



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Sarah Daniel - Scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk 07385 086 169

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a HYBRID meeting of OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE to be held on MONDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2023 at 5.00 PM

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by 23.02.23 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

AGENDA

**Page
No's**

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To receive for approval the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 14 December 2022

3. CONSULTATION LINKS

Information is provided in respect of relevant [consultations](#) for consideration by the Committee.

4. RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

To pre-scrutinise the preferred options following a public consultation on the future provision of accommodation with care for older people in each of the Council's nine residential care homes

11 - 174

5. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

6. CHAIRS REVIEW AND CLOSE

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee (County Borough Councillor J Edwards and County Borough Councillor J Brencher respectively)

County Borough Councillors:- Councillor M Ashford, Councillor J Bonetto, Councillor S Evans, Councillor S Evans, Councillor G Hughes, Councillor C Middle, Councillor K Morgan, Councillor S Morgans, Councillor W Owen, Councillor G L Warren, Councillor K Webb and Councillor G E Williams

Officers:- Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2022-2027 COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee held on
Wednesday, 14 December 2022 at 5.00 pm.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor J Edwards (Chair)

Councillor J Brencher	Councillor M Ashford
Councillor J Bonetto	Councillor S Evans
Councillor C Middle	Councillor K Morgan
Councillor S Morgans	Councillor G L Warren
Councillor K Webb	Councillor G E Williams

Officers in attendance

Ms G Davies, Director Education and Inclusion
Ms A Richards, Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Mr R Waters, Director Frontline Services
Mr S Owen, Service Director Streetcare
Mr A Wilkins, Director Legal Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mrs S Daniel, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence

Councillor S Evans Councillor G Hughes
Councillor M Powell

29 Declarations of Interest

None

30 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021-2022

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the Draft Scrutiny Annual Report to members for their comments and endorsement at Council

Members of the Committee gave thanks to all previous Chairs and Vice Chairs for their hard work and dedication to their previous Scrutiny Committees

The Chair also gave thanks to previous Members, particularly those that had departed at the recent election. She commented that the report gave a fair reflection of the work that had been undertaken and gave her and all Scrutiny members a solid base to work from.

RESOLVED:

Authorised the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communications to consult with the Chairs of the respective thematic scrutiny committees to confirm the content of their individual Annual Reports before presentation to Council

31 Consultations

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the reports to Members to seek their views on the Waste Management Strategy and Community Meals Service. Members were advised that the consultations conclude on the 9th January 2022 with any comments and observations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being considered as part of the Cabinet decision process

32 Service Review Community Meals Service

The Director Education and Inclusion Services provided an overview of the options

On the [29th November 2022](#), Cabinet agreed to initiate a public consultation and engagement exercise on the preferred service change proposal in respect of the Community Meals Service. A review has been undertaken and several options for the future of the service have been evaluated.

- Option 1: to continue the service as it currently operates with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.
- Option 2: to reorganise the existing internal service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal.
- Option 3 (preferred option): to reorganise the existing internal service and provide a hot/frozen Community Meal home delivery service with increased service user charges thus reducing the subsidy per meal. Option 4: to cease the current service and support service users to find alternative options

A Member sought clarification under the proposal for option 3 and asked if a service user requests a hot meal, could this be heated before delivery. He asked if welfare checks on vulnerable service users could

still be undertaken when meals are delivered in the future.

The Director Education and Inclusion confirmed that all meals are prepared in the Council's facilities and delivered as a frozen meal for the service user to heat at a time of their choosing. She added that where a service user has requested support in heating the meal, this can be provided and the meal will be heated and plated for them. She reassured Members that there will still be support options available for those that require it and the delivery of the meal could therefore also serve as a welfare visit. The Director added that a time analysis could be undertaken and reported back to Scrutiny as she advised that staff delivering the meals are time restricted.

The Service Director 21st Century Schools And Transformation advised members that the Council has strict Food Safety Standards to adhere to and if we defrost a meal, it then has to be eaten in a certain amount of time before it would be unsafe to consume. It was therefore determined that the safest option and in order to comply with food safety standards is to prepare the meal, freeze it and deliver frozen.

Clarification was sought on the containers the meals will be delivered and if they were able to be recycled. The Service Director 21st Century Schools and Transformation advised that the meals are currently delivered in microwaveable safe containers which are 100% recyclable.

A number of Members were supportive of option 3, but emphasised that many people rely on the service, not just for the delivery of a meal but as an opportunity to have a welfare check as some service users do not have regular visitors. They requested if this can continue should any of the proposals taken forward this would provide reassurance for the service users and their families.

Members sought clarification as to how the Council will support service users who may find difficulty in meeting the cost of the meals and whilst an increase of 50p per meal does not seem like a big cost, some families are struggling due to the current UK cost of living crisis.

The Director Education and Inclusion acknowledged that the current circumstances presented difficulties however she reassured members that they will continue to engage with families to understand what support they require and ensure they are signposted to relevant support in adult services.

In response to a query officers confirmed that the meals are developed by a dietician to ensure they are healthy and nutritious and with the menu choice can be expanded with the frozen option. Meals were also regularly checked for quality and safety so they stood up to food safety standards. Members were also informed that data is monitored with uptake in the service being quieter during the summer months. Taster menus were developed with feedback sought from staff and service

users. Where service users opt out of future deliveries an exit survey is undertaken to understand why they have decided to not continue with the service

Members emphasised the importance of engaging with Service users throughout the consultation and any potential transition period to ensure their needs continue to be met and they understand the changes and why they are being made as this is a vital service for some of our most vulnerable residents in the Borough.

Following consideration of the proposals Members **RESOLVED** to :

1. Acknowledge the Decision of the Cabinet taken on the 29 November to initiate a public consultation on the preferred service change proposals attached at [Appendix A](#)
2. Acknowledge the contents of the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on [29 November 2022](#), at [Appendix B](#)

Authorised the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications to notify those Cabinet of the Committees comments and recommendations before they make a final determination on this matter.

33 Revised Waste Management Strategy

The Director Frontline Services provided Overview of report and sought members views on the public consultation and engagement exercise on the option for change, namely:

- The collection of residual household waste on a 3-weekly basis for all domestic waste collections.
- Presentation of waste on a 3-weekly basis will be as follows; strict volume control measures will apply to all domestic waste, namely:
- a maximum of 3 black bags per household, (for those properties with existing black bag waste collections),
- no side waste rule continues for those households with large wheelie bin collections; and
- It was also agreed to consult on a trial of the use of reusable recycling sacks for the collection of dry mixed recycling, (DMR).

Members collectively voiced concern that the proposals could initiate an increase in flytipping throughout the Borough with members receiving queries from residents to clarify how this will be addressed.

The Director Frontline Services reminded Members that the council offers a very comprehensive range of collections available to their residents which includes weekly food, green waste, mixed recycling and adult hygiene collections. In addition, the Authority has one of the most comprehensive Community Recycling Centre offers too. With these many options available to residents, there is no need for people to flytip. He

reassured members that where the Council does find evidence of flytipping, they will always take action and issue a Fixed Penalty Notice which should serve as a deterrent to offenders.

In response to a query, officers confirmed that they will work with residents where they generate additional waste such as pet waste, clinical or hygiene and allow for additional bags, should we be reassured that the resident will work with the Council to ensure they are recycling everything else possible. The Community Recycling Centres will continue to be promoted to our residents to take any additional items for recycling they have. Officers added that most residents currently manage very easily with the current limits as there are plenty of options for them to dispose of their waste effectively.

Members commented that the current success in achieving the recycling rates has only been made possible by ensuring the process is made as easy as possible and accessible to all residents. They encouraged early and continued engagement during any potential changes to ensure the success continues. They emphasised the significance of making the public aware of the importance of recycling and disposing of their waste correctly including potential fines for not reaching Welsh Government set targets for recycling in Wales. A majority of members noted that much of the public concern in respect of the changes related a misunderstanding of the proposals and what can or cannot currently be recycled. Officers responded that they have an awareness team who go door to door to work with the public and presence will be increased in the shorter term in a warning and informing role to support residents.

Members commented that they Members of the Climate Change, Frontline Services and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee recently attended a site visit to Bryn Pica where the Borough's waste and recycling is sorted and they were very impressed with the first class facilities.

As part of any future changes, a majority of members encouraged engagement local supermarkets to encourage each retailer to take responsibility for soft plastics and other "returnable" items for recycling, to facilitate a reusing of items culture.

Members requested that any change to the recycling bags that are issued to residents is carefully considered so they adequately retain items put in them and are able to withstand adverse weather conditions.

Members felt that educating and raising awareness amongst the public was a far better approach in the shorter term than issuing immediate fines as often residents were not fully aware of the recycling process and once they understood the process they were more often than not compliant and want to support and engage in the process. Members recommended that the Council engage with School Council's and Eco-Committees where possible to raise awareness of the importance of recycling

Following the conclusion of discussions Members **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the Decision of the Cabinet taken on the 29 November to initiate a public consultation and engagement exercise attached at Appendix A
2. Acknowledge the contents of the report considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 29 November 2022, at Appendix B

Authorised the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications to notify Cabinet of their comments and recommendations before they make a final determination on this matter.

34 ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION AND REFORM WHITE PAPER

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented the report which sought Members comments upon the proposals, which are currently being consulted upon, before the 10th January submission deadline.

The Director of Legal Services added that any proposals that simplify the electoral administration and registration process is welcomed. The current proposals for non-devolved elections, voters will be required to present identification at the polling station which creates concern over the divergence of the elections in England and Wales, and causing confusion amongst voters where there may be combined elections.

Members welcomed the election process becoming more a streamlined and the opportunity these proposals present to make this process more straight-forward. Members did however express concern at the development of different process for Welsh Election and UK elections, and expressed concern around the confusion which could be caused, if polls under Welsh and UK and arrangements where conducted on the same day.

A Member raised concern at the UK direction of travel, however many members acknowledged they did not want to see a divergence between nations. Members commented that with the current uptake of voting at less than 30% they would like to see the voting process made as easy as possible to ensure no person is excluded from the process and no barriers precluded them from participating, such as presenting identification at the time of voting.

Members were in favour of an automatic registration process to improve voting numbers. They also stated the importance of engaging in the education sector to improve voter participation and using other platforms to engage young people in the voting process to ensure they have a general awareness at a young age, to ensure it is easy for them to participate, engage and understand the voting process at a young age as evidence suggests that those who engage from a young age, will continue

to do so throughout adulthood

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the Welsh Government proposals.
2. Agree for comments of the Overview and Scrutiny 2022-2027 Committee to be formulated by Officers in response to the Welsh Government consultation by the deadline of 10th January 2023.

Request that additional updates are presented as appropriate, as further detail is provided by Welsh Government.

35 Chairs Review and Close

The Chair thanked all Members and officers for attending the meeting and for their contributions.

36 Urgent Items

NONE

**Councillor J Edwards
Chair.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 FEBRUARY 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATIONS

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a further opportunity to pre-scrutinise the preferred options on the future provision of Residential Care Homes for Older People following the outcome of a public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the outcome of the public consultation, and the Officer recommendations for Cabinet detailed in paragraph 2 of **Appendix A** to this report.
- 2.2 Determine any comments and recommendations the Committee wish to present as a formal response to Cabinet in respect of these proposals; And in doing so authorise the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications to report those matters to the Cabinet before a final determination upon the report contained in Appendix A.

3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Overview & Scrutiny has further opportunity to comment on the proposals detailed in **Appendix A** to this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The report attached at **Appendix A** provides Cabinet with Officer recommendations for Cabinet to consider the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in each of the Council's nine residential care homes.
- 4.2 Scrutiny Members have previously had the opportunity to provide their comments and feedback on the future service delivery model for residential care services, to Cabinet at various stages in the development of the proposals. This was undertaken through meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in [December 2018](#), [July 2019](#), [December 2020](#) and [November 2022](#)

5.0 PRE SCRUTINY

- 5.1 Members are reminded that the purpose of pre scrutiny activity is to contribute and inform decisions of the Cabinet before they are determined. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to have the opportunity to explore and comment on a number of reports in advance of Cabinet's consideration to bring a different perspective to the decisions made and enabling Cabinet decisions to be more informed.
- 5.2 A report summarising the discussion and any recommendations made by Overview and Scrutiny will be put forward and considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 28th February 2023
- 5.3 Scrutiny has been engaged at a number of important points in the council's considerations and has been afforded the opportunity to further comment on the future service delivery model for the Council's Residential Care Homes and day care for older people throughout the process.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1 The appropriate impact assessments to accompany this decision will be presented to the Cabinet for consideration when determining this matter.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 There are no consultation requirements emanating from the recommendations set out in this report. Members are advised to

consider the feedback of the consultation initiated by Cabinet in respect of these proposals.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9.0 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Welsh language implications as a result of the recommendations set out in the report. The appropriate Welsh Language impact assessments to accompany this decision will be presented to the Cabinet for consideration when determining this matter.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

11.0 CONCLUSION

11.1 Any comments and feedback to the Cabinet will ensure that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee fully evaluates the effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny function.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH CLLR G CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

Author(s): Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to consider the outcome of the consultation on the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in each of the Council's nine residential care homes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

2.1 Considers:

- the responses to the consultation on the modernisation of the Council's nine residential care homes for older people;
- the information provided in this report;
- the Equality Impact Assessment (including Socio-Economic Duty) and Welsh Language Impact Assessment; and
- the recommendations and comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, following its meeting held on the 27th February 2023, where the Committee undertook pre-scrutiny of the preferred options on the future provision of the Council's accommodation for older people following the consultation [NOTE: this will be reported orally at the Cabinet Meeting].

2.2 Determines whether to proceed with the preferred option to retain the current service provision at the five Council residential care homes listed below:

- Clydach Court, Trealaw
- Pentre House, Pentre
- Tegfan, Trecynon
- Cae Glas, Hawthorn

- Parc Newydd, Talbot Green

- 2.3 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to permanently decommission Ystrad Fechan residential care home and continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available development space and need, as set out in Section 7 of this report. Following a previous Cabinet decision Ystrad Fechan residential care home is currently temporarily closed and has no residents living there.
- 2.4 Subject to 2.3 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposals to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds in Treorchy.
- 2.5 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to develop land near the existing Ferndale House residential care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds and decommission Ferndale House residential care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed, as set out in Section 7 of this report. NOTE: This would be an amendment to the preferred option consulted upon which was to provide new accommodation with care with 20 extra care apartments and 10 residential dementia care beds and would increase the care provision in the Rhondda Fach.
- 2.6 Subject to 2.5 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds in Ferndale.
- 2.7 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw residential care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds and decommission the Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed, as set out in Section 7 of this report.
- 2.8 Subject to 2.7 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds in Mountain Ash.

- 2.9 Determines whether the Council should proceed with the preferred option to redevelop Garth Olwg residential care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood and decommission Garth Olwg care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs, as set out in Section 7 of this report.
- 2.10 Subject to 2.9 above, agrees that the decommissioning of Garth Olwg residential care home be concluded by the end of May 2023 and will follow the good practice principles detailed below in paragraph 7.7 of this report and ensure comprehensive support is provided to residents, their families, and staff.
- 2.11 Subject to 2.9 above, agrees to a further report being presented to Cabinet setting out the investment proposal to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood on the Garth Olwg residential care home site.
- 2.12 Agrees that the Interim Director of Social Services and Director of Human Resources produce a workforce development plan to address the workforce issues raised by staff during the consultation in order to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce to support the delivery of Council's residential care service. The workforce development plan would be shared with the recognised Trade Unions for views prior to any implementation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 imposes market shaping duties upon the Council and guidance provides that local authorities are required to ensure that there are sufficient, quality services available in the area and that these services are sustainable.
- 3.2 In line with these duties, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council continues to review the residential care home provision that it delivers internally and has consulted on preferred options for a future service delivery model. Officers consider that doing nothing is not a viable option and without re-designing the way that the service is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and needs within the resources available.
- 3.3 The Council is committed to investing in adult social care services and is already investing significantly in care accommodation for older and vulnerable people, making sure that investment is made in the best possible way.

3.4 The consultation undertaken on the preferred options together with the information provided in this report and associated impact assessments will assist Cabinet when considering the future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes in accordance with the recommendations set out above.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The need to modernise and continually improve adult social care services is a key priority for Rhondda Cynon Taf and over the last six years the Council has transformed the way in which it delivers adult social care; with the focus shifting to supporting independence so that people are supported to remain in their own homes for as long as possible.

4.2 In [September 2017](#), Cabinet approved a £50m investment plan to develop, in total, 300 extra care apartments across Rhondda Cynon Taf and to deliver modern accommodation options to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population. At this meeting, Cabinet also approved a comprehensive review of residential care homes (and day care services) for older people to determine future improvement opportunities for service delivery in line with the Council's strategy for accommodation for older people.

4.3 The future of the Council's residential care homes for older people has been subject to ongoing review since September 2017. In [December 2020](#), Cabinet agreed, following consideration of three separate stakeholder consultations, the future provision of the Council's residential care homes and to receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme.

4.4 In making their decision, the Cabinet considered the outcomes of the three stakeholder consultations, the rationale and drivers shaping the preferred options for the future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people, and information relating to the capacity and demand. These are summarised below:

- The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.
- There is a need to retain Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining an in-house offer of provision in the local residential care home market.
- The difficulty of existing Council's residential care homes to accept the range of referrals and complexity of need being presented

unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.

- The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes, including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes. This is consistent with national and regional priorities and the Council's aim of providing care and support to people in their own homes wherever possible.
- The over provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality in Rhondda Cynon Taf to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.
- The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.
- The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.

4.5 In [July 2022](#), Cabinet agreed, following a further review of the Council's residential care home provision to address ongoing pandemic related issues and challenges, including reduced demand and low occupancy, staffing shortages and quality of care issues, to:

- temporarily close Ystrad Fechan (Treorchy) and transfer the eight residents to Pentre House (Pentre) or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and,
- temporarily provide up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd (Talbot Green), in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, to support hospital discharge.

4.6 In [July 2022](#), a copy of The Regional Market Stability Report (2022) was presented to Council. The report, which is based on regional analysis of current data and trends and the feedback from resident and stakeholder engagement carried out in 2021/22, highlighted that:

- people are continuing to choose to live at home for longer and that people are entering care homes later in life and with more acute needs, which has resulted in a reduction in the demand for traditional residential care and an increased demand for nursing care and homecare.

- residential care home providers are reporting that they are now supporting people with more complex needs who would have previously had their needs met in a nursing home.
 - current provision is unable to meet the increasing need for nursing with dementia care and respite care, particularly dementia care.
- 4.7 The above highlights from the Market Stability report reinforces the recent trends seen within Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Council's residential care home service and reflects on the trends in the national picture.
- 4.8 On [5th December 2022](#), Cabinet approved the following:
- 4.8.1 To initiate a public consultation, including consultation with current residents and their families and staff, on the preferred options set out below:
- Option 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council residential care homes. This includes - Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
 - Option 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan residential care home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.
 - Option 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House residential care home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
 - Option 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw residential care home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
 - Option 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg residential care

home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- 4.8.2 To receive a further report following conclusion of the proposed consultation, including an updated full Equality Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment prior to any final decision being made in relation to the preferred options on the future provision of accommodation for older people in the Council's residential care homes.

5. CURRENT RESIDENTIAL CARE HOME PROVISION IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

- 5.1 There are currently 34 care homes for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf, offering a total of 1308 registered beds. Of these, the Council operates 9 residential care homes offering 267 registered residential beds, which makes it one of the largest local authority providers of residential care in the country. The remaining 25 care homes are provided by independent providers contracted by the Council, offering 1041 registered residential and nursing beds.

- 5.2 As previously reported, Rhondda Cynon Taf has had a surplus of care home beds for several years, across the Council's care homes and those in the Independent Sector, as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Care home occupancy and vacancies

	Council care homes		Independent care homes	
	% Occupied	Vacancies	% Occupied	Vacancies
Nov 2022	60%	103	91%	81
May 2022	50%	145	86%	159
Sep 2021	55%	131	81%	206
Sep 2020	53%	157	79%	206
Feb 2020	69%	102	94%	63
Aug 2019	77%	71	96%	46
Mar 2019	79%	76	93%	81
Mar 2018	83%	57	88%	135
Mar 2017	89%	27	88%	67
Mar 2016	98%	8	95%	75

- 5.3 Whilst occupancy in the Council's residential care homes increased in November 2022, this was due to the previous Cabinet decision, mentioned in paragraph 4.5, to temporarily close Ystrad Fechan and temporarily provide up to 10 new step up step down beds at Parc Newydd, which reduced the overall number of beds available. Table 1 above shows that local demand is following national trends with a

period of decline in residential care home placements prior to the pandemic and thereafter. Occupancy across the independent sector, whilst still below pre-pandemic levels, has now started rising, primarily due to increased placements in nursing and dementia and the Council's decision in September 2022 to stop contracting with Pontypridd Nursing Home.

- 5.4 Lower levels of demand are expected to continue for an extended period. Research by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that there is a lower demand for residential care and that 1/3 of people are now less likely to seek residential care for an elderly relative, while 40% of over 65's are less likely to consider it for themselves.
- 5.5 Over recent years, long term admissions to care homes has fallen in Rhondda Cynon Taf despite an expanding population. Conversely, demand for homecare services for people who live in their own homes and are aged 65 and over has been increasing.
- 5.6 Current vacancies, as of 1st November 2022, broken down by geographical area, market sector and care category are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Current care home vacancies, as of 1st November 2022, by geographical area, market sector and care category.

Area	Sector	Res	Res Dementia	Nursing	Nursing Dementia	Total
Rhondda	Independent	0	10	2	4	16 (5%)
	In-house	20	11	-	-	31 (34%)
	Sub Total	20 (21%)	21 (13%)	2 (2%)	4 (22%)	47 (12%)
Cynon	Independent	23	11	8	3	45 (12%)
	In-house	29	0	-	-	29 (40%)
	Sub Total	52 (37%)	11 (13%)	8 (6%)	3 (4%)	74 (17%)
Taf	Independent	6	2	11	1	20 (6%)
	In-house	24	19	-	-	43 (45%)
	Sub Total	30 (18%)	21 (19%)	11 (7%)	1 (8%)	63 (14%)
Rhondda Cynon Taf	Independent	29	23	21	8	81 (8%)
	In-house	73	30	-	-	103 (40%)
	Total	102 (25%)	53 (15%)	21 (5%)	8 (7%)	184 (14%)

5.7 As shown in Table 2 above, there are still 184 bed vacancies as of 1st November 2022 in Rhondda Cynon Taf, despite previous decisions to temporarily reduce the Council's care home provision at Ystrad Fechan and Parc Newydd and stop contracting with Pontypridd Nursing Home, which resulted in several residents relocating into Council homes, - amounting to 14% of total registered care home beds. This represents a significant oversupply of beds, especially in residential care - 155 bed vacancies (20%) in all three geographical areas, as follows:

- 41 bed vacancies (16%) Rhondda
- 63 bed vacancies (28%) Cynon
- 51 bed vacancies (18%) Taf

5.8 As a result, some care homes are carrying a high number of vacancies and in November 2022, 100% of the Council's Care Homes and 14% of the independent providers reported occupancy rates below 85%.

