



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

**Proposed Future of Ridgway House Residential
Care Home**

Consultation Analysis Report

December 2023

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1. Introduction

On the 23rd October 2023 West Northamptonshire Council commenced with a public consultation exercise on the options for the future of the council owned residential care home at Ridgway House, Towcester.

West Northamptonshire Council wants to be able to ensure it is in a position to offer high quality care which continues to meet the changing needs of its residents both now and in the future.

Ridgway House has 44 rooms; however it is significantly under occupied as the design of the building means that the facilities available within the home are unable to meet the needs of an increasing number of people who require residential care. Similar to other care settings the home has also experienced recruitment challenges and has been carrying a significant number of staffing vacancies for some time.

The Council wanted to seek views on its proposals for the future of Ridgway House. It wanted to hear about the experiences of people who reside in the home and their families, along with staff and other interested stakeholders. This report is the analysis of the consultation results received.

2. Background

Ridgway House has the lowest occupancy across the council's three internal care homes and it is only able to operate at a maximum of just above half its physical capacity as the first floor is not accessible to people with care and support needs and subsequently had to reduce its CQC registration to deliver care to 24 rooms.

The building is over 40 years old and whilst it would have been compliant at the time it was built it would not meet today's CQC accessibility of facility requirements for new build care homes. There are no ensuite facilities, reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size. The home requires increasing intervention just to maintain it as a safe environment. A condition survey in 2020 highlighted that to maintain the home at just a basic habitable standard would require a minimum investment of approximately £1 million over the next 10 years.

Up to 8 people have to share bathrooms reducing the ability of staff in the home to support people's dignity and respect.

The number of people who need registered care home provision has remained at a consistent level through the transition from Northamptonshire County Council to West Northants Council. However, the needs of people in registered care homes are now more complex with an increasing number of people requiring nursing care rather than the residential care which Ridgway House is registered to deliver.

Whilst the work force is skilled and able to meet these more complex needs the environment/buildings limit the ability to meet these high needs or vary the CQC registration.

3. Consultation Methodology

The following section outlines the methods of consultation used to generate the material/ data for analysis.

The consultation was conducted by the Adult Social Care Team, with support from the Council's Communication Team, who carried out the consultation in compliance with WNC's Consultation and Engagement Policy and Standard of Required Practice.

Identified stakeholders included: residents, residents' family carers, WNC employees, Councillors, local health partners and interested members of the public. Due to the breadth of potential stakeholders a questionnaire was devised to capture feedback.

At the outset of the consultation period the Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services met with both the affected staff group, residents and family members to explain the reasons for consultation, the process that would be followed and answer any questions they may have. Paper copies of the consultation questions were made available within the Care Home to all residents, relatives and staff members. (Appendix A). All parties were also offered the opportunity of a 1:1 meeting to discuss the consultation further or receive support submitting their responses.

An online version of the questionnaire and details of the consultation, was made available on a dedicated internet page on WNC's consultation site Citizenspace, which is where all of the Council's consultations are published. www.westnorthants.citizenspace.com

The online questionnaire was open to all. However, it was set up in a way which distinguished respondents who were residents and/or their family carers, who were able to answer specific questions about their experience of the care provided within Ridgway House.

The questionnaire was broken down into two main sections. The first section sought to gain a qualitative and quantitative understanding of residents, and residents' families, experiences of the Care Home, whilst the second section sought to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design and ascertain how best to mitigate

the impact of proposals. In this section respondents were asked to consider and respond to three proposed options:

- The first option was to make no change to the existing facilities would mean that occupancy levels would continue to decline and the service difficulty in providing safe staffing levels is only likely to increase. The condition of the buildings is likely to result in further practical challenges and it is likely that residents would need to be moved to alternate provision at either a time when their needs can no longer be managed within the home or at a point of crisis.
- The second option was to implement a programme of safe closure would involve, stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents' needs would be reviewed and we would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate HR policies and undertake a process of redeployment of staff into our other care settings, with redundancy only where unavoidable. As far as possible we would seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care and maintain friendship groups as far as possible.

An offer was made to translate the questionnaire into another format, including easy read, however no requests were made for a translated version.

The consultation and online questionnaire were also promoted to a large number of key stakeholders, including:

- Members of West Northamptonshire Council's Consultation Register
- Local community and voluntary sector organisations and faith groups
- Northamptonshire Integrated Care Board
- Healthwatch Northamptonshire
- Local Councillors
- Other interested parties

This consultation was also posted and publicised via the Council's Facebook, Twitter and other social media accounts. Respondents were given the opportunity to participate through these social media sites, although no responses were received via them.

As the closure of the Care Home was one of the two proposed approaches, WNC Adult Social Care staff offered to meet with every resident and/or their family carer on an individual basis to explain the situation to them and to seek their views on the proposals.

