

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 17 September 2018.

PRESENT

Cllr P Hollick (Chairman)
Cllr P Downing (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs P A Duckett
K Ferguson

Cllrs Mrs S A Goodchild
G Perham

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs A Barker
R D Berry
Mrs D B Gurney
Ms C Maudlin
Mr D Simpson
B J Spurr

Substitutes: Cllrs M A G Versallion (In place of Mrs A Barker)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs E Ghent Executive Member for Assets and Housing Delivery
Ms C Hegley Executive Member for Adults, Social Care and Housing Operations (HRA)
Mrs T Stock Deputy Executive Member for Health

Officers in Attendance: Mr N Costin Head of Housing Service
Mr B Douglas Tenant Involvement Leader
Mrs P Everitt Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mrs J Ogley Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
Ms C Rooker Head of Housing Management

Others in Attendance Mrs E Hunt-Smith Assistant Director of Unplanned Care, BCCG
Mr S King Senior Locality Manager, East of England Ambulance Trust (EEAST)
Dr J Kirkham Clinical Lead Unplanned Care, BCCG
Mr A Streets Accountable Officer, BCCG
Mr G Tolliday Senior Lead, EEAST

SCHH/18/102.Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 04 June 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCHH/18/103.Members' Interests

Cllr Mark Versallion declared an interest at item 11 in his role as a Non-Executive Member of the Luton and Dunstable Hospital.

SCHH/18/104.Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman advised the Committee of recent news that included:-

- Plans to undertake a Housing Inquiry had been put on hold and the Committee would look to reinstate the Inquiry once proposals for a Development Company had been established.
- IT issues at the East and North Herts NHS Trust had resulted in GP's not receiving patient records. The Committee would seek reassurances from the Trust that the issue had been addressed.
- The Chief Executive of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust had advised of his impending retirement from the role. Interviews for his replacement were in hand.

SCHH/18/105.Petitions

None.

SCHH/18/106.Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

SCHH/18/107.Call-In

None.

SCHH/18/108.Requested Items

None.

SCHH/18/109.Executive Members' Update

The Executive Members' for Assets and Adult Social Care (ASC) and Housing Operations (HRA) were delighted to advise The Executive had approved in principle the award of the contract for Houghton Regis Central.

A presentation on the scheme was delivered and both Executive Members were confident the scheme would be delivered on time. Regular updates on progress would be provided at future meetings. The Committee were shown a video make about the scheme.

A Team in Housing Services and Executive Members had met and prepared a bid for Housing Revenue Account funds made available by the Government.

The Deputy Executive Member for Health advised the Committee of recent activity that included:-

- A Health and Wellbeing Board development session
- Visits to the stop smoking and drug and alcohol teams
- The success of group sessions for Year 6-11 to learn how to avoid 'unhealthy relationships'. Following the introduction of the session there had been a fall in teenage pregnancies recorded.

SCHH/18/110. Update on the Non-Emergency Passenger Transport Service Contract

The Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the East of England Ambulance Service Trust Bedfordshire delivered a presentation that outlined the Services' performance for the Non-emergency Passenger Transport service contract awarded to them in January 2018.

With plans to recruit additional staff and the relocation of the control room to Bedford to provide a localised service to patients, the SRO was confident Key Performance Indicators could be met. In addition, there would be a move to re-establish the help of voluntary drivers. A Member commended the work of the Good Neighbour Scheme that provided transport to hospital for local residents who request it. There was the potential to coordination with the Good Neighbour Groups amongst other voluntary groups to help secure the voluntary help they required.

In response to a question on how the Council might help the Service, Members were asked to raise the profile of the Ambulance Trust in the Bedfordshire area with a positive voice. The Committee was reassured that plans put in place would see the Ambulance Service reach its goal and achieved an excellent service for patients.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- The direction of travel and good performance within Bedfordshire be welcomed.
- The Trust be encouraged to fill outstanding vacancies in order to enhance performance.
- The Committee wished to see an early resolution concerning the appointment of a new Chief Executive who, when in post, would provide continuity and improved services.