5.9 The Council's nine residential care homes have the potential to offer 257 care home beds and currently 103 of these are vacant, this excludes the 24 beds from the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan and new 10 bed step up step down facility at Parc Newydd. This represents a current occupancy level for the Council's Care Homes of still just 60%. Half of the Council's Residential Care Homes still have occupancy below 60% as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Current occupancy, as of 1st November 2022, in each of the Council's nine residential care homes

Area	Care Home	Location	Bed Nos	Permanent Residents Numbers	Temporary Resident Numbers	Overall Occupancy %
Rhondda	Clydach Court	Trealaw	35	22	4	74%
	Ferndale House	Ferndale	26	11	1	46%
	Pentre House	Pentre	29	20	1	72%
	Ystrad Fechan	Treorchy		Temporarily closed		
Cynon	Tegfan	Trecynon	46	25	4	63%
	Troedyrhiw	Mountain Ash	26	14	0	54%
Taf	Cae Glas	Hawthorn	39	17	3	51%
	Garth Olwg	Church Village	30	14	2	53%
	Parc Newydd	Talbot Green	26	14	2	62%
	Total		257	137	17	60%

- 5.10 The pandemic has had a profound impact on the market, in particular the Council's residential care homes and has increased the vacancy rate in the Council's homes. Inevitably, the prolonged high number of vacancies has affected the living environment and experience for residents, increasing the risk of a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.
- 5.11 While the pandemic has created considerable uncertainty about future demand for care home placements, there is still a lot more capacity available in the Council's residential care home market, and in addition to the extra care developments, there are sufficient residential care home places for people. As previously reported, there remains clear evidence that there is an over provision of care home beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 5.12 It is therefore important that the Council continues to review its current residential care home provision to ensure it addresses the ongoing challenges resulting from the recovery from the pandemic, including the greater demand for nursing and specialist care home placements and domiciliary care for people who wish to continue to live in their own homes.
- 5.13 As Cabinet will be aware from previous reports, the Council's residential care homes are in dated buildings, and whilst the quality of the care provided by staff is very good, they were mostly built over 40 years ago and were not designed to meet the current expectations of care accommodation. However, the Council continues to maintain each home in accordance with normal industry practice and requirements and each home is routinely inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales who independently validate ongoing compliance with requirements.
- 5.14 As previously reported, modern purpose built care homes are designed to be dementia friendly and have a larger space standard to support mobility and hoisting needs. They also have en-suite facilities, so people are more able to toilet themselves or with support.
- 5.15 The Council's long term aim, subject to available funding, is to provide an environment where people living in a Council residential care home live in comfort and in a home where the design of the building, with support from staff, maintains someone's sense of dignity and independence.
- 5.16 As Cabinet will be aware, the Council commissioned Quattro Design Architects "Quattro" to undertake an independent review of each of the Council's nine residential care homes to explore options for the refurbishment and new build of each home at their current location in line with modern fit for purpose standards.

5.17 In terms of design, Quattro were commissioned to create plans for the provision of high quality modern residential care homes, with up to 60 beds, to support people with dementia, including those requiring respite care by refurbishing or rebuilding each of the Council's nine care homes.

5.18 The Quattro review outcomes for the refurbishment of each of the Council's residential care homes concluded that none could be refurbished to meet the modern-day standards required of residential care in a way that represents value for money and this would leave the homes financially unsustainable in the longer term, because:

- due to the age, size, and design of the Council's residential care homes, significant investment (at least approx. £30M) would be required to make each home fit for the future and in line with CIW new home standards
- making the Council's residential care homes fit for the future reduce the number of places available due to different facility requirements, such as en-suites - six of the Council's nine residential care homes would have a new occupancy of below 20 registered beds.
- reduced capacity would mean the Council's residential care homes would be more expensive to run. Good provision is already available which would not result in these additional on-going costs.
- the Council's residential care homes would require major alternations resulting in residents and staff having to move to alternative accommodation for a considerable period while the refurbishment is completed.

5.19 The Quattro review outcomes for a new build option on the sites of the Council's existing residential care homes concluded that:

- 3 of the 9 Council's care homes have the potential to be redeveloped to provide purpose-built care home facilities for older people with dementia - with one in each geographical area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, namely
 - Clydach Court in Trealaw (Rhondda)
 - Tegfan in Trecynon (Cynon)
 - Parc Newydd in Talbot Green (Taf)
- In all the above options, it would be necessary for the current residents living in these homes to move to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis for a period of at least up to 18 months, whilst the building work was undertaken.

- Redevelopment of the above care homes will require significant capital investment to achieve the standard of care expected. There will also be a need for additional revenue funding to provide the day to day management and running of these larger home options.
- Whilst Garth Olwg in Church Village does not have the potential to be redeveloped as a sustainable residential care home in the longer term, the site has potential to be redeveloped into supported accommodation for working age vulnerable adults requiring care. This option would need to be further developed in a feasibility study, including potential opportunities to work in partnership with housing associations and service care providers.
- In terms of Ferndale House, Pentre House, and Troedyrhiw the existing locations and sites do not lend themselves to new purpose built care homes in a way that leaves any of those homes financially sustainable and fit for purpose in the longer term.
- Both Ystrad Fechan and Cae Glas care homes are in flood zones and any new care home development for vulnerable people would not be permitted.

5.20 As needs change the Council will need to continue to work with partners to ensure the development of accommodation with care and services that will meet these changing needs and the demands of the integrated health and social care system.

6. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 6.1 The Let's Talk public consultation conducted in part by the Council's Consultation Team took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023 in order obtain as many views as possible from interested stakeholders to enable the Cabinet to make informed decisions on the preferred options for each home.
- 6.2 Practice Solutions Ltd, based in Abercynon, were commissioned to undertake an independent consultation on the preferred options with residents, their families and staff from each of the Council's residential care homes that are the subject of this report.
- 6.3 In addition, through co-production and support of Cwm Taf People First, an online information session and 15 face to face sessions were held across Rhondda Cynon Taf to gain views from people with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

- 6.4 Detailed information about the consultation and feedback received, including key themes on the preferred options for change are set out in the consultation reports at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 6.5 In total 329 survey responses, 7 emails and 1 telephone call were received as part of the Let's Talk public consultation. This total includes those responses received through Cwm Taf People First. 2 petitions were also received relating to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home. 3 public "drop in" sessions were also held in Church Village, Ferndale, and Mountain Ash. In summary:
- 43.6% of respondents to the questionnaire were members of the public, 22.6% were respondents to the Cwm Taf People First survey, 11.3% were relatives of the residents, 10.4% were staff, 7.6% were residents and 6.1% classified as others.
 - 42.3% responses relate to Garth Olwg, 20.2% to Ferndale House and 27.8% were not related to any home in particular.
- 6.6 Table 4 summarises respondents' views on the preferred options using the 329 survey responses received. However, not all respondents provided answers on all options presented.

Table 4: Respondents' Views on the 5 preferred options

Option	Number of respondents	Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Did not know
1	288	200 (69.4%)	63 (21.9%)	25 (8.7%)
2	277	147 (53.1%)	71 (25.6%)	59 (21.3%)
3	298	137 (46.0%)	88 (29.5%)	73 (24.5%)
4	273	127 (46.5%)	82 (30.0%)	47 (23.5%)
5	293	101 (34.5%)	148 (50.5%)	44 (15.0%)

Note: a common theme throughout the feedback analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg care home and disagreement with that proposal (preferred option 5). This continued through the other options in the comments provided.

- 6.7 The feedback received, which has been reviewed and analysed, has been summarised into key themes as set out at Appendix 2. The consultation responses have not identified any other viable options officers had not considered or otherwise discounted, such as doing nothing. Having considered the feedback, the response to each key theme is also set out at Appendix 2, alongside specific responses relating to the feedback and considerations for each preferred option below.

- 6.8 **Preferred Option 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes: Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.**
- 6.8.1 The majority of respondents (69.4%) agreed with preferred option 1, whereas 21.9% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.8.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 1, mainly related to the Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made.
- 6.8.3 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the proposals set out in preferred option 1, subject to comments and themes raised above.
- 6.8.4 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.
- 6.8.5 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to the retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes, namely: Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
- 6.9 **Preferred Option 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.
- 6.9.1 The majority of respondents (53.1%) agreed with preferred option 2, whereas 25.7% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.9.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 2, mainly related to the:
- Rationale for the closure of Ystrad Fechan Care Home
 - Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes

- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- 6.9.3 The Council is satisfied that there is sound rationale supporting the proposals relating to the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan set out in the [Residential Services report to Cabinet on 18th July 2022](#) and proposed permanent closure set out in Section 5 of this report.
- 6.9.4 Whilst Ystrad Fechan Care Home is currently being used to provide emergency short term accommodation for young people, this has had, nor should have, any bearing on the decision to temporary close or the current preferred option to close permanently. The decision to consult on the preferred option is about making sure the Council invests its resources in the right way so that people get the right level of care for their needs, which is what the preferred option is recommending.
- 6.9.5 In addition, engagement with two of the residents who were relocated from Ystrad Fechan Care Home to Pentre House Care Home when it was temporary decommissioned in August 2022, indicated they were very happy with the care and support that they have received in Pentre House. Both residents explained they were happy to stay at Pentre House and wanted reassurance that whatever the decision made by Cabinet they could remain at Pentre House.
- 6.9.6 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals in Treorchy as set out in preferred option 2, subject to comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.
- 6.9.7 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.
- 6.9.8 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to develop new accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy and permanently close Ystrad Fechan, which is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there.
- 6.10 **Preferred Option 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

- 6.10.1 The majority of respondents (46.0%) agreed with the preferred option 3, whereas 29.5% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.
- 6.10.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 3, mainly related to the:
- Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes
 - Impact on residents and their families who may be affected by the proposed changes
 - Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- 6.10.3 There was strong preference from all stakeholder groups that any new provision proposed should be:
- run by the local authority and
 - bigger, offering more capacity than currently provided at Ferndale House, in particular residential dementia provision in order to meet future demand
- 6.10.4 During the consultation, Officers explained that the preferred site for the proposed development of the new care accommodation in Ferndale is the former Ysgol Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn School site, although a final decision to progress this site would be subject to Cabinet approval following consideration of a detailed investment development proposal and then planning approval. The school is planned to move to its new site in Summer 2024 and it is estimated that construction of new care accommodation would take around 24 months to complete, subject to site surveys, tender and planning approval. Any decision to decommission Ferndale House, subject to agreement by Cabinet, would not commence, as proposed in the preferred option, until after the completion of the new care accommodation, estimated to be around Summer 2026 at the earliest.
- 6.10.5 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals for Ferndale set out in preferred option 3, subject to the comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.
- 6.10.6 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where

possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.10.7 Taking into account the consultation feedback and a further needs analysis, the recommendation, subject to Cabinet agreement, is to amend the original preferred option proposal and increase the number of extra care apartments from 20 to 25 and the residential dementia beds from 10 to 15 at the proposed new care accommodation in Ferndale. Ferndale House care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.11 **Preferred Option 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.** This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.11.1 The majority of respondents (46.5%) agreed with the preferred option 4, whereas 30% of respondents disagreed. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.

6.11.2 Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 4, mainly related to the:

- Impact on staff who may be affected by the proposed changes
- Impact on residents and their families who may be affected by the proposed changes
- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made

6.11.3 There was strong preference, from staff, residents, and their families that any new provision should be run by the local authority.

6.11.4 During the consultation, Officers explained that the preferred site for the proposed development of the new care accommodation is land on Darren Road in Mountain Ash, owned by Linc Cymru, the Council's Development Partner, although a final decision to progress this site is subject to Cabinet approval following consideration of a detailed investment development proposal and then planning approval. It is estimated that construction of new care accommodation would take around 36 months to complete, subject to site surveys, tender and planning approval. Any decision to decommission Troedyrhiw, subject to agreement by Cabinet, would not commence, as proposed in the

preferred option, until after the completion of the new care accommodation, estimated to be around Summer 2026 at the earliest.

6.11.5 Overall, through the consultation processes most people indicated broad support for the new care accommodation proposals in Mountain Ash set out in preferred option 4, subject to comments and themes raised above. The investment in the proposed new care accommodation in the local community was welcomed.

6.11.6 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.11.7 The recommendation is to proceed with the preferred option to develop new accommodation with 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. Troedyrhiw care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

6.12 **Preferred option 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.** This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

6.12.1 The majority of respondents (50.5%) disagreed with the preferred option 5, whereas 34.8% of respondents agreed. 52.2% of respondents with a learning disability agreed with the preferred option. In addition, feedback from the Practice Solutions consultation event with residents and their families at Garth Olwg on 19th January 2023, also supported disagreement to this proposal. Examples of feedback are included in Appendix 1.

6.12.2 The overwhelming message from older people and their families can be simply summarised as wanting Garth Olwg care home to remain open. Comments made through the consultation process regarding preferred option 5, can be themed as:

- Impact on residents who may be affected by the proposed changes, in particular concern about the stress of moving to another home.
- Loss of local service to meet local need, allowing people now and in the future to maintain social connections with local friends and family and the impact on families in having to travel further to visit their relatives.

- Council's Strategy in terms of future need and perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made
- Quality of care now and in future / concern regarding independent care home market.
- Rational for replacing current provision for older people with accommodation for people with learning disabilities / concern regarding closeness to school.

6.12.3 Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated.

6.12.4 Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of respondents to the consultation, and, in particular those directly impacted by the proposals, are not in favour of Garth Olwg care home decommissioning to create new supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities, the Council has to balance these views with other competing factors, highlighted in this report in order to make sure the Council invests its resources in the right way so that all residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf can get the right level of care to meet their needs now and the future.

6.12.5 The recommendation therefore is to proceed with the preferred option to redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood and decommission Garth Olwg care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

6.13 In addition, staff expressed their concerns about job losses and their considerable anxieties raised about job security due to the on-going review of the Council's Residential Care Homes and there was a strong belief these concerns needed to be considered by Cabinet alongside the preferred options for a future service model for the Council's Residential Care Homes.

7. PREFERRED OPTION - FUTURE SERVICE MODEL FOR THE COUNCIL'S RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES

7.1 As previously reported to Cabinet, Officers consider that doing nothing is not a viable option. Without continuing to explore the potential for re-designing the way in which adult care is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and increasing demand within the resources available. It is imperative, within the context of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, that the Council continues to reduce reliance on traditional services such as residential care

homes and moves to a model that is sustainable for the future, and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs, whilst focusing on preventative services, which promote choice, independence, and wellbeing.

7.2 Cabinet will recall however that it has previously agreed to:

- retain a level of provision for residential care homes which were focused on providing complex care, short term residential reablement and respite; and
- base the level of provision retained on a determination of the market share and need required in each of the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf geographical areas.

7.3 Having regard to the outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet decisions, and the further updated supporting information included in this report, the preferred options for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes that were subject to the recent public consultation are outlined in Table 5 below, which is in line with current policy direction and current and future need in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Table 5: Recommended preferred options (pre and post consultation) for the Council's residential care homes

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Clydach Court Trealaw	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site redevelopment potential • Geographical presence • Larger care home • Higher level of current residents • Dedicated dementia capacity
Pentre House Pentre	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical presence • Higher level of current residents

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Cae Glas Hawthorn	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographical presence Larger care home Higher level of current residents & dedicated dementia capacity
Tegfan Trecynon	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site redevelopment potential Geographical presence Larger care home Higher level of current residents & dedicated dementia capacity
Parc Newydd Talbot Green	Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<u>No change.</u> Retain and no change to existing service provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site redevelopment potential Step down to support hospital discharge Larger care home
Troedyrhiw Mountain Ash	<p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Troedyrhiw care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Troedyrhiw care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building not of a standard of a modern care home Quattro conclude due to age & condition, that refurbishment, or redevelopment to achieve accommodation that is fit for purpose is uneconomical. New accommodation with care to be developed near existing home in lower Cynon, subject to approval Over supply of residential care beds and lack of extra care beds in lower Cynon

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Ferndale House Ferndale	<p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Ferndale House care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 20 extra care apartments and 10 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Ferndale House care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<p><u>Amended preferred option.</u></p> <p>Work with Linc Cymru to explore options to develop land near the existing Ferndale House care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 25 extra care apartments and 15 residential dementia care beds.</p> <p>Decommission Ferndale House care home when the new proposed alternative accommodation with care for older people provision is developed near the existing care home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building not of a standard of a modern care home • Quattro conclude due to age & condition, refurbishment, or redevelopment of achieve fit for purpose accommodation that is uneconomical. • New accommodation with care to be developed near existing care home in Rhondda Fach, subject to approval • Residents & staff move once, once new accommodation developed. • Over supply of residential care beds & lack of extra care beds in Rhondda Fach
Ystrad Fechan Treorchy	<p>Permanently decommission care home.</p> <p>Continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing Ystrad Fechan care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available development space and need.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Permanently decommission care home.</p> <p>Continue to explore with Linc Cymru and the Health Board the development of land near the existing Ystrad Fechan care home to provide new accommodation with care provision, including 40 extra care apartments and 20 residential dementia care beds, along with other health and social care accommodation options depending on available space and need.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently closed temporarily and has no residents living there • Quattro conclude due to age and condition of the home, extensive refurbishment to achieve modern fit accommodation is uneconomical • Home in flood zone • Current over supply of residential care home beds and therefore capacity to meet need

Care Home	Recommended Preferred Option (pre-consultation)	Recommended Preferred Option (post-consultation)	Rationale
Garth Olwg Church Village	<p>Redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood.</p> <p>Decommission existing residential care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>	<p><u>No change.</u></p> <p>Redevelop Garth Olwg care home to provide alternative accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood.</p> <p>Decommission existing residential care home for older people when suitable alternative placements are found for existing residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building not of a standard of a modern care home • Quattro conclude due to age & condition, that refurbishment, or redevelopment to achieve fit for purpose accommodation is uneconomical. • Site size and location for development of supported accommodation • Over supply of residential care beds and lack of modern supported accommodation in Taf. • Increased need & demand for care accommodation for people with learning disabilities. • Residents would be offered to transfer to two nearby Council residential care homes or another home of their choosing, which meets their needs. • Staff will also be offered to transfer from the home to accompany residents and enhance staffing levels in other Council residential care homes.

7.4 Taking into account the outcome of the consultation, previous rationale to support the reported preferred options and the supporting information included in this report, it is recommended that the Cabinet agree the revised preferred model for the future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes, as outlined in Table 5 in paragraph 7.3 above.

- 7.5 This preferred model would allow the Council to deliver a model that is sustainable for the future and enables people to maximise their independence, remain in their own home for longer and effectively meet the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs and the need of vulnerable adults, which are consistent with the priorities set out in relevant strategic intent and in line with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 7.6 There will be appropriate consultation and engagement with older people, people with a learning disability, carers, residents, and all other key stakeholders, subject to Cabinet approval, on the redevelopment proposals outlined in Section 2 above.

Next Steps

- 7.7 Any decisions taken by Cabinet will be communicated to all residents, their families, and staff. If a decision is taken to decommission one or more of the Council's care homes:
- Adult Services will initiate the Council's Care Home Closure Protocol in relation to each home, and decommissioning will be approached in a planned and carefully managed way, in line with national best practice guidance. This would include the involvement of residents, families, friends and staff from the Care Home.
 - Adult Services will use its experience of supporting residents, their families and staff when individuals have needed to move to a new care setting, for example from a care home to a nursing home or where services have closed in the past.
 - Residents and families will be at the centre of discussions.
 - Staff in Adult Services will make themselves available to support families and care home residents to make informed decisions. This would take into account specific issues such as long standing friendships and transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process. Where appropriate other care professionals including health staff and GPs would be involved. Staff will also work closely with residents, their families and, if relevant, any new care providers; facilitating visits to potential new homes where appropriate and developing up to date relevant information to support a seamless transition
 - Advocates will be arranged to support discussions were needed.
 - Discussions and decisions will be overseen by an Officer Group that will ensure a person-centred approach is taken with residents,

their families and advocates, if appropriate. Adult Services will also support people to move closer to their families, including those who may wish to move outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf or would like to consider any of the new developments in extra care that are being supported by the Council.

- 7.8 Staff in the Council's care homes will also have dedicated Human Resources support allocated to minimise the impact of any decisions in line with the Council's Management of Change Policy. Adult Services and Human Resources will also work closely with our Trade Union colleagues when implementing any decisions reached.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 8.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations based on protected characteristics.
- 8.2 The Council's Equality Impact Assessment process ensures that due regard is paid to the above. It also ensures due regard is had to the Socio-Economic duty as it applies to public bodies in Wales.
- 8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), informed by the consultation feedback, has been updated and has informed the final recommendations set out in this report. A copy of the EIA is included at Appendix 3. Cabinet should have regard to the assessment when reaching its final decision.
- 8.4 Subject to Cabinet's decision the Council would take account of the challenges people affected by the proposals, as highlighted in this report and EIA, may face and ensure that the impact of any changes are mitigated as detailed in the EIA, if they are to be implemented. Due to the nature of the people group, there would be a disproportionate impact on older people and people with a range of disabilities. The key potential impacts of the preferred options on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and carers are set out in the EIA. Alongside these, a number of mitigating actions have been proposed to address this.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIA) has been prepared and provides further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh

Language (Wales) Measure 2011. The outcome of this assessment is provided in Appendix 4.

- 9.2 A possible negative impact on the Welsh Language was identified in Stage 2 of the WLIA, as the closure of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents). They would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present.
- 9.3 Whilst that potential negative impact is acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking residents, were they to move to another setting where Welsh-speaking staff are employed. As with all Council services however its vision is to increase the use of the Welsh Language across its workforce.
- 9.4 If agreed, all recommended proposals will comply with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposals set out in this report have the primary focus of delivering improved quality of care and support outcomes for Rhondda Cynon Taf residents.
- 10.2 Notwithstanding this, the pandemic has had a significant financial impact on the Council's residential care home provision and continues to result in overall increased cost pressures for Adult Services and these proposals would provide more cost-effective solutions to the current arrangements and reduce cost pressures. Any potential financial contribution these proposals would make to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan would be used to maintain these essential care and support services.
- 10.3 The capital funding requirements to deliver the proposals for investment in new facilities would be considered by Cabinet, if approved, in due course. This will include reviewing all opportunities to secure any available external (Welsh Government) sources of finance to support the timely delivery of the strategy.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 There is a requirement to publicly consult along with staff affected by proposals resulting in changes to current and future service provision.
- 11.2 Where consultation is undertaken it should be done when proposals are at a formative stage; give sufficient reasons for any proposal so that respondents can make an informed response and allow adequate time for consideration and response. Cabinet would then be required to give consideration to the outcome of the consultation process prior to any decision(s) being made on any proposals.
- 11.3 Any future provision of services would need to be considered in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Local Authorities have a general duty under the Act to promote wellbeing. This duty applies when considering decisions in respect of an individual but also when considering broader strategic issues that do not relate to an individual. In doing so, the overall purpose is to produce a sustainable and diverse range of care and support services to deliver better, innovative and cost-effective services and support and promote the wellbeing of every person, and carer, with the need of care and support. The recommendations made in Section 2 above and consideration of future options aims to deliver the highest standards of care and support and is consistent with the above duty.
- 11.4 In addition, the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 Code of Practice sets out that where an Authority has carried out an assessment which has revealed that the person has needs for care and support then the local authority must decide if those needs meet the eligibility criteria, and if they do, it must meet those needs. The recommendations in this report will allow the Council to ensure that going forward the Council can meet all eligible needs.
- 11.5 Any employment issues that arise would need to be considered in conjunction with Human Resources and in accordance with the Council's Management of Change Policy when making changes that affect staff.

12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 12.1 This report supports two of the Council's corporate priorities, namely:
- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
 - Living within our means - where services are delivered efficiently to achieve value for money for the taxpayer.

12.2 The proposals in this report, subject to approval, would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. They meet the needs of an ageing population, including those with more complex needs, are more sustainable and increases focus on wellbeing and independence, resulting in the wellbeing goals of a healthier Wales and more equal Wales being supported.

13. ELECTORAL WARDS AFFECTED

13.1 Subject to approval, the recommended preferred options set out in this report would directly impact the following wards:

Care Home	Electoral Ward
Clydach Court	Trealaw
Ferndale House	Ferndale and Maerdy
Pentre House	Pentre
Ystrad Fechan	Treorchy
Tegfan	Aberdare West and Llwydcoed
Troedyrhiw	Mountain Ash
Cae Glas	Hawthorn and Lower Rhydyfelin
Garth Olwg	Church Village
Parc Newydd	Llantrisant and Talbot Green

13.2 Although, the proposals will also most likely impact on residents, families and staff from across the County Borough.

14. CONCLUSIONS

14.1 Officers consider that doing nothing in respect of each proposal is not a viable option. Without exploring the potential for re-designing the way that adult care is provided, it will not be possible to meet people's changing expectations and increasing demand within the resources available. It is imperative, within the context of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014, that the Council continues to reduce reliance on traditional services such as residential care homes and moves to a model that is sustainable for the future, and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs, whilst focusing on preventative services, which promote choice, independence and wellbeing.