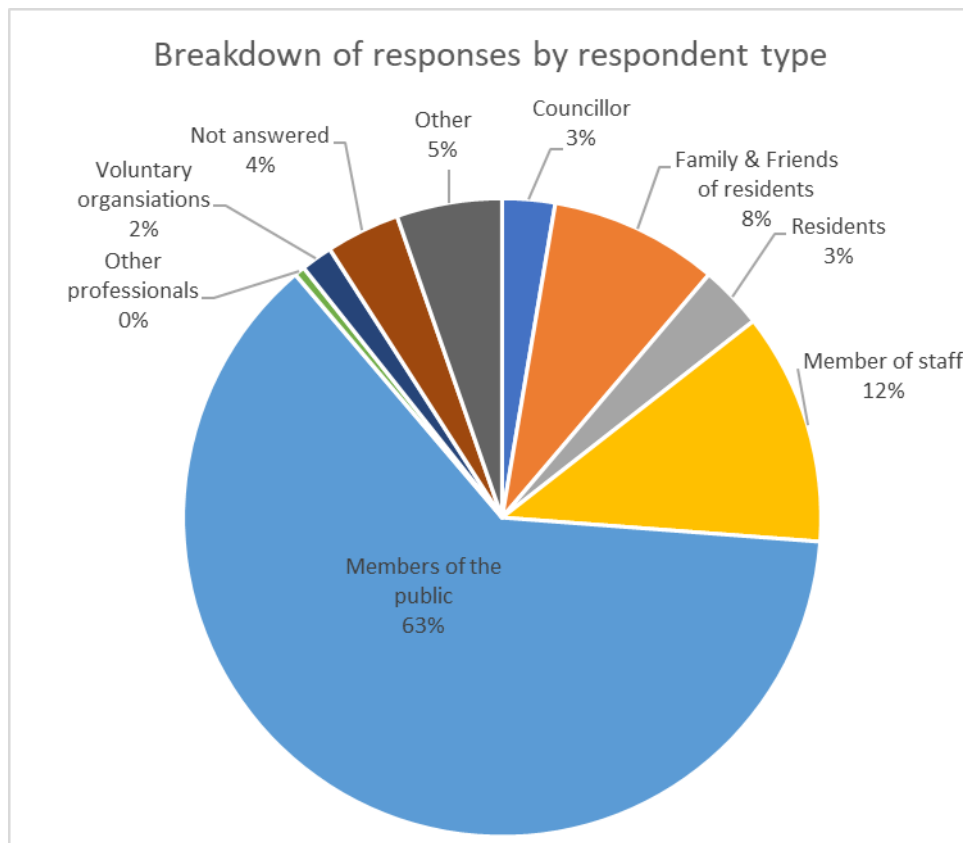
The consultation began on 23rd October 2023 and ended on 19th November 2023, giving 28 days of consultation.

4. Summary of Feedback

The following is a short summary of the findings. A copy of the paper questionnaire can be found in appendix A.

A total of 187 people responded to the consultation via a full completion of the questionnaire, 181 of which were completed online. No requests were received for a one-to-one discussion from any of individuals within the groups who received this offer.

A breakdown of the 187 responses by the respondent type they recorded is provided in the chart below:



Not all responders answered all of the questions within the questionnaire which creates a disparity in the total number of responses against some questions when compared to the overall breakdown of returned questionnaires. Within the responses from residents/families' multiple family members of individuals living in the home were able to submit responses and the results outlined are based totality of responses received from this group.

Experience of Ridgway House

Proposed future of Ridgway House - Consultation Report

Residents and their families were asked an additional set of questions about their experience of the Care Home, there were 18 responses to this set of questions.

- 4 respondents stated they/their relative has lived in Ridgway House for between 1 – 2 years, 5 had lived there for 2 - 3 years, 2 had lived there for 4 - 5 years and 7 had lived there for more than 4 years.
- 4 of these responses related to a resident/residents who had been a long-term resident in another care home other than Ridgway House.
- The main reasons residents/their families chose Ridgway House was because of its affordability and it was close to the community the person moving in had resided in, or it was close to their relatives previously.
- When asked what they like about living at Ridgway House most respondents highlighted the quality of the care provided by the staff as being the main positive.
- All of the respondents who answered the question about their level of satisfaction of the care received at Ridgway House stated they were very satisfied with the quality of care received scoring it 10 out of 10.

Most important features of a Care Home

All respondents were asked what they thought were the most important features of a good quality care home.

- The following statements are listed in order of the weighted score they received, this was calculated by multiplying the frequency of responses against the rating they received as follows.
 - 1 = Not at all important
 - 2 = Not very important
 - 3 = Somewhat important
 - 4 = Important
 - 5 = Very important

The table below shows the features of a good quality care home in order of the weighted score they attracted, from highest to lowest:

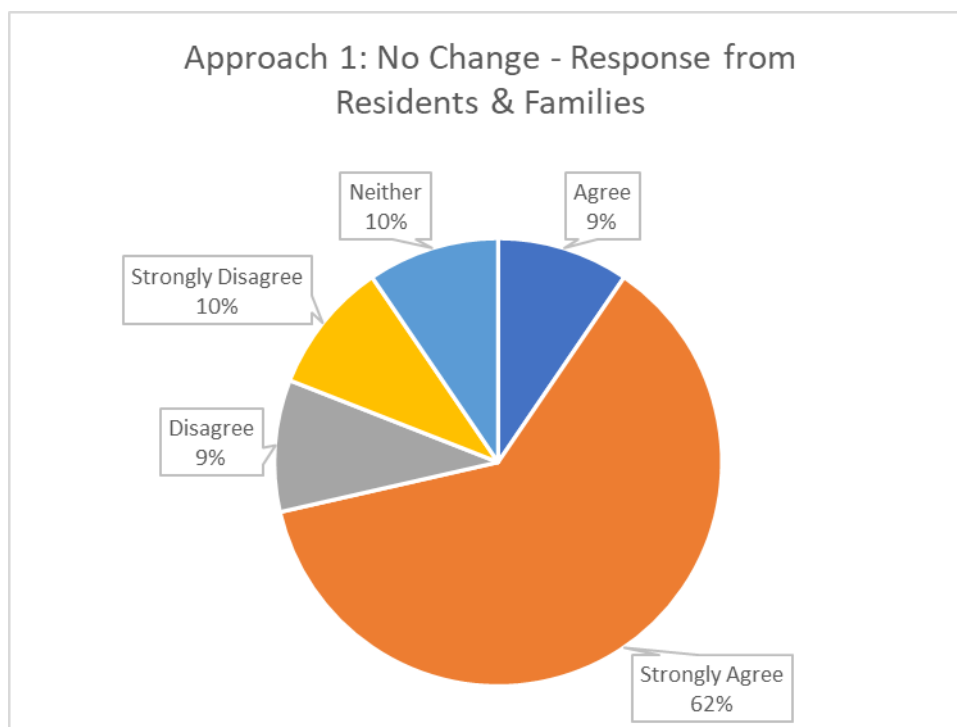
People who live here are treated with respect and dignity
Feeling safe
Staff are helpful and caring
There is good quality food and drink available
To have privacy when wanted
The home can meet the needs of residents as they change
People who live here can be sociable when they want to
Making and having friendships
There are things to do

Visitors can come when they want to
The home is close to where relatives live
People who live in the home are helped to do things outside the home
To have gardens / outside space
People from outside the home can come in for events
The building looks good and is well looked after
The bedrooms have plenty of space
Feeling comfortable in shared and private locations

Proposed approaches.

Approach 1 – No change

Response from Residents/Families

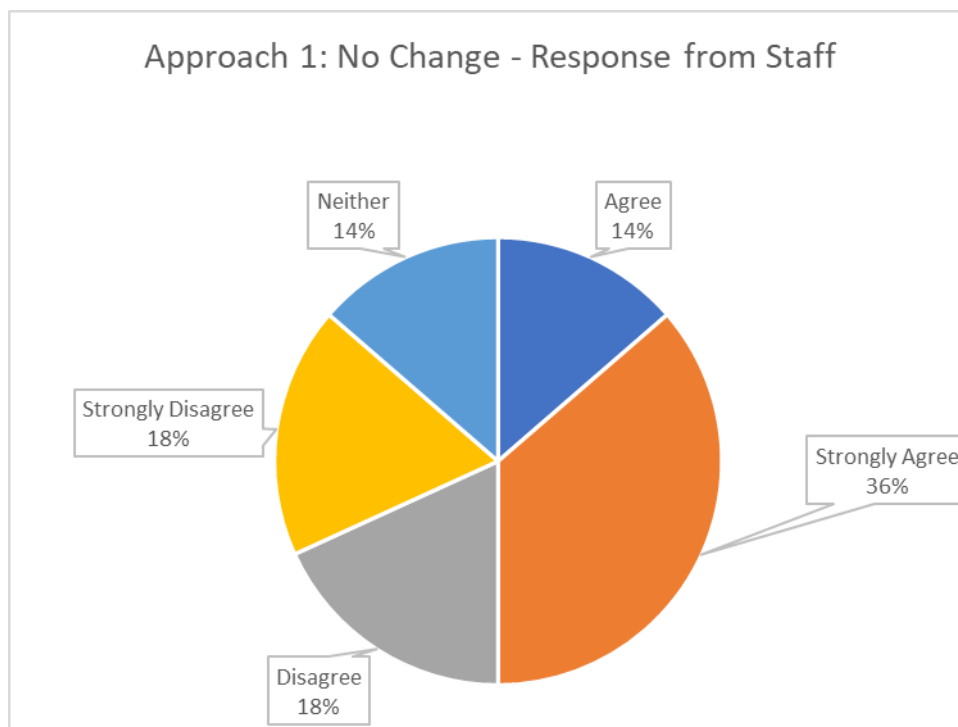


- There were 22 responses to this option from Residents/Families with a range of views expressed within them. Cumulatively “strongly agree/agree” to making no changes made up 71% of the responses received, with a further 19% “strongly disagreeing/disagreeing” and the remaining 10% opting for “neither agree or disagree” or “don’t know”.
- Of those that “agreed/ strongly agreed” with making no changes they recognised the need to improve facilities in the building and concerns about the design of the building,

however the impact on residents and them needing to remain in the original community, along with maintaining the relationships residents have built were the most commonly cited reasons for holding this view.

