

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>12/2/18</b>
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Briefing note for the Corporate and Public Services Scrutiny Committee at Walsall Council on 22 February 2018</b>
<b>WRITTEN BY:</b>	Jamie Lindon-Lewis Operations Manager Housing and Care 21.
<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Housing &amp; Care 21 (HC21) is a leading national provider of retirement housing and care services for older people, mainly those aged 65 and above. We deliver affordable, contemporary, person-centred care and housing that meets individual needs, improves wellbeing and promotes independent living.</p> <p>We are a not-for-profit organisation and operate in over 150 local authority areas – managing around 19,000 Retirement and Extra Care apartments and providing over 80,000 hours of care each week to more than 31,000 customers. We provide jobs for circa 390 local people.</p> <p>Housing and Care 21 operate five extra care developments and one dementia specialised care home within Walsall. The services are delivered through the Public Private Partnership with Walsall Council which was established in 2008.</p>	

## 1.0 Engagement between Housing and Care 21 and Walsall Council.

Due to the requirements in the contract there is frequent engagement with HC21 and Walsall Council. The meetings take place bi monthly and involve a variety of people of differing levels in both organisations. These meetings are a useful way to review performance of the services, provide updates and discuss new opportunities.

The wider engagement with the local authority is limited however it is acknowledged that the planned contractual meetings throughout the year are sufficient enough.

## 2.0 Impact on benefit cuts, current government policy and barriers facing HC21.

The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 social rent reduction meant that from 1 April 2016. Registered providers of social housing had to reduce the total rent payable by a tenant in year by 1%

Whilst for social rent properties, such as ours, the reduction applies to the rent element and not to service charges the impact on our Walsall developments alone has been circa 40k to date.

As an organisation we have had to absorb this loss whilst still delivering our organisational purpose of providing a modern and forward-thinking 21st-century service. This includes

updating and modernising our existing housing, as well as developing new and innovative property designs and service models for the future.

We recognise that our staff are our most important asset and we therefore support the increase of the National Living Wage to £7.50 per hour in April 2017.

Indeed, we are going one step further and making a promise to our lowest paid staff that we will always aim to pay 10% more than the NLW.

We recognise that this is a bold commitment to make but we feel that to be an employer (and provider) of choice then the first step is retaining good staff and therefore we have to pay competitively.

In reality, this does put further pressure on us as an organisation in particular when our income revenues are reducing.

### **3.0 Housing and Care 21's Services to Walsall.**

HC21 provide 285 properties across Walsall for people over the age of fifty five. All of our developments are mixed tenure offering rental and shared ownership apartments.

Extra Care services have increased on-site care to enable individuals with illnesses or disabilities to live as independently as possible. People have their own flats and tenancies or leases and there is a range of communal facilities available, such as hairdressers and restaurants.

In addition to the on site care services all of our Extra Care sites employ Activity Coordinators to provide a range of social events for residents and prevent potential loneliness and isolation. Both of these factors have been widely recognised as a key contributor to poor physical and mental health in older people.

In addition to the Extra Care developments, The Watermill is a residential care home based in Goscote and specialises in caring for people with Dementia.

We provide thirty five permanent placements, three general respite rooms and two emergency respite placements.

The emergency respite placements are used frequently by The Walsall Manor Hospital to place people that are medically and no longer require a hospital bed but are not able to return home. This service supports the hospital to free up much needed beds.

We operate a 140 place per week day centre at The Watermill. 100% of placements are from referrals made by Walsall Council.

We do not offer specific homelessness services, however, any applicant that meets the eligibility criteria and is homeless are always made a priority.

We have successfully rehoused homeless individuals within our Walsall developments in the past.

### **4.0 Plans for the future.**

As the largest provider of Extra Care housing in the country we have clear plans to continue to provide more quality housing for older people as well as provide more jobs for people in local communities.

In 2017 we developed our strategy to build 2100 more Extra Care units by 2021.

As part of this process we took time to assess and identify who our key strategic partners were and the locations where we wished to develop further.

Due to the strong relationship with Walsall Council we identified the authority as a key partner for future opportunities.

We then carried out an analysis in conjunction with the council that identified there was a requirement for more Extra Care developments in Walsall to meet local demographics i.e. the ageing population and increasing numbers of people being diagnosed with dementia.

Since then we have evaluated a number of opportunities to build new developments within the Walsall area.

Unfortunately due to the expensive land and low rental yield in Walsall none of these have stacked up financially and therefore have not been pursued.

Local Authorities that we work with in other parts of the country will ordinarily ear mark land for Extra Care developments when adult social care commissioners identify a strategic need for more services.

This land is then sold at a discounted rate or for free. In return, we offer the authority 100% nomination rights.

This approach along with grants from the HCA and our own internal investment means that we can make the potential new development work financially.

The barriers we face in Walsall are that land is not prioritised in line with local needs and is instead opened up to the commercial market at market price.

This in itself is not always an issue and means we would normally invest more ourselves. For this to work for us financially the local LHA rent levels need to be set at the right level and /or property prices in the local area need to be sufficient enough that we can sell leasehold properties at a reasonable price to cover our costs.

Neither of these have been possible in Walsall. This means that us purchasing the land at a discounted price is the only option if we are to develop more services in the area.