



Proposed Supported Living accommodation at Greenacres Farm

Proud to make a difference and proud to care

Greenacres Farm in Walford Heath, Shrewsbury, already provides a range of day service opportunities to adults with learning disabilities in Shropshire.

It is a statutory requirement for Shropshire Adult Social Care⁽¹⁾ to meet the care and support needs of the individuals the proposed development is designed for and to provide specialist accommodation.

The project supports various National and Regional Housing priorities and was agreed unanimously by Full Council on 24th September 2020. Councillors recognised appropriate accommodation should be made available to enable adults with learning or physical disabilities to live in a community setting.

The development also supports the council's wider project initiative to develop a different model that meets the demographic demand and a range of various needs.

It will also enable each tenant to live in good quality homes that are highly sustainable. We will be able to be more creative about the range of Assisted Technology used to support an individual's independence.

The accommodation will be built on land that is currently part of Greenacres Farm in Walford Heath, and will comprise of eight PassivHaus⁽²⁾ standard, single-storey supported living apartments, a communal shared area for tenants and staff, internal courtyard and outdoor spaces.

Designed to help people to develop their independent living skills, each self-contained apartment will have its own lounge, bedroom, bathroom and kitchen area.

What is Adult Social Care? ⁽¹⁾

Adult Social Care provides a wide range of support and activities to any Shropshire adult 18 years and over to live in their own homes independently, stay safe and well. This includes personal care (support with washing, dressing and getting in and out of bed); home care (domiciliary care to help with household tasks like shopping, cooking and support with medication), support in day centres, care provided by care and nursing homes (residential care); services to help people gain their independence (reablement); provide a range of aids and adaptations and support to family carers.

Why are we doing this?

Shropshire Council's Adult Social Care Directorate identified a need for specialist accommodation that was not currently available in the county.

As there is no current specialist provision, it has and continues to result in individuals leaving Shropshire to live in residential settings or single occupancy homes, especially those with complex needs. This results in people feeling isolated, lonely and away from their family support. These placements are amongst the highest costs for Adult Social Care.

The council rethought how they are offering housing to people with a learning disability, autism and/or mental health conditions. Due to the shortage of suitable accommodation, the council propose to build eight sustainable, single-storey Supported Living apartments, communal internal courtyard and outdoor spaces on council land at Greenacres Farm. The cost of the development is £3.125m (capital budget).

The primary aim of the project is to support individuals to move back into their home county to live near family, friends and/or support network and deliver better outcomes for individuals. It also creates savings on care packages by reducing care hours by sharing carers as a result of housing multiple individuals at the same property, whilst living in their own apartments. It will also reduce the need for Shropshire Council having individuals in out of county placements and the high revenue cost of this.

Supporting independence

The site at Greenacres allows young people to have access to a range of health and social care support whilst having their own tenancy in supported living accommodation, designed specifically to meet their needs. It will also give them the opportunity to build peer relationships, engage in communal activities, shared interests and develop new skills, to ensure their opportunities are equitable with other young people whilst in turn enabling them to benefit from a rural location, which reduces risks to them in the community due to their vulnerability. It also offers more choice for individuals of where they wish to live as stated in "Building the Right Support".

Shropshire Council already have a significant number of supported living services across the county in both urban and rural locations; close to 100 services, supporting nearly 200 individuals. These locations have been chosen by the individuals and their families and assessed as suitable to meet their needs. The majority of these services are in more urban locations and recently we have seen an increase in demand for individuals wishing to live in more rural locations, and it has been identified it is in their best interests to do so. We also have and continue to develop a number of supported living services that would be ideal for the individuals living at Greenacres to move onto as they build their confidence and independence skills required for community living, though they are always likely to need a high level of support, this will be reduced.

We are confident our transition model for these extremely complex individuals in a rural environment is suitable for them at this time and will reduce the risk to each individual.

Greenacres Farm current day service, includes the benefits of a rural environment, opposed to town, and presents an opportunity for learning real skills that can be used in the industry.

Person-centred outcomes / personalised care

The project has been developed and designed in partnership with the young people, their families and current care providers. All of the young people we support identified as suitable occupants for this development have already had an assessment carried out in which they have expressed a preference for rural living, that meets their individual needs and is suitable for them for a number of reasons. Therefore, a rural location has been assessed as being the right environment for them.

The proposed residents have all had their individual needs carefully assessed so that the Council are confident they can be safely and appropriately cared for at Greenacres within a supported living environment. Residents have a learning disability and/or autism. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure everyone is properly supported and will therefore provide a sufficiently high staffing ratio not merely to ensure adequate supervision but also to allow individuals to learn new skills and develop their independence. Through our assessment process we are clear the proposed residents do not pose any kind of risk or danger to local residents and their families as a result of the nature of their disability.

Personalised care means that people have choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered. It is based on 'what matters' to them and tailored to their individuals strengths and needs. Personalised care improves people's health and wellbeing, joins up care in local communities, reduces pressure on the NHS, helps people with multiple physical and mental health conditions make decisions about managing their health, so they can live the life they choose, with or without the help and support of family or support network if they lack capacity to make decisions themselves.

If planning permission is granted, the new supported living apartments will provide a more person-centred approach to provide a range of bespoke housing options based on each individual's needs and preferences that will have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. The unique approach will enable tenants to live in good quality homes and lead them on a path of independent living, community integration and volunteer opportunities or employment.

As part of integration, we will work with each young person as part of a step-down approach. First we need to help them learn or develop their independence skills so, if possible, they can eventually move on from Greenacres and manage their own future tenancy with lower level support in a rural or urban location of their own choice. For some, this will take a considerable time to achieve. It may not be possible for everyone.