14.2 The extensive consultation exercise undertaken by the Council has demonstrated the strength of feeling from a range of people. The Council's residential care homes are clearly highly significant for the people who live in them. There is mixed support for Cabinet's preferred options for the future of the Council's residential care homes and to retain a level of residential care home provision, as set out in Section 7 of this report. The overwhelming message from older people and their families

can be simply summarised as wanting all Council residential care homes to remain open. However, it has been possible to respond to all concerns raised during the consultation and put forward by way of appropriate mitigation.

- 14.3 Taking into account the feedback received from the consultation and the supporting information included in this report, officers consider that the recommendations put forward in this report for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes, as outlined in Section 7 of this report, alongside the ongoing successful delivery of the Council's extra care strategy would lead to the development of a more sustainable model of residential services providing the best possible care and support.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

28TH FEBRUARY 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER PEOPLE

**REPORT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH CLLR G CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE**

Background Papers

Cabinet: September 2017; November 2019; December 2020; July 2022

Officer to contact: Neil Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services

Dewch i
siarad RhCT
Let's talk
RCT

THE MODERNISATION OF
RESIDENTIAL CARE
FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Consultation Report

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC
January 2023



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report presents the findings of the consultation on the modernisation of Residential Care for older people.
- The consultation was conducted in-house and ran from the 12th December 2022 to the 27th January 2023.
- Views were sought on a number of proposed options for the future of Residential Care in Rhondda Cynon Taf as follows:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes - Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- The following methods were used to consult with stakeholders;
 - An online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP.
 - A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.
 - Promotion on the [Councils online consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement.
 - An email was sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.
 - 3 public drop-in sessions were held.

- Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk
- A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allowed people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- Through coproduction and with the support of RCT People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a Learning Disability.

Summary of Feedback

- 255 responses were received to the survey, and a further 74 responses were received from the Easy Read surveys and accompanying sessions. A selection of comments are provided in the full report and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a resident of a Council Residential Care Home, a relative/friend, an advocate, a staff member, or a member of the public. The largest proportion of respondents were members of the public (43.6%).
- Respondents to the primary survey were asked what Council Care Home their views related to. Most of the responses related to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home (42.3%) or were not related to any home in particular (27.8%).
- Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current care Council homes (69.4%).
- The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 1 were asked why they disagreed. A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5). This continued through the other options in the comments received.
- Finally on option 1, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included positive impacts, such as keeping a local service and providing a variety of options. The negative impacts are reported to be upheaval for families, a sense that that relatives will have further to travel and concerns for the residents themselves of any change. There is also continued mention of the Garth Olwg proposal, option 5.
- There were a number of concerns for the future impact of the proposals, with people seeing no impact now, but looking to the future for themselves and family, when they may need the care themselves.
- Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 2 (53.1%).
- Overall, 46.0% agreed with option 3 for Ferndale House Care Home, and 29.5% disagreed. There was a relatively high number of respondents who were unsure on this option, with 24.5% of respondents stating that they "didn't know".

- With option 3, a common theme were views relating to the Rhondda area, particularly in relation to the Ferndale residential care home and the perceived need for more dementia care in the area.
- Overall, 46.5% of respondents agreed with option 4, with 30.0% disagreeing and 23.4% stating that they “didn’t know”.
- The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 4 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were similar to those already received for the other options, in terms of distance to travel from other care homes if relocated to Mountain Ash, and support for the new accommodation, including further suggestions that the old home should also be kept or that additional capacity is needed.
- Overall, the largest proportion of respondents did not agree with option 5 (50.5%). The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were largely similar to other options, with additional concern about the location of the new accommodation being near a school. Many comments focused on there not being alternative provision in the locality and the perceived distress that residents would suffer if uprooted from their community. A lot of comments also praised the current staff and atmosphere at Garth Olwg and expressed worry that this would not be continued or recreated elsewhere.
- Finally on option 5, respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included travel barriers, distress to current and potential future residents and the impact on existing staff.
- When asked for other suggestions or alternative options, the following themes were identified and mainly mirrored the comments that had already been made.
 - Objections to option 5 Garth Olwg.
 - Keep everything the same, why change?
 - Perceived need for more capacity in care homes and to build new ones where appropriate.
 - Upsetting for the residents of the care homes.
 - Need for more dementia care in Ferndale.
- 3 public drop-in sessions provided an opportunity for the public to raise any concerns they may have regarding the consultation and to ask questions directed towards the Director of Adult Social Services and the Head of Service for Accommodation regarding the future of Care Homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- Overall, those in attendance in Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre were concerned with the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability. An acknowledgement was given that although the staff provide outstanding levels of care within our homes, there is now a need for more tailored facilities to meet different requirements of care into the future. Transportation issues were also

discussed during the meeting, with those in attendance raising concerns regarding the public transport accessibility to other homes within RCT.

- Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. Moreover, it was discussed that although the staff provide excellent quality of care at the home, the home itself is outdated to meet future need and modernisation of the facility is required, especially given change in care needs. The investment in the local community is welcomed.
- A total of 2 petitions were received in relation to option 5 and were against the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care home.
- **Overall, 329 survey responses and 7 emails were received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the customer services phone line and 2 petitions.**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of the consultation on the modernisation of Residential Care for older people.
- 1.2 Section 2 outlines a brief background to the consultation process.
- 1.3 Section 3 details the methodology.
- 1.4 Section 4 provides the results of the survey.
- 1.5 Section 5 outlines the responses received from the public drop in sessions.
- 1.6 Section 6 presents the feedback from the written responses.
- 1.7 Section 7 outlines the petitions that were received.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Modernising and improving adult care provision is a key Council priority. This is important due to an ageing population, lower demand for ‘traditional’ care homes and changing expectations of people to remain at home in their local communities for as long as possible. The Council believes people should be able to access residential care accommodation which is modern and meets their needs. As a Council, we have a duty to reflect on our current model and ask ourselves whether we think it reflects the needs and aspirations of not only our current population, but the generations to come.
- 2.2 A Council commitment to modernise accommodation with care options, for older people, including residential care was approved in 2016, while a £50m investment plan to provide 300 Extra Care beds in Rhondda Cynon Taf was agreed in 2017. Extra Care delivers modern accommodation to meet the needs and changing expectations of the growing older population, allowing them to live as independently as possible in their own homes. They are modern, built-for-purpose buildings, catering for a range of needs.
- 2.3 Extra Care residents also receive targeted on-site support for their assessed needs, in an environment which provides an alternative to a care home. This care and support is available 24/7 for the residents. Extra Care facilities also offer dedicated day services for older people, as well as a community resource providing community opportunities. Two new modern, state of the art, Extra Care Housing schemes have been opened in partnership with Linc Cymru in Aberaman and Pontypridd in May 2020 and December 2021 respectively, delivering 100 new beds.
- 2.4 In July 2022, Ystrad Fechan Care Home was temporarily closed, and 10 new beds were provided at Parc Newydd Care Home, to support hospital discharge. This change, in response to falling occupancy rates and immediate pressures in the care sector, ensured residents continued to access quality support and care. As a direct result, occupancy levels at other Council care homes increased as the affected residents were supported to access suitable alternative provision.
- 2.5 [In December 2022, Cabinet considered](#) and determined to consult on major proposals to invest and modernise residential care services in Rhondda Cynon Taf– including three new facilities offering Extra Care and residential dementia care, a fourth new accommodation for adults with learning disabilities, and the retention of five Council care homes.

Current Position

- 2.6 The Council runs nine residential care homes, offering 267 beds, making it one of the largest Local Authority providers in Wales. It has had an increasing surplus of beds over many years – with 184 beds vacant as of November 2022, rising from just eight vacant beds in 2016. It is unlikely that demand for residential care will increase substantially in the near future. Overall, the Council currently has 60% of its residential care beds occupied, and a third of its care homes have at least one in two beds empty.

- 2.7 An independent review found that none of the nine Council care home buildings can be sufficiently refurbished to meet modern standards. It also found that only three of the nine Council's care home locations would be suitable for a new-build provision. In each of those three homes, it would be necessary for the current residents living in these homes to temporarily move to alternative accommodation on a temporary basis for a period at least up to 18 months, whilst the building work was undertaken.

Preferred Options

- 2.8 Following the review of the Council's Residential Care Homes for older people, five preferred options are being consulted upon. These preferred options focus on preventative services, choice, independence, well-being and future needs. The proposals would increase options for people who need accommodation and care and offer a viable alternative for those able to remain independent with support in their local communities.
- 2.9 The options on which Cabinet have determined to consult upon are set out below:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes. This includes- Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash. This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedryhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village. This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 12th December 2022 and ended on the 27th January 2023. This section presents the methodology which was utilised to promote and collect the data.
- 3.2 The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.
- 3.3 A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.
- 3.4 To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the [Councils online consultation webpage](#) to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.
- 3.5 3 public drop-in sessions were held as follows:

Location	Date	Time
Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre	16 th January 2023	5-7PM
Mountain Ash Library	24 th January 2023	5-7PM
Ferndale Hub	25 th January 2023	5-7PM

- 3.6 Respondents were encouraged to write in using a dedicated email address residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk, in order to allow them to share their views.
- 3.7 A telephone consultation option was in place, through the Council's contact centre. This option allows people to discuss their views or request consultation materials. Individual call backs were available on request and a consultation Freepost address was available for postal responses.
- 3.8 Overall, 255 survey responses and 7 emails were received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the customer services phone line and 2 petitions.
- 3.9. In addition, through coproduction and with the support of Cwm Taf People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

4 QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

- 4.1 The following section outlines the results from the online and paper questionnaires, which received 255 survey responses and 74 easy read surveys through Cwm Taf People First.
- 4.2 A selection of comments are provided and the full list of the comments will be provided to Cabinet and senior officers to assist with decision making.
- 4.3 Respondents were asked whether they were responding as a resident of a Council residential care home, a relative/friend, an advocate, a staff member, or a member of the public. Table 1 shows that the largest proportion of respondents were members of the public (43.6%).

Note: tables including type of respondent do not add up to 100% as this was a multiple response question. The base is the total number of respondents, some of whom will have provided more than one response.

Base	329 100.0%
Are you a:	
Resident of a Residential Care Home	25 7.6%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council Residential Care Home	37 11.3%
Advocate for a resident	2 0.6%
Member of the public	143 43.6%
Staff member	34 10.4%
Other	20 6.1%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	74 22.6%

Table 1: Respondent Type

- 4.4 Respondents were asked what Council Care Home their views related to, and the results are shown in Table 2. Most of the responses related to Garth Olwg Residential Care Home (42.3%) or were not related to any home in particular (27.8%).
- 4.5 This question was not asked of the 74 respondents to the Easy Read survey.

Base	248 100.0%
Ystrad Fechan (currently staying at Pentre House)	4 1.6%
Pentre House	3 1.2%
Clydach Court	3 1.2%
Ferndale House	50 20.2%
Tegfan	4 1.6%
Troedyrhiw	12 4.8%
Cae Glas	5 2.0%
Garth Olwg	105 42.3%
Parc Newydd	6 2.4%
No home in particular	69 27.8%

Table 2: Care Homes

- 4.6 Respondents were asked whether they agreed with a number of options for service change.

4.7 **OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes.**

This includes:

- Clydach Court in Trealaw,
- Pentre House in Pentre,
- Tegfan in Trecynon,
- Cae Glas in Hawthorn
- Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

	Total	Do you agree with option 1?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	288	200 69.4%	63 21.8%	25 8.7%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	12	9 75.0%	2 16.7%	1 8.3%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	32	19 59.4%	11 34.4%	2 6.3%
Advocate for a resident	2	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	140	88 62.9%	35 25.0%	17 12.1%
Staff member	16	11 68.8%	5 31.3%	0 0.0%
Other	20	12 60.0%	7 35.0%	1 5.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	66	60 90.91%	2 3.03%	4 6.06%

Table 3: Agreement with Option 1

- 4.8 Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current Council Care Homes (69.4%), with 62.9% of the public agreeing with option 1.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 1

- 4.9 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 1 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows;

Perceived need for more care homes

“New, bigger and better accommodation is needed in the area”

“It would not provide extra facilities to meet growing demand”.

“The demographic of the population is getting older and more, not less places will be needed in the future.”

- 4.10 A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5).

Garth Olwg Views

“Garth Olwg should also be retained as a Council care home.”

“Garth Olwg is a local care home for local people where they can go and be near family and friends. They would probably know people there from the area which would help them in the long term.”

“Why shut Garth Olwg it has a brilliant reputation and all we have in our local community.”

- 4.11 Another common theme are views relating to the Rhondda area, particularly in relation to Ferndale residential care home. Later in the report, under option 3 (section 4.23), the views include the perceived need for further dementia care in the area.

Rhondda / Ferndale Views

“More supported care is required in the Rhondda to enable people to remain in the locality. we need to encourage older people to remain independent for as long as possible with some support rather than shut away in a home.”

“Your proposal to restructure care provision in the Rhondda Fach locality is inadequate and poorly informed. There is no competitor to absorb the residential care element.”

- 4.12 Finally on option 1, respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“Would maintain ongoing care for parent.”

“Keeping a local service.”

“Provides a variety of options.”

Negative Impact

- 4.13 The negative impacts are reported to be upheaval for families, a sense that this option means that relatives will have further to travel and concerns for the residents themselves of any change. There is also continued reference to the Garth Olwg proposal and the comments reflect this.

“Too far to visit residents.”

“Making residents and family having to be placed outside of the area they were born. Forced to move out of the place where they know so many people and have families faces.”

“It would have a dramatic implication on my mother’s health as visitors would be less. She is already stressed over the thought of being moved.”

Future Impact

- 4.14 There were a number of concerns for the future impact of the proposals, with people seeing no impact now, but were looking to the future for themselves and family when they may need the care themselves.

“At this time no impact but looking to the future could effect myself and my wife.”

“No impact at present but I am getting older and wish to stay as independent as possible for as long as is practical so some supported accommodation may help in future.”

- 4.15 Respondents to the Easy Read survey raised the following comments:

“One person’s mother is in a residential home, and she is going to be moved, it is very confusing and unfair. The home does need to be modernised but is difficult for people to adjust especially with dementia. The care she gets at the home is very good and people have access to health care services much quicker.”

“Older people should have freedom of choice. No one should be forced into homes older people with a learning disability may want to stay at home with their parents.”

4.16 **OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

	Total	Do you agree with option 2?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	277	147 53.1%	71 25.6%	59 21.3%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	6	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	3 50.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council Residential Care Home	31	13 41.9%	9 29.0%	9 29.0%
Advocate for a resident	2	1 50.0%	1 50.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	135	72 53.3%	36 26.7%	27 20.0%
Staff member	14	7 50.0%	5 35.7%	2 14.3%
Other	20	10 50.0%	8 40.0%	2 10.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	41 59.4%	12 17.4%	16 23.2%

Table 4: Agreement with Option 2

4.17 Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 2 (53.1%), with 53.3% of members of the public agreeing. A relatively high 21.3% of all respondents said they didn't know.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 2

4.18 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 2 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows:

Positive

"It would seem to provide the most extra facilities."

"It would be good to have extra beds while still being close enough to visit."

"How many dementia beds are there now? If this increases the number of beds then it's good."

- 4.19 A number of respondents provided views on this option in terms of distance and travel time from existing homes, mainly Garth Olwg.

Transport / Distance

“People from other valleys might have difficulty getting there.”

“Too far away for people living elsewhere in RCT. Families won’t be able to visit, people lose their friends / community links. Staff having to travel miles without public transport links.”

“Not quite sure how relatives and friends would get there to visit as there are no direct or quick transport links from Church Village and their relatives would become isolated and confused very quickly.”

Geography /Location

“Why should this facility only be in the Rhondda and not in the south of the area? Yet again the Taff area is neglected by the Council.”

“I am unsure as it seems the focus here is yet again on the valleys, not here in Talbot Green, Pontyclun, Miskin area.”

“We need a care home in the Pontypridd area.”

No change to Treorchy

“It should be retained for the future of the valley.”

“There should be no closures but more care homes.”

“It's lovely to have new care homes, but you don't have to close the existing good ones!”

- 4.20 Finally on option 2, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“Still able to visit regularly.”

“Treorchy should be utilised for the residents living in the area of Rhondda as long as there is enough spaces for the residents living in the area then I agree with this option.”

“My dad is currently in hospital and needs a dementia care home, Treorchy is close for family to visit daily.”

Impact on Travel

“Having to travel to the Rhondda to visit. No direct bus route and cost of travel to visit.”

“Why would I want to go to a home in Treorchy when I live in Tonteg? It would make my condition worse!”

“If anyone needed dementia care it would be difficult to get to Treorchy to visit them.”

- 4.21 59.4% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 2, as the new facilities will be able to meet the evolving care needs of older people. The below comments were raised:

“Think it will be good for people with dementia as they will get their support needs met.”

“It is good to have the Extra Care support as long as they get it!”

“It will help the older people get the right care and support.”

“It needs to be local for relatives to be able to visit this is important.”

“It will be safer for them.”

“More flats are needed for older people especially those with dementia.”

- 4.22 17.4% of respondents to the Easy Read survey disagreed with option 2, and raised this comment:

“I am not happy to move into a residential home – I like living in supported living.”

4.23 **OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

	Total	Do you agree with option 3?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	298	137 46.0%	88 29.5%	73 24.5%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	15	4 26.7%	5 33.3%	6 40.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	32	19 59.4%	7 21.9%	6 18.8%
Advocate for a resident	1	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	134	58 43.3%	41 30.6%	35 26.1%
Staff member	28	8 28.6%	16 57.1%	4 14.3%
Other	19	10 52.6%	5 26.3%	4 21.1%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	38 55.1%	13 18.8%	18 26.1%

Table 5: Agreement with Option 3

- 4.24 Overall, 46.0% of respondents agreed with option 3 for Ferndale House Care home, with 29.5% of respondents disagreeing. There were a relatively high number of respondents who were unsure on this option, with 24.5% of respondents stating that they “didn’t know”.

If no, why do you disagree? - Option 3

- 4.25 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 2 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received can be summarised as follows:
- 4.26 A number of responses that could be perceived as positive were placed in the comments box as to why they disagree with the option 3.

Positive

“This is a better option for the residents.”

“Home is run down in places but would like the new building to stay in Ferndale.”

“This particular area of the Valley really needs this, if it moved elsewhere such as Treorchy, family will find it extremely difficult to visit due to very poor transport links.”

“As a staff member of Ferndale House for the last 20 years and also 7 years as a home care worker, I feel this proposal is very much needed in this valley as an EMI and elderly, as there is a great demand for these places. Extra care, I feel, would be invaluable against EMI residential.”

- 4.27 Once again, a number of respondents provided views on this option in terms of distance and travel time from existing homes, mainly Garth Olwg.

Transport / Distance

“Can’t see how relatives and friends will now be able to visit as no direct transport links from church village to Ferndale so visiting would stop.”

“Middle of nowhere.”

“Same reason- too far away. No transport links.”

No Change

- 4.28 Some of those in disagreement said they were in favour of the new Extra Care facilities, but not at the expense of the existing residential care home.

“If this option would be possible while retaining the current provision within RCT I would support it but clearly it involves the closure of facilities currently providing services to the detriment of their local residents.”

“There are not enough care facilities across RCT as it stands. I’m not against this new accommodation but think it should be built as well as keeping the existing Ferndale House Care Home open.”

Dementia Care

- 4.29 Some of the respondents provided views on dementia care in the area, in particular the need and demand for the service.

“Need more support in the area for dementia needs.”

“I agree with the extra care scheme, however, how much thought has gone into the fact, of 10 beds will cover Ferndale and surrounding areas for Dementia care.”

“The proposed dementia care provision is inadequate for the Rhondda Fach locality when there is no private competitor. Doubling the proposed dementia care provision would be a more suitable idea when demand for the provision currently out demands what we can supply.”

“I think there is more of a demand for residential dementia residents.”

- 4.30 Finally on option 3, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families. In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“At least some provision would be in the Rhondda Fach near family.”

“The development of new accommodation will offer many opportunities for the future both in quality of the accommodation on offer and independence.”

Impact on Travel (Garth Olwg)

“Too far to travel and lack of continuity in care which would severely affect residents.”

“Too far away for family to visit loved ones.”

Impact on Residents

“I am a member of the public who visits care homes through singing and have witnessed the bond between staff and residents! To break this would be dreadful!”

“Most of my family live local and my family would prefer me to stay here I live currently until the new build is finished.”

“If the care home closed and I need care for mobility issues etc. send would have to leave the area.”

Impact on Staff

“I could possibly lose my job. A job that I love doing. I am the main breadwinner in the home as my partner is now disabled. Ferndale new build is going to be the smallest building. Yet again something taken from the people of the Rhondda.”

“As a domestic member of staff, it is not known whether jobs will be available. I think all staff from Ferndale House should be kept together. I waited for a contract so I could have stability and consistency for me and my young daughter.”

“Impact my employment currently on a 0 hour contract. Is there work for me or am I going to be offered a position.”

- 4.31 55.1% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 3, and 18.8% of respondents disagreed. The following comments were made:

“Keep it the same.”

“Feel sad for older people who have to leave.”

4.32 **OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.**

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

	Total	Do you agree with option 4?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	273	127 46.5%	82 30.0%	64 23.4%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	6	3 50.0%	0 0.0%	3 50.0%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	31	14 45.2%	13 41.9%	4 12.9%
Advocate for a resident	1	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	133	58 43.6%	42 31.6%	33 24.8%
Staff member	14	7 50.0%	5 35.7%	2 14.3%
Other	19	8 42.1%	5 26.3%	6 31.6%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	37 53.6%	16 23.2%	16 23.2%

Table 6: Agreement with Option 4

- 4.33 Overall, 46.5% of respondents agreed with option 4, with 30.0% disagreeing and 23.4% stated that they “didn’t know”.

If no why do you disagree? - Option 4

- 4.34 The 30.0% of respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 4 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were similar to those already received for the other options, in terms of distance to travel from other care homes, if relocated to Mountain Ash and support for the new accommodation, but some suggestions that the old home should also be kept or that additional capacity is needed. A selection of comments are provided below:

“Too far away and difficult to visit on public transport.”

“Again miles away from where we live.”

“The existing care facility should remain open alongside the new facility, to provide even more accommodation.”

“Again need to have additional capacity, ‘closing the ‘old’ home would be counterproductive.”

4.35 There were a number of positive comments:

“It provides extra facilities to meet growing demand & would be more convenient personally.”

“Better option for existing residents.”

4.36 Finally on option 4, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included:

Positive Impact

“This would be a wonderful opportunity for residents living in the lower Cynon Valley.”

“Easy to access via A470.”

“Good to look ahead for future residents as long as it does not affect the day-to-day normality for the dementia patients that are settled and happy.”

“Although difficult to get to for my family, a larger dementia facility might benefit other residents of the Cynon Valley.”

Family / Resident Impact

“Far less visits and little or no interaction with home.”

“It would be detrimental to my wellbeing in the future if I needed a care home to be moved from my area to go and live somewhere I didn't know or be with people I didn't know or have anything in common with!!”

“Less visitors which would be detrimental to my mother's health.”

4.37 53.6% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 4, commenting:

“When people can no longer cope living on their own, it is good to have somewhere safer for them to go.”

4.38 **OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.**

This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs

	Total	Do you agree with option 5?		
		Yes (agree)	No (disagree)	Don't know
Total	293	101 34.5%	148 50.5%	44 15.0%
Respondent Type:				
Resident of a Residential Care Home	12	0 0.0%	11 91.7%	1 8.3%
Relative/partner/friend of a resident in a Council residential care home	31	9 29.0%	14 45.2%	8 25.8%
Advocate for a resident	2	0 0.0%	2 100.0%	0 0.0%
Member of the public	140	45 32.1%	76 54.3%	19 13.6%
Staff member	19	6 31.6%	11 57.9%	2 10.5%
Other	20	5 25.0%	12 60.0%	3 15.0%
Respondent to Easy Read survey	69	36 52.2%	22 31.9%	11 15.9%

Table 7: Agreement with Option 5

4.39 Overall, the highest proportion of respondents did not agree with option 5 (50.5%).

If no why do you disagree? - Option 5

4.40 The respondents who disagreed with the proposed option 5 were asked why they disagreed. The comments received were largely similar to those already made in the report, with additional concern about the location of the new accommodation being near a school. Many comments focused on there not being alternative provision in the locality and the perceived distress that residents would suffer if uprooted from their community. A lot of comments also praised the current staff and atmosphere at Garth Olwg and expressed worry that this would not be continued.