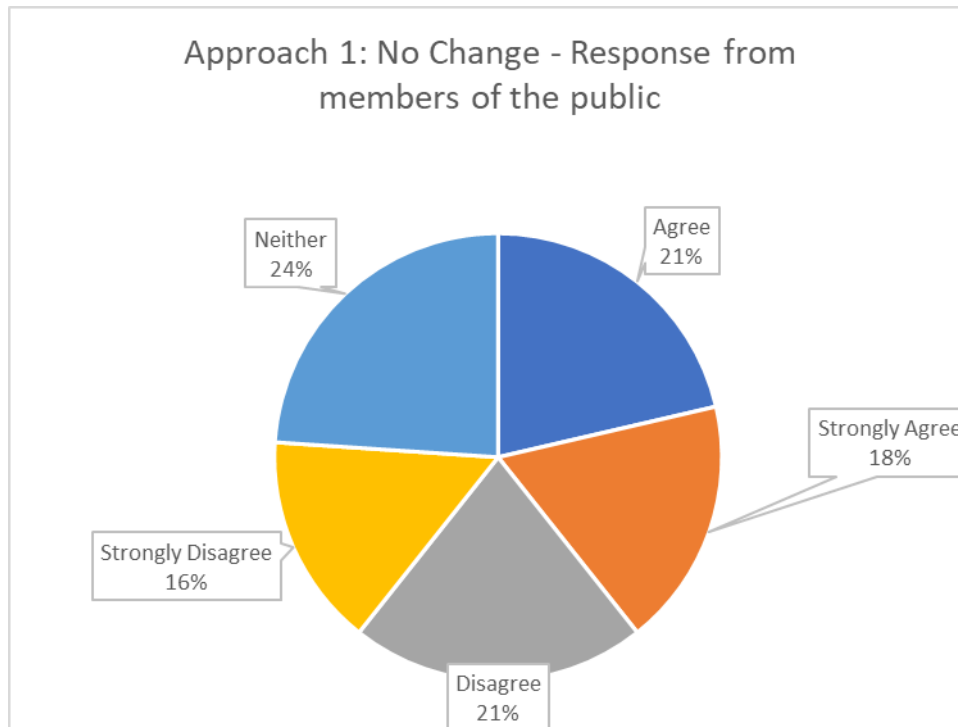
- Those that “disagreed/strongly disagreed” with making no change identified the outdated facilities within the home and the inability to meet current CQC standards as the main reason for this.

Response from Staff



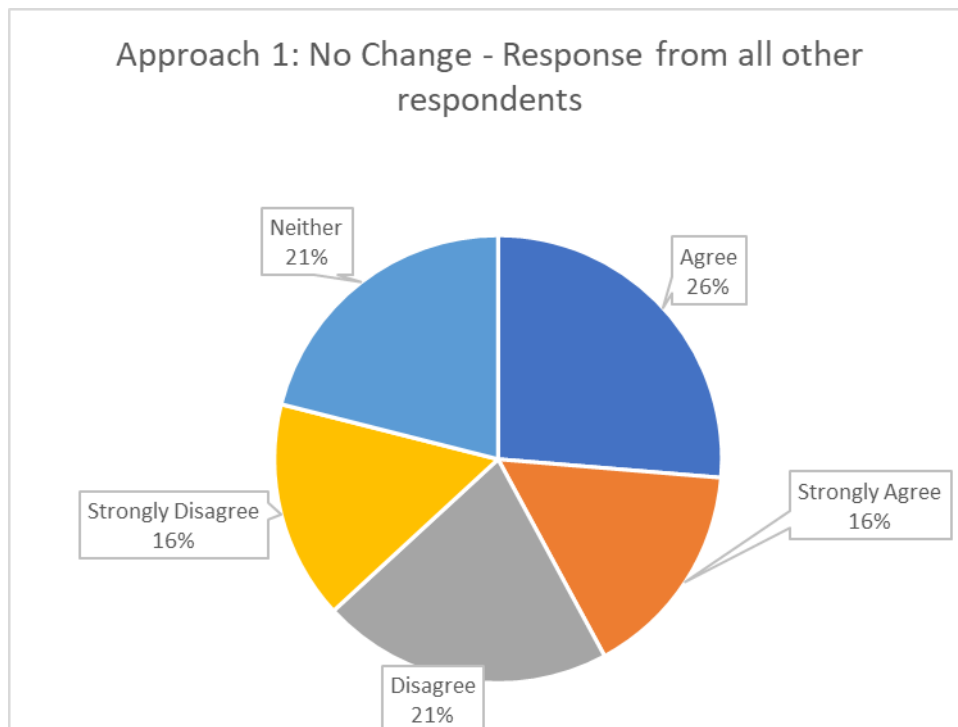
- There were 22 responses to this option from staff who expressed a range of views with 50% who “strongly agreed/agreed” with no changes being made. A further 36% “strongly disagree/disagreed” with the option of no change whilst the remaining 14% either opted for “neither agree or disagree” or “don’t know.”
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” provided a range of reasons for holding this position which included a feeling that residents should be able to stay in their home as they are happy and part of the community and that any other option would cause them disruption.
- Of those that “disagreed/strongly disagreed” with making no changes they cited the need for facilities to be improved, particularly the lack of ensuite facilities as being the main reason for this.

