Council Board transferring the site to Cymdeithas Tai Eryri, free of charge.
- (d) To support the Portfolio Member and the Corporate Director to submit a formal application to the Assembly to redirect the social housing grant allocated to build Extra Care Housing at Llan Ffestiniog to develop Extra Care Housing schemes in Porthmadog and Bangor.

Appendix 1

Information Pack and Social Services leaflet '*Social Care for Adults is changing*'

Appendix 2

List of the stakeholders to whom information packs were sent

Appendix 3

Questionnaire results

Appendix 4

.Documentation submitted by Porthmadog Town Council

Appendix 5

Equality Impact Assessment on the Recommendations submitted