Praise for existing provision

“Management are amazing here and will be missed.”

“Garth Olwg Means More to families than just a care home.”

“To close this care home would be a travesty, these residents have already had to move out of their homes because they are no longer able to care for themselves they are settled and happy with their fellow residents and staff who are like family to them. How awful would this be to uproot them and leave their friends and familiar surroundings behind.”

Local community impact

“This care home is needed in the community to support the NHS and vital care needed.”

“I disagree because there are no other care homes in the area and it’s the residents home. I believe it’s not appropriate for the community as well as all the hard working staff at Garth Olwg.”

“This care home is imbedded into our community. We need to maintain and grow the support in the area.”

Location

“Church Village isn’t a location where individuals with learning disabilities would obtain the most stimulation, what’s here for them?? Where are the clubs etc?? Individuals where you have a physical or learning disability need to feel valued and be stimulated within their community what is going to be provided for them in those terms??”

“Ridiculous idea when Comprehensive School is a stone throw away. Both are vulnerable and are at risk of each other. The care home is a home for settled residents and children in the community go there and learn about the elderly members there. The home has a great reputation and good links to the local businesses and societies.”

“Because we need a care home to serve the local area. I also don’t agree with this being right by schools.”

- 4.41 Finally on option 5, the respondents were asked how the recommended proposal would impact them or their families.

In addition to those respondents who said there would be no impact, the themes identified included travel barriers, distress to current and potential future residents and the impact on existing staff.

Travel

“Would have to travel distance to visit and that is not easy with public transport.”

“Able to visit residents easily. No public transport to proposed valley locations.”

“This would impact upon my family were my parents need to go into care in the future as those of us who care for them would have great difficulty in visiting anywhere further afield than Talbot Green as we are dependent upon public transport.”

Resident and Family Impact

“It would be a travesty to close this home as the people in the surrounding area love having their relatives there as it is a really good home. Local, convenient for family to visit and if I needed a home, I would choose this one and my son who has Asperger’s would be able to visit me as he knows the area and would feel safe getting there to see me!!”

“It would make a very vulnerable old lady confused, upset, disorientated, anxious. She would regress in her health and the decision would shorten her life expectancy.”

“Massively. This is the third care home my Nan has been a resident at in just two years. The constant closures and disruptions are taking their toll on her mental well-being.”

“The loss of the only local care home would mean that me or my family would be able to stay as part of our local community when we need care in the future.”

“I would be placed somewhere else and it would put upset to my life the not knowing where I would work, putting upset in my family also.”

Staff Impact

“Why should I as a carer who’s been working at garth olwg for 18 yrs loving every minute be moved on to another home or be made jobless just to suit these top nobs who havent got a heart or clue about feelings just disgusting.”

“I have worked here since I came straight from school (YTS). I only live 5 minutes away and would find travelling very difficult and I’ve known no difference.”

Positive Impact

- 4.42 The only positive comments were from respondents who have family that would benefit from the increased support for adults with learning disabilities:

“This would be welcomed, we have a adult daughter with learning difficulties and recognise the need for additional accommodation to support these adults.”

“My son has learning disabilities and will need support in the future when we are no longer around to care for him.”

“It would mean losing a job in a place that I love working as it has been my job for the last few years on my doorstep. I am nearing 60 years old and it saddens me that I have to move elsewhere.”

- 4.43 52.2% of respondents to the Easy Read survey agreed with option 5, and made the following comments:

“It is good to build independence with support and make new friends.”

“Fantastic for people with LD to have more places to live.”

"It is good to have a new Extra Care facility for people with learning disability in Taff Ely."

"People with learning Disabilities will get the support with medication and with health needs."

"They can have a lifeline and there will be someone there in case of an emergency."

"It is a good thing to have it, but not for older people to move out."

"More supported living is needed."

4.44 31.9% of respondents disagreed with option 5, with concerns regarding staff and older people. The following comments were raised:

"I don't think it is a good idea for older people to have to move out."

"It can be difficult for older people to get to know new places especially if they are confused."

"It is hard to settle in when there is change."

"I don't like the sound of residential care for anyone. Lots of people living together is not a good idea."

"What about the staff that work there- these homes create employment."

"It is important to have same staff."

4.45 Other Suggestions or Alternative Options

The following are a selection of comments received and mainly mirrored the comments that had already been made.

Garth Olwg Responses

- 4.46 The responses that related to Garth Olwg were against the proposal for that care home, with suggestions that the home should be kept and improved.

“There are many areas that could be considered to build a new accommodation without the need to decommission garth olwg. Tonteg hospital has been derelict for Years , spend money on doing this up !!!”

“Keep garth olwg open it’s a wonderful care home with fantastic staff.”

“Keep garth olwg open.move residents to 1 side of building then do work that needs to be done new windows new roof as promised, make bedrooms bigger with ensuite it can be done.”

- 4.47 A number of the responses on Garth Olwg were against the proposal for new accommodation to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.

“Why would this home be suitable for adults with learning disabilities? That could be developed elsewhere as I assume the adults will not be local to the area.”

“People with learning disabilities wouldn't know where they are anyway. Very blunt yes but it’s true. The older generation will.”

“Keep Garth Olwg open and use existing provision across RCT for the support for adults with Learning disabilities.”

- 4.48 There were calls from some respondents to keep everything the same:

“Do nothing and leave it as it is.”

“Why change for the sake of change especially with the state of the country as it is we have no money but you are looking to spend money we don't have.”

- 4.49 A number of respondents felt that there was a need for more capacity in care homes and to build new ones where appropriate.

“With an aging population, RCT needs to far more proactive in planning for the future. Many more care and nursing homes need to be built and they need to serve all areas, not just the depths of the valleys.”

“Provide more local care homes and staff them accordingly.”

“More residential and nursing home placements not less! Put money where its needed and not throwing it down the drain.”

- 4.50 Some of the responses noted that the service change would be upsetting for the residents of the care homes:

“This has been my home for 18 months. If there is no residential element, where will I be placed. When moving to Ferndale House was meant to be my forever home, now I am threatened with a further move. This deeply upsets me. All staff are my family.”

“I like it at Ferndale House and the thought of moving from Ferndale where I spent all my life is very distressing to me. There is no other home or facilities in this valley for us to go. I feel like the decision where I live will be taken out of my hands if a new plot will not be found. This should not be your decision to make but mine.”

“I am so pleased that I am in residential care. I love all the staff as they look after me well and they will do anything for me. It will upset me if any of this will change and to move on.”

Ferndale

- 4.51 There were a number of comments and concerns about the services available in the Rhondda Fach and Ferndale:

“The proposals are unfair for the Rhondda Fach as you plan to build bigger care homes in the other areas which makes it more favourable for them.”

- 4.52 In particular with respect to the need for dementia care in the area.

“The proposed dementia care provision is inadequate for the Rhondda Fach area. There is no provision for residential or dementia care between Rhondda Fach and Cynon valley. Current demand for dementia care in the Rhondda Fach is high.”

“Is there a need for extra care when there is a higher need for dementia care and I feel that everyone who works at Ferndale House should also work in the new build including cleaners, cooks, care staff.”

“In my opinion, the biggest new build with the most best should be built in the Ferndale area as it is the only care home in the Rhondda Fach area and maybe there should be more than 10 dementia beds as this is the illness on the increase and a lot of younger people are having it and families have to struggle to look after them. It is vital that this is built in the Ferndale area as being the only one in the Fach, as residents' families could struggle to travel to other areas to see their loved ones as local transport is very poor.”

4.53 Preferred Accommodation

The 74 respondents to the Easy Read survey were asked to provide comments on the type of accommodation which would suit their needs. The following comments were received:

“I want a place where I got someone else, where I can get to know people. I would like to share to start with then move out to live on my own.”

“Elderly residential for when I get older.”

“I would like a new build and I would like to be able to have a partner stay overnight at my flat and for family Members to visit.”

“I would like to live in extra care as I can be more independent but there is staff there.”

“Extra Care is good as you can meet new people but it is important that mam and dad can visit.”

“I like a kitchen where I can do my own cooking.”

“I need my pets, to do volunteering and the things I like to do.”

“There should be CCTV 24/7 and someone should monitor it.”

“More staff need to be available.”

“Having friends in the communal room when they visit.”

About you

4.54 Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. Respondents were asked how the proposals affecting them would relate to any of the below.

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Ethnicity
4. Disability
5. Sexuality
6. Religion / belief
7. Gender identity
8. Relationship status
9. Pregnancy
10. Preferred language

4.55 The following are a selection of the comments received.

“Difficulty of visiting due to disability.”

“The ageing process brings some mobility and activity problems. A little support and suitable housing could help keep residents independent.”

“As I’m getting older I don’t know what the future holds as to care I may need! I therefore worry that if or when I need residential care, the home i choose could be closed and I moved in somewhere else! Such uncertainty in the future is worrying!”

“If you closed our local home I would not be able to visit family members who need care due to distance, finances and my disability.”

“I am 93 years of age and I would find it very traumatic if I was moved around before the new build.”

“The proposals do not have an effect on me personally but I believe as the general population is becoming older ie living longer we will need more care homes and also sheltered accommodation. Or even social housing for over 60s.”

4.56 Under the Welsh Language Standards, with regards to the proposals, and the impact they may have, respondents were asked how they could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive, Negative or Neutral) and if, in any way, it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language. Respondents were further asked how neutral effects could become positive, how positive effects could be increased, or how negative effects be decreased.

4.57 Most of the comments received said that there would be no impact and questioned how this related to residential care. The following are a selection of the comments received.

“My school education for Welsh was very limited. For those who wish to learn to speak Welsh it should be available free of charge.”

“Not sure I can answer as you didnt explain how care is provided and how you make sure language choice is addressed. Where would be best to be cared for in a welsh speaking care home?”

“(a) The council should ensure that the care provision is provided using both Welsh and English, according to the resident's preferences (b) Staff should receive appropriate training in both languages, signage should be bilingual and there should be no discrimination according to language in treatment or care, and staffing should be arranged so that there should always be a Welsh speaker working.”

“More opportunities should be provided for staff to learn welsh and provide incentives to do so.”

The detailed comments received for the above 2 questions have been made available to officers for the development of the associated Impact Assessments.

5. PUBLIC DROP-IN MEETINGS

- 5.1 To ensure public engagement with the consultation, 3 public drop-in sessions were advertised via the [Council's website](#) and [social media](#). In total 29 members of the public took part.

The drop-in sessions were arranged at the following locations:

Location	Date	Time	Number of people in attendance
Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre	16 th January 2023	5-7PM	6
Mountain Ash Library	24 th January 2023	5-7PM	0
Ferndale Hub	25 th January 2023	5-7PM	23

Table 8 – Public Drop-in Locations

- 5.2 The drop-in sessions were arranged as an opportunity for the public to raise any concerns they may have regarding the consultation and to ask questions directed towards the Director of Adult Social Services and the Head of Service for Accommodation regarding the future of Care Homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Along with this, consultation booklets and easy read documents were supplied, both in English and in Welsh, to ensure the public were fully informed and had the opportunity to participate and have their say by completing the survey.
- 5.3 The following comments and themes were identified from each drop-in session:

Garth Olwg Learning Centre

Theme	Comment Raised
Sadness at the closure of the home.	"With Garth Olwg closing we feel like we are losing something in the Community. "
Concern for residents in the home.	"It will be difficult to move residents in a care home who have been there for 10 years as they are already used to their surroundings. This might affect their health overall."
Continuity of Care in the new home.	Noted that continuity of care has been a pertinent theme so far during the consultations, residents would like staff to accompany them when moving homes – families also think this is important
Staffing	Concerns were raised regarding what will happen to the staff following Garth Olwg's proposed closure. Further comments were raised regarding care workers being undervalued nationally.
Consultation held again surrounding the future of Garth Olwg	Those in attendance raised questions surrounding why once again there is a proposal to change Garth Olwg, following the previous consultation outcome.

- 5.4 Overall, those in attendance were concerned with the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability. An acknowledgement was given that although the staff provide outstanding levels of care within our homes, there is now a need for more tailored facilities to meet different requirements of care into the future. Transportation issues were also discussed during the meeting, with those in attendance raising concerns regarding the public transport accessibility to other homes within RCT.
- 5.5 They felt reassured that the Council will look after the residents of Garth Olwg care home and provide support for the families.

Mountain Ash Library

- 5.6 There were no members of the public in attendance.

Ferndale Hub

Theme	Comments Raised
Concern around the number of dementia beds to meet future need	Although there was a general consensus that Extra Care was a positive proposal for the area, concerns were raised by those in attendance that the proposal outlined for Ferndale has only 10 residential dementia beds. Members of the public discussed the suitability of this in the future, given current dementia projections.
Concern for residents	Concern for current residents of Ferndale House. Members of the public felt reassured that the care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
Staffing	Staffing concerns were raised regarding their future with the proposals for Extra Care and the role of the housing association. Broader issues were also raised surrounding staff pay and casual contracts. Members of the public noted that carers nationally are undervalued.
The need for residential care in the future	The need for residential care provision in the long term was raised for the Ferndale/Rhondda Fach area.
Current NHS pressures	Comments were raised regarding the suitability of the current home to support those currently in hospital.
Modernisation	General consensus was that there is a need to modernise provision within Ferndale/Rhondda Fach area and members were happy with the prospect of investment into their local community.

- 5.7 Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would

be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. Moreover, it was discussed that although the staff provide excellent quality of care at the home, the home itself is outdated to meet future need and modernisation of the facility is required, especially given change in care needs. The investment in the local community is welcomed.

6 WRITTEN RESPONSES

- 6.1 The following section outlines a summary of the written comments received from residents within the local community.
- 6.2 A total of 7 emails or letters were received. The table below highlights and summarises the responses received:

Date Received	Email/Letter/ Contact Centre	Information received
19/12/2022	Email 1	<p>I am a member of Sally's Angels, a group of singers based in Pontyclun!</p> <p>We have visited Gartholwg on many occasions and have been overwhelmed by the kindness and fantastic care given to the resident!</p> <p>It was with much sortie to be told on our recent visit about the pending closure of this incredible home! Both Staff and Residents were in tears as they told us of this awful news! This has been the home for many years of the residents and therefore cannot comprehend the rational of closing a place where they feel is their home!</p> <p>Please try and get the powers that be to reconsider this decision!</p> <p>We were all deeply upset to hear from the residents and the affect it will have on their mental health!</p>
13/12/2022	Email 2	<p>I object to this proposed closure, its vital for locals to have access to the facility , which is needed, travelling to other areas isn't easy especially in poor weather. Constant threat of closure results in poor morale for the staff at the home . With regards to your plan for housing children with learning disabilities in Church Village, so close to Garth Olwg school, not sensible. Remember, the social services history of " caring" in the children's home, which used to exist in Church Village, which lead to the death of xxxxx , that home was demolished,</p>
28/12/2022	Email 3	<p>Please note that I am not happy that RCT intend to disinvest this care home (Garth Olwg). It has provided homes for very needy people for many years and is a valuable asset.</p> <p>Please reconsider the closure.</p>
05/01/2023	Email 4	<p>Dear Sir/Madam</p> <p>I am just reading your booklet on the proposed changes for residential care in RCT</p> <p>Please could you clarify whether options 2-5 are in addition to the existing care homes remaining open or whether they will replace those facilities (which will be decommissioned).</p> <p>Also, please could you explain why the number of Extra Care apartments and residential beds proposed differ from site to site.....is this down to the cost of land purchase or something else?</p>

16/01/2023	Email 5	<p><u>Residential Care Home Consultation – Submission from Mick Antoniw MS and Alex Davies-Jones MP</u></p> <p>We have been contacted by constituents and a small number of Councillors in respect of RCT County Borough Council’s (RCTCBC) proposed modernisation of residential care services and specifically, the proposal for the Garth Olwg residential home in Church Village.</p> <p>We recognise that RCTCBC has a duty to provide sufficient quality residential care options to meet the needs of older people. We recognise also that the care of older people is an issue that matters to many constituents, and we wish to contribute to the consultation in order to register our view.</p> <p>We welcome RCTCBC’s programme of investment to modernise and improve residential care provision, which reflects both the continuing trend is for people to remain in their homes for longer (and where necessary, receive their care package at home) and the growing demand for specialist provision, including for adults with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Taff Ely is currently well provided for in respect of residential care and this will continue as a result of RCTCBC’s plan for additional capacity and modernised facilities at both the Parc Newydd home in Talbot Green and the Cae Glas home in Hawthorn (which will also have facilities to provide for dementia, mobility and hoisting). In contrast the facilities at Garth Olwg are clearly not fit for purpose. We understand that only one of the existing fourteen residents at Garth Olwg is from the local area, so the proposal’s impact on visiting families is likely to be minimal.</p> <p>The proposal for a new facility at Garth Olwg to accommodate adults with learning difficulties is an important step in increasing specialist provision. We understand that the new facility at Garth Olwg will be a c£10m investment and that as a result of the closure of the existing Garth Olwg facility there will be no staff redundancies.</p> <p>Care needs are changing. In our view, RCTCBC’s investment in this programme of modernisation and improvement will ensure that the best facilities are available, without reducing capacity. In respect of the proposal for Garth Olwg and taking all factors into account, we believe that replacing the current care home with a new, specialist home is appropriate to the care needs in Taff Ely and RCT more widely and therefore also has our full support.</p>
16/01/2023	Email 6	<p>Our Cllrs discussed the consultation at our meeting last week and have asked me to advise you that they thought that the wording on the website was not that clear in what you were asking.</p>
18/01/2023	Customer Care Call	

		<p>Garth Olwg Consultation - regarding the potential closure of the residential care home. Customer called regarding those who are not able to complete consultation via the website, is there any way they can complete a physical copy and hand it in? Customer referred to the local library and if there was any potential for them to be distributed to them for residents. Would it be possible to contact back regarding this please.</p>
25/01/2023	Email 7	<p>Helen Fychan - MS</p> <p>Dyddiad Date: 26.1.2023</p> <p>Pwnc Subject: Ymgynghoriad Gofal Preswyl Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p>Annwyl Cyngor Rhondda Cynon Taf</p> <p>Mae nifer o etholwyr wedi cysylltu a mi yn datgan pryderon am y cynnig sydd gennych parthed cau cartref preswyl Garth Olwg yn Ton Teg.</p> <p>Rwyf yn croesawu'r buddsoddiad newydd a amlinellir i greu cartrefi preswyl modern sydd yn gallu diwallu anghenion nifer o bobl, ac yn deall yr angen i symud gyda'r oes ac i foderneiddio. Serch hynny mae rhai cwestiynau dilys wedi cael eu codi gyda fi am y cynlluniau arfaethedig ac wedi eu nodi isod:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rydych yn nodi yn y rhesymeg dros y penderfyniad bod llai o alw am lefydd mewn cartrefi gofal yn gyffredinol, ond bod cynnydd mewn galw am lefydd nyrsio ar gyfer pobl a dementia a phobl sydd a phroblemau iechyd dwys. Yn sgil hyn pam ydych chi am gau cartref sydd yn darparu gofal nyrsio i'r grwp yma o'r boblogaeth? Gwyddom fod gwasgiadau difrifol ar y sector iechyd ar hyn o bryd, yn rhannol oherwydd diffyg lleoedd ar gyfer gofal cymdeithasol yn y gymuned i'r rheiny sydd ddim eto yn ddigon iach i ddychwelyd i'w cartrefi. Oni fyddai'n synhwyrol i ddatblygu'r capasiti gofal nyrsio a llenwi yr holl lefydd allai fod ar gael yn Garth Olwg fel datrysiad i hyn? Mae'r penderfyniad i'w gau yn llwyr er mwyn ei ail-ddatblygu i fod yn ganolfan ar gyfer oedolion gyda anabledau yn mynd i waethygu'r sefyllfa o safbwynt diffyg opsiynau ar gyfer henoed sydd angen gofal nyrsio. 2. A ystyriwyd os oedd modd defnyddio y gyllideb a glustnodwyd ar gyfer ail-ddatblygu cartref Garth Olwg i ddatblygu sgiliau'r gweithlu a chael cyfarpar addas i gymryd mwy o bobl sydd angen gofal nyrsio gan gynnwys rheiny sydd angen cyfle i wella ac ad-ennill cryfder ar ôl cyfnod yn yr Ysbyty? 3. Mae'n ymddangos o'r ffigyrau a rannwyd yn yr ymgynghoriad mae pendraw y trywydd hwn fydd gwaredu pob gwely nyrsio o ofal Rhondda Cynon Taf yn uniongyrchol. A oes asesiad risg wedi ei wneud o goblygiadau hyn i'r dyfodol? Rydym wedi gweld yn y sector tai yn ddiweddar mewn rhai awdurdodau nad yw'r sector tai cymdeithasol yn gallu bodloni gofynion yr awdurdodau lleol am niferoedd digonol o dai i gwrdd a'i dyletswyddau statudol. Mae'r system honno bellach yn creu heriau sylweddol i

		<p>bobl sydd angen cartrefi, ac awdurdodau wedi colli'r hyblygrwydd a fyddai wedi bod ganddynt yn y gorffennol i adeiladu unedau newydd a rheoli'r farchnad tai cymdeithasol. Oes perygl y gwelwn farchnad rydd yn datblygu yn y maes gofal nyrsio henoed a fydd yn gadael pobl bregus iawn mewn perygl am na fydd gan yr awdurdod lleol ei cartrefi eu hunain i gynnig llety ar fyr rybudd pan bo angen?</p> <p>4. Dengys adroddiad diweddaraf Arolygaeth Gofal Cymru fod y cartref preswyl yng Ngarth Olwg yn ddiogel, yn glud ac yn llwyddo i fodloni preswyliaid, eu teuluoedd ac yn meddu ar tîm profiadol o ofalwyr sydd wedi bod yno am flynyddoedd. Mae lleoliad fel hyn yn bluen yng nghap yr awdurdod lleol a byddai'n drasiedi ei weld yn diflannu gyda thrigolion yn cael ei hail leoli gan golli eu cynefin a'u cymuned yn hwyrnos eu bywydau.</p> <p>5. Mae nifer o bobl gydag anwyliaid yn Garth Olwg yn nodi mai dim ond newydd symud yno mae rhai, yn dilyn cartrefi gofal eraill yn cau. Maent yn pryderu am symud anwyliaid unwaith eto, o leoliad mae nhw wedi setlo ynddo. Yw'r awdurdod wedi ystyried pa ddarpariaethau eraill sydd mewn perygl o gau, yn sgil yr argyfwng costau byw a beth fydd opsiynau gofal amgen os bydd y cartref hwn yn cau?</p> <p>Gobeithiaf y byddwch yn rhoi sylw teilwng i bob un o'r ymatebion a ddaw i law, ac y byddwch yn ystyried sylwadau pawb wrth gynllunio i'r dyfodol.</p> <p>Yn gywir</p> <p>Dyddiad Date: 26.1.2023 Pwnc Subject: Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's</p> <p>Residential Care Consultation Dear Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, A number of constituents have contacted me to express concerns regarding your proposal to close Garth Olwg Residential Care Home in Ton-teg. I welcome the new investment outlined to create modern residential care homes that can meet the needs of a number of people, and I understand the need to move with the times and modernise. However, some valid questions have been raised with me regarding the proposed plans, and are noted below:</p> <p>1. You have noted that the reason for the decision is that there is generally less demand for placements in care homes, but there is an increase in demand for nursing care placements for people with dementia and people with profound health problems. As a result of this, why do you want to close a home that provides nursing care to this group of the population? There are serious pressures on the health sector at the moment, partly because of the lack of places for social care in the community for those who are not yet well enough to return to their homes. Would it not be sensible to develop the capacity within nursing care and fill all of the spaces that could be available in Garth Olwg as a solution to this? The decision to close the home in its entirety in order to redevelop it to become a centre for adults</p>
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		<p>with disabilities is going to make the situation worse with regards to the lack of options for older people that need nursing care.</p> <p>2. Have you considered whether it is possible to use the budget that has been earmarked for redeveloping Garth Olwg Care Home in order to develop the skills of the workforce and getting appropriate equipment to take on more people who need nursing care, including those that need to get better and regain strength after some time in a hospital?</p> <p>3. It seems from the figures shared in the consultation that this course of action would ultimately lead to getting rid of all nursing beds from Rhondda Cynon Taf's care. Has a risk assessment been conducted in relation to the future implications of this? We have seen recently in the housing sector in some authorities that the social housing sector can't meet the requirements of local authorities with regards to the number of houses needed to meet its statutory duties. That system is now creating significant challenges for those people who need homes and authorities have lost the flexibility that they would have had in the past to build new units and control the social housing market. Is there a risk that we will see the development of a free market in the nursing care sector for older people that will leave very vulnerable people at risk as the local authority won't have their own homes to offer accommodation at short notice when needed?</p> <p>4. Care Inspectorate Wales' recent report shows that the care home at Garth Olwg is safe, cosy and manages to satisfy its residents, their families and also has an experienced team of carers that have been there for years. A setting like this is a feather in the cap of the local authority and it would be a tragedy to see it disappear with residents being relocated from their homes and their community in the latter stages of their lives.</p> <p>5. A number of people who have loved ones in Garth Olwg have noted that some have only just moved there, following the closure of other care homes. They're concerned about moving their loved ones again, from a setting where they have settled. Has the authority considered what other provisions are at risk as a result of closing the home, in light of the cost of living crisis, and what the alternative care options would be if this home was to close?</p> <p>I hope that you will give each of the responses submitted the attention they deserve and that you will consider everybody's comments when planning for the future.</p> <p>Regards, Heledd Fychan MS</p>
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Table 9 - Email Responses

7 PETITIONS

- 7.1 A total of 2 petitions were received in relation to option 5 and the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care home. The full Petitions will be provided to Officers and Cabinet Members, along with the full comments from the survey.