Response from the general public



- There were 117 responses to this option from members of the general public.
- Within this group there was a real split of opinions with a relatively even spread of responses across all of the options available, as outlined in the chart above.
- The respondents who “agreed/strongly agreed” with this option recognised the need for modernisation of facilities but cited the need for a care home facility and affordable care in the Towcester area as the reason for holding a preference for this option.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with making no changes they cited the building not being fit for purpose and the under utilisation of the building as being the main reasons for this.

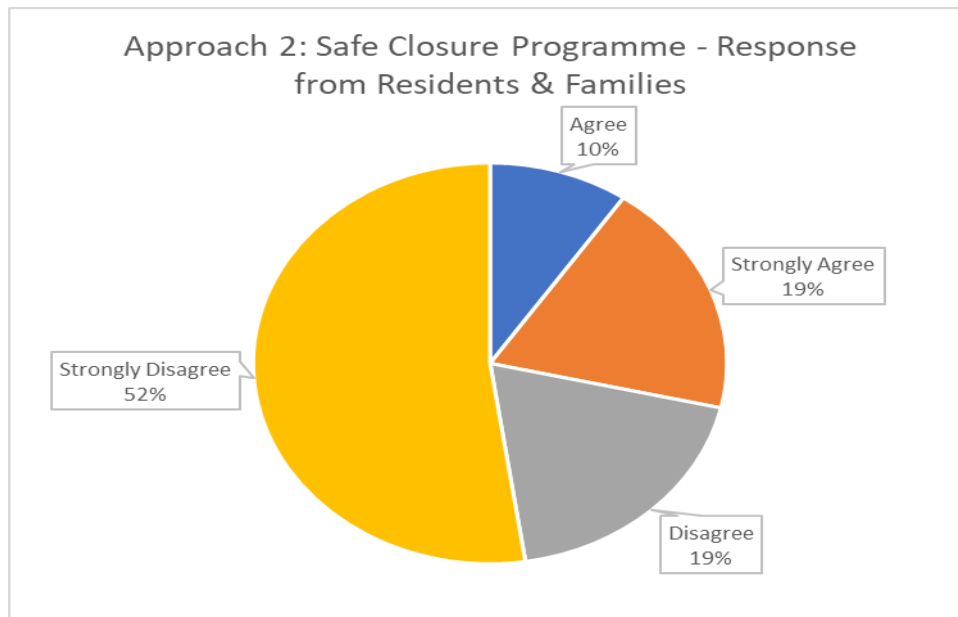
Response from other stakeholders



- There were 19 responses to this option from other stakeholders
- This group also displayed a split of opinions with a relatively even spread of responses across all of the options available, as outlined in the chart above.
- Of the responses from people within this group “strongly disagreed/disagreed” with no changes being made at the home this was due to the current suitability of the building and its facilities and the subsequent need for improvements to be made.
- Of those that “agreed/ strongly agreed” with making no changes they did so on the basis of not wanting to cause disruption to the residents and the need for a council run care home in the area.

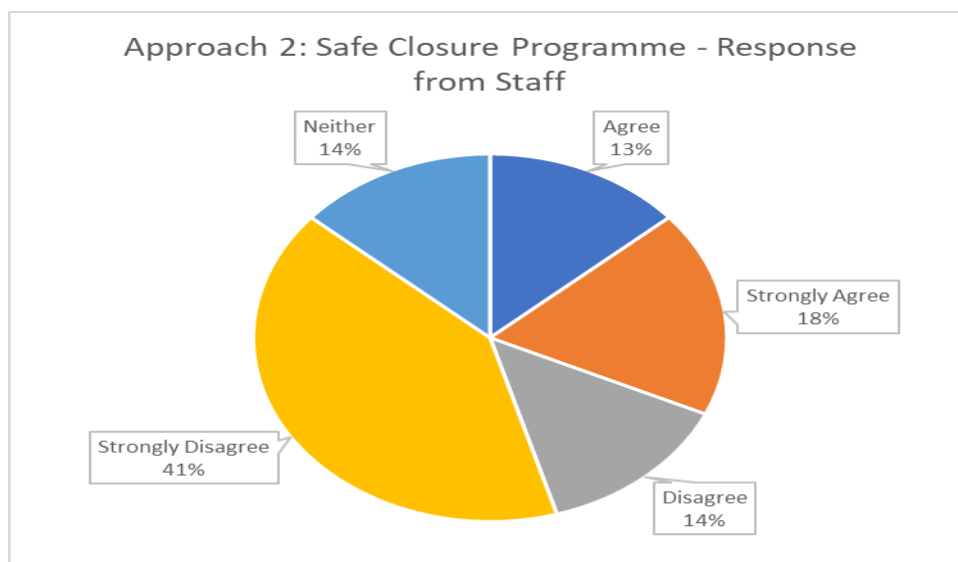
Approach 2 – Implement a safe closure programme.

