



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Adults Social Care & Health
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Adults and Health
DATE:	Thursday, 9 November 2023

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Adults Social Care & Health
WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT: Intermediate Care at Albion Mill – Proposal for transfer of services and commissioning arrangements

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Intermediate Care at Albion Mill has been operational since January 2022. The current model is delivered in partnership through Blackburn with Darwen (BwD) Borough Council, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT), and BwD Local Primary Care (LPC). The service is funded through the Better Care Fund which is a pooled budget between the Council and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

Since the Intermediate Care service opened in January 2022, it has been successful in mobilising a maximum of 50% of the total rehabilitation placements available. In practice, this has resulted in only one of the two Floors of the unit being utilised (13 suites and 2 apartments). This is due to a combination of difficulties relating to operationalising a new service within a new building and the complexities of working across several organisations. An alternative solution is required to ensure full utilisation of the scheme and subsequently the provision of sufficient high quality intermediate care provision to support the residents of the Borough. System partners across health and social care have been working together for some time to develop an optimal model for intermediate care to support Blackburn with Darwen residents. The outcome of several working groups, a due diligence exercise and specialist procurement advice, is to recommend that a single Provider arrangement and care model is agreed.

If agreed, the proposal is to move the current provision of nursing and therapy from LSCFT, and social care support from BwD Council, to a single provider. The proposal includes a phased approach to full implementation, commencing with the mobilisation of Floor 1 from December 2023.

Phase 2 will include the opening of the remaining suites and the diversion of the Discharge to Assess pathway through Albion Mill.

The lead Commissioner for the whole service will be Lancashire & South Cumbria ICB, who currently commission the nursing, therapy, clinical oversight and pharmacy elements of the existing model.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Note the significant challenges with the current operating model and the need for urgent change.
- Approve that the ICB becomes the lead commissioner for the intermediate care service at Albion Mill.
- Approve the plan to commission a single provider to deliver the nursing, care and therapy services that make up the intermediate care service within Albion Mill.
- Support the intention to utilise a phased approach to opening the two floors
- If required, approve the transfer of existing Council staff at Albion Mill, via TUPE, to the new Provider;
- Give delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Adults and Health, in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health and the Deputy Director for Legal and Governance, to conclude any agreements necessary to facilitate the recommendations above.

3. BACKGROUND

Intermediate Care remains a key priority across all system partners as a means to improve health, care and wellbeing outcomes for the population of Blackburn with Darwen. Intermediate care and enhanced support at home enables our residents to maximise independence and stay living at home for longer following periods of illness or injury.

Albion Mill is a relatively new-build extra care and intermediate care facility located within the Borough. The intermediate care element of Albion Mill provides 35 suites across two floors (31 en-suite bedrooms and 4 apartments) and delivers person centred, integrated rehabilitation and recovery as part of a time-limited response, enabling people to return to living independently.

A procurement exercise led by BwD Council was undertaken across 2019/2020. One Provider tendered for the contract, however, following lengthy consideration and negotiation, the process was unsuccessful. Following the failed procurement and in the context of entering the early stages of the pandemic in 2020, a rapid solution was required to meet the required timeline and trajectory for the opening of Albion Mill. The subsequent partnership agreement ensured the programme of work remained on track and at the time, provided an opportunity to try an innovative, integrated approach to health and care commissioning.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

The service commenced a phased approach to opening in January 2022 and has achieved some excellent outcomes for residents undertaking their rehabilitation programme. Since opening however, the Partnership has been unable to progress to full delivery of the 35 suites due to both operational and environmental issues. This has meant that the facility has been operating with reduced capacity and at times has generated concerns around quality and sustainability.

Fundamental challenges have arisen from the partnership delivery model. This has had a subsequent impact on the ability to deliver a single, seamless service. Adding layers of complexity to operational delivery has generated a number of vulnerabilities. These include:

- **Governance & safety:** separate organisational policies and procedures result in no single line of governance or accountability. This impacts on basic requirements such as incident reporting and recording and also generates duplication. Issues are not easily escalated or resolved due to the need to go through each individual organisation's governance processes.
- **Workforce:** separate staffing requirements have led to inefficiencies within the service model. Lines of accountability are complex due to staff being employed by multiple organisations. Workforce retention in LSCFT has resulted in high agency usage, with significant pressure on the nursing rota. This, coupled with some agency usage in BwD Council has, over time, presented challenges to staff morale and service continuity.
- **Mobilisation:** Despite the service being established with 35 suites, the current multi-provider arrangement has only been successful in opening one floor, which is a maximum of 13 beds and 2 apartments. Admission policies and processes have at times hindered step-up pathways due to multiple access requirements onto electronic resident/patient records. Additionally, there is a demand for an increased level of acuity/need which cannot be met by the current staffing model.
- **Quality:** three separate quality reviews have been undertaken, including a test CQC inspection, which have generated a series of recommendations. These primarily relate to: policies and procedures; management of medicines; auditing processes; and governance structure.

Whilst all partners have continued to work together to improve and mitigate risks, all agencies involved have concluded that the current partnership model is unable to deliver the future requirements of a fully utilised and high quality service. Transferring to a single provider model will immediately mitigate much of this risk and enable ongoing improvements, ultimately providing successful outcomes for a greater number of residents.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Operational policies and procedures relating to the provision of Intermediate Care at Albion Mill will be replaced by the policies and procedures of the single Provider going forward. This will be completed as part of the service transfer and mobilisation, with safety and continuity of care ensured.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no new financial implications for the Council.

The Intermediate Care Service at Albion Mill is funded through the Better Care Fund budget which is pooled between BwD Council and the ICB. Additional hospital discharge grants are also managed through the BCF framework. This will remain the case going forward.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

TUPE arrangements will apply for the staff currently working within the Intermediate Care Service at Albion Mill.

It is proposed that the ICB becomes the lead commissioner for Intermediate Care at Albion Mill and that the new Provider will provide all elements of nursing, therapy and care within the service. This will allow the ICB and BwD Council to retain joint oversight of the service through local joint

commissioning arrangements. The delivery model for Albion Mill is evolving and it is recommended that this is reviewed regularly as part of the BwD Place Based Partnership. All necessary regulations will be adhered to as part of the transfer to a single Provider. As the lead commissioner, the ICB will adhere to all relevant regulations contained within the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Successfully implementing the new commissioning arrangements and the transfer of services to a single provider will require capacity and support from senior officers from within the Council. This will be managed within existing resources.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Regular updates have been provided to Leadership, Elected Members, staff groups, Unions and partner organisations.

Prior to the implementation of change, a communication and engagement plan will be developed regarding the transfer of services including:

- Current staff providing the service
- Wider staff of all partners
- Unions
- Service users and their families / carers
- Stakeholders
- CQC
- Politicians
- Media

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

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DATE:	24 th October 2023
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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