

**Meeting of the Cabinet - 12 February 2007**

**Report of the Director of Adult, Community & Housing Services**

**Promoting Independence for People with Physical Disability**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To report progress on the strategy for the future development of residential care for physically disabled people.
2. To make recommendations with regard to the future use of Bridge House.

**Background**

3. A report to the Executive in November 2003 set out a proposed strategy for the future development of residential care for older and disabled people in Dudley and the key principles to underpin the management of such developments.
4. The Executive agreed that the Council should shift the emphasis from residential care for people with a disability into promoting independence through supported living, in partnership with housing associations and other providers.
5. Further reports have been received by the Executive and subsequently the Cabinet describing progress in implementing this strategy with regard to Learning Disabled People and Older People. This report focuses on Physically Disabled people and also refers to the links with Extra Care Housing Strategy approved by Cabinet on 02/11/05.
6. Bridge House is a Local Authority owned residential home for Physically Disabled People in the Borough. Opened in 1978 it has 14 single rooms; only one room has en suite facilities. In recent years the number of people who have made it their permanent home has fallen, the last person to be admitted permanently was in 2002, although it has continued to successfully offer respite and short term care.
7. There has been a strong shift in emphasis, from institutional living to promoting independence in independent supported living, in the aspirations of disabled people and their families. Funding mechanisms, such as Independent Living Fund and Direct Payments, together with increased availability of community services such as adapted housing, Home Call, Assistive Technology, Home Care, Personal Assistants and Day Care Opportunities has made independent living much easier to achieve and sustain and hence the decline in demand for residential care.

8. Staff have positively supported residents in activities of their choice and the remaining residents have been living fairly independent lives in the community outside Bridge House – for example one person has been volunteering at a local day centre, going to the cinema and attending college. In addition, residents have seen people move in on a short term basis who then have moved out to live independently in adapted homes with support packages.
9. Over the last year a social worker has been specifically appointed to work with the remaining residents and their families on an individual basis to focus on their wishes and aspirations with regard to living more independently. An Occupational Therapist has also been appointed to work with individuals on increasing their skills in areas of self care and activities of daily living.
10. Tribute should be paid to how staff, residents and relatives have embraced greater independence. Each person has had dedicated one to one social work and OT time to develop a personal care plan. The change had been gradual and directed at the pace of each resident. In the last few months an unanticipated momentum has gathered pace.
11. At first it was considered that the likely outcome would be a self-contained unit as part of one of the Extra Care Housing Schemes planned for the Borough. However, residents have now decided they would like to consider moving to a range of alternative types of accommodation. Some plans are firmer than others.
12. It is likely that by the end of summer 2007 most people, if not all, will have moved out to live in their expressed choice of accommodation. However, exact time scales will entirely depend on their individual wishes and preferred pace.
13. There will still be a need for respite care for disabled people, many of whom still live with their families. We also need a facility to provide rehabilitation and temporary accommodation to people discharged from hospital following an accident or illness which has led to a disabling condition, in preparation for returning to live at home or in supported accommodation. Following a short period of closure for minor refurbishment and the appointment of specialist staff, Bridge House would be ideally suited to provide this facility.
14. Residents and their relatives and friends have been fully consulted and involved in the discussions which have taken place over the last 12 months regarding their future lives. Plans for the future provision of respite and rehabilitation in the Borough will equally benefit from the involvement of disabled people, relatives and family carers.

15. **Finance**

The current revenue budget for Bridge House is £398K. This will be utilised fund a respite and rehabilitation unit and for clients who have left the unit to live independently. Clients will also be supported by other base budget funding, specific grant or from external funding mechanisms such as the Independent Living Fund.

16. **Law**

The main statutory provisions relating to the contents of the report are contained in the National Assistance Act 1948, the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

17. **Equality Impact**

Equality and diversity implications are integral to this report. Supporting disabled people to live fulfilled and independent lives in homes of their choice is fundamental to promoting and sustaining the rights of disabled people.

**Recommendation**

18. It is recommended that:

- Cabinet commend the work of the residents and staff of Bridge House and their relatives in arriving at this significant milestone and taking on the challenge of independent living, or alternative accommodation.
- Bridge House is re-designated as a respite and rehabilitation unit.
- Disabled people, relatives and family carers are actively involved in the planning of future provision of respite care and rehabilitation, which meets their needs and aspirations for support and which will help people live fulfilling and independent lives.
- Funding currently available for Bridge House be retained to support physically disabled people to live independently in their own homes through packages of care and in providing respite care and rehabilitation to support disabled people and their families.



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## **Background Papers**

Report to Executive November 2003 – Residential Care of Older & Disabled People in Dudley

Report to Cabinet June 2005 – Future Development of LA Residential Homes and the further Development of Housing with Care

Report to Cabinet 2 November 2005 – report on consultation in respect of future development of LA Residential Homes and the further development of Housing with Care