Response from Residents/Families



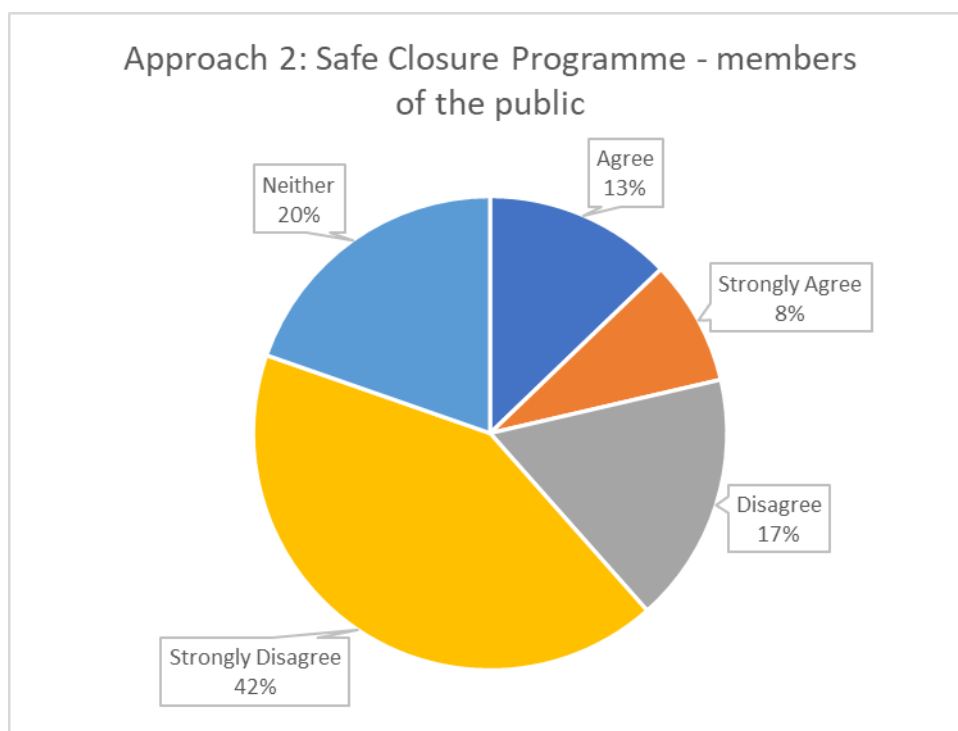
- There were 22 responses to this option from Residents/Families with a range of views expressed within them. Cumulatively “strongly disagree/disagree” made up 71% of responses, whilst “strongly agree/agree” accounted for 29% of responses.
- Those that “agreed/strongly agreed” with the safe closure programme made a number of different comments alongside their response, which recognised the limitations of the building and its design that they agreed with this way forward if it could be implemented as described.
- Of those that “disagreed/ strongly disagreed” with this option they cited the unsettling impact on residents and residents needing to remain in the area and close to relatives as being the main reasons for doing so.

Response from Staff



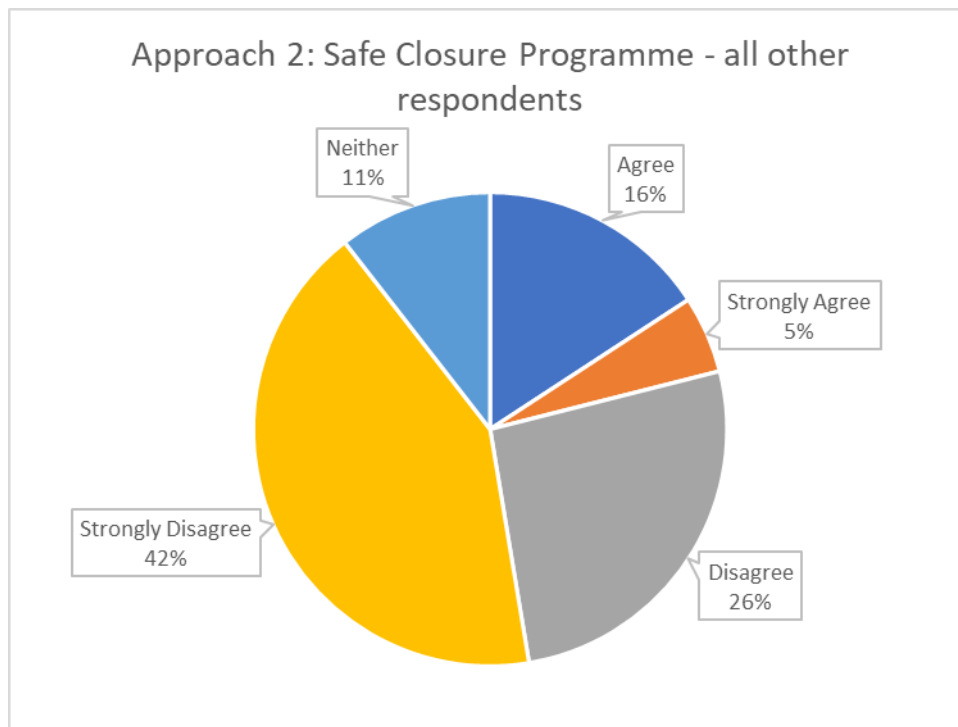
- There were 22 responses to this option from staff with 55% opting for “strongly disagree/disagree” as a response. 31% opted for “strongly agree/agree” with the 14% of remaining respondents opting for “neither agree or disagree.”
- Those that “strongly disagreed/disagreed” with the safe closure programme put forward a number of different comments alongside their responses which included the detrimental impact of closure on staff, residents and families alike and the lack of alternative provision in Towcester for people to move to.

