

Briefing notes.

Devon County Council has been working on plans to transfer its residential care homes to new owners*. We are committed to maintaining the level of care currently provided and we will be transferring our existing staff to the new owners. It will be a condition of the transfer that existing residents continue their care in their existing home. We will be working closely with the chosen providers to ensure the transfer will be a smooth and seamless process. Those members of staff who currently provide care and support within the home will continue in those roles.

We have placed an advertisement inviting organisations with experience of providing care to older people to express interest in taking over our residential homes. We have done this in a way which has attracted interest from a range of small, medium and large companies.

The expressions of interest we have received will be carefully considered and a shortlist of potential providers identified. We will then ask them to submit more detailed applications.

Those applications will then be subject to careful examination to ensure we choose the companies which are able to provide the standards of care and the financial capacity and standing that we require.

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*Please note that we are not actually selling the homes but offering a 125 year lease.

Five homes will NOT be included within this tender exercise because they contain a significant number of 'Intermediate Care' beds, which we operate in conjunction with our NHS colleagues. The NHS is currently consulting on the future direction of intermediate care and will not be in a position to conclude before we tender.

These homes are:

Wardhayes, Okehampton

Exebank, Exmouth

Oakwell, Barnstaple

Green Close, Sidmouth

Bodley House, Exeter

We established three focus groups one for each of our localities: Northern, Southern and Eastern Devon. The groups included people who use social care services, people who provide them and other interested parties. For example, the family carers of residents in our care homes, representatives from voluntary organisations, care providers, Senior Council for Devon, Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) and Patient Advisory Liaison Service (PALS)

These groups considered; demographic and finance pressures; activity and demand; current capacity; costs; and best examples of services from elsewhere.

A county wide group, elected from the focus groups, considered in more detail priorities for investment and disinvestment in line with the agreed sense of overall direction for care services for older people and considered what outcomes they would expect as individuals and carers to be delivered from any care home provider as part of the transfer process.

Along side this we have kept staff, residents, carers and other stakeholders informed in writing, at local meetings and via briefings by local managers. We are committed to maintaining this communication throughout the process.

On 13 July we invited the original members of the wider focus groups to a briefing meeting with senior managers to update them on progress to date, to share with them how their input has influenced and informed the way in which we are going to the market and to explain the next steps and how they can continue to be involved in the process.

In particular we discussed how their involvement had shaped the development of a wider range of community support services that help older people to stay at home for longer i.e. social care reablement, telecare and community equipment services; how they had influenced the decision to offer care homes as individual lots encouraging local small and medium sized providers to express an interest; how they had influenced the decision to offer the homes as going concerns thereby offering continuity to existing residents and day care users and finally how their input had shaped the financial and quality standards against which any potential provider would be evaluated.

The next stage of the process in mid August will be to meet with potential bidders who have been short listed in the pre qualification process (PQQ) to explain to them in detail the tender process they have to complete.

Providers that are shortlisted in the second stage evaluation will be invited to do a presentation to members of the evaluation panel and representative members of the focus group. These presentations are anticipated for early November and representatives will be contacted in due course.

Following presentations and the completion of the evaluation process officers will make appropriate recommendations on how to progress to the county council for decision in early January 2011.

13 July 2010