

REPORT TO GWYNEDD COUNCIL'S CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	18th March 2021
Item Title:	Penrhos Site, Llanbedrog
Contact Officer:	Arwel Wyn Owen – Assistant Head
Member :	Cllr. Dafydd Meurig

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide an update on the Penrhos site, Llanbedrog and the collaboration with partners, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The cabinet meeting held on the 26th May 2020 supported the objective of transferring the liabilities of Polish Home Association to Clwyd Alyn Housing Association to maintain services at the Penrhos site. Earlier in January 2020 the Cabinet had approved an application from Clwyd Alyn Housing Association to operate within Gwynedd.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 During 2019 the Welsh Government Housing Regulators highlighted a number of governance risks relating to the viability of the Polish Housing Association and outlined the challenges within a regulatory report. Concern was expressed that the Association had insufficient financial resources to invest to improve the standard of the accommodation in order to comply with minimum standards. Concurrently Care Inspectorate Wales reports relating to inspection of the care home confirmed the need to enhance the accommodation and the care provision.
- 3.2 Having spent time seeking a viable a solution and exploring various options the Board of the Polish Housing Association decided, at a meeting

on the 2nd of May 2020, that they could not continue to maintain the services and that it was necessary to transfer the site in its entirety to Clwyd Alyn Housing Association to avoid the risk of bankruptcy.

- 3.3 On the 12th September 2020 all Polish Housing Association liabilities transferred over to Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. This included the 93 sheltered housing flats and a (42 bed) Nursing Hom.
- 3.4 This safeguarded the future of the site as a whole. Although there was an attempt with the support of Gwynedd Council and the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board to try and secure the long term future of the care home, it became apparent due to a level of uncertainty that the home could not be sustained but it was possible to work towards a managed closure limiting the impact on users and their families and ensure they were given an opportunity to identify other placement of choice. On the 7th of December 2020 the home was closed having secured suitable placements for remaining residents.
- 3.5 The Sheltered Housing was safeguarded and is now being managed by Clwyd Alyn Housing Association as part of their extra care housing provision. They are now exploring an investment program to redevelop the units to ensure they meet standards and address local need.

NEED ANALYSIS

- 3.6 It is acknowledged that the current supply of care beds, especially nursing beds in the Llyn area is inadequate, as the market is fragile and limited. As service commissioners, we know that there is no alternative provision in the area and it is unlikely that the open market would fill the gap.
- 3.7 Over the past 5 years the Care Home at Penrhos had become an important resource for the local community, particularly in relation to nursing care provision. The nearest alternative nursing home is located in

Criccieth, but many families are having to travel further to secure suitable service.

- 3.8 Although disappointed that the home could not be retained, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, Gwynedd Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board have continued to work together to explore the possibility of providing high quality care and accommodation services in a sustainable way, with all partners, keen to consider models that would have the potential to transform the model of care over time.
- 3.9 Gwynedd Council and the Health Board recognize that finding a solution is a priority as it is anticipated that the demand for specialist provision for older people along with those with a severe mental health / dementia will increase significantly in the future.
- 4.0 There are currently significant challenges for social landlords in owning care homes. There is no existing grant aid programme similar to social housing, and it is not possible to use private loan facilities which is a barrier to housing associations in using care assets as security, which limits their ability to borrow. Generally, residential and nursing services are viewed as a burden for on housing association's funding.
- 4.1 It would seem therefore that the Council, the Health Board and the Welsh Government would need to support if an alternative solution is sought.
- 4.2 The Penrhos site offers many opportunities and there is a tradition of providing care on site. The main limitation in terms of continuity of service was the quality and nature of the buildings which were deemed unsuitable and incompatible with modern requirements. In many respects the original vision of providing a range of services on the care pathway on the one site was very progressive and a precursor to the recently developed extra care housing schemes.

- 4.3 As part of the transfer, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has confirmed a willingness to work with Gwynedd Council and the Health Board in terms of service provision and expanding the use of the site.
- 4.4 In recent years the emphasis on co-production and co-delivery has increased and the expectation is that services will work closer together in future.
- 4.5 There seems to be a need to investigate opportunities and identify the cost implications and the financial package that would be required to establish a partnership between Gwynedd Council, Health Board and the Housing Association, each contributing to its strengths.
- 4.6 We know that population projections for the area project that demand for specialist care and nursing provision will increase over the coming years and that there will be a shortage of services for individuals suffering from mental health conditions and dementia. Gwynedd Council and the Health Board recognize that without provision people will have to travel a considerable distance to receive services, thus increasing pressure on other areas and weakening contact with families and the extended community.
- 4.7 There are also wider opportunities to explore new approaches relating to the future delivery of care and health services.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 We recognize that securing appropriate care services, and especially care and nursing beds in the Llŷn Peninsula is a priority to promote the welfare of vulnerable individuals and retain key services locally.
- 5.2 There are obvious benefits and opportunities of collaborating with the Health Board and Clwyd Alyn Housing Association to develop joint care solutions.

- 5.3 Given the nature and scale of the site there are opportunities to co-locate and relocate services.
- 5.4 Demand for social care and health services is likely to continue and increase and is expected to become more specialized.
- 5.5 There is an opportunity to look at an alternative model for joint provision of care and health services emulating the pattern set in other areas e.g. Penygroes.
- 5.6 Clwyd Alyn Housing Association has indicated their intention and willingness to invest in upgrading the standard of sheltered housing to meet regulatory requirements and commenced discussion to draw up a Master Plan to evaluate different options that could be delivered on site if resources were forthcoming.