



Committee and Date

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Item

Public

SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION AT GREENACRES FARM

Responsible Officer

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The proposal for which Council approval is sought is to build a facility providing eight single storey Supported Living units on Council land at Greenacres Farm, Walford Heath, Shrewsbury. The accommodation will provide an opportunity for people with complex needs to live more independently and will also reduce the number of placements in residential care outside of Shropshire. This accommodation will be suitable for individuals who may currently live with their parents but who may need residential care, or who may already be in residential care, in temporary placements or be at risk in the community.
- 1.2 The project main objectives are to create significant savings on care packages; create local specialist accommodation that will be categorised as Social Rent within Shropshire, and support, with bespoke individual care packages to some of the most vulnerable people Adult Social Care supports, bringing them back into their home county. Care hours can be reduced through shared carers as a result of housing multiple individuals at the same property, whilst still within their own individual apartments. It will also reduce the need for Shropshire Council to place individuals in placements outside of the county. These placements are amongst the most expensive individual care packages that Shropshire Council are responsible for, ranging from £0.090m to £0.320m per person per year. A number of these individuals have been earmarked as suitable occupants of the proposed supported living arrangements.
- 1.3 Specialist provision is not available in Shropshire and has resulted, and continues to result in individuals leaving Shropshire to live in residential settings or single occupancy homes, especially those with complex needs that can result in people feeling isolated and lonely and away from their family support. These individuals are amongst the highest cost care packages and considerable savings on staffing hours can be made by developing this provision.

- 1.4 The development will retain economic benefits within the Shropshire economy and provide a range of financial opportunities to the council in respect of the current housing stock for some of the most vulnerable people Adult Social Care supports.
- 1.5 It is widely recognised that providing suitable alternative Supported Living homes, such as Greenacres, is a more cost-effective, flexible way of helping people live more stable, productive lives, increasing their independence and works particularly well for adults who face complex challenges such as mental health problems; learning/physical disabilities or sensory problems; older people; autism or those with multiple conditions/diagnosis (learning disability, autism, mental health) have spent time in hospital/rehabilitation due to brain injury; adults and young people with a disability who have spent time in residential care and are moving towards independent living; transitioning to adulthood and/or who display behaviours that challenge. There are many examples of people with complex needs living happily and successfully in their local community when they are in the right environment with bespoke personalised support that meets their individual needs.
- 1.6 In addition, we intend to develop a different model to future proof buildings to support the demographic demand; be more creative about the range of Assisted Technology used to support individuals' independence and provide alternative individual living units with communal areas, sharing staff to lower care costs.
- 1.7 Assistive technology is any product or service designed to enable independence or any device or system that allows individuals to perform tasks that they would otherwise be unable to do or increases the ease and safety with which tasks can be performed. Greenacres is influenced by and will use a wide range of stand-alone, supportive but unobtrusive services and equipment, from telecare, telehealth, monitors, sensors, seizure monitors, to more sophisticated systems. Assistive Technology will present Adult Social Care with a range of evidence and data that will be continually monitored, identify any problems or trends so corrective urgent action can be taken to safeguard everyone. It includes computer software, handheld devices or video call systems that increase social interaction and family contact. Using assistive technology to support personalisation in social care can help individuals to complete daily tasks and structure their daily (day and night) routine, such as personal care, cooking and laundry.
- 1.8 Adult Social Care have carried out extensive research and will commission a wide range of assistive technology that will transform how Supported Living is delivered. The benefits promote and maintain independence, educate, entertain and stimulate social interaction to enrich lives and improve outcomes. Tenants are increasingly tech-savvy and use devices like laptops, tablets and smartphones in their homes. Using smart devices and technology will provide a wealth of data that helps professionals provide the highest level of care and can alert carers to any potential problems such as a health or medication so appropriate action can be taken to reduce potential risks. By teaching individuals how to use bespoke assistive technology, it will reduce the number

of care and support hours required as the individual will be able to carry out tasks independently over time.

- 1.9 The project is linked to an existing day facility opportunity on the same site at Greenacres Farm and is an extension of the farm that already provides a range of facilities and day care opportunities to vulnerable people. It is not a stand-alone development. The day services facility will provide opportunities and support to the new proposed residents of the apartments outlined in this proposal. In addition to this, the empty house situated at Greenacres, will be converted to incorporate a variety of uses to suit the needs of the residents living in the apartments, along with the local community. Combining these three services on one site will allow them to complement each other and jointly support adults with a learning disability, autism and/or mental health needs to 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.