SCHH/18/111. Urgent Care Treatment Update

The Assistant Director, Unplanned Care at Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG), Acting Accountable Officer, BCCG and Clinical Lead for Unplanned Care, BCCG, provided an update on the provision of an Urgent Care Treatment Centre. The BCCG would continue to raise the public awareness of the much improved 111 service through its campaign to avoid

Winter pressures. The Deputy Executive Member advised that the proposed Hubs in Central Bedfordshire would help to ease the pressures on hospitals.

In response to questions raised by Members, representatives from the BCCG provided the following responses:-

- That patients suffering from drink and drug related symptoms would be triaged before being transported to Hospital A&E departments.
- That clinical staff engaged in the running of 111 services would signpost residents to the most appropriate place for help or care, which could include a range of facilities as Central Bedfordshire does not have its own General Hospital.
- Negotiations with a local landlord to increase car parking capacity at Bedford Hospital were taking place.
- The reduced service that would continue to be provided at the Putnoe Walk-in centre.
- That services provided by the Urgent Team Centre followed NHS England guidance and would be reviewed and revised at the end of the pilot. A similar approach would be applied to services for hubs.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- 1. The Urgent Treatment Centre at the Cauldwell Centre was more appropriate for use by Mid and North Central Bedfordshire residents.**
- 2. More publicity and guidance on the use of the 111 Service be provided, particularly outlining where residents in Central Bedfordshire can access those services.**
- 3. The Committee be provided with a greater insight into the design of services which could go into a future Hub and how proposals were coming forward.**

SCHH/18/112. Tenant Scrutiny Panel - Homelessness Report

The Tenant Involvement Team Leader introduced the Inquiry into Homelessness on behalf of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The report sets out the aims and objects of the Inquiry and examines homelessness pressures on the service, studies the journey faced by residents who are at threat of being made homeless and how the service offer could be improved under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

A review of the existing process had resulted in recommendations that had been actioned by the Housing Solutions team, however, the challenge to find additional accommodation and affordable housing remained.

In light of the report Members queried what steps had been taken by the Housing Service to ensure residents at risk of losing their home were offered temporary housing. In response the Head of Housing Services advised the Council had temporary accommodation available and had set up its own Letting Service. The Council worked closely with private landlords to provide a housing solution for some residents. A tenant reward scheme had also been devised as an incentive for tenants to move to the right size of house for their needs and free up accommodation for families in need.

It was requested that information packs be provided to Ward Members, local churches, community and voluntary sector groups who regularly supported residents facing the prospect of homelessness, be provided with information packs.

The Executive Member for ASC and Housing Operations extended thanks to the Tenant Scrutiny Panel for the excellent report and the insight into the tenant's perspective. It was important to note that the number of working families threatened with homelessness was a cause for concern and called for all Members to support the provision of affordable housing in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDED that:-

- 1. The well drafted and informative report from the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel be received along with the Housing Service response.**
- 2. Information about the Homeless Service be made more accessible to vulnerable residents and voluntary groups.**
- 3. The Housing Service take account of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel's recommendations.**
- 4. A formal Housing Inquiry be undertaken in 2019.**

SCHH/18/113. Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy

The Head of Housing Solutions Service introduced the revised Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy and presentation. The revisions had been made to take account of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 that saw a greater emphasis on prevention, relief and a duty to provide temporary accommodation. The policy also ensured that a level of safeguard to ensure the health and well-being to homeless applicants was maintained. Detailed records would be kept and maintained by officers that reflect that due care was taken.

A Member sought clarity on the complex legislation and deficit of affordable homes and whether the chance of success for the Policy was achievable. In response the Head of Service advised the plan would ensure the Council followed the right direction to provide homes and temporary solutions. There was a risk that some residents would be placed away from an area in the initial stage, but final settlement would see residents hopefully living in a place they would like to stay.

The Committee fully supported the Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy and no changes were proposed.

RECOMMENDED that the Discharge of Homelessness Duty to a Suitable Private Sector Home Policy to the Executive be fully endorsed.

SCHH/18/114. Work Programme 2018/19 and Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered the current work programme and Executive Forward Plan. The Work Programme was agreed subject to the addition of the following items:-

- Future consideration of the Townsend Centre,
 - Adult Social Care Green Paper and NHS England Plan.
- (Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.55 p.m.)

Chairman.....

Dated.....