	Information received	Number of signatures
Petition 1	Garth Olwg Care Home in Church Village has served our community well for nearly sixty years. We call on Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council Cabinet to rethink their latest decision to close the facility as a residential care home, which would reverse their previous judgement that the home would stay open. The home has been invaluable for residents who are no longer able to manage in their own homes. This move is cruel for residents, particularly for those recently moved from other care homes, along with the loyal dedicated staff.	189
Petition 2	We, the under signed oppose the proposed closure of the Garth Olwg Care Home in Church Village and ask Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to reject this proposal.	364

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Proposed changes to Residential Care Homes and Extra Care Housing for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Consultation Report

Authors: Phil Evans and Paul Pavia
February 2023

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Executive Summary

1. This report analyses findings from a consultation process undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in respect of proposals to modernise its residential care services for older people and to create additional Extra Care housing.
2. Consultation took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023. Alongside the public consultation process, Practice Solutions ran an exercise which provided additional opportunities to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of care home residents and their families and residential service staff within the four homes directly affected by the proposed options. Sixty-two residents and relatives participated and thirty-seven staff.
3. The consultation events were designed to:
 - offer participants the best possible information about the proposals for change;
 - give them appropriate and effective ways of making known their views and feelings in an environment which encouraged people to use their voice, individually and collectively; and
 - ensure a strong thread of independence throughout the process, including writing an informed but non-partisan report for Cabinet which accurately reflects what had been said.
4. Events for residents and relatives were organised for each of the four Council-run care homes for older people affected by the proposed options – Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg.
5. The main themes that emerged in the discussions are set out in the full report. It is important to note that, in some key areas, representations made in three of the homes (Troedyrhiw, Ferndale House and Ystrad Fechan) differed considerably from those in Garth Olwg.
 - i. Without exception, residents and relatives praised staff for the high quality of care and support currently provided in the care homes.
 - ii. People wanted clear priority given to meeting the assessed needs of current residents and to ensuring continuity of care. Initially, some participants were sceptical about whether this could be reconciled with the Council’s proposed options. Some questions were asked about whether possible budget cuts were the real motive for change.
 - iii. Having listened attentively to clarification from senior managers, most participants began to express greater confidence in the plans that were being considered. For example, they appreciated the scale of investment which the Council is prepared to make in providing modern, purpose-built accommodation and facilities for older people. They asked for more details about the Council’s Extra Care housing programme (including schedules for building, potential sites for redevelopment and how the new facilities would operate).
 - iv. There was a positive response to reassurances that the proposed changes would not involve residents moving out of current placements unless their individual circumstances changed. This helped participants to acknowledge that creating new, more modern facilities was the proper way forward and they broadly supported the options put forward in the Cabinet report. In some events, people discussed the possible merits of ‘doing nothing’ (i.e., keeping the status quo or waiting for additional information before making decisions). However, they agreed that prolonged uncertainty is destabilising and risks generating even more anxiety.

- v. People were worried about how the Council's proposals would be implemented, especially during any period of transition. They wanted decisions to be accompanied by a commitment to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, top ups where necessary and full involvement by current staff in the homes. Once again, concerns centred on the need for implementation plans to put the well-being of current care home residents and their families at the heart of any proposed change. This should be demonstrated by placing more emphasis on co-production throughout the modernisation process; ensuring timely/effective communication about the general programme of change; and setting out in detail the implications for individuals whose lives will be affected.
 - vi. There was strong opposition from residents and families in Garth Olwg to the option which involves decommissioning the care home. Residents did not want to leave a place they regarded as home and relatives were very anxious about the impact of the proposed changes. They put forward an alternative where the home would be retained and modernised. Two of the residents had already experienced a placement move brought about by the sudden closure of an independent sector care home. This made them especially appreciative of the environment provided by Garth Olwg and even more worried about change. Their relatives explained the difficulties which they had previously experienced, including the challenge of finding a setting in which their family member could thrive.
6. Consultation events for staff working at all the Council's residential care homes affected by the proposed options were organised in three geographical localities (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely). No staff attended the Cynon event. A separate event was held for relevant managers. The main themes that emerged in the discussions are set out in the full report.
- i. In all the events where staff were in attendance, they demonstrated how much they wanted the best for current residents, for their interests to be a paramount concern in decision-making, and for a meaningful choice of placement to be made available to residents in homes where planned closure was agreed.
 - ii. They were provided with assurances that, where possible, the Council would decommission homes only when new facilities had been built. Given the length of time needed to develop alternatives, this means that the proposed changes are unlikely to involve residents moving out of current placements unless their individual circumstances change.
 - iii. With the exception of Garth Olwg staff, the options put forward by the Cabinet did receive support, although doubts persisted about the merits of decommissioning homes. Some staff felt that they might be adversely affected by the proposed changes and said that they were experiencing considerable anxiety about Human Resource issues - such as job security, safeguarding employment rights, long-term career prospects, remuneration and other entrenched causes of instability within the residential care sector.
 - iv. Despite these high levels of anxiety, staff displayed a strong sense of loyalty to the Council. This was grounded in a shared public service ethos, the high standard of care being delivered in the homes, its employee terms and conditions vis-a-vis the independent sector, and the fact that Council-run care homes are anchored in the communities they serve. They looked for reassurance that the provision of care in new Extra Care Housing facilities would be undertaken by Council staff.

- v. Participants were preoccupied by the proposals for the home in which they worked and for their geographical area. However, they were also looking for evidence that the Council has a genuine (and future-proofed) commitment to providing high quality care and modern facilities in those homes where the options include retention. In particular, there was a feeling that the Council still needs to improve staff recruitment and retention. They expressed dissatisfaction with the practice of advertising only casual posts.
- vi. The staff said that, in their opinion, most residents (and their relatives) would prefer to remain in their current home, even if they could not be modernised to provide facilities such as en-suite bathrooms. Those working in Garth Olwg believe that the proposed option for the home would have a very adverse impact upon current residents, as it would deny them the opportunity to remain living in the home. Staff from the Rhondda Fach made strong representations that a facility, either a residential care home or Extra Care housing/dementia residential care, should be available in their valley. This would aid staff recruitment and retention and also ensure that the community was not deprived of an important community asset. They wanted assurances about where this new facility would be located and further consideration of the proposed balance there between extra care accommodation and residential care facilities for people experiencing dementia-related illnesses.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report analyses the findings from a consultation process undertaken by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in respect of proposals to modernise its residential care services for older people and to create additional Extra Care housing. Consultation took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023.
- 1.2 The report is in five parts:
- Part 1: Introduction
 - Part 2: The Council's Proposals
 - Part 3: Consultation Methods
 - Part 4 Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives – Main Themes
 - Part 5: Consultation Events with Staff and Managers – Main Themes

There are three accompanying documents:

APPENDIX 1: Presentation for Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

APPENDIX 2: Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

APPENDIX 3 Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Staff and Managers

2. The Council's Proposals

- 2.1 The Council's key priorities include a commitment to modernising and continually improving Adult Social Care Services.
- 2.2 Some factors helping to influence its approach are set out below.
- Welsh Government policy, including the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which directs councils to undertake local market assessment and shaping duties;
 - The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016; and
 - The Cwm Taf Regional Plan 2018 to 2023, produced by relevant local authorities and the Local Health Board in response to their statutory duties for conducting population needs assessments and providing a market strategy.
- 2.3 In November 2016, Cabinet approved a strategy designed to modernise accommodation options for older people and deliver Extra Care housing in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It committed the Council to reviewing and reshaping the care market to:
- increase the options available for people needing accommodation with care and support; and
 - deliver a viable alternative for people who can remain independent with support.
- 2.4 In September 2017, Cabinet agreed a £50m investment plan to develop 300 Extra Care beds across Rhondda Cynon Taf and to deliver modern accommodation options able to meet the needs and changing expectations of a growing population of older people. This policy decision was intended to further the process of achieving a shift in the balance of care from residential care settings to more community-based options, including Extra Care housing.
- 2.5 Notwithstanding this decision, Rhondda Cynon Taf has continued to depend heavily on residential care placements. It has the highest proportion of people aged 65 or over living in residential care in Wales.
- 2.6 The future of the Council's residential care homes for older people has been subject to ongoing review since 2017. In December 2020, Cabinet considered:
- the outcomes of three previous stakeholder consultations;
 - the rationale and drivers shaping the choice of preferred options for future provision of the Council's residential care homes for older people; and
 - supporting information relating to capacity and demand.
- 2.7 The decisions made are summarised below:
- *The Council's residential care homes have served their communities well and are popular homes with good standards of care, provided by committed staff.*
 - *There is a need to retain Council residential care homes to ensure that the Council meets its commitment to maintaining, in the local market for residential care, an in-house offer of provision.*

- *The difficulties experienced by existing Council's residential care homes in accepting the range of referrals and the complexity of need being presented unless the current facilities are upgraded to the modern standards identified for dignified care delivery.*
- *The demand for traditional residential care is decreasing and less residential care will be needed in the future, as more people will receive care in their own homes (including extra care housing and other supported housing schemes). This is consistent with national and regional priorities and the Council's aim of providing care for and support to people in their own homes wherever possible.*
- *The over-provision of residential care beds and sufficient alternative provision of the required type and quality to meet current and forecast demands - less residential care will be needed in the future geographical market share across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf areas.*
- *The current and forecasted need is for more complex care (including dementia care), reablement, respite care or short breaks for carers and nursing care.*
- *The impact of older people exercising choice now on the occupancy levels in our care homes.*
- *To receive a further report setting out a comprehensive modernisation programme.*

2.8 Following a further review, Cabinet agreed in July 2022 to address ongoing pandemic-related issues and challenges within residential care (including reduced demand and low occupancy, staffing shortages and quality of care issues) by:

- closing temporarily Ystrad Fechan (Treorchy) and transfer the eight residents to Pentre House (Pentre) or another home of their choosing which meets their needs; and
- in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, providing temporarily up to ten new step-up/step-down beds at Parc Newydd (Talbot Green) to support hospital discharge.

Because affected residents were supported to access suitable alternative provision, occupancy levels at other Council care homes increased.

2.9 In December 2022, Cabinet received a detailed report setting out a modernisation programme for the Council's residential care homes and providing, for consideration, proposed preferred options for future provision.

2.10 The five options were:

OPTION 1: Retain the current service provision at five current Council care homes.

This includes:

Clydach Court in Trealaw

Pentre House in Pentre

Tegfan in Trecynon

Cae Glas in Hawthorn

Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.

OPTION 2: New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board. It would be located on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is currently temporarily closed with no residents living there and would be permanently decommissioned.

OPTION 3: New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 4: New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash.

This development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.

OPTION 5: New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village.

This would be achieved by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

- 2.11 The proposed changes in the service provided by some of the Council's residential care homes require the Council to consult with the public and those directly affected (including care home residents, their families, and staff). This is to ensure that their views can be considered when a final decision is made. To fulfil its legal obligations, the Cabinet decided that a six-week consultation process should take place.

3. Consultation Methods

- 3.1 To implement the Cabinet decision on public consultation, the Council's Research and Consultation Unit developed a comprehensive approach for the exercise. The aim of the public consultation was to gather as many views as possible from residents, their relatives, staff and the public, to inform the Cabinet in its decision-making about the future provision of residential care homes for older people in each of the geographical areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 3.2 Information about proposed changes, options and the consultation process were publicised extensively, including use of the Council's website (www.rctcbc.gov.uk/consultation) and a FREEPOST address. A dedicated consultation page on the Council's website contained key links and attachments. A booklet called HAVE YOUR SAY! was made available. Both the website and the booklet explained how to complete a questionnaire/survey, online or in hard copy. All completed questionnaires had to be returned by 5pm on 27th January. People were also encouraged to participate by means of "Drop In" events across the County.
- 3.3 The public consultation process ran alongside an exercise designed specifically to provide additional opportunities to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of care home residents and their families and residential service staff within the four homes directly affected by the proposed options. This was seen as a crucial aspect of the overall approach and one which merited considerable planning and attention.

The role of Practice Solutions

- 3.4 The Council engaged Practice Solutions¹ to facilitate independently a series of consultation events which would inform participants and give them opportunities for discussion and debate in group sessions. Senior managers from Social Service (including the Director and the Head of Accommodation Services) attended the sessions, to provide further information about the Council's intentions and to answer questions posed by relevant stakeholders. The advocacy service provided by Age Connects was promoted and made available to all service users and their families. A representative from Age Connects attended each consultation event. There was Trade Union representation at meetings with staff and with managers. Observers made a written record of each session. People in attendance were provided with information about how to make further contact with Practice Solutions should they wish to provide any additional observations.
- 3.5 The independent consultation events took place over a period of three weeks, from 9th January to 24th January 2023. Four meetings took place with residents and their relatives from the care homes most affected – Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg. Meetings with staff took place in three of the Council's leisure facilities – Sobell Leisure Centre (Aberdare), Llantrisant Leisure Centre and Rhondda Sports Centre (Ystrad). A meeting with managers likely to be affected by the proposals took place in the Council's offices in Ty Elai (Williamstown).
- 3.6 The consultation events were designed to:
 - provide participants with the best possible information about the proposals for change;

¹ From its base in Abercynon, Practice Solutions:

- supports social care and health organisations across Wales to plan and deliver improvements in services; and
- facilitates effective engagement with service users and staff.

- give them appropriate and effective ways of making known their views and feelings in an environment which encouraged people to use their voice, individually and collectively; and
- ensure a strong thread of independence throughout the process, including writing an informed but nonpartisan report for Cabinet which accurately reflected what had been said.

3.7 Different presentations were used in events for care home residents and their families and for staff and managers but the overall agenda was similar.

- What do you think? PART 1
- How can I have my say?
- Where are we right now?
- Why are the changes needed?
- What are the options?
- What do you think? PART 2
- What happens next?

3.8 Details of the independent consultation events held including the numbers of people attending each event are set out below:

Week	Date	Venue	No of Attendees
Residents and Family Meetings	10 January	Troedyrhiw	16
	12 January	Ferndale House	16
	17 January	Pentre House (Ystrad Fechan)	2
	19 January	Garth Olwg	28
Staff Meetings	9 January	Ty Elai (Managers)	6
	11 January	Sobell Leisure Centre	0
	19 January	Rhondda Sport Centre	22
	24 January	Llantrisant Leisure Centre	9

4. Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives

- 4.1 Events were organised at each of the four Council-run care homes for older people affected by the proposed options-Troedyrhiw, Ferndale, Ystrad Fechan, and Garth Olwg. Residents and relatives were invited to attend. The agenda was designed to maximise participation (see **Appendix 1**). The meeting for Ystrad Fechan residents and relatives was held in their current placement, Pentre House.
- 4.2 Following a short presentation from Practice Solutions to set the scene, an open “What do you think?” session was undertaken on each occasion (to initiate comment and discussion). Practice Solutions then outlined the five proposed options and advised residents and relatives about how they could have their say within the wider consultation process. Another “What do you think?” session was scheduled for the second part of the meeting to capture further thoughts, observations and questions.
- 4.2 **Appendix 2** has reports from each of the individual consultation events with care home residents and their relatives. A summary of the main themes that emerged in the discussions is set out below.

Main Themes

- a) The number of participants varied but it was evident that people very much wanted the opportunity to express their views, to have them recorded and to influence the decision-making process. In all the events, it quickly emerged that some people had been left perplexed by conflicting information, rumours or difficulties in navigating complicated systems/processes. They appreciated the way in which senior managers sought to answer questions and provide realistic reassurance. Exchanges of views were properly challenging but also characterised by a willingness to listen and to reconsider.
- b) While acknowledging the need for services and facilities to be modernised for the future, without exception residents and relatives praised staff for the high quality of care and support currently provided. The contribution and commitment of staff were mentioned repeatedly. There was high regard also for services which have a strong public service orientation, well connected to the community and to their locality. People were anxious that this key element could be lost if and when changes are made, especially if services are transferred to independent sector organisations.
- c) People wanted clear priority given to meeting the assessed needs of current residents and ensuring continuity of care. In the case of three homes (Troedyrhiw, Ferndale House and Ystrad Fechan), assurances could be given that changes would not involve residents being compelled to leave current placements unless their individual circumstances changed. Here, participants in the consultation events were willing to acknowledge that creating new, more modern facilities was the proper way forward. They were broadly supportive of the preferred options for put forward in the Cabinet report.²
- d) There was strong opposition from residents and families in Garth Olwg to the option which involved closing and decommissioning the care home. Residents did not want to leave a place they regarded as home and relatives were very anxious about the impact of the proposed changes. They put

² Because of the need to close Ystrad Fechan as a matter of urgency, two of its residents had moved to Pentre House. They were very pleased to know that they would be able to remain in the placement while new facilities are being developed.

forward alternatives whereby the home would be retained and modernised. Two of the residents had already experienced a placement move brought about by the sudden closure of an independent sector care home. This made them especially appreciative of the environment provided by Garth Olwg and anxious about change. Their relatives explained the difficulties they had encountered, including the challenge of finding a setting in which their family member could thrive.

- e) During the meeting in Garth Olwg, people listened carefully to explanations given by senior managers. This helped to generate discussion about what might happen to residents if Option 5 was approved and what steps could be taken to safeguard the interests of current residents and their relatives. While maintaining their opposition to the proposal, they did welcome the efforts made to understand and respond to their concerns.
- f) Putting care home residents and their families at the centre of the modernisation process was seen as essential. This would be helped by a greater emphasis on co-production - ensuring timely, effective communication about the detailed implications for individuals as well as the general programme of change. Participants were very anxious about how Council decisions would be implemented, especially during the period of transition. They wanted any decision to be accompanied by commitments to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, 'top ups' where necessary and full involvement by staff in the homes.
- g) There was unanimously a feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. Residents and relatives requested early, detailed information about transition planning, as well as the timing of any such move to ensure that the process is properly managed and that continuity of care can be maintained. People were concerned about safeguarding the interests of residents who lack capacity. Relatives were seeking assurances that longer travel distances should be avoided, especially as some of them are dependent on public transport. They were reassured by the fact that the proposed redevelopment sites being considered in Mountain Ash and Ferndale are seen as good locations for new facilities.
- h) The events generated debate about the Council's rationale for its proposals. For example, there was initial scepticism about explanations for low occupancy levels in residential care homes, given factors such as increasing numbers of very old people in the population and severe problems in discharging people from hospital. Also, some people were concerned that the Council's primary motivation for making changes was to make financial savings. After considerable debate, it was generally acknowledged that most older people experiencing delayed discharge from hospital did not want permanent placements in residential care homes and that there is a discernible move away from choosing residential care where other suitable options are available.³ The Council's commitment to significant investment in accommodation for older people was warmly welcomed.
- i) Residents and relatives had some reservations about the ability of Extra Care housing to match the high standards of care in current homes and to provide a 'homely' environment while also catering for complex needs. They were somewhat reassured when more information was made available, alongside an offer of opportunities to visit one of the new facilities. They welcomed case examples of

³ There was a degree of consensus around the fact that the Council is required to meet increasing demand from older people for care and support within the resources available. This generated further discussion about how this can mean reducing reliance on traditional services such as residential care homes which are no longer viable and moving to a different pattern of help – one that is sustainable for the future and effectively meets the needs of an ageing population with more complex needs and different expectations.

the way in which current facilities in Rhondda Cynon Taf are working. Possible financial implications for individuals moving into other facilities were worrying those likely to be affected. Requests were made for further information about proposed sites and about how the transition to Extra Care would be undertaken and the timetable for homes to close. There was a very strong preference that, in any new facilities, the provision of care should be undertaken by the local authority.

- j) In some of the events, there was discussion about the possible merits of 'doing nothing' (i.e., keeping the status quo) or waiting for additional information before making decisions. However, people agreed that prolonged uncertainty is destabilising and risks generating even more anxiety.

5. Consultation Events with Staff and Managers

- 5.1 To facilitate discussion about the proposals to modernise care homes in the Borough, consultation events were organised in three geographical localities (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely) for staff working in all the Council's residential care homes affected by the proposed options. It should be noted that no members of staff attended the Cynon meeting. The format for the consultation events mirrored that for care home residents and their relatives but there were slight changes to the information content.
- 5.2 **Appendix 3** has reports from each of the individual consultation events with managers and staff. A summary of the main themes that emerged in the discussions is set out below.

Main Themes


- a. All the events demonstrated how much staff wanted the best for current residents and for their interests to be a paramount concern in decision-making. With the exception of Garth Olwg staff, the options put forward by the Cabinet received general endorsement by those attending consultation events.
- b. Fearing that they might be adversely affected by the proposed changes, some staff said that they were experiencing considerable anxiety about Human Resource issues – such as job security, safeguarding employment rights, long-term career prospects, remuneration and other entrenched causes of instability within the residential care sector. Questions included:
- What would happen to staff members if their place of work closes?
 - Are current employees guaranteed to keep their jobs?
 - Will the current staff have options around redundancy?
 - Will the current hours be reduced if staff are redeployed?
 - How will proposed changes affect career prospects?
- c. It was helpful that HR and Trade Union representation was made available for the events, so that general concerns could be addressed. Staff were strongly in favour of continuing this level of dialogue and advice as soon as decisions are made. It was important to ensure that these decisions are made known to staff directly. They were especially concerned that more needed to be done to improve staff recruitment and retention. It was their perception that not enough permanent contracts were being offered, resulting in too much reliance on casual contract and agency workers to cover unfilled vacancies. The subsequent discussions revealed some confusion about the Council's policy and its implementation. Managers gave a commitment to resolving the issue.
- d. Despite high levels of anxiety, staff displayed a strong sense of loyalty to the Council, but some felt that this was not always reciprocated. There was a consensus about wanting to remain employees of the Council. This was grounded in a shared public service ethos, the high standard of care being delivered, its employee terms and conditions, and the fact that Council-run care homes are anchored in the communities they serve.
- e. Staff were understandably preoccupied by the proposals for the home in which they worked and for their geographical area. However, they were looking also for evidence that the Council has a genuine and future-proofed commitment to providing high quality care and modern facilities in those homes where the options include retention. This would mean spelling out plans for investment in buildings and staff over a sustained period. 'Review fatigue' was evident, with staff expressing frustration and

apprehension that they find themselves in this position again within such a short space of time. There were fears that further reviews would be held, and further closures recommended. This was seen as putting at risk the Council's commitment to providing equity of service in the three principal parts of the Borough (Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely).