2. Recommendations

That Council

- 2.1 Approve a financial investment of up to £3.125m in accordance with the Outline Business Case (Appendix 1) to build eight supported living accommodation apartments, a communal shared area, internal courtyard and outdoor space on the Greenacres Farm site.
- 2.2 Approve the use of Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) investment to finance the development of the Greenacres Farm Supported Living project.
- 2.3 Approve the submission of a suitable application for planning permission to build 8 Supported Living apartments.
- 2.4 Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Services to take appropriate steps to implement the decisions set out above in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Services and Climate Change.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

(NB This will include the following: Impact on Children and Vulnerable Adults, Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community and other Consultation)

- 3.1 There are several planning restrictions that will need to be overcome in order to gain planning approval:
 - Existing planning Policy CS5 Countryside & Green Belt (p. 65) of the Core Strategy together with Policy MD7a of the Local Plan (SAMDev) that restricts new residential developments in the countryside and are not normally permitted. The policies do, however, facilitate some exceptions, such as

conversion and appropriate new affordable accommodation to meet a local need identifying a preference for locations, which is not connected with a settlement are linked to existing developments or enterprises. This is applicable to Greenacres as Adult Social Care have identified the need; the accommodation will be affordable housing and the day opportunities already operates at Greenacres.

- Policy CS11 Type and Affordability of Housing (pp. 85-89) of the Core Strategy strictly controls new market housing but there is some flexibility on housing that specifically identifies specialist affordable housing to meet a local need. Greenacres will provide good quality, sustainable housing of the right size, type and tenure of affordable housing. Vulnerable tenants will pay social rent.
 - Shropshire’s planning supplementary guidance Type & Affordability of Housing, the National Planning Policy Framework
- 3.2 Risks have been reduced following various discussions with planning officers concentrating around advice on affordable housing as building does not comply with existing planning policy. An Exceptional Needs Case (Appendix 2) has been produced demonstrating the need and benefits of the development and how key planning issues have been addressed in the pre-planning application stage.
- 3.3 The Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) “Registering the right support” sets out the expectation that people with a learning disability and/or autism have the right to the same opportunities as anyone else to live satisfying valued lives and to be treated with dignity and respect. The service model, Building the Right Support, refers specifically to “people with a learning disability and/or autism who display behaviour that challenges, including those with a mental health condition”. They should have a home, be able to develop and maintain relationships, and get the support they need to live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives in the community. Greenacres underpins the principles of both models. Registering the right support currently limits the number of builds in one setting to 8 self-contained apartments.
- 3.4 A screening Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 3 to this report. Building the supported living units at Greenacres Farm is anticipated to have a positive impact for young adults, as the individuals identified to live in the apartments are currently managed by the Preparing for Adulthood Team and are drawn from 14 to 25 year olds transitioning from childhood to adulthood. The positive equality impact will be across the Protected Characteristic groupings, as well as around social inclusion. The first cohort will be young adult males, and there is accordingly an anticipated medium to potentially high positive impact for these people with regard to Age, Disability, and Sex.
- 3.5 This is because the current specialist provision is not available in Shropshire and has and continues to result in individuals leaving Shropshire to live in residential settings or single occupancy homes, especially those with complex needs. This can result in people feeling isolated and lonely and away from their

family support, creating high negative impacts in equality terms and in terms of their health and wellbeing.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 An Outline Business Case (OBC) (Appendix 1) has been prepared for the project which includes the financial effect on both capital and revenue expenditure and incorporates a 25-year income and expenditure cash profile.
- 4.2 The sum of £3.125m is being requested to complete the whole development of the site as detailed. £2.600m construction costs, £0.375m professional fees, £0.020m furniture, £0.005m planning fees and £0.125m contingency.
- 4.3 Using an already identified cohort of individuals that have been deemed to be likely to be most suitable to be placed into the new supported living accommodation, savings totalling £0.289m per annum have been calculated based on a comparison of future care costs against existing costs of those individuals to Shropshire Council. Whilst the care needs of individuals when the building would be ready cannot be certain at this point in time, a long list of potential individuals have been identified and our knowledge of demand gives certainty that all eight properties will be utilised as soon as ready and savings will be realised from the point of completion.
- 4.4 The financial modelling for the project assumes the following:
- Funding the development through Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) borrowing based on a 25-year annuity loan with a forecast interest rate of 3%.
 - Annual borrowing costs of £0.179m.
 - Annual repairs and maintenance costs of £0.005m.
 - Annual revenue savings of ££0.289m.
 - Annual income of £0.060m through a lease agreement with a housing association company to manage the facility
- 4.5 The financial modelling demonstrates annual borrowing costs for the project of £0.179m, net annual cashflow of £0.165m, a good net yield of 5.26% and a payback period of 27 years.
- 4.6 The VAT status of this project will be clarified prior to the commencement of construction.
- 4.7 On top of this, it has been estimated that new income totalling £0.060m could be received by agreeing a lease arrangement with a housing association company to manage the property. Shropshire Council will retain ownership of the asset and will be responsible for the external repairs and maintenance of the building. They will enter into a formal agreement (suggested ten years) with a Registered Housing Provider who will manage the property on a day to day basis and be responsible for internal repairs and maintenance of the building. Final terms to be structured and agreed by the Estates Department.

