

**Health & Adult Social Care Policy & Scrutiny
Committee**

18 February 2020

Report of the Director of Health, Housing & Adult Social Care

Portfolio of the Executive Members for Health & Adult Social Care and
Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods

Lowfield Green: Responding to older persons' accommodation needs

Summary

1. At the meeting of this committee in December, officers were asked to give further information on the progress being made on the development of older persons' accommodation on the Lowfield Green site and on the Oakhaven site.
2. Officers are making good progress to narrow down the options for the sites to be presented to the Executive in March and in April.
3. This report asks the committee for their views on how these sites should be used to support the accommodation needs of our older residents. This input will be reflected in the executive reports.

Background

Lowfield Green

4. On 7th December 2016, Executive agreed that the Older Persons' Accommodation Programme should include the procurement of a new residential care facility on the Lowfield Green development site.
5. At the meeting it was agreed to procure an independent sector care provider to construct and operate a Care Home and that the care provider be chosen through a competitive process.
6. Integral to this procurement was that the care provider should enter into a contract with the Council for the purchase of 25 beds in the Care

Home at Actual Cost of Care (ACOC) for ten years (with a possible 5 year extension)

7. The opportunity to develop, construct and operate a care home on the site was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union on 3rd May 2019. Two bidders expressed an interest in this opportunity and, following an initial assessment of the quality of care provision through a Selection Questionnaire stage, only one was invited to tender.
8. However, prior to the submission deadline, that bidder advised the Council that the proposal was not commercially viable and that they would withdraw from the procurement. In the absence of any interest in the opportunity, the procurement has been terminated.

Oakhaven

9. On 30th October 2015 Executive agreed to seek “the building of a new Extra Care scheme on the site of an existing Older Persons Home”. On 29th October 2015 Executive agreed to close Oakhaven Older Persons’ Home on Acomb Road and agreed to “the procurement of a partner to develop the Oakhaven site as an Extra Care facility for Acomb”.
10. Following a procurement process, a developer was selected as Preferred Bidder who proposed to deliver 56 apartments. At their meeting in March 2017, Executive were asked to note the appointment of the Preferred Bidder and to approve the sale of the site.
11. The developer submitted a planning pre-application in October 2017. The response was not supportive of the proposal, due primarily to its impact on the street scene. An attempt was made to amend the design, though this reduced the number of apartments to 40. This in turn caused the development not to be financially viable to the care provider, who would operate the site on completion.

Resident consultation

11. During summer 2019, the Council talked to over 500 people to gain a better understanding of the priorities and preferences of York residents when thinking about accommodation for later life. To refresh our Older People’s Accommodation Programme, data was drawn from a survey as well as consultation and engagement events with advocacy groups, interest groups and community groups. We also conducted in depth interviews with a number of York residents to gain a deeper insight into their survey answers. We believe that this approach provided us with a

rich source of data which can help to inform a practical and effective older persons' housing programme.

12. In summary, this report has told us that:

- i. Autonomy when making decisions about where to live in later life is extremely important, however awareness of the types of accommodation and support available varies. Raising awareness of the types of accommodation available should be prioritised to enable people to make informed decisions and select the type of accommodation most suitable for them. Home ownership is also extremely important therefore opportunities for different tenures, including shared ownership should be made available and well publicised.
- ii. The most trusted sources for help and advice when making a decision about where to live are family and advocacy groups like Age UK, therefore making sure comprehensive up to date information is readily available through a variety of means should be a priority.
- iii. When thinking about accommodation in later life the most important factors are privacy, access to outdoor space and living in a manageable home. Being part of a community and the benefits of living in appropriate accommodation in the right location are also viewed as key factors.
- iv. York needs to adapt to changing demographics and preferences, it should address the lack of purpose built affordable accommodation for retirement living. There is a demand for homes which are safe, manageable and affordable within the city. The city should seek to support developers who can provide homes which are age friendly. Pursuing this would have knock-on beneficial effects for the city as it would free up more family homes into the market.
- v. There appears to be a strong appetite for assistive technologies with the potential benefits recognised by many. With this in mind pursuing opportunities to integrate assistive technologies into accommodation for older people would seem prudent. In the future further research targeted at minority groups within the city would be beneficial to ensure that views are represented and all needs are met.

13. Our consultation regarding these two sites also includes soft market testing and structured conversations with Registered Social Landlords and commercial developers to gauge the level of interest in developing older person's accommodation on the sites.
14. This work is ongoing but current feedback indicates that there is interest in both sites with a range of different options coming forward. Further work is needed to understand the viability and desirability of each of these options.

Review of requirements

15. Given the lack of responses to the care home procurement and the inability to develop the Oakhaven site for extra care, and the conclusions from our consultation, it was clear that there was an opportunity to review our requirements of the two sites.
16. In reviewing the use of the sites, we are taking into account the proximity of the two sites, the community interest in the sites, and on Lowfield Green the surrounding residential development, both in terms of programme and tenure mix. The housing development is progressing well with infrastructure including roads and utilities being provided as part of the housing delivery contract.
17. From this information it is evident that:
 - i. Our older residents would like to be able to live in a home which is "small, safe and manageable" while having care and support available when required.
 - ii. While there is still an ongoing commitment to provide older persons' accommodation on the Lowfield Green site, any attempt to re-procure a care home on the Lowfield Green site with similar criteria is unlikely to generate any viable bids.
 - iii. Housing development is underway on Lowfield Green and to ensure the occupation of these properties and the creation of a new community, it is important that a clear alternative plan for the Older Persons' Accommodation plot is progressed.
 - iv. There is local interest and drive to see development on the Oakhaven site.
 - v. There is interest in the market to develop on the sites.

For consideration

18. The committee are asked to consider the options available for development of the Lowfield Green Older Persons' Accommodation site and the Oakhaven site and give their views to inform the recommendations to the Executive. Options for the sites include, but are clearly not limited to:
- a) Repeat the exercise to procure a care home developer and operator on the Lowfield Green site.
 - b) Repeat the exercise to procure an extra care developer on the Oakhaven site.
 - c) Undertaking a procurement exercise to secure a developer and future operator of extra care accommodation on the Older Persons' Accommodation plot within the Lowfield Green development.
 - d) Appropriate the older persons' accommodation plot on Lowfield Green into the HRA and for the Council itself to develop extra care accommodation within the housing delivery programme.
 - e) Appropriate the Oakhaven site into the HRA and for the Council itself to develop independent living accommodation within the housing delivery programme.
19. The committee are also asked to give their views on what they consider to be important to include within any brief for the sites.

Contact Details

Author:
Vicky Japes
Head of Older Persons'
Accommodation Programme
Tel No. ext 3382

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:
Sharon Houlden
Director of Health, Housing & Adult Social
Care.

Report
Approved



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10/02/2020

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report