- f. Concerns were also raised about how the proposals have been communicated to staff. This had left much scope for misinformation and rumour. They felt ill-equipped to reassure residents and relatives whose lives were deeply affected by ongoing uncertainty or even to explain the reasons that lie behind the proposed options. Following all the problems associated with the pandemic, this had perpetuated feelings of crisis and uncertainty. However, they were pleased to have an opportunity to hear from senior managers.
- g. There was some appreciation that refurbishing all existing residential homes may not be financially viable. Staff appreciated the work done to explore the prospects for modernising each of the current homes, although there was scepticism about whether some findings are valid - especially as it is their perception that refurbishment has been put on hold for a long time.
- h. The staff felt that current residents and their relatives would prefer to remain in their current home even if they could not be modernised to provide facilities such as en-suite bathrooms. Those working in Garth Olwg believe that the proposed option for the home would have a very adverse impact upon current residents as it would deny them the opportunity to remain living in the home.
- i. Staff from the Rhondda Fach made strong representations that a facility, either a care home or extra care housing/dementia residential care, should be available in their valley. This would aid staff recruitment and retention and also ensure that the community was not deprived of an important community asset. They were concerned to explore in detail the option for Ferndale House set out in the Cabinet report and they welcomed details about a potential new site that is being explored.
- j. It was considered essential that residents in all homes are given a meaningful choice of placement if their home was to be closed while they were there. Staff expressed considerable relief that this is unlikely to be the case if most of the proposals go ahead, given the length of time needed to develop alternatives. They wanted assurances about where any new facility would be located and further consideration of the proposed balance between extra care accommodation and residential care facilities for people experiencing dementia-related illnesses.
- k. Where care homes are to be retained or redeveloped on another site, managers would like to see early, detailed information about the investment plans and what the implications would be for each home. They expect to be involved in the decision-making process as early as possible, especially in managing any potential impact for residents and staff.
- l. Some staff are looking for more information about moves to commission significantly increased levels of Extra Care housing. It appears that not everybody has a clear enough understanding about the role of housing associations and "not for profit" organisations, or the way in which Extra Care operates. There was a consensus that the Council should explore opportunities for ensuring that care in these settings is provided by its own staff.

Appendix 1

Presentation for Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives



**PROPOSED CHANGES TO
RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES
AND EXTRA CARE HOUSING
FOR OLDER PEOPLE
IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**



Consultation Events
January 2023

Phil Evans and Paul Pavia

[@Pracsolutions](https://twitter.com/Pracsolutions) www.practicesolutions-ltd.co.uk

AGENDA FOR CARE HOME EVENTS

- What do you think? PART 1
- How can I have my say?
- Where are we right now?
- Why are the changes needed?
- What are the options?
- What do you think? PART 2
- What happens next?



WHAT DO YOU THINK? PART 1

- What worries/interests me most is....
- What residents want most/least is.....
- It's very important that staff are/aren't.....
- What I would most like to see is.....
- Has the Council considered.....?
- Why are homes recommended for closure when they provide such good care?
- Why isn't there enough demand for places in Council homes?
- Other questions, comments, concerns?



HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY? PART 1

- Public Consultation started December 12th and closes January 27th
- Series of consultation events in residential care homes and with staff
- HAVE YOUR SAY! Consultation Booklet
- Further information on the Council's website
- Questionnaire/survey
- Democratic accountability



HOW CAN I HAVE MY SAY? PART 2

- For further information, you can visit the Council's website: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/consultation where you can find out the detail of the proposals
- You can get in touch via:
 - 01443 425014
 - or
 - residentialcare@rctcbc.gov.uk
 - or
 - FREEPOST RSBU-HJUK-LSSS, Research & Consultation, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale, CF40 2XX



WHERE ARE WE NOW? PART 1

- The Council proposes making important changes in services for older people
- This would involve:
 - retaining five of the Residential Care Homes which the Council runs and eventually closing four others
 - creating three new facilities that offer Extra Care and residential dementia care, plus additional accommodation for adults with learning disabilities
- No decisions have been taken yet, pending this public consultation
- The Council invites you to let them know your views and Cabinet will make the final decision



WHERE ARE WE NOW? PART 2

- £50m is being invested in Extra Care, to deliver 300 extra care apartments within five new facilities across the County Borough
- Extra Care housing aims to provide 'a home for life' for many people, even if their care needs change over time. People have their own self-contained home in purpose-built accommodation and with 24-hour care and support available. Apartments usually consist of either one or two bedrooms, a lounge area, a kitchen area and a fully fitted wet room
- Details about the Extra Care programme can be found on the Council's website:
<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/AdultsandOlderPeople/SupportingAdultsinRhonddaCynonTaf.aspx>



WHY ARE THE CHANGES NEEDED?

- Long journey – ongoing review since November 2016 to establish the case for change, explore options and ensure that resources are used wisely.
- Outcome of the review - wanting to keep some Council-run residential care homes but only if they can be upgraded to meet changing needs expectations and standards (dementia friendly/ frailty/end-of-life care).
- Residential care homes are closing in many places - declining occupancy/ageing premises which require renovation and new facilities/ people's preferences for other options.
- Plans are in place to develop new choices for older people, especially extra care housing and integrated support at home.



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? PART 1

- **OPTION 1:** Retain current service provision at 5 Council care homes.
- **OPTION 2:** New accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds on land near the existing Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The home is temporarily closed with no residents living there and it would be permanently decommissioned.
- **OPTION 3:** New accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.



WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS? PART 2

- **OPTION 4:** New accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is developed.
- **OPTION 5:** New accommodation with care to support people with learning disabilities in adulthood. This would involve developing the existing Garth Olwg Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.
- Individual homes – Table 6 in the Cabinet report



WHAT DO YOU THINK? PART 2

- **Possible themes**

- Concerns for residents, carers and relatives if homes are closed.**
- How will the change be managed? - continuity of care, assessments for current residents (including advocacy), review of care and support plans**
- Timescales for change**
- What choice will residents have about where they live? – facilities, eligibility, costs**
- Geographical location of proposed facilities and investment plans**
- Implications for staff**
- Alternative proposals/Recommendations**



Appendix 2

Reports from Individual Consultation Events with Care Home Residents and their Relatives⁴

a) Troedyrhiw

Proposal

Initially, concerns were raised about the proposed option for the care home, in relation to its closure and decommissioning. Residents and family relatives felt the care home provided good quality care and that it would be 'terrible' if it were closed.

One family member said: *"My father's needs are being met in the care home now. He has everything he wants here."*

One family member felt that the specific option for Troedyrhiw seemed *'too good to be true'* because the care home would not be closed until a new facility was developed.

It was unanimously agreed that any new facility needs to be built within the local area, so that families would be closer and better able to visit. Concerns were raised about identifying a site and questions were asked about what would happen if appropriate land could not be found. This was seen as a risk that must be mitigated but participants were much reassured when details about a potential site were provided.

High standards of care and specialist care

Assurances were sought that the same high standards of care and an appropriate, 'homely' environment would be available in any new accommodation provided to the residents of Troedyrhiw. In particular, relatives were adamant that any new provision should be run by the local authority.

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

In relation to any change that may occur following the Council's decisions, there was a unanimous feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. More detailed information was requested about transition planning, so that the timing of any moves helped to ensure continuity of care.

As one relative stated: *"This will be a major disruption for people staying here at the moment. The care home is great as it's local and it has a good reputation. Anything which is built not like this will not be good for the residents. We need to ensure it's an easy transition."*

Both relatives and residents requested that, if a decision is made to approve Option 4, local authority officers should come back to them as early as possible, to involve them in developing the proposals for any new facility.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

The quality of care and commitment shown by staff was praised and there were concerns expressed about their future employment. It was suggested that ideally, the staff should move

⁴ Material expressed in Parts 4 and 5 of this report directly represent the views of those attending the series of consultation events and does not cover the responses to questions and further information provided by Council officers.

with the residents to ensure continuity of care is maintained. Staff were also deemed to have a crucial role in providing families with help and support.

Relatives felt it was important that any new facility must have good staffing levels to deliver consistent, high-quality care. However, there were also concerns raised more broadly about staffing capacity at the current facility and that the Council needed to do more to encourage people to work in the sector.

Conclusions

At the end of the consultation session, there was a strong feeling within the group that the proposal for Troedyrhiw was the right decision for the community and the best outcome that could be achieved.

However, it was also felt that the needs of this current generation of residents should not be overshadowed in developing facilities for the next. Excellent communication with and support for families would be essential. Notification of any decisions must be made to residents and their families first before any wider dissemination.

b) Ferndale House

Proposal

There was some initial confusion around the 'preferred options' being proposed, with a perceived discrepancy regarding the information published on the consultation page on the Council's website and material printed in the 'Have Your Say' consultation document. People questioned what they perceived as ambiguity about whether the proposed options were a prioritised list, whether they were linked to each other or whether they were 'all or nothing' options, or whether they could be individually 'cherry-picked' by the Council. Further discussion helped to clarify all these issues. Officers in attendance provided clarification.

Residents and relatives liked the current care home facility and did not understand why change was necessary because they initially believed the care home was oversubscribed.

One family relative stated: *"I know the hassle that we had to go into my mother into here."*

Another recognised the positive psychological effect that had taken place when their loved one moved to the home and expressed their initial anxiety surrounding any proposed change.

However, when presented with the trend data on falling residential care home places, one relative observed: *"I was shocked when I saw the vacancies (referencing statistics in the information pack)."*

Another family member commented on current NHS pressures to discharge people from hospital and questioned why there was not a higher degree of demand for beds in the care home.

Questions were asked about: the location of the proposed new facility; how close it would be to the current home; how accessible it would be, particularly to emergency vehicles; how the retained care homes identified in Option 1 were decided on and whether the Council had a specific target to achieve in reducing residential care beds.

One relative asked: *"Is the Council trying to make cuts with these options and privatise care?"*

Another relative raised concerns in relation to the cuts in services, particularly day care services, that had already taken place in the community.

All these points were discussed in detail and the group then agreed with one participant who said: *"Now I feel much better about it all and grateful for the time to think about it."*

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

Residents and relatives wanted to know more about the model of care used in Extra care accommodation – how the care and support is delivered; what facilities are available and their suitability for residents affected by decommissioning; who would be eligible; what costs would be incurred; and how did the facilities link to the wider community. They sought detailed information about how the transition to Extra Care would be undertaken and the timetable for homes to close, to ensure that the quality and continuity of care would be maintained.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

People praised the quality of care and commitment shown by staff. It was suggested that, ideally, the staff should move with the residents to ensure continuity of care. Staff were also deemed to have a key role in providing families with help and support during a period of transition.

However, broader concerns were raised about current and future staffing levels. One relative noted that the Council was not offering full-time, permanent jobs and was reliant on casual contracts, to the detriment of efforts to recruit carers. They felt that that work should have been undertaken to rectify this problem as they perceived working for the Council as a better option than working out in the community providing care.

Conclusions

At the end of the discussion, the general consensus was that the option set out in the Cabinet report for Ferndale House was the best way forward, especially as ‘doing nothing’ was not viable and was just going back to square one. Residents and relatives acknowledged the age and limitations of the current care home in terms of space and layout. However, change was seen as unsettling: residents and their families required much reassurance that the Council had fully considered the needs of current residents.

As one resident stated: *“The people here do want their dignity.”*

However, another family member said: *“Why wouldn’t anyone vote not to have a new facility, when we can keep the current one? I cannot see why anyone would not want it. It seems a better option for managers, staff and residents.”*

It was clear that, if any decision was taken to develop a new facility, that residents and their families would want to be involved in the shaping of those plans in a co-productive way, including the viability of the site identified by the Council. There was also a strong feeling that any new facility should be Council-run’.

At the conclusion of the event, one relative said: *“Come on...I want it done.”*

c) Pentre House

As the event was intended for former residents of Ystrad Fechan who had moved to Pentre House when their care home was temporarily closed, there were only two residents present and no relatives. The meeting was attended by an Older Person’s Advocate from Age Connects, who knew the two individuals and acts for one of them in other matters. Some parts of the consultation event were conducted bilingually.

Proposal

It was explained to both residents that they would not be affected directly by the proposals and they were reassured that their place in the home was secure.

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

Both residents were very happy with the care and support that they received in the home. They knew the staff who looked after them and they were both very complimentary about their work.

One resident said: *"They've been brilliant to me here."*

While the other said: *"They're all bloody (sic) good."*

Conclusions

Both residents had moved from another residential care home; they felt very settled at Pentre House and got on well with staff and the other residents.

One resident noted there were no staff in the care home that she could communicate with fluently in Welsh (her first language). However, staff do make a conscious effort to use Welsh phrases and sayings to engage with her and this is much appreciated.

Both residents were happy to stay at the home. They very much appreciated further confirmation that the proposals would not affect them personally. There was a clear need for staff to reinforce this message and provide further reassurance.

d) Garth Olwg

Proposal

There was significant opposition to the proposal to decommission Garth Olwg as a residential care home and repurpose it as a supported living facility for adults with a Learning Disability. Residents and relatives felt that this was the worst-case scenario for the home.

There was a high-level of anxiety amongst both residents and relatives. There was a feeling that the Council *"needs to understand they are dealing with 'people' not 'bed numbers" and "start dealing with people's expectations."*

As one relative stated: *"When looking at care, we can't lose the fact that they are people, and they have a story. If many of them had a choice, they would want to be in their own homes. But we are aware that domiciliary care has long lists. Circumstances have dictated that they have to live here. The Council needs to consider that they are paying over £700 a week for their own care (self-funded) so should remember that. All they want is to stay where they are because they are happy where they are. I feel that, if you do a show of hands, many would agree."*

One resident said: *"I'm filled with alarm and very upset."*

Another resident said: *"I've only been there a year but it's the best life I've ever had."*

A third resident was worried about moving away from the very good friends they had made in the home. The resident chose to read out a statement, describing how when they arrived in Garth Olwg, their situation was dire, physically and mentally. *"It is due to the understanding and hard work of the staff that I am the person that I am today. I am very happy here and the thought of having to move elsewhere is causing me mental distress. This is a very happy, well-run home. We have a dedicated, hard-working staff and remember this is the only home in RCT that during the covid pandemic had no deaths or cases of coronavirus. The effort and work staff made during that time was incredible. Now their efforts and hard work are being rewarded by being made possibly redundant or having to find other employment. As many of them have been here for years, it is a blow for them. Jenny the warden has been here for 33 years. The staff must be devastated. Returning to the residents here... personally I would not be happy to become an extra care resident.When in 2019, it was decided to keep Garth Olwg open, it was a great relief. Once again, closing Garth Olwg, I feel that authority think only of numbers and not people and decide to change their mind.....I understand the need for support for people with learning difficulties, but remember the elderly have needs too! I would now like relief in my final days having worked all my life."*

One relative explained about their mother's experience of moving to the care home in September 2022 and that the move was not well managed and was a very difficult episode for the whole family. They enquired why they were not made aware of these proposals at the time before the move was made. They also expressed a '*lack of faith*' in the Council to manage another move when they witnessed the impact of the last move and especially given there were more people to transition from Garth Olwg to other facilities. The resident in question expressed great upset because she had been assured that it would be her last move now it was not going to be. The notion of supporting vulnerable older people who regarded Garth Olwg as their 'home for life' had not been given any priority, it was suggested.

One participant drew attention to a manifesto commitment made by the Labour administration in the 2022 local government elections to keep the care home open. He felt that, clearly, this had been reneged on.

There was a belief too that the needs of adults with Learning Disabilities were being given more priority than the older adults in the home.

One resident said: "*It seems that people with disabilities are being given everything and we feel we are being pushed aside despite paying into the economy for years.*"

Questions were raised regarding the rationale behind the proposal:

- Why was the local need in relation to Learning Disabilities not raised three years ago during the last consultation process? The view was that the Council had been short-sighted.
- Why does the Council feel the home is not fit for purpose, when residents and their families do?
- Are people really not wanting to come into residential care or is the extent of the vacancies in the home caused by a lack of staff?
- Were the new proposals future proofed? What will happen in a few years' time when there will be a further influx of elderly people?
- Given that residents in the care home did not fit categories of disabled or dementia – what care homes in the area now cater for their needs?

Alternative options/proposals

There were a several alternative proposals discussed:

- If there is a need, could the Council not develop a purpose-built facility on other land in the area and then decommission and move residents, in line with other proposed options in the consultation?
- Could the current building be adapted and modernised over time, minimising disruption to the residents?
- Given that the Council's analysis highlights future need for high care dementia beds and the pressure on the NHS to discharge people back into community care, could Garth Olwg be dual registered for both residential and also nursing accommodation?

Relationships with staff, residents and their families

There was unqualified praise for the quality of care and the commitment shown by staff.

One resident said: "*There's a lot of love and care in this facility and you cannot buy that. I've had marvellous support here. I'm now able to walk again since moving here.*"

Residents and relatives expressed concern about staff welfare but also regarding their future employment options. It was hoped that they would be redeployed to Parc Newydd.

Extra Care

Residents and relatives asked questions regarding the model of care used in Extra Care accommodation: how the care and support is delivered; what facilities are available and their suitability for residents with varying degrees of need; and who would be eligible. Several relatives expressed a view that they would be unhappy to move their loved one into an Extra Care facility.

Moving residents to alternative care facilities

Participants requested information regarding how transition arrangements would be managed if a decision were made to close the care home. Residents and relatives asked questions regarding choice of alternative provision and what the timescales would be to make that transition. One relative asked if suitable alternatives could not be found in the short-term, whether their loved one would be able to stay until other arrangements were made.

One relative asked about the circumstances of a loved one with a Learning Disability and enquired whether she would have to move out to move back into Garth Olwg.

There was a strong view from both residents and relatives that the majority would want to remain in placements local to the current care home because they liked the community but also for the transport links for visiting relatives. One resident expressed a view that they did not want to move further away from their family and would prefer a transfer to a facility in Bridgend County Borough and asked whether this was feasible.

Concerns were raised about local alternatives and their suitability. In terms of Council-run Parc Newydd, there were concerns about current capacity and whether it could accommodate all the residents who may want to stay local and move there. One relative asked whether the Council could restrict access to Parc Newydd for new admissions and reserve sufficient capacity to allow all residents from Garth Olwg to transfer across if that were their choice. There was a perception that the rooms were smaller than those in Garth Olwg and that the outlook was not as favourable, which would have an adverse impact upon the well-being of residents. There were also concerns raised about the housing estate near Parc Newydd. There were perceptions that 'undesirable' people living there were potentially involved in risky, anti-social behaviour.

In terms of local independent provision, while people acknowledged that there were other independent sector providers in the vicinity, this was not an option that residents or their relatives had initially considered. They wanted to go to Garth Olwg because the facility and level of care were excellent.

Communication and information

Both residents and relatives enquired why they were not made aware of the options sooner.

They also enquired about the process of reporting and decision making – would they be able to see a copy of the independent consultation report in advance and how would it be published. They also asked when the Council reports would be published and how they would be able to access copies.

They also enquired about whether Council officers had seen the numerous petitions that had been generated and whether they had been formally submitted. As the Council's proposed option for Garth Olwg potentially has the greatest effect upon residents and relatives, it was felt to be unfortunate that their consultation event was the last in the schedule

Other issues

- Why were consultants commissioned to undertake this exercise, presumably at significant cost?
- What would happen to the money (capital receipts) from the other residential care homes identified in the preferred options Cabinet report?
- Why is the capital money used for infrastructure development and not staff/workforce development?
- Is the Council investing more money in older people now than in previous years?
- What is the purpose of the new Council developments in Llantrisant?

Conclusions

Given that Garth Olwg was initially earmarked for closure and decommissioning during the last consultation process and then given a reprieve, elevated levels of anger and anxiety had been generated by this being put forward as an option again. Residents and relatives unanimously opposed the proposal.

It was evident that both residents and relatives place a very high value on this Council-run care facility because of the quality of care, the dedication of staff and the homely environment that had been created. This had led them to put forward alternative options for the Council to consider.

Appendix 3

Reports from Individual Events with Staff and Managers

a) Staff Event at Sobell Leisure Centre

No members of staff attended the event.

b) Staff Event at Rhondda Sports Centre

Ystrad Fechan

Questions were raised initially about the temporary closure of Ystrad Fechan and the rationale behind the decision. Staff were aware that children's services were now making use of the premises but they had not been told anything about this decision, even as a matter of courtesy.

This had left them feeling angry and disappointed. *"We feel let down again by the Council."*

Another said: *"We feel in limbo. This has gone on too long...we have been here before."*

There were questions about the long-term plans for Ystrad Fechan and whether children's services were going to be there permanently or whether residents and staff were going to return eventually.

One member of staff said: *"We worked there for so long, we didn't want to leave."*

Another said: *"Fair enough that we've moved. However, if it reopens, surely as it's my home we can go back in?"*

Proposal

Staff members felt their greatest concern about the entire process was the uncertainty, the 'not knowing.'

There were also concerns raised by staff from Ferndale House about the level of service provision in that part of the county. There was a feeling that there had been cuts and service erosion over recent years.

One staff member said: *"There's nothing here in our valley. There is no elderly service or day services from Maerdy to Porth – there is nothing available for the elderly."*

Another member of staff said: *"I never thought I'd be sitting here once again fighting for the Rhonda Fach. All services have been taken away and everything is in Rhondda Fawr."*

While questions were asked about the location of the new facility and the timescales for the changes to take place, there remained an entrenched belief that the current proposals were an inadequate response to the needs of older people in the Rhondda Fach. There was concern about the proposed balance of dementia beds to Extra Care places, given increasing numbers of older people experiencing cognitive impairment. Staff felt that, before any long-term proposals were developed, the Council needed to address workforce pressures.

Workforce (recruitment, retention and security)

While there was considerable anxiety about what the proposals meant for staff job security in the future, there was also a strong focus around the recruitment and retention challenges for the Council's adult care workforce more generally. Staff felt that there were still too many vacancies, with not enough permanent appointments being made and too much reliance on casual contracts to cover those vacancies.

Staff felt that there needed to be more incentives for people who work in care. Staff wanted to see proper career pathways created, so that people could train and develop in permanent roles, ensuring greater stability for individuals and the Council over the longer term. There was also a feeling that staff loyalty needed to be properly recognised by the Council.

There was a discussion about the implications of the proposals for the current staff cohort in relation to the management of change – what it meant for job security; how the job would change; what it meant for local staff in terms of redeployment; what the effects would be on working hours and pensions and what the consequences would be if another provider (other than the Council) was commissioned to deliver care in the new facility.

Independent sector

Concerns were raised about the quality of care and standards of facilities available in the independent sector. It was suggested that the quality of Council care homes was much higher. There was a strong feeling that any new facility should be Council-operated because a public service focus and motivation were perceived to be better for residents, staff and the community.

One staff member said: *“The private sector is all about money – not care focused.”*

Extra Care

There was a discussion held around the development of an Extra Care facility, how the model worked and how flexible it was to manage the decline experienced by an individual along their dementia pathway, as well as accommodating the general demands of dementia EMI placements. One staff member expressed the view that the number of dementia beds in the proposal for Option 3 was not sufficient to meet demand and that it should be doubled (from 10 to 20).

Other issues

Staff commented on current NHS pressures to discharge in a timely way people from hospital in need of care and questioned why there was not a higher degree of demand for beds in care homes.

Conclusions

A strong commitment to residents, other staff colleagues and the needs of the community was demonstrated throughout the meeting.

Staff were under no illusion that Ferndale House requires updating. However, there were concerns and considerable anxieties raised about job security.

Notwithstanding the consultation process, staff felt strongly that the Council had already made its mind up about the proposals and that feedback would not lead to any real amendments.

c) Staff Event at Llantrisant Sports Centre

Proposal

Staff really wanted to know why Garth Olwg had been singled out again for closure? They expressed the view that the process was causing great anxiety, uncertainty and distress. Staff members said that the announcement of the proposals had a very strong impact upon their own Christmas celebrations.