- 4.8 In addition to that immediate saving, there will be future preventative savings, for example individuals currently being funded through CCGs, but likely to return to Shropshire Council responsibility, or currently Children's funded but soon to transition to Adults with high cost packages can move onto this scheme at a reduced cost. These savings have been estimated at £0.418m per annum.
- 4.9 Whilst a payback period of 27 years would be considered a long payback in a commercial investment, the fact remains that the savings generated in social care are able to pay the borrowing costs as well as generating a further budgetary saving. Furthermore, the payback calculation does not take into account any preventative savings on future expenditure, estimated as above at £0.418m per annum. Whilst this is not considered a direct budgetary saving, it will have a huge impact on managing the level of growth required in future year's budgets.
- 4.10 The project will result in reduced time, expenses and travel time for social care practitioners and family and friends to travel in a car to see loved ones in high cost residential out of county placements, which can be anywhere in England and Wales. This will have a direct reduction in the amount of travel time and subsequent carbon omissions travelling within Shropshire to one central location.

5. Climate Change Appraisal

- 5.1 The design and construction of the project will incorporate measures to maximise energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions during both the construction and the operation of the new buildings. The design of the scheme will reflect 'whole lifetime' costs and will reduce carbon emissions through a 'fabric first' approach to insulation, low-energy lighting and heating and through the inclusion of renewable energy generation, for example solar PV panels and air-source heat pump for space and water heating. The buildings will be designed to be durable and resilient in the face of the more extreme weather conditions (very high or low temperatures and very wet, dry or windy weather) which are expected as the result of climate change. This includes capturing rainwater and battery storage for self-consumption. This will be further strengthened by applying a range of innovative Assistive Technologies as part of the original design and construction which will guarantee endurance and longevity of the building.
- 5.2 Shropshire Council would like to adopt a [PassivHaus](#) approach to the design, which is a pre-fabricated modular house. PassivHaus are super-efficient buildings and have enormous benefits as they are cheaper to run than conventional housing. Buildings are constructed and brought on site from a factory; are a quicker method of construction and is an alternative to it being built on site. The units will be placed on a concrete foundation by a crane and hooked up to utilities.
- 5.3 PassivHaus are prefabricated modular housing and generates significantly better internal air quality which benefits the health of occupants relative to a conventional design. One such example is [Haus4one](#) which is a relocatable

one-person home. The units can be either fully manufactured offsite, delivered and installed ready for occupation within hours or delivered as a structural thermal envelope ready for your contractor to finish. Larger units are also available which would be applicable to the 8 units proposed for Greenacres.

- 5.4 The PassivHaus methodology is focussed on the design and construction of the building. It relies on good planning to take advantage of solar gain, very high levels of insulation, extreme attention to detail to restrict air loss and very efficient mechanical and electrical (M&E) services. Renewable energy systems such as photovoltaic cells to generate electricity, solar thermal systems to pre-heat water and electric 'heat pumps' will also be employed.
- 5.5 The result would be a property with very low running costs and excellent air quality.
- 5.6 The project will comply with Shropshire Council's Sustainable Construction Policy. As the development is in excess of £1m the project will undergo a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) assessment which will assist meeting climate change and reaching a carbon neutral stance. The cost and effort necessary to enhance the sustainability of the project will be significant, but the results will be of benefit to the service users, the Council and the wider community.
- 5.7 This is the first time Shropshire Council will have developed a PassivHaus so Greenacres will be the first example. The advantages include zero carbon, huge amounts of insulation, triple-glazed windows, draught proofing and controlling ventilation. The rate at which heat and energy escapes is so slow that the running costs are really low.