The development also increases the supply of affordable and social housing, retaining economic benefits within Shropshire economy and provide a range of financial opportunities to the council in respect of the current housing stock. The accommodation will be affordable housing as tenants will pay social rent.

The Greenacres Farm site was chosen to deliver this specialised housing as it was favourable over more urban locations due to the risk urban locations posed to individuals. In addition, Greenacres is an existing service that provides a range of facilities and day opportunities. The day services facility will provide opportunities and support to the new residential tenants as they will be able to learn and develop usable skills relating to horticulture, livestock and agriculture, alongside the softer skills of communication, developing and maintaining personal relationships; learning household skills such as cooking, washing and getting dressed; managing and maintaining nutritional diet and learning household skills such as cleaning and maintaining a safe and habitable home.

Combining the three services (farm, empty house and apartments) on one site will allow them to complement each other and provide a range of opportunities, mutual benefits and activities that promotes independent living to not only the residents living in Greenacres apartments but the wider community. All newly acquired skills will have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Eco-friendly Housing

Shropshire Council would like to adopt a [PassivHaus](#)⁽²⁾ approach to the design. PassivHaus is a standards for energy efficiency in a building, which will provide a low ecological footprint. It is an ultra-low energy building that requires little energy for heating or cooling. It is intended that the energy required will be generated on site and support the existing sustainable measures already being utilised on site, for example solar panels and lagoon.

Support Staff

Care staff roles will be appointed by the successful service provider/s who will recruit staff with the relevant skills, knowledge and experience that meets the assessed needs of the service users. DBS checks will be carried out. The appointed provider/s will be regularly monitored by the council through our contract monitoring process and regulated by the Care Quality Commission. In addition, Shropshire Council will carry out regular social work assessments that will involve the individuals and families.

Individuals will have choice and control over which care provider/s they appoint. Care can be provided in various ways; single provider, multiple providers and/or shared care.

Care Providers will be procured through Shropshire Council's new Flexible Contracting Arrangement which is an upfront accreditation process that will be opened intermittently to new entrants. The accreditation process will present providers an opportunity to answer a range of questions, requirements and standards that demonstrates how they will support and meet the needs of people with a range of living well skills, care and support, complex and forensic. This will be balanced against quality and price. When commissioning a service from the providers on the Flexible Contracting Arrangement, individuals who will be in receipt of the service and or their families/advocates will be involved in the procurement process and be able to formulate questions to ask the providers who bid, ensuring that the support the individual gets is personalised to them.

Shropshire Council framework is a competitive, fair and transparent process. Once accredited and on the framework, the council will be assured there is an adequate provision of high-quality care, providers will deliver outcomes that meet varying needs (low level to highly complex) for adults with a learning disability, on the autistic spectrum and/or mental health condition.

Long-term vision and commitment

The day service has huge potential and part of our long-term vision is to regenerate and reinvigorate the entire Greenacres site. This will encompass times of use and traffic movements both during any development and during use. We would like to develop a training and education centre across the day service site and the house for people who are using the day service to be able to come and learn new vocation, skills and/or occupation; an Assisted Technologies centre where people can learn, trial and test a variety of technology and equipment; respite facility to families/carers by offering a break from their caring role and a "matching hub" type facility where individuals who are considering living together in a supported living scheme can spend some time together to see if they are compatible, are able to get on and have things in common.

We acknowledge moving into new accommodation with others can be quite daunting and is a big decision to make, so having this facility will support the decision-making process and relieve some anxieties. The classification of 'respite' supports this so that individuals can spend extended time in the property, either testing new technologies over a period of time as a form of assessment or by spending time with others that they may be moving in with.

In addition, we would like to have a wider range of animals on site to support animal husbandry skills, horticulture, in addition to building a sensory garden, laying new hedges, cycle path, gym equipment, creating a games area, tidying up and landscaping, wildlife pond, and a shed with kitchen area so day service users can practice their cooking skills. To date, some of these developments are already in progress or have been completed through the use of external grants applied for by the day service team. Opportunities may change or develop further in the years ahead and will be incorporated in different phases.

Working in partnership with the local community

As part of early engagement, we have already discussed and met some neighbouring residents and Baschurch Parish Council. We would like to thank everyone involved for their feedback and helpful comments so far as it has enabled us shape the service and see the vision for Greenacres as a whole. We have acknowledged and considered all comments and recommendations and have answered any questions and/or concerns in an open and honest manner, whilst maintaining confidentiality to potential tenants.

As a result of those discussions, we have taken time to re-evaluate the site as a whole in order to be clear on the overall vision as we recognised the need to have a clear vision for the future, one that demonstrated both the linkages, interdependences and mutual benefits between the developments at the Greenacres site. We would like to demonstrate we have an indicative programme of development for the site that shows our commitment to develop and maintain Greenacres in future years. The development is following Shropshire Council's internal project management reporting process. The project is communicated, planned and any options have been presented to the Greenacres Project Board. Members have been given the opportunity to prioritise any changes, consider and manage risks/issues and agree on the best course of action to take. Any actions of formal decisions have been agreed by members of the Greenacres Project Board.

How can I find out more information about the development?

- [Greenacres Farm Supporting Living webpage](#)
- [Greenacres Farm webpage](#)
- [Our Committee Services webpages](#)
- [Our Newsroom webpages](#)

Please note: these documents will be updated as the vision for the project develops

How you can contribute/comment

If you would like to contribute to the overall vision of Greenacres, we welcome your comments and/or suggestions. Please email your suggestions to:

greenacresfarmssupportedlivingaccommodation@shropshire.gov.uk

Next Steps

The project is currently at the pre-planning stage. If Adult Social Care gain planning approval in 2021, they will consult with the wider local community at relevant stages of the development. The development will be open to the public to further comment as part of the planning process. We plan to attend a further meeting with the Parish Council and local residents prior to a planning application being made.