Staff members raised their concerns about the effect the proposals and the consultation were having on the residents for whom they care.

One staff member said: *“Since the (residential) consultation, residents have been really bad. One resident did not want to leave their room as they are very low. We have to go back and deal with the upset. We*

don't want to have to deal with their questions and we are worried about answering them because we don't want to cause residents more upset."

Another staff member said: *"I think change is good sometimes, but it is scary. The residents that are going through it now, are going through it a second time. We were told after the previous decision that the home was going to be refurbished but that never happened."*

Several questions were raised regarding the rationale behind the proposal:

- Would there be enough residential beds in the locality to accommodate current residents looking to move to other settings?
- Was there still a high need for residential care given the NHS pressures on discharging into the community?
- Had staffing pressures and vacancies affected residential care capacity?
- Was this just a finance/cost cutting exercise?

A discussion then took place about details underpinning the proposed facility providing supported living for people with Learning Disabilities and whether the location was the right one for those individuals and the community. Questions were posed regarding:

- How many people were on the Learning Disability Waiting list for supported living?
- What would be the age range of people accommodated in any new facility?
- What level of disability or challenging behaviour would be in the statement of purpose for the setting?
- Would it be a secure unit?
- Were the local community and school made aware of the proposal?

Alternative proposals

Staff raised the point that given there is already an elderly frail resident with a Learning Disability in Garth Olwg. Could the Council not look to bring people together in one setting rather than segregate them? Could the facility not accommodate a mix of elderly frail and learning disabilities?

As one staff member said: *"We've had people with learning disabilities come into Garth Olwg before and that has never been a problem. Seems you don't care about the other people who have learning disabilities coming into us."*

Moving residents to alternative care facilities

Participants requested information regarding how transition arrangements would be managed if a decision to close the care home was made and what the proposed timeframe would be from the start of that process to decommissioning.

Extra Care

There was a discussion about the role of Extra Care in the County, the staff model, the financial implications for the Council, the Council's longer-term ambition; its role as a direct provider and/or commissioner and what implementing the model meant for the future of other residential care settings, like Parc Newydd and Cae Glas.

Staff felt that workforce stability would be achieved only when answers to these concerns had been agreed and implemented. Confidence in the Council's overall plans was seen as an important factor in securing new staff and retaining the current workforce. One question they posed was that if staff took the opportunity for redeployment to Parc Newydd, what guarantees could be given that they would not be in the same situation in two or three-years' time?

Workforce (Recruitment, retention and security)

There was a discussion about the implications of the proposals for the current staff cohort in relation to the management of change – what it meant for job security; what it meant for local staff in terms of redeployment to other care homes like Parc Newydd; what the effects would be on working hours, rights and pensions; and whether there would be redundancies.

Communication and information

Staff enquired why they were not made directly aware of the options sooner.

One staff member said: *“We found out via Facebook, before we were told collectively.”*

They also enquired about the process of reporting and decision making. Information was sought about when they would be able to see a copy of all the reports going to Cabinet, when the Cabinet meeting would take place and how they would be informed about any decision made. Staff wanted to be informed personally and in a timely way, rather than seeing anything published second-hand on a website or via social media.

They also enquired whether Council officers had seen the numerous petitions that had been generated and whether they had been formally submitted.

Conclusions

Initially, there was considerable frustration and anger that Garth Olwg had been earmarked again for closure and decommissioning. However, towards the end of the meeting, staff expressed more their feeling of resignation that the decision had already been made.

As one member of staff stated: *“I feel as though it is already a done deal.”*

Another said: *“The reason there were no people there (at the public drop-in) is because they fought last time to keep Garth Olwg open.”*

It was clear that staff do not want continued uncertainty and feel that a decision needs to be made but that they should be treated with courtesy and informed directly as soon as it is made.

d) Managers Event

Consultation Engagement

Concern was expressed about the scheduling of the consultation events, particularly in relation to Garth Olwg (given the potential impact of the proposals on its residents and staff). It was felt that these events should not be the last ones to take place. It was evident that many of the residents have the capacity to understand what is going on and the scheduling reinforces their view that they are not being properly considered.

Proposals

Managers felt that the proposals and the consultation process were generating a significant level of anxiety and uncertainty for both residents and staff.

One manager stated that the report to Cabinet did not place enough emphasis on how the proposals were going to make Council-run facilities a better place for residents to live. Their perception was that the report was ‘bed number focused’, as opposed to person centred. It was suggested that the proposals do not give enough reassurance to residents (and their relatives) that this was going to be their lasting home.

While understanding that the decision-making process needs to operate properly, managers expressed their view that a final decision should be made quickly to bring a greater level of reassurance and stability to the residential care system in the County Borough. The point was clearly expressed that the Council

could not keep going over the same ground every couple of years. Managers felt that the system requires a greater level of consistency and continuity. It was essential, therefore, that senior officers engage in effective, long-term planning with operational managers to achieve this. Matters such as future demographic trends, levels of demand (especially older adults with dementia), models of care, geographic coverage and workforce planning should be considered carefully.

It was felt that staff need a greater level of reassurance about the investment that will be made in new facilities but also in the care homes being retained. Following the last consultation, commitments were made about investing money in the care homes to be retained but that did not happen. It was felt that detailed plans for investment in homes to be retained must be shared with managers and staff at the earliest possible juncture, so that both groups felt empowered to help shape those plans.

Managers anticipated that residents and staff would be asking about the location of any new facilities because in many communities, land is a scarce commodity.

Moving residents to Extra Care homes

In relation to any change that may occur following the Council's decision-making process, there was a unanimous feeling that any disruption to the residents must be kept to a minimum. More detailed information was requested about transition planning, as well as the timing of any placement changes to ensure seamless, continuity of care.

Workforce (recruitment, retention, security)

While there was considerable anxiety about what the proposals meant for staff job security in the interim, there was also a strong focus on the recruitment and retention challenges for the Council's adult care workforce more generally.

As one manager stated: *"We have a really good group of staff, and we are aware that, if they leave, they are unlikely to come back."*

It was felt that the Council needed to give this thorough consideration because, with the current level of workforce pressures in terms of vacancies carried and staff burn-out, careful planning would be required to ensure safe and viable services could be maintained.

One manager said: *"Staff feel there has been a mass exodus following the last Cabinet review and the pandemic. We lost many staff and now we are struggling to accommodate people."*

There was a discussion about the number of current vacancies and the role of casual contracts to cover some of these posts. Concerns were raised that not enough people with casual contracts were moving into permanent positions and this must be resolved soon. The Council has to realise how long it would take to train new members of staff to the level of those who may potentially leave its employment.

Communication and information

Managers queried how the decision-making process would take place in terms of timing and how they and staff would be informed of any decisions made. Questions were also asked about the speed of the change process and transition planning following any decision.

A query was raised about whether hard copies of the consultation document had been sent out to residents, relatives and staff - not everyone has access to internet.

Conclusions

Managers clearly expressed their concerns about the potential impact of the proposals on residents and staff, and they were rightfully carrying the anxieties of those two groups into the meeting.

It was evident that managers wanted to move to a greater level of continuity and stability across services for accommodating older people in the county. Maintaining a state of constant review was not only unsettling for residents and relatives but also had a serious impact on recruitment and retention. They all wanted to work with senior managers and to take an active role in the process of change, thereby ensuring that the service in the county was well designed and fit for purpose.

Managers understandably wanted to be involved in the transition planning process following any decision about the proposals, but they also wanted early input into planning any new facilities, if that was the direction of travel set by the Council.

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KEY CONSULTATION THEMES

A summary of the key themes that emerged from the consultation, including officer responses, is provided below.

Impact on residents and families

The distress to residents and relatives caused by moving home, or by supporting their elderly relative to move home, has been cited as a main reason not to decommission. Respondents raised concerns about the location of alternative homes and whether families would be able to visit new locations. Families and residents raised concerns about the impact on friendship groups that had formed and the strong relationships with staff that had developed over years.

The Council acknowledges that asking residents to move home, whether this is on a temporary or permanent basis, is likely to cause disruption and distress for residents and their families and this concern is evidenced by the number of responses to the consultation on this theme. The Council has experience of successfully relocating residents and it is satisfied that through careful, detailed, person-centred planning, suitable alternatives can be found for current residents with as little disruption and distress as possible. Ensuring that families and friends can continue to visit will be an important part of this planning process. The Council is satisfied that for the majority of residents, the distress and any negative impact of the move can be sufficiently mitigated and will be relatively short lived.

A dedicated team of Social Care Practitioners will be allocated specifically to work alongside care home residents and their relatives should Cabinet decide to decommission a care home. These Practitioners will carry out full care assessments for all residents and these will generate an up-to-date person-centred care and support plan for each resident. The care and support plans will help to ensure that residents, their families and the social work staff, are fully informed of their care needs when residents come to make decisions on future accommodation, should the home be decommissioned. This will enable a full understanding of people's preferences for their future care, enabling beds to be reserved in the alternative accommodation.

Arrangements will be made to ensure that residents are fully supported to move to alternative accommodation. Staff from the home would assist residents in their moves if required to do so by relatives or residents and would be encouraged to visit after each move to ensure that the residents are settling in, and their needs are fully understood.

Impact on staffing

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council is proud of the level of care its staff provides and their skills and capabilities are valued. Whilst there continues to be investment in the workforce, the Council acknowledges more needs to be done to improve the stability and confidence of this workforce alongside improving recruitment and retention. These challenges are not unique to Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Following the public consultation and only when the Council is in a position to make decisions which will affect staff, there will be a separate staff consultation exercise during which the Council's Management of Change procedure will be followed. The Council's Human Resources Department will work closely with the Service and Trade Unions in order to support staff through the changes at the appropriate time.

Staff would have the opportunity and be encouraged, where possible, to be redeployed and relocated with residents to a retained Council residential care home. In such cases, staff from the residential care home would also assist residents in their moves if required to do so by relatives or residents and would be encouraged to visit after each move to ensure that the residents are settling in, and their needs are fully understood.

Council's Strategy in terms of future need and the perceived need for less care homes now and in the future and the assumptions made

The way in which individual care needs are met and delivered has changed considerably since the Council's Care Homes were opened. The Council is aware that it needs to plan for the future and is looking at different ways to provide care and choices for its vulnerable adults and older people population.

The need for "standard" residential care provided at the Council's 9 residential care homes will continue to decline, alongside increases in community based support accommodation and more specialist dementia care accommodation. The Council is required to respond accordingly to this change in needs. Replacing our existing old care homes with new standard residential care homes is not what is required, and the Council's priority must be to ensure that with partners we create sufficient specialist dementia care provision and more opportunity for people to be cared for independently in the community by increasing options like extra care housing. This is about making sure we invest our resources in the right way so that people get the right level of care for their needs.

The Council wants to provide a range of services so that needs can be catered for on an individual basis. The Council acknowledges that some people will still need support in residential care homes. As per the Cabinet report, there are currently 34 registered care and nursing homes in Rhondda Cynon Taf, offering 1308 beds, with 184 vacancies. With these beds, and current and proposed additional extra care housing, the Council believes there will be sufficient accommodation care services for older people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Quality of care now and in future / concern regarding independent care home market

A number of respondents raised concerns relating to the quality and cost of local independent homes when compared to the Council's in-house provision. A few respondents were concerned that the independent sector was profit oriented and therefore felt that standard of care may sometimes be lower. Rhondda Cynon Taf is served by a number of excellent independent sector providers that are subject to the same regulations and inspection requirements as the Council's in-house services. Any cost implications, including the requirement to pay top ups, would be considered when looking at the suitable alternatives available locally for each individual, although it is worth noting that there is sufficient capacity in the Council's Residential Care Homes to meet current and future need.

Strong resistance to decommissioning: Garth Olwg from residents, families and staff.

It is clearly positive that the residents of Garth Olwg residential care home are well settled and content with their accommodation and good quality care. The Council are acutely conscious of the depth of feeling aroused among care home residents, families, local communities, and staff. The overwhelming message from people and their families can be simply summarised as wanting all Council in-house care homes to remain open and it is a testament to the skills and commitment of the staff at these homes that this is the case, and the residents are happy there.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of respondents to the consultation are not in favour of the home closing and the reasons offered in the consultation response have some validity in themselves, it is also worth recognising that respondents are directly impacted by the proposals and the Council must also consider the wider context of the current and future needs and expectations of all people, including those with learning disability in all our communities.

Officers consider that the recommendation put forward in this report are appropriate when taking into consideration all relevant factors and themes arising from the consultation process and EIA.

It is worth noting, there are two extra care schemes, two Council Care Homes, plus independent sector care homes within a 5-mile radius of the current Garth Olwg residential care home that can meet the needs of residents, should Cabinet agree to proceed with the recommended preferred option.

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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: **Jill Bow**
 Service Area: **Adult Services**
 Date: **10th February 2023**

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

Residential Care Homes for older people.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet decisions, and the further supporting information included in the report, have informed the proposals for the revised future service delivery model for the Council's residential care homes. These proposals, which are in line with current policy direction and current and future need, are summarised below:

- Retaining the current service provision at five current Council care homes – Clydach Court in Trealaw, Pentre House in Pentre, Tegfan in Trecynon, Cae Glas in Hawthorn and Parc Newydd in Talbot Green.
- Providing a new accommodation with 40 Extra Care apartments and 20 residential dementia beds in Treorchy – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru and the health board. It would be located on land near Ystrad Fechan Care Home. The care home is temporarily closed with no residents and would be permanently decommissioned.

- Providing a new accommodation with 20 Extra Care apartments and 10 residential dementia beds in Ferndale – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Ferndale House Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed.
- Providing a new accommodation with 25 Extra Care apartments and 15 residential dementia beds in Mountain Ash – this development would be explored with Linc Cymru. It would be located on land near the existing Troedyrhiw Care Home. The home would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed.
- Remodelled accommodation to provide care for people with learning disabilities in adulthood, in Church Village – this would be achieved by redeveloping Garth Olwg Care Home. The care home would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

In considering this proposal, the Council will need to meet its requirements under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and accompanying Part 4 code of practice. In addition, all social care staff undertake Equality and Diversity training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework.

1.e) Please outline who this proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age (Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people)	<p>Negative (in respect of immediate residents through the potential of being relocated to another home)</p> <p>Positive (future provision and state of the art facilities, better services and provision, more choice for older people, will effectively meet complexity of individual's needs).</p>	<p>The proposal will impact on older people as the care home provides primarily long-term accommodation for older people, including some people who have dementia.</p> <p>Residents and their families during previous consultations have raised concerns over the impact of moving to alternative accommodation will have. In particular, people are concerned that moving will cause stress and illness amongst residents, break the ties people have within the home and local community, and make it difficult for families and friends to continue to provide the support and care they do currently. We will ensure that the involvement and encouragement is embedded throughout the process and will ensure development of transitional plans for each resident.</p> <p>Adult Social Care will need to take the individual health and wellbeing of each resident, as well as</p>	<p>We have more recently successfully relocated 8 residents from Ystrad Fechan, 15 from Dan Y Mynydd and 10 from Bronllwyn to other Council care homes with no detrimental effect. We will draw on previous experience and utilise best practice to support this process</p> <p>Alzheimer's Association, Changing Care Providers (Accessed 17 December 2021)</p> <p>Achieving closure: good practice in supporting older people during residential care closures' Glasby, Jon; Robinson, Suzanne; Allen, Kerry (2011)</p> <p>At the time of writing, 14 residents will be affected by the proposal for Garth Olwg. Should the decision be agreed</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>the needs of families and carers, into account as part of its arrangements for supporting residents to move, should the proposals be agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>We will assist in ensuring that the risks which can be associated with a move are kept to a minimum. This is based on thorough assessments, including risk to health and wellbeing, and ensuring that all factors are fully taken into account in the process of identifying where a resident moves to and ensuring the move itself is properly handled. (Alzheimer’s Association, Changing Care Providers December 2021), outlines processes and good practice examples to support the service to assist residents/relatives to relocate to an independent provider should they choose to do so.</p> <p>We will also follow best practice guidance (Achieving Closure: good practice in supporting older people during residential care closures 2011) and lessons learned from previous residents that have been relocated</p>	<p>by cabinet a further EIA will be undertaken to reflect the decision.</p> <p>Our service records indicate that a proportion of residents have some age-related needs. – Age profile of residents is 70 – 95 years of age.</p> <p>Previous consultations – Cabinet Report - Modernisation of Residential Care Services - September 2019</p> <p>New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered positive outcomes for older people, including those with dementia and their carers and families.</p> <p>Strategy to modernise Accommodation options and deliver a programme of Extra Care housing (2016 – 2026)</p> <p>Residents are regularly assessed so that changing needs can be identified</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>To ensure continuity of care for residents, staff from current homes will help with the transition to minimise disruption faced by residents.</p> <p>However, there is a potential positive impact in the future. The proposed development of new accommodation with care, including extra care apartments and residential dementia provision in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Ferndale will ensure, if agreed, that older people, including those with disabilities will have better quality care accommodation that is more suited to their individual needs and wishes; thereby improving the lives of adults that live in the accommodation. If these new developments are approved, they will have state of the art facilities and better services and provision of services for users. These new facilities will also mean a greater choice for older people needing to access the service and means that we will be able to meet the complexity of individual's needs.</p>	<p>- Social Workers with experience in moving residents would be involved in any change of home required.</p> <p>Extra care housing provides care and support for older and vulnerable people in settings and in ways that people say that they prefer.</p> <p>Provision of extra care housing is aimed at enabling vulnerable people to maintain their independence and ensures that a range of services are developed that meet the diverse needs of all communities across Rhondda Cynon Taf.</p> <p>Investment and modernisation will support changes in the demographics of the elderly population, and will meet the needs of both frail and more active older people and provide accommodation to meet the aspirations of the current elderly community and of future generations</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p><u>Council's Residential Care Home Staff:</u></p> <p>The age profile of staff ranges from 18 to 70, around two thirds of staff are over 50 years of age.</p> <p>To mitigate any compulsory redundancies, opportunities for redeployment will be available and utilising the Council's Enhanced Voluntary Early Retirement and Voluntary Redundancy Scheme for eligible staff, as part of on-going workforce planning arrangements.</p>	<p>To meet current and future demand the council has committed to the development of 320 units of extra care housing, we currently provide 140 units.</p> <p>68 staff will be potentially directly affected by this proposal.</p> <p>35 staff - Garth Olwg</p> <p>33 staff - Ystrad Fechan (the home has been temporarily closed since August 2022); all staff have been relocated to other in-house homes.</p> <p>Age profile of staff - 19 years – 70 years.</p> <p>Staffing profile from ITrent</p> <p>All staff affected by the proposal will be supported via the Management of Change protocol.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Disability (people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</p>	<p>Negative (in respect of immediate residents through the potential of being relocated to another home)</p> <p>Positive (future provision and state of the art facilities, better services and provision, more choice for older people, will effectively meet complexity of individual's needs).</p>	<p>The frail nature of many of the residents and the fact that a number also have dementia means that in terms of disability, the proposals could result in a negative impact in the immediate future for people affected who might be deemed to be disabled as well as elderly.</p> <p>Dementia can impact upon on a persons' capacity to make an informed decision about moving home, whether this is on a permanent or temporary basis and those who lack capacity to make this decision would need to be supported by relatives, people with power of attorney or independent advocates where required in accordance with mental capacity law. Some residents require support with their mobility and/or have sensory impairments.</p> <p>We will ensure that the involvement and engagement with families / carers is embedded throughout the process and will ensure the development of transitional plans for each resident to minimise disruption as much as possible.</p>	<p>Detailed assessments outline the needs of individuals - care and support plans are reviewed and assessment/care and support plans are updated to reflect these changes.</p> <p>This information is outlined at the assessment stage and care and support plans are subject to on-going review</p> <p>Previous consultations.</p> <p>New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered positive outcomes for older people, including those with dementia and people with learning disabilities and their carers and families.</p> <p>An <u>Easy Read</u>, accessible format of the information booklet and questionnaire was created and supplied during the meetings. One resident with a learning disability</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>We will need to take the individual health and wellbeing of each resident, as well as the needs of families and carers, into account as part of its arrangements for supporting residents to move, if the proposals be agreed by Cabinet.</p> <p>Assessments will be completed; relatives and advocates will be consulted to ensure location and facilities of their choice meets their needs.</p> <p>We will assist in ensuring that the risks which can be associated with a move are kept to a minimum. This is based on thorough assessments, including risk to health and wellbeing, and ensuring that all factors are fully taken into account in the process of identifying where a resident moves to and ensuring the move itself is properly handled.</p> <p>We will also follow best practice guidance and lessons learned from previous residents that have been relocated.</p> <p>To ensure continuity of care for residents, staff from current homes will support the transition to minimise. disruption faced by residents.</p>	<p>accessed the Easy Read format to ensure full engagement in the process.</p> <p>Detailed pre-admission checklist has been developed and implemented to support assessment and admissions</p> <p>Residents have been able to step down from nursing placements to an extra care environment maximising their independence –</p> <p>Evidenced outlined in individuals’ case studies – Statutory Director’s Annual Report.</p> <p>Annual Review data / documentation.</p> <p>Learning Disability Needs Analysis Data</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		<p>However, there is a potential positive impact in the future. The proposed development of new accommodation with care, including extra care apartments and residential dementia provision in Treorchy, Mountain Ash and Ferndale will ensure, if agreed, that older people, including those with disabilities will have better quality care accommodation that is more suited to their individual needs and wishes; thereby improving the lives of adults that live in the accommodation.</p> <p>In addition, the proposed development of Garth Olwg provides opportunity to support people with a learning disability to effectively meet their assessed needs and existing and future demand as more people are living longer, with increased complex care and support needs. If agreed, the redevelopment of Garth Olwg represents a significant positive step forward to achieving modern high quality care accommodation to people with learning disabilities.</p>	

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Gender Reassignment (anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)	Neutral (in respect of immediate residents) Positive (in respect of future provision and services)	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic. All social care staff undertake Equality and Diversity training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework. The Service will liaise with the Council's EIA and Training Departments to ensure specific training and support on Gender Reassignment is available and accessible to staff	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Marriage / Civil Partnership (people who are married or in a civil partnership)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity (women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Race (ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic. Staff from ethnic minority groups cultural requirements are taken into consideration and are supported to maintain their religious and cultural beliefs.	The service employs staff from ethnic minority groups and will continue to support employment and admissions for individuals that share this characteristic. We currently employ 3 staff from ethnic minority groups
Religion or Belief (people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)	Neutral	It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sex (women and men, girls and boys)	Negative (in terms of immediate residents and staff due to potential of being relocated to another home) Positive (in terms of future provision and services).	Immediate impact may have more of an effect on women as there are more female residents than male. We will accommodate residents wishes / choice where possible by placing them on units with other residents of the same sex.	Female residents are more than men. Women are more prominent within care sector workforce

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Sexual Orientation (bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)	Neutral	<p>It is considered that the proposal will have no direct impact on people who share this characteristic.</p> <p>The service has supported LGBTQ residents by providing appropriate/ private space and support for people to explore their sexual orientation</p> <p>https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/policybristol/briefings-and-reports-pdfs/2017-briefings--reports-pdfs/PolicyBristol_Briefing_November_2017_Inclusive_Care_Homes.pdf</p>	The service has a diverse makeup of staff, many of whom identify as LGB+. We will continue to support employment for people who share this characteristic.
Armed Forces Community (anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)	Positive (in respect of future provision and services and new residents)	Residents from this community are supported within extra care, where appropriate, and will be signposted to relevant services and events relating to the Armed Forces to enhance their wellbeing.	Armed Forces Veterans are supported within our extra care facility and the service will continue to support individuals that share this characteristic
Carers (anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)	Neutral	The proposal would have a neutral impact on carers, as the Council is continuing to provide accommodation with care to people with an assessed need. However, proposals may have an impact on carers in terms of ease of access to see a relative or friend if they move into another	Previous consultations New models of accommodation with care developed over recent years in the county borough have delivered

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		care home. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	positive outcomes for older people, and their carers and families. There will be assessment of impact on carers during and following consultation stage.