Response from the general public



- There were 117 responses to this option from interested members of the public.
- The majority of responses from people within this group, 59%, “strongly disagreed/disagreed” with a safe closure programme, with 21% “strongly agreeing/agreeing” and the remaining 20% “neither agreeing or disagreeing.”
- Of those respondents that “strongly disagreed/agreed” with this approach they identified the detrimental impact local employment, the disruption this would cause to residents and staff and the need for residential care facilities within the Towcester area.
- Those that “strongly agreed/agreed” with the safe closure programme did so on that basis that they felt the facilities in rooms were not suitable and the residents within the home deserved better facilities than they had.

Response from other stakeholders



- There were 19 responses to this option from other stakeholders.
- The majority of responses from people within this group, 68%, “strongly disagreed/disagreed” with a safe closure programme, with 21% “strongly agreeing/disagreeing” and the remaining 11% “neither agreeing or disagreeing.”
- Of those respondents that “strongly disagreed” with this approach they identified the need for care homes locally and the unsettling impact this would have on residents and families.
- Those respondents that “strongly agreed/agreed” with this option did so on the basis that they felt closing the home was the best way forward.

5. Conclusion

This consultation was designed to gather stakeholder feedback on experience of life in Ridgway House, to gain an understanding of future aspirations and priorities on options to influence future service design and ascertain how best to mitigate the impact of proposals.

The majority of responses, 63%, were received from interested members of the public, with 24% of responses coming from staff and residents/families.

All responses from the people who have experienced life at Ridgway House commented on how satisfied they were as a result of the quality of care they had received.

The top aspects of a good quality care home identified by respondents were:

- People being treated with respect and dignity.
- Feeling safe
- Staff being helpful and caring.
- The quality of food and drink available
- Having privacy when wanted

When asked questions about the two proposed approaches for the future of Ridgway House, the responses are summarised as follows:

- **Approach 1 – No change:** There was a slight preference towards agreement with this proposal, with the strongest preference coming from residents and their families; the most frequent reason cited for this was to avoid disruption for the residents and for them to remain close to their families. However there was a general recognition across respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with this option that the facilities in the home need to improve.
- **Approach 2 – Safe closure programme:** Responses from all groups of respondents showed a preference towards disagreeing with this as an option; this was on the basis that it would cause disruption for residents, families and staff, and also because there is a lack of alternative care provision in the Towcester area. Again however there was a general consensus from responders that facilities within the home need to improve to support the people living their in future.

Appendix A: Copy of the Paper Version of the Consultation Questionnaire

Consultation on the future of Ridgway House

We are reviewing the current and future usage of our residential care service at Ridgway House in Towcester, which is wholly-owned by the Council.

West Northamptonshire Council wants to be able to ensure it is in a position to offer high quality care which continues to meet the changing needs of its residents both now and in the future.

The home has 35 rooms, however, the first floor is not accessible to people with care and support needs and subsequently the registration of the home has had to be reduced to 25 rooms. The design of the building means that the facilities available within the home are unable to meet the needs of an increasing number of people who require residential care. Similar to other care settings the home has also experienced recruitment challenges and has been carrying a significant number of staffing vacancies for some time.

Background

Ridgway House is located within a residential area in Towcester and is currently home to 19 residents.

The building is over 40 years old and whilst it would have been compliant at the time it was built it would not meet today's Care Quality Commission (CQC) accessibility of facility requirements for new build care homes. There are no ensuite facilities, reduced accessibility for wheelchairs/hoists. Added to this it not possible for the home to be improved because of the disruption it would cause existing residents whilst work is undertaken, and because of restrictions due to its location it is not possible to increase the size of the home.

The home requires increasing intervention just to maintain it as a safe environment; a condition survey in 2020 highlighted that to maintain the home at just a basic habitable standard would require a minimum investment of approximately £1 million over the next 10 years.

The top floor of the building cannot be used because of Health and Safety risks in particular around safe evacuation of residents in the event of fire, in addition to this the environment does not support the safe care of high needs residents.

Infection Control audits carried out by CQC have highlighted challenges with environment and stated the home is very dated/tired looking and identified a number of holes in walls and the corners of walls damaged causing them to be porous.

Added to this there is insufficient space for the environment to be improved or increased in size.

The number of people who need registered care home provision has remained at a consistent level over the years. However the needs of people in registered care homes

today are more complex with an increasing number of people requiring nursing care rather than the residential care which Ridgway House is registered to deliver.

Whilst the work force is skilled and able to meet these more complex needs the environment/buildings limit the ability to meet these high needs or vary the CQC registration.

We are seeking views from stakeholders on the future for Ridgway House to enable decision makers to understand the impact of any future decision that is made.

We are also interested to know how you feel about living at Ridgway House if you are a resident.

The future

We would like to understand the impact of allowing the current position at Ridgway House to continue or what the impact would be if we commenced with a safe closure programme of the home. Further details on each of these courses of action is outlined within the questionnaire.

