



REPORT TO: Strategic Planning Group

MEETING DATE: 7th March 2024

BY: Gillian Neil, General Manager, Acute and Ongoing Care

SUBJECT: Financial Recovery Proposals – Closure of Inpatient Beds Associated with Edington and Belhaven, Closure of Belhaven and Abbey Care Homes.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the SPG with a high-level assessment of the impact associated with the closure or recommissioning of the following services:

- 1.1. Permanent Closure of the nine inpatient beds associated with the Edington Hospital site.
- 1.2. Closure of Blossom House Care Home, situated on the Belhaven Hospital site.
- 1.3. Closure of the eleven inpatient beds associated within Ward 3 at Belhaven.
- 1.4. Relocation of community services currently based at Belhaven Hospital, due to the ongoing risk associated with fire hazards, security, and lone working. This will result in the full closure of the Belhaven site.
- 1.5. Closure of The Abbey Care Home in North Berwick.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The SPG is asked to agree to the following proposals:

- 2.1. Permanent closure of the 9 inpatients beds associated with the Edington. This means that the inpatient beds opened in ward 6 at ELCH will be closed with immediate effect.
- 2.2. Closure of the Care Home (Blossom House) situated on the Belhaven hospital site (11 beds).
- 2.3. Permanent closure of the 6 inpatient beds, originally situated within Belhaven Hospital.

- 2.4. Relocation of the community services based at Belhaven, which will result in full closure of the Belhaven site.
- 2.5. Closure of The Abbey Care Home (29 residents) in North Berwick.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership have been working on a whole system programme of transformation around older people services for the last three years. This work has included extensive engagement with communities and the use of research and data to understand the current and future need of our local communities.

Hospital Beds

- 3.2. The analysis of the data confirmed there is predicted to be sufficient hospital bed capacity to maintain current levels of service up to 2032-35. Maintaining this position over the medium to long term will remain challenging if additional measures and investments are not taken to improve early intervention and prevention that support individuals to live more independently, which could also extend capacity beyond 2035. Maintaining sufficient levels of future hospital bed capacity will require continued proactive management over the short to medium term. Unnecessary capital expenditure should be avoided for as long as possible. Reasons to support this approach include:
 1. Investment in additional hospital bed capacity would conflict with local and national policy requirement to Shift the Balance of Care.
 2. Capital expenditure is likely to remain constrained over the short to medium term, but if this changed, any future business cases would have to articulate how the proposal would support a shift to increased patient independence.
 3. Investment in capital expenditure would likely be at the expense of investment in community intermediate care provision.
- 3.3. Further to the initial engagement work, hospital bed data was revisited in January 2024 to take into account updated Census figures (2022) and patient occupancy data. Based on 2023 occupancy figures, East Lothian Community Hospital (Wards 3, 4 and 6) is currently meeting the required number of beds at an 85% occupancy rate. When Ward 5 is added, the total provision of hospital beds at East Lothian Community Hospital can meet projected demand at 85% occupancy until circa 2034. With Edington and Belhaven added to the total provision in East Lothian, the number of beds available outweighs current and projected demand for the next 12 years.
- 3.4. The Planning Older People's Services project completed its hurdle criteria exercise in February 2024 with a representative cross section from the Project Team and an Independent Community Panel agreeing

by supermajority that the following options should be explored and modelled further as part of the project:

- Option 69: Edington and Belhaven satellite hospitals should close with all community hospital beds located within East Lothian Community Hospital (ELCH). Consideration should be given to opening ELCH Ward 6 on a more permanent basis.
- Option 71: Edington and/or Belhaven sites should be redeveloped as larger ELHSCP/Local Authority-run sites. Consideration to be given to protected step-up and step-down provision, palliative care, care home beds, community respite and community hub approach.

The following option did not meet the necessary hurdle criteria and will therefore not proceed:

- Option 68: The Edington and Belhaven satellite hospitals should re-open with return to original service provision

3.5. Blossom House Care Home, Belhaven has remained closed since 7th March 2024 after an emergency evacuation of residents in response to the risks identified by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service during an unannounced inspection. Prior to this, the entire site had previously been closed from August 2022 to January 2023 due to water quality issues, and whilst care home residents had returned, inpatient beds did not reopen due to workforce issues.

3.6. In response to challenges posed by COVID-19, and significant workforce issues, a strategic decision was made in August 2021 to transfer staff and bed capacity from the Edington to ELCH and Ward 6 at ELCH was opened to support this transfer.

3.7. The transfer of the inpatient beds from both Belhaven and the Edington continues to be provided within the current bed capacity available in ELCH.

3.8. Both the Edington and Belhaven sites are delivered from buildings that no longer meet the requirements for safe and effective health care delivery. Due to the increased risk of escalating maintenance costs associated with these buildings, it has been confirmed that there is no capital funding available, and we are aware that NHS Lothian will also not have sufficient resources within their capital programme to support future investment.

Care Home Beds

3.9. The Abbey Care Home Building is no longer fit for the longer-term delivery of safe and effective care. Extensive work would be required if the building is to meet current care and safety standards and this level of refurbishment is not financially viable, especially as no capital funding

is available. The layout of the building means that accommodation spans two floors with an accessible passenger lift and at present only 16 of the bedrooms feature an en-suite toilet and hand basin facilities. There is inadequate showering / bathing facilities at the Abbey, with only one shower and 2 baths shared between 29 residents, which does not comply with infection protection and control protocols.

- 3.10. In December 2022, the Care Inspectorate issued an enforcement notice to Eskgreen Care Home in Musselburgh, citing substantial concerns about the condition of the building and the refurbishment upgrades required. This resulted in its closure in May 2023 and the residents were required to permanently re-locate to alternative care homes at pace. It is likely that the Abbey may find itself in a similar position in the future, therefore it is crucial that the Abbey adopts a proactive and planned approach to support residents to source alternative care home placements.
- 3.11. There are several care homes within North Berwick, which are more modern and comply with the Care Inspectorate standards. A recent assessment as part of the re-provisioning work for Older People older people's services, indicates that there are sufficient care home beds across East Lothian. As such, while there are ongoing considerations for the provision of care home places across the region, there is currently no requirement for additional placements. This has also been supported the recent initiatives led by social work, which has reinforced the 'home first' approach and has resulted in a 31% reduction in the number of local authority care home placements required since 2016.
- 3.12. It is with this level of analysis that we must ensure we do not invest further in unsustainable services which do not meet best value or meet strategic ELIJB' Strategic Objectives:
 - Develop Services that are Sustainable and Proportionate to Need.
 - Deliver New Models of Community Provision, Working Collaboratively with Communities.
 - Focus on Prevention and Early Intervention.
- 3.13. Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) have been completed to assess the impact of these choices on vulnerable groups as outlined in our equality agenda. These assessments also identify the risks and necessary actions required, to address the choices and proposed budget reductions.
- 3.14. The Provisioning Strategy Project Updated Background Data Report presents current data on demand and capacity in relation to hospital and care home beds across East Lothian (see Background Papers below).

4. ENGAGEMENT

4.1. Engagement within the IIA process.

4.2. Significant Engagement through 'Planning for Older People Service' project – details of the engagement are included process and feedback are available on the [Planning Older People's Services webpages](#).

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are currently no identified policy implications.

6. INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1. An IIA has been completed.

7. DIRECTIONS

7.1. N/A

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Financial – as detailed in the IJB budget setting papers and Financial Recovery Plan.

8.2. Personnel – none.

8.3. Other – none.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1. [Provisioning Strategy Project – Updated Background Data Report – January 2024](#)

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