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

Not applicable

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision?

Yes

No

Name: Jill Bow

Position: Head of Accommodation Services

Date: 10th February 2023

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services. Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parents and vulnerable families • Pensioners • Looked after children • Homeless people • Students • Single adult households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in the most deprived areas in Wales • People with low literacy and numeracy • People who have experienced the asylum system • People misusing substances • People of all ages leaving a care setting • People involved in the criminal justice system
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PLEASE NOTE: All individuals are means tested prior to admission. Most of our current residents' care costs are funded via this method.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i>	Neutral	<p>It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.</p> <p>Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.</p>	<p>All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required.</p> <p>There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.</p>

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Material Deprivation <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Area Deprivation <i>(where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required in line with fairer charging protocol.

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
		continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage.
Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged)</i>	Neutral	It is not envisaged that there would be any financially adverse impact on affected residents as a result of any decision(s) made in respect of the proposals. Transport links to any alternative home and the ability (including cost implications) of family and friends to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process.	All current residents will have been financially assessed to determine any contribution required. There will be assessment of impact during and following consultation stage. Reviewed data of family / friends contact/address details to ascertain suitable location of alternative accommodation in line with choice of home.

SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified.

The decisions taken by Cabinet will be communicated to all residents, their families, and staff. If a decision is taken to decommission one or more of the Council's care homes:

- Adult Services will initiate the Council's Care Home Closure Protocol in relation to each home, and decommissioning will be approached in a planned and carefully managed way, in line with national best practice guidance. This would include the involvement of residents, families, friends and staff from the Care Home.
- Adult Services will use its experience of supporting residents, their families and staff when individuals have needed to move to a new care setting, for example from a care home to a nursing home or where services have closed in the past.
- Residents and families will be at the centre of discussions.
- Staff in Adult Services will make themselves available to support families and care home residents to make informed decisions. This would take into account specific issues such as long standing friendships and transport links to any alternative home and the ability of carers to continue to visit their loved one will be important in any planning process. Where appropriate other care professionals including health staff and GPs would be involved. Staff will also work closely with residents, their families and, if relevant, any new care providers; facilitating visits to potential new homes where appropriate and developing up to date relevant information to support a seamless transition
- Advocates will be arranged to support discussions were needed.
- Discussions and decisions will be overseen by an Officer Group that will ensure a person-centred approach is taken with residents, their families and advocates, if appropriate. Adult Services will also support people to move closer to their

families, including those who may wish to move outside of Rhondda Cynon Taf or would like to consider any of the new developments in extra care that are being supported by the Council.

Staff in the Council's care homes will also have dedicated Human Resources support allocated to minimise the impact of any decisions in line with the Council's Management of Change Policy. Adult Services will also work closely with Trade Unions.

4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

To be updated when redeployment opportunities have been identified and expressions of interest for Enhanced Voluntary Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy Scheme received.

4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

The outcome of previous consultations and Cabinet reports, together with supporting information from local adult social care records and analysis of previous and current service provision have informed the proposals. Along with National policy and national and local strategy developments.

4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

The Let's Talk public consultation conducted in part by the Council's Consultation Team took place from 12th December 2022 to 27th January 2023 in order obtain as many views as possible from interested stakeholders to enable the Cabinet to make informed decisions on the preferred options for each home.

Practice Solutions Ltd, Abercynon, were commissioned to undertake an independent consultation on the preferred options with residents and their families and staff from of the Council's residential care homes that are the subject of this report.

In addition, through co-production and support of Cwm Taf People First, 1 online information session and 15 in-person sessions were held across Rhondda Cynon Taff areas to gain views from people with a learning disability. Overall, there were a total of 74 easy read surveys completed.

Detailed information about the consultation and feedback received, including key themes on the preferred options for change are set out in the consultation reports.

The feedback received has been reviewed and analysed and can be summarised into the following key themes:

Officers have responded to the key themes collated from the consultation feedback in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report and provided mitigation where possible. There were no concerns put forward that could not be mitigated. In addition, the consultation responses have not identified any other viable options the Council has not considered.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

Following the consultation, the impact assessment will be reviewed and Cabinet will receive further reports on the progress and outcomes of the implementation of the preferred options, if agreed.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

To be determined following Cabinet's final decision.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

Director of Adult Services.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

The results of the monitoring will be assessed to inform future reports to Cabinet regarding the implementation of the preferred options, if agreed and of ongoing care market analysis for adult social care across health and social care

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Diversity and Inclusion team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in equality/Socio economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments

Diversity and Inclusion team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house. The consultation period ran from the 12 th December 2022 and ended on the 27 th January 2023. The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.	February 2023	The consultation has been appropriately publicised in order for anyone who wishes to have the opportunity to contribute. Following concerns raised from residents and relatives around relocating to another facility, we would use previous experience of managing home closures in line with best practice and implement a phased approach to closure so the service can focus and ensure the specific needs of our

<p>A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.</p> <p>To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the <u>Councils online consultation webpage</u> to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.</p> <p>3 public drop-in sessions were also held.</p> <p>Overall, 255 survey responses and 7 emails were Received to the consultation, along with 1 call to the Customer services phone line and 2 petitions.</p> <p>Overall, the majority of respondents agreed with option 1, to retain the current service provision at the 5 current Council Care Homes (69.4%), with 62.9% of the public agreeing with option 1.</p> <p>Service response from both residents and relatives indicate a high level of concern and anxiety around having to move from their care home.</p> <p>Through coproduction and with the support of RCT People First, 1 online information session and 15 in person sessions were held across the Rhondda, Cynon and Taff Ely areas to gain views from members of the public with a Learning Disability.</p>		<p>vulnerable residents are appropriately met. Residents would be supported to move by people they know eg staff in the care homes and families.</p> <p>This approach will be in accordance with the implementation plan that will be developed following the cabinet decision</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the need for increased dementia beds within the Ferndale proposal, but this will be in line with current trends and future demand.</p> <p>Involvement and engagement with residents, staff and families regarding the outcome of the consultation.</p> <p>On-going engagement with residents, families and staff will be undertaken via quarterly Regulation 73 visits to all our registered care home establishments.</p> <p>Implementation of a transitional plan.</p> <p>.</p>
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Overall, there were a total of 74 Easy Read surveys completed.

A common theme throughout the analysis were views relating to Garth Olwg residential care home and disagreement with that proposal (proposal 5), with suggestions that the home should be kept and improved.

Continuity of care has been a pertinent theme so far during the consultations, residents would like staff to accompany them when moving homes – families also think this is important

Concerns were raised regarding what will happen to the staff following Garth Olwg's proposed closure. Further comments were raised regarding care workers being undervalued nationally

Concerns were raised on the impact the closure would have on the residents as well as the local community. However, they agreed that modern facilities need to be built which will meet the care needs of the public in the future, including both Extra Care provision and accommodation with care for those with a learning disability

Overall, there was general support for the proposals outlined for Ferndale. Reassurance was provided to those in attendance that Ferndale House would be decommissioned when the new facility is developed. Those in attendance provided concern

<p>for current staff at the home regarding how they would be impacted by these proposals and the role of the housing association. They also felt that the proposed ratio for dementia residents needs to be increased and incorporated in the new proposal.</p> <p>Overall, 46.5% of residents agree with option 4, with 30% disagreeing and 23.5% stated that they didn't know".</p> <p>There was also continued praise and recognition to our care home management and staff team for the excellent quality of care provided within the Council's residential care homes.</p> <p>Putting the well-being of current care home residents and their families at the centre of the modernisation process was seen as essential</p> <p>People were especially anxious about how Council decisions would be implemented, especially during any the period of transition. They wanted any decisions to be accompanied by commitments to ensuring that safeguards would be in place, including prompt assessments of need, choice of placements, dignified and timely transfers, top ups where necessary and full involvement by staff in the homes.</p> <p>There was appreciation for local investment, modernisation, and purpose-built schemes for individuals, was expressed during the consultations.</p>		
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<p>This is evidenced in the minutes from the meetings held with families, residents, and staff.</p> <p>Staff emphasised that they needed stability within their working environment as there had been previous consultations over a significant period of time and they felt it was pivotal that a decision on the proposals needed to be verified.</p>		
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

The Council will take account of the challenges which the people affected by the proposals in this report face, ensuring that the impact of any changes is mitigated as detailed in the impact assessment, if they are to be implemented. Due to the nature of the people group, there would be a disproportionate impact on older people and people with a range of disabilities. The key potential impacts of the preferred options on people with protected characteristics particularly older people and carers are set out in the EIA. Alongside these, a number of mitigating actions have been proposed.

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Jill Bow

Position: Head of Accommodation Services

Date: 10th February 2023

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Neil Elliott

Position: Director Adult Services

Date: 16th February 2023

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

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WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	Modernisation of the Council’s Residential Care Homes
Department	Adult Social Services
Service Director	Neil Elliott
Officer Completing the WLIA	Jill Bow
Email	Jill.bow@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	07786523926
Brief Description	<p>New proposals to invest in new modern care accommodation.</p> <p>These proposals build on the already significant investment in care accommodation by this Council over recent years, will continue to provide access to local Council-led provision, while also addressing the longstanding oversupply of resident care provision and focussing on current and future demand needs by creating more modern care accommodation for people, which offers increased choice and independence in their local communities.</p> <p>Proposals are as follows:</p> <p>Retaining current service provision at five Council care homes – Clydach Court, Pentre House, Tegfan, Cae Glas and Parc Newydd.</p>

	<p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Treorchy. Ystrad Fechan Care Home, which is currently temporarily closed is recommended to be permanently decommissioned.</p> <p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Ferndale. Ferndale House Care Home would be decommissioned when this new accommodation is built.</p> <p>Providing a new extra care and residential dementia accommodation in Mountain Ash. Troedyrhiw Care Home would be decommissioned when the new accommodation is built.</p> <p>Providing a new supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities in Church Village, by redeveloping the existing Garth Olwg Care Home and would be decommissioned when suitable placements are found for its residents, in a home of their choice which meets their assessed needs.</p>
Date	February 2023
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Current and future service users Service user family, carers and friends Employees

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	<p>The aim of the proposal is to consult with residents, staff and families around potential future changes to current service delivery as part of the moderation of the Council's residential care home provision.</p> <p>The Consultation process will engage with residents, families, employees and the wider community, and will be undertaken in both Welsh and English and in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.</p>
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	Welsh language groups such as service users, employees and the wider community will continue to be able to contact the Council in the Welsh language, if they choose to do so, as this will provide continuity of service delivery. All documentation relevant to the proposed service change will be available bilingual formats

<p>Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned</p>	<p>The 2011 census indicated that of the 225,555 residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf, 12.3% (27,779) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 87.6% (197,776) were not able to speak Welsh. This can be compared to the All-Wales figures that showed, of the 2,955,841 residents living in Wales, 19.0% (562,016) were able to speak Welsh, whilst the remaining 81.0% (2,393,825) were not able to speak Welsh.</p> <p>Mwy Na Geiriau 2022 -2027 ('More than Just Words') is the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care. The aim of the framework is to ensure that organisations recognise that language is an intrinsic part of people's care and the offer of Welsh language services to people is so important. Ensuring positive well-being outcomes for individuals, is something which underpins the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014. The Codes of Practice under the Act require local authorities to ensure Welsh language services are built into service planning and delivery and that services are offered in Welsh, to Welsh speakers, without them having to request it as required by the 'Active</p> <p>Legislation and policy in Wales require that Welsh language services in social care are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the same standard and are as easily and promptly available as English medium services • As wide-ranging and thorough • Organisations shouldn't assume English as the default languages when providing their services • Welsh speakers should not be required to ask for a service in Welsh.
<p>Other relevant data or research</p>	<p>Recently released 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show that the anticipated increase in Welsh speakers across Wales as a whole has not been realised. The all-Wales figures showed a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers to 17.8% percent. There was a small increase in RCT, however – the percentage of our population who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%, and we saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough (from 27779 to 28556).</p> <p>RCT was also one of only for LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful, all neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider how it may impact the services we provide.”</p>

Breakdown of Welsh speaking residents and staff situated within the Council's residential care homes:

Garth Olwg - Residents 2– staff 0
Pentre House - Residents 1 - staff 3
Parc Newydd - Residents 0 - staff 2
Caeglas - Residents 0 - staff 2
Clydach Court - Residents 0 - staff 2
Ferndale House - Residents 0 - staff 3
Troedyrhiw House - Residents 0 - staff 1
Tegfan - Residents 0 - staff 4

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Previous Welsh Language Impact Assessments can be found on Inform by [clicking here](#).

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The proposal will have a positive impact on service users, staff and the wider community, to use the Welsh language, if Cabinet approve the proposal for the modernisation of the Council's residential care home services.</p> <p>Existing and new staff are being encouraged to begin Welsh language lessons and continue on their language journey. Six staff have recently completed The Welsh Language Level 1 training as part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework for social care workers.</p> <p>Recruit Welsh speakers to increase face-to-face Welsh language service provision</p>	<p>Welsh language Level 1 skills / training forms part of the Social Care Wales Induction Framework and is also incorporated into the Social Care Wales registration process. (All social care staff must complete the above as part of their registration process, this also applies to staff working for private sector organisations).</p> <p>The service has recently recruited another Welsh speaking social care worker who will be based in Tegfan residential care home - this appointment will increase the number of Welsh speaking staff based within the home (as outlined in the data section).</p>	<p>To actively offer Welsh language services to ensure that people's needs are understood and met, and those who access and work in residential care home services can rely on being treated with dignity and respect they deserve. As outlined in Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words') is the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health and social care.</p>

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g. Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative / Positive</p>	<p>The proposal would have a neutral impact on the numbers and/or percentages of Welsh speakers with service users, employees, and the wider community.</p> <p>Garth Olwg Care Home is based in the most “Welsh-speaking” area of the County Borough, and, if Cabinet agree to decommission it as a care home, this could potentially have negative impact on people’s ability to receive care in an area where Welsh Language is more prevalent than others. However, in adult services we are committed as a care service to providing the Welsh language “Active Offer” irrespective of individual service location in line with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027</p>	<p>All new staff who don’t already meet Level 1 Welsh requirements undertake online Level 1 training, (2-hour online course). This process is incorporated into our Employee Induction Framework.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will also be able to access all consultation documentation in the Language of Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will have the option of the resident’s/staff consultation meeting being discussed with them in the medium of Welsh</p> <p>RCTs 5-year strategy requires the Council to increase Welsh language skills of our workforce. In addition, the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050</p>	<p>Staff training to enhance learners’ bilingual skills</p> <p>Work with the relevant departments/ services to Provide online course for beginners that’s tailored to those working in care</p> <p>Advise residents of the homes that have Welsh speaking staff, so they have an opportunity to converse in the medium of Welsh if they choose to do so.</p> <p>Utilise our pre-admission checklist for the relocation of residents as this will highlight residents Welsh language preference.</p>

		<p>('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.</p> <p>If agreed, the decommissioning of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents), who would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present. Although there are possible negative impacts that need to be acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts</p>	<p>strategy wants a million Welsh Speakers by 2050.</p> <p>The service currently has 17 staff and 2 service users who can communicate in Welsh.</p>	<p>Recruiting Welsh speakers will contribute to creating this environment and would increase opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p>
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		<p>in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking</p> <p>Staff are actively encouraged and supported to learn Welsh and speak Welsh in work.</p> <p>Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service.</p> <p>All staff records include details of language preference.</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales Care Home Inspection reports are available bilingually.</p>		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Positive	<p>The proposal will have a positive effect on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Legislation places a duty on Council's to consider the Welsh language in accessing, commissioning, and delivering care to individuals in order to ensure that they experience the best possible outcomes.</p>	<p>Consultation documentation is published in hard copy and online in both Welsh and English and includes a response proforma to enable collection of the views of stakeholders.</p> <p>All Council residential care homes are named in Welsh</p> <p>All communication is bilingual. Enquiries / comments/ complaints, emails /out of office notifications are bilingual, and if</p>	<p>Service users, staff and the wider community will be able to use the Welsh language, when they are given the opportunity to express their views on the proposal during the consultation process.</p> <p>Supporting access to Welsh language for service users/staff via radio, television, and books.</p>

		Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service	Welsh is the preferred language, they will be responded to in Welsh.	<p>Review promotional materials when consulting with residents in order to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>Service to explore opportunities to deliver Welsh medium activities in our care home settings</p>
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g. increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through</p>	Positive	<p>Continue to monitor and improve systems in place to ensure that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.</p> <p>Welsh Language is embedded into the Social Care Wales</p>	The consultation process will follow the Welsh Language standards as will all correspondence with service users and staff.	The service supports Welsh speaking staff to communicate with Welsh speaking residents and colleagues in their preferred language.

<p>the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>		<p>Induction Framework – staff wellbeing meetings form an integral part of this framework.</p>	<p>Job descriptions / advertisements are presented in a bilingual format.</p> <p>Social care staff participate in the Welsh language training sessions in line with the SCW Induction Framework</p> <p>Staff are encouraged to greet service users in Welsh and use the Welsh Language in work.</p>	
<p>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>All service communications, whether via letter, website or telephony is bilingual, with Welsh text first or to the left of English text - this will remove the risk of isolating individuals who communicate in Welsh by failing to provide services in their preferred language.</p>	<p>Promotional materials, website, and all subsequent correspondence available bilingually.</p> <p>Signage throughout all our residential care homes is displayed bilingually</p>	<p>Ensure greater consistency in terms of the Welsh language services on offer and improve their quality across the service. All residential care home services have been provided with laptops, the service will utilise this technology to promote and deliver Welsh language sessions to staff, this will enable them to access the training in a more flexible and convenient means.</p> <p>Promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff.</p>

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
All residential care home services have been provided with laptops, the service will utilise this technology to promote and deliver Welsh language sessions to staff, this will enable them to access the training in a more flexible and convenient means.	On-going	Head of Service
The service will continue to promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff	On-going	Care Home Registered Manager/s

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

What was identified?	Why is it not possible?

Stage 4 – Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed (Stage 1>6) impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<p>Welsh Language Services welcome the attention paid here to matters regarding recruitment and training of Welsh speakers relating to these proposals. We would, however, like to see more attention paid to how these proposals will make it possible to recruit more Welsh speakers to ensure an active offer of care in Welsh can be made, and care received in the language of the service user's choice.</p> <p>We would also like to see an acknowledgement of the potential negative impact the closure of Garth Olwg may have on residents ability to receive care within a community where the Welsh language is more prevalent than others within the County Borough, and what will be</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>The service will continue to promote Welsh speaking staff via our rolling advertisement for casual social care staff</p> <p>Welsh language preference has been incorporated into our pre-admission checklist for individuals' who access the service</p> <p>Service to explore opportunities to deliver Welsh medium activities in our care home settings</p> <p>There are currently two Welsh speaking residents that reside at Garth Olwg and this is the only home that does not have any Welsh speaking staff. To promote the Welsh language within our service we can offer the residents relocation to homes of their</p>

<p>done to ensure other Council-run services, and privately commissioned services, can offer activities etc in Welsh to mitigate against any potential negative impact.</p> <p>Some detailed data about Welsh - speaking staff, service users and their families may help demonstrate how Welsh language services can be provided elsewhere to mitigate against any negative impacts too.</p>		<p>choice and homes that employ Welsh speaking staff, providing residents and staff with the opportunity of conversing in the medium of Welsh. In addition to this, Welsh speaking residents and staff will also be able to access all consultation documentation in the Language of Welsh.</p> <p>Welsh speaking residents and staff will also have the option of the resident's/staff consultation meeting being discussed with them in the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Expanded on the legislative requirements of the Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.</p>
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<p>1. Include the following note regarding Welsh Language figures from 2021 Census:</p> <p>“Updated following review panel on 16.02.23 to reflect 2021 Census figures:</p> <p>Recently released 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show that the anticipated increase in Welsh speakers across Wales as a whole has not been realised. The all-Wales figured showed a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers to 17.8% percent. There was a small increase in RCT, however – the percentage of our population who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%, and we saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough (from 27779 to 28556).</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>All comments made at the review panel have been actioned</p>

<p>RCT was also one of only for LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tudful, all neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider how it may impact the services we provide.”</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Update Cabinet report to include reference to WLIA at 2.1 and 4.8.2 3. Update Cabinet report (9.2) and Stage 6 of WLIA to include acknowledgement of negative impact identified in WLIA, whilst also demonstrating longer term positive effects/mitigations in place to turn help ensure a more positive outcome. 		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
<p>The Residential Care consultation was conducted in-house</p> <p>The consultation period ran from the 12th December 2022 and ended on the 27th January 2023.</p> <p>The consultation used an online and paper survey which was built using Snap XMP. The survey aimed to gain feedback on the proposals.</p>	<p>February 2023</p>	<p>The consultation has been appropriately publicised in order for anyone who wishes to have the opportunity to contribute – all consultation documentation was available bilingually.</p> <p>We have 3 Welsh speaking staff employed at Pentre House and had Welsh speakers present in all the consultation events.</p> <p>The Welsh speaking staff member attended the residents meeting at Pentre House and. communicated with the resident in the medium of Welsh.</p>

A consultation booklet was provided to all care home residents and their relatives, which included the survey, and an easy read document.

To ensure wide outreach and involvement of the wider community the consultation was promoted on the Councils online consultation webpage to encourage engagement. An email was also sent to key stakeholders to promote the consultation and encourage participation on the Snap XMP survey.

3 public drop-in sessions were also held.

The majority of comments received stated that there would be no impact on the Welsh Language.

One resident (Pentre House) noted there were no staff in the care home that she could communicate with fluently in Welsh (her first language). However, staff do make a conscious effort to use Welsh phrases and sayings to engage with her and this is much appreciated.”

Other comments received from the survey analysis in relation to the Welsh Language

Language is irrelevant but good care isn't!

The council should ensure that the care provision is provided using both Welsh and English, according to the resident's preferences. Staff should receive appropriate training in both languages, signage should be bilingual and there should be no discrimination according to language in treatment or care, and staffing should be arranged so that there should always be a Welsh speaker working.

Wales should make the language compulsory in all departments and general use. It should be the main language taught in schools. English to be taught as secondary.

Where possible residents should have the opportunity to speak in their preferred language.

I am Welsh speaking and an advocate for keeping the language alive.

WELSH LANGUAGE SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION.

We appreciate that Welsh speaking staff were in attendance throughout the consultation events and were able to converse with residents and other potential affected parties in Welsh. This is really good practice and we're sure it was appreciated by Welsh-speaking service users.

The comments from the consultation, such as those listed above, are addressed within the evidence provided and the mitigations noted in the Welsh Language impact assessment – e.g. the importance of language choice in ensuring the quality of care, and the availability of Welsh speaking staff and the need to increase numbers of Welsh-speaking staff where possible.

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

If agreed, actions related to the implementation of the proposals will be monitored through the Service's Delivery Plan in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework. This will include the actions identified in Stage 3 'Strengthening the proposal'.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:

A possible negative impact on the Welsh language was identified in Stage 2 of the WLIA, as the closure of Garth Olwg Care Home will directly impact two Welsh-speaking residents who reside there (amongst other residents), who would be required to move, possibly to different settings where they would no longer have the opportunity to speak Welsh with other residents as they do with each other at present.

Whilst there is possible negative impact that needs to be acknowledged, it should also be noted that Garth Olwg currently has no Welsh-speaking staff who can converse fluently with these residents, whilst other settings across the County Borough do employ Welsh-speakers at this time. Short of ensuring Welsh-speaking staffing capacity at Garth Olwg in the interim period, moving from Garth Olwg could possibly have positive impacts in the longer term for these Welsh-speaking residents, were they to move to another setting where Welsh-speaking staff are employed.

If agreed, all recommended proposals will comply with Mwy Na Geiriau 2022-2027 ('More than Just Words'), Welsh Government's strategic framework for improving and promoting Welsh language services in health, social services and social care.

Stage 7 – Sign Off			
Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Jill Bow	Service Director Name:	Neil Elliott
Position	Head of Accommodation Services	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature	<i>J Bow</i>	Service Director Signature	
Date	10/02/2023	Date	16 th February 2023

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