Please could you take about **15-20 minutes** to tell us your views on the options put forward for Ridgway House by completing this questionnaire. Your feedback will be used to help us gain a better understanding of our opinions on the options for the future and will help inform any future decision making process. Your feedback will be part of a report with other people's feedback, so you will not be personally identified.

You do not have to answer all of the questions. If you don't want to answer a question, or don't know the answer, then move on to the next question.

You can ask a friend, relative or an advocate to help you complete the questionnaire, but please remember that it is your views and your experiences that are important to us, rather than the views of anyone that helps you.

If you prefer, you can also get in touch using the below contact details for someone independent from social services and your care provider (e.g. an independent advocate) to help you to complete this questionnaire.

We really would like to hear your views, however, if you do not wish to take part in this survey then please discard this questionnaire.

Once completed please return this questionnaire in the pre-paid envelope (you don't need to put a stamp on the envelope) by **19th November 2023** to:

Consultation on future of Ridgway House 2023
Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Ridgway House
1 Swinneyford Road,
Towcester,
Northamptonshire,
NN12 6HD

Please contact us either by email care.feedback@westnorthants.gov.uk or telephone on 01604 361002 if you have any queries, comments or would like a copy of this questionnaire in another format, including easy read or large print.

Thank you for helping us by completing this questionnaire.

1) In what respect are you answering this questionnaire?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

I live at this home permanently	<input type="checkbox"/>
I live at this home temporarily or use it for respite care	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a family carer of someone living at this home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a friend of someone living at this home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of the public	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of staff employed by West Northamptonshire Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a Councillor	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a business supplier to home	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a professional e.g. GP, district nurse, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am a member of a voluntary or community organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other, please specify	

We are interested to hear about what it is like to live in Ridgway House Care Home. If you are not a resident/family member of a resident of Ridgway care Home please go to question 8.

2) How long have you/ your family member been a resident in Ridgway House Care Home?

Less than a year	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 1 year but less than 2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 2 years but less than 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 3 years but less than 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
Over 4 years or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) Have you/ your family member ever been a long term resident in another Care Home, other than Ridgway House Care Home? (please do not include any time spent in respite care)

4) Why did you choose Ridgway House Care Home?

5) What do you like about living at Ridgway House Care Home?

6) On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'very dissatisfied' and 10 is 'very satisfied', overall how dissatisfied or satisfied are you with the care you receive at Ridgway House Care Home?

Very dissatisfied										Very satisfied	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		Don't Know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We would be interested to find out what you think are the most important features of a Care Home like Ridgway House.

7) What do you think are the most important features of a good quality Care Home?

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Don't know
Having some control over how people in the home live their lives					
Accessible bathroom and toilet facilities					
Feeling comfortable in shared and private locations					
Feeling safe					
The building looks good and is well looked after					
The bedrooms have plenty of space					
To have privacy when wanted					
To have gardens / outside space					
The home can meet the needs of residents as they change					
There is good quality food and drink available					
There are things to do					
People who live here can be sociable when they want to					
Making and having friendships					
Visitors can come when they want to					
People who live here are treated with respect and dignity					
Staff are helpful and caring					
People from outside the home can come in for events					
The home is close to where relatives live					
People who live in the home are helped to do things outside the home					

8) Are there any other features that you think help to make a good quality Care Home that are not listed above?

The future of Ridgway House

When considering the future of the home, as we are unable to redevelop or refurbish the home due to the disruption the extensive changes required would cause for

residents, the options for the future are to either maintain the home as it currently operates or commence with a safe closure programme.

To make no change to the existing facilities would mean that occupancy levels would continue to decline and the service difficulty in providing safe staffing levels is only likely to increase. The condition of the buildings is likely to result in further practical challenges and it is likely that residents would need to be moved to alternate provision at either a time when there needs can no longer be managed within the home or at a point of crisis.

A programme of safe closure would involve, stopping new admissions to the service and recruitment to any staff vacancies within the home. Residents needs would be reviewed and we would work with them and their families to identify alternative arrangements for their care. For the affected staff group we would engage the council's appropriate policies and undertake a process of redundancy or redeployment of staff into our other care settings. As far as possible we will seek to resettle people with the redeployed staff into Council delivered homes to support continuity of care, friendship groups and the change in environment and care arrangements as much as possible.

9) Option 1 is to make no change to the existing facilities, and for the home to continue to operate in the same manner that it does now.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach.

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us why?

10) Option 2 is to implement a safe closure programme; this would result in stopping new admissions to the home and supporting residents to find suitable accommodation. It would also mean undertaking a process of redeployment or redundancy with the current staff group. The council would however attempt to, as far as possible, restle people with their friendship groups and redeploy staff.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this approach?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neither agree or disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Strongly disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't Know	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please tell us why?

11) Do you have an alternative option we should consider for the future of Ridgway House Care Home?

Please tick (✓) relevant answer

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you said "Yes", please tell us what this is:

12) Is there anything else you think we should consider as part of the above mentioned proposed options?

13) Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it in the pre-paid envelope (no stamp required) by 19th November to:

Consultation on future of Ridgway House 2023
Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Wellbeing Services
Ridgway House
1 Swinneyford Road,
Towcester,
Northamptonshire,

NN12 6HD