

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TAKEN BY:**

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health

**DECISION NO:**

19/00063

**For publication****Key decision\***

The need to modernise services and to respond to changing demands

**Subject: OUTCOME OF THE FORMAL CONSULTATION ON WAYFARERS CARE HOME, SANDWICH**

**Decision:** As Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, I agree to:

- a) **CLOSE** the current Wayfarers Care Home and for Kent County Council to seek to find a buyer for the building and its land and to explore Housing with Care options preferably in the Sandwich area.
- b) Subject to budget appraisal **PROCEED** with the alternative proposal received from the residents and staff of Wayfarers to relocate the Wayfarers service to an unused, purpose-built unit at Westbrook House, near Margate, and to find accommodation for any residents who instead may wish to move to alternative care homes; and
- c) **DELEGATE** authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision

**Reason(s) for decision:** The future of the council owned and operated Wayfarers Care Home has been considered on at least three occasions since October 2010. A previous public consultation carried out in 2015 considered KCC's preferred options for four of its owned homes. This included a preferred option for Wayfarers to sell the home 'as a going concern' and approval was given through an executive decision in February 2016, to secure the sale of the home 'as a going concern'. This envisaged selling the home to an external provider with the successful bidder required to retain the building and the existing staff and being responsible for any future maintenance or upgrading of the building. Despite a buyer being found, a decision had to be taken not to proceed with the sale as it was felt unviable for both parties. The proposal put forward will support the KCC strategic objective that older and vulnerable residents are safe and supported with choices to live independently in modern and refurbished fit for purpose accommodation.

**Financial Implications:** If a decision is made to close Wayfarers and find alternative accommodation for residents, there is a requirement to continue to maintain the building and service up to the point of closure and relocation of residents. Any future placements with a cost above KCC's guide price would therefore be funded by KCC. None of the current residents would see an increase in the contribution towards their care or be charged additional fees either by KCC, or by alternative providers as a result of KCC's proposal.

**Legal Implications:** The council has a responsibility under the Care Act to assess people who have an appearance of need and options for meeting needs will be discussed. There is a duty to ensure all care home provision that the Council places residents in is safeguarding individuals and that effective contract management is in place.

**Equality Implications:** An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and this has been reviewed taking into consideration the outcomes of the consultation.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:** The proposed decision was discussed at the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee on 27 September 2019. Ms Dene (Senior Commissioning Manager), Ms Rogers (Project Manager (AH DCLDMH)) and Ms Shepherd (Head of Provision) were in attendance for this item. Mrs Southern introduced the report which set out the outcomes of the public consultation on the future of Wayfarers Care Home, Sandwich.

Officers then responded to comments and questions from Members, including the following: -

- a) Ms Rogers confirmed that the majority of residents at Wayfarers Care Home were from East Kent.
- b) Ms Shepherd said that if proposals were agreed, the vast majority of Wayfarer's staff would transfer with the service users to Westbrook House, although those opting to move elsewhere would be fully supported in doing so. Mrs Southern added that staff that transferred from Wayfarers Care Home to Westbrook House would be reimbursed for the extra travel to their work base and could potentially work from home.
- c) Ms Dene confirmed that Wayfarers Care Home had been up for sale on a number of occasions, although the sales did not proceed due to a variety of reasons, such as TUPE transfers, timing issues etc. when we looked at the options appraisal it was considered but then discounted as an option because it failed in the past and through the consultation we have had people come forward expressing interest to buy.
- d) Ms Southern talked about the vulnerability of care homes and said that care homes could close at any time either through CQC, or private providers that wished to stop providing the service.
- e) Mrs Southern said that Westbrook House was a modern, spacious accommodation, where a wider range of support services and facilities that residents currently use and enjoy, would be available. She added that by bringing the Wayfarers resources to Westbrook House, it would support the longer-term sustainability of the service.
- f) Ms Shepherd said that it proved challenging to meet individual's specific needs at Wayfarers Care Home because the rooms were small and no en-suite bathroom facilities were available within the rooms. Whereas Westbrook House was much more spacious and would allow individual's higher needs to be met for longer. Mrs Southern added that Westbrook House was an Integrated Care Centre with nurses, occupational therapists and physio therapists in the same building to help in supporting individuals.
- g) Mrs Bell stated that expanding the rooms within Wayfarers Care Home would not be practical or financially feasible and would considerably reduce the capacity. She added that a number of families with relatives being cared for at Wayfarers Care Home were very impressed with the facilities at Westbrook House.

- (1) RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to
- (i) close the current Wayfarers Care Home and for Kent County Council to seek to find a buyer for the building and its land and to explore Housing with Care options preferably in the Sandwich area;
  - (ii) subject to budget appraisal proceed with the alternative proposal received from the residents and staff of Wayfarers to relocate the Wayfarers service to an unused, purpose-built unit at Westbrook House, near Margate, and to find accommodation for any residents who instead may wish to move to alternative care homes; and
  - (iii) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision,

be endorsed.

(Mr J Burden asked that his vote against the recommendation be recorded in the minutes)

A 10-week public consultation on the future of Wayfarers concluded on 24 July 2019. Residents, relatives/carers, staff and the staff Union representative have been involved in the consultation meetings and their views have been collected and considered. Local MPs, local councillors and KCC Cabinet Members have also been briefed on the proposals and consultation process.

**Any alternatives considered:**

The following proposals were considered for Wayfarers as part of the options appraisal and outlined in the consultation documents:

**Do nothing and continue Wayfarers as it is.**

- The rooms have no en-suite facilities and would require significant financial investment to modernise the facilities in line with the Care Quality Commission standards.
- Due to the age of the building, significant investment would be required to make the facility fit for the future.

**Redesign Wayfarers as a specialist dementia unit.**

- Making Wayfarers fit to be a specialist dementia unit would involve significant investment and reduce the number of places available due to different facility requirements (such as en-suites).
- Reduced capacity would mean it would be very expensive to run. Good provision is already available which would not result in these additional on-going costs.

**Sell the home as a going concern.**

- This is now not perceived as a viable option due to two previous attempts at selling the facility.

**Close Wayfarers and find alternative provision for residents. Sell the building and land.**

- This means residents would move to alternative accommodation.

**Close Wayfarers and find alternative provision for residents. Sell the building and land. Explore options for developing older people's accommodation preferably in the Sandwich area, in the form of Housing with Care.**

- This means residents would move to alternative accommodation.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:**

*Ken Bell*

signed

*17th October 2019*

date