6. Background

- 6.1 It is the Council's duty under the Care Act to meet the assessed accommodation needs of vulnerable people. The current specialist provision is not available in Shropshire and has and continues to result in individuals leaving Shropshire to live in residential settings or single occupancy homes, especially those with complex needs that can result in people feeling isolated and lonely and away from their family support.
- 6.2 Many local authorities have moved away from the provision of residential care services to Supported Living options. Some people with complex needs, such as those identified for Greenacres, will have a social care assessment carried out in which they have expressed a wish and the social care professional has assessed them as being capable of living with support in "ordinary housing". Supported Living is an approach that promotes independence and provides a range of housing for people as an alternative to living in a residential care setting or nursing home but find it difficult to cope at home on their own. The fundamental principle of Supported Living is that people live in their own home, which can be shared with others, or on their own, and the person receives the care and support commissioned by the council as identified in their support plan. This may include personal care; financial help to manage money, bills and

benefits; accessing education opportunities and finding voluntary or paid employment; taking part in social and leisure activities and community life; making and maintaining friendships and relationships; using technology and/or equipment to make independent living and everyday tasks, such as shopping and cooking, easier.

- 6.3 Under Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STP), Building the Right Homes and CQC's guidance; Registering the Right Support, the evidence suggests many people end up in hospital following disrupted housing and support arrangements, with many experiencing a lack of choice and control over their lives and the environment in which they are living. Poorly thought-out environments can increase behaviour that challenges and it is clear that just 'slotting' people into settings without really understanding the needs of the person, in partnership with them and their families, is unlikely to lead to people living settled and healthy lives in the community.
- 6.4 This is not a new use but an extension and diversification of an existing use. There is a shortage of suitable accommodation in Shropshire that delivers the needs for highly complex individuals, in addition to more expensive out of county placements. We need to increase the amount of available supported living accommodation for people with a learning disability, autism, mental health or those with a multiple conditions/diagnosis. We acknowledge that having a range of bespoke housing options based on each individual's needs and preferences has a positive impact on health and wellbeing. The project aims to shift provision towards a model that gives people security of tenure and housing rights, with a separate contract for their support enabling people to have choice about their social care provider without jeopardising their home.
- 6.5 For such complex needs individuals, previous experience identifies rural areas achieve better results because they are better supported in a rural setting initially when coming out of secure residential settings. One of the reasons the location was chosen is the belief that rural settings are better because of the reduced noise levels, leading individuals to tend to feel less overwhelmed by their surroundings. This ultimately leads to a more settled, calming and stable living environment and behaviours. It is believed that having access to agricultural, livestock and horticulturally based activities on site will prove beneficial to support people with anxiety and mental health conditions. In addition, opportunities will be considered as to a range of voluntary opportunities or paid employment to residents through the day service, for example the farm shop. Other benefits during delivery include employment while the scheme is under way and the provision of paid and voluntary job opportunities.

7. Additional Information

- 7.1 Adult Social Care, Property Services Group (PSG), Shropshire Council Highways, Planning Services and a range of contractors and sub-contractors will work together to commission and build a super-efficient building that meets an identified local need and delivers against National and Regional housing policies. The project is based on 100% affordability.

7.2 The geographical location of Greenacres was chosen to deliver Shropshire’s specialised housing for some of the most vulnerable individuals we support. This is favourable over a more urban location due to the risk urban locations may pose to individuals with complex needs, for example road awareness and increased risk of harm and abuse. Currently there is nowhere in Shropshire for such individuals to live and this is the reason why we would like to bring them back into county, to be near family, friends and their support networks.

Conclusions

- 8.1 The development will utilise land in our ownership which we will retain for future use to develop and support bigger project initiatives by continuing to provide the type of Supported Living housing that is required by young people with complex needs.
- 8.2 The type of Supported Living accommodation at Greenacres will provide good quality, sustainable housing of the right size, type and tenure of affordable housing. Vulnerable tenants will pay Social Rent.
- 8.3 PSG are aware of the planning risks and constraints of the site and they have made allowances across all areas which are documented in PSG’s Feasibility Study Report (Appendix 4). Their intention is to develop this project as a highly sustainable and independent facility and to that effect we have made allowances to cover for this as identified in the feasibility report. PSG will undertake further studies, investigations and designs to mitigate all issues, concerns and risks raised before any formal planning application is submitted or tender released.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) Cllr. Dean Carroll

Local Member Nick Bardsley

Appendices :

Appendix 1 - Outline Business Case

Appendix 2 - Exceptional Needs Case

Appendix 3 - Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 - PSG’s Feasibility Study