

AGENDA ITEM No. 21

To: SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE	Subject: A HOME FOR THE FUTURE – NEXT STEPS	
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 20 MAY 2004	Ref: JN/TJC	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT / INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Committee of progress in relation to the agenda set out in “A Home for the Future”. Specifically, the report details the current position with regard to the Council's own residential homes for older people in the context of National Standards, other policy direction, the development of services for older people and the expectations of older people as to how services are delivered in the future.
- 1.2 This report identifies a range of issues which have had to be addressed in order to make considered recommendations about the future of North Lanarkshire's ten residential homes for older people.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The member/officer group on older peoples services “A Home for the Future” reported to Social Work Committee in November 2000. That report contained an Improvement Action Plan for social work services to older people and progress on the Improvement Action Plan was reported regularly to Social Work Committee thereafter.
- 2.2 Only one element of the “A Home for the Future” action plan remains outstanding today. That is arguably the major thrust of the report and concerns the future of the Council's ten residential care homes for older people. In relation to the future of those ten care homes, “A Home for the Future” said:
- ◆ “Until alternative resources are available the present level of provision within the local authority sector requires to be maintained.”
 - ◆ In the short to medium term, the number and capacity of local authority homes should remain unchanged. The Council should continue to be a major provider of such services in accordance of older peoples clear wishes that “council run” homes be a choice option for them.”
 - ◆ “Many, if not all, establishments (homes) may not meet the standard expected of single care homes”.
 - ◆ “Very Sheltered Housing should be further developed as a preferred model of future care for older people in North Lanarkshire.”

- 2.3 In summary, "A Home for the Future" committed the Council to the retention of local authority care homes for as long as those care homes met the standards of the day and/or until alternative resources were in place to meet the needs, aspirations and wishes of older people in North Lanarkshire.

3. DEVELOPMENTS SINCE NOVEMBER 2000

- 3.1 In relation to the issues identified in the previous section of this report, a number of developments have taken place since the publication and Committee approval of "A Home for the Future."

3.2 National Standards

National Standards for Care Homes were introduced by the Scottish Executive in April 2002. While having no immediate impact on the Council's ten homes for old people, the standards require that by 2007 all residents should have a single room if they so wish. The National Standards also indicate that it is desirable that rooms should have en-suite facility of a toilet and wash hand basin, again by 2007. At present, only two of the Council's ten homes will meet the national standard by 2007 although a further two homes could meet the standard with modest reduction to resident numbers. The remaining six homes cannot meet the standard by 2007 without significant adaptation and refurbishment. This would involve not only expenditure in the region of £1 million per care home but would require a full decant of each care home for some months in order to carry out such major adaptation and refurbishment.

3.3 Capacity

Despite demographic trends indicating a growing elderly population over the last few years and into the future, residential care home usage by older people has been reducing steadily over the past two years. This is undoubtedly due to the success of the Council's strategy for supporting people in their own homes or in alternative home settings (adapted, sheltered and very sheltered housing) rather than institutional care home placements. The rise in numbers of people receiving intensive packages of care at home together with greatly increased community alarm availability and extended day care opening means that people who would otherwise require residential care home places are increasingly being cared for in their own homes or in supported housing alternatives.

Unlike the residential sector, nursing home provision continues to grow in North Lanarkshire and new provision being developed by the independent sector is invariably provided on a single room/en-suite model. Developments in the past year have increased choices available in this sector and have increased choices available in this sector and continue to keep pace with the demographic trends. The successful policy of supporting people at home may not meet the needs of the frailest older person but the likelihood is that the continuing trend will be for people to be cared for at home until their level of care is well beyond that of a residential model. Thus we will increasingly see a diminishing need for residential care home places with a corresponding increasing need for a mixture of community supports and nursing home places.

3.4 Housing Developments

The Council's "Housing for Older People" working group, developed as a recommendation of "A Home for the Future" is engaged in the development of very sheltered housing as tri-partite work involving housing, social work and community Scotland. While not being seen as direct replacement for the Council's own care homes, several very sheltered housing developments are now in progress or are planned over the next few years, further reducing the need for care home provision in those areas. At present, two developments are in progress in Seafar Cumbernauld and Patterson Street Motherwell. These complement existing provision in Wishaw, Coatdyke and the assisted living unit at Airbles Road Motherwell.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 Initial assessment suggests that as many as six of the Council's ten care homes for older people will not meet National Standards by 2007. Such standards recognise that older people deserve the opportunity to have the highest quality of provision, particularly if they are having to be cared for in a setting other than in their own home. Developments in the flexibility, levels and availability of responsive care packages mean that many older people who would previously have been placed in residential settings can now be cared for in their own homes. Further developments in models of housing with support and the independent sector nursing home provision mean that a variety of alternatives to residential care are now available to meet the needs of older people.
- 4.2 Given the above considerations, it is proposed that detailed proposals be prepared for a future Committee cycle with clear recommendations as to how the Council can achieve the best possible services within the policy and legislative context described in this report.


5. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL/LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Detailed information on the financial and personnel implications of future plans will be included in a future report to Committee.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the potential impact of National Standards for Council-run residential care homes;
- (ii) Request that the Director of Social Work bring forward a future report to Committee setting out future plans;
- (iii) Remit this report to Housing and Technical Services Committee for their information; and
- (iv) Otherwise note the contents of this report.



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28 April 2004

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