

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, High Street North, DUNSTABLE, Bedfordshire LU6 1LF on Thursday, 5 November 2009

PRESENT

Cllr Miss A Sparrow (Chairman)
Cllr A M Turner (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs Mrs J Freeman
P Freeman
Mrs R B Gammons
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs Ms A M W Graham
J Kane
P Rawcliffe

Members in Attendance: Cllrs Mrs R J Drinkwater
Mrs C Hegley

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs P Coker	– Head of Partnerships
	Mr D Jones	– Assistant Director Commissioning
	Mr H Khan	– Head of Housing Needs
	Mrs J Ogley	– Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Ms M Peaston	– Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Miss C Powell	– Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Others in Attendance	Mr A Morgan	– Chief Executive, NHS Bedfordshire
	Ms S Sherratt	– Communications Manager, NHS East of England
	Mr I White	– Strategic Projects, NHS East of England

SCHH/09/65 **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

SCHH/09/66 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SCHH/09/67 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

SCHH/09/68 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman, with the Committee's agreement, changed the order of the agenda to bring forward item 13 Bedfordshire and Luton Partnership NHS Trust (BLPT) Tender Process – Project Handover Update. This was in view of visitors who were attending only for this item.

SCHH/09/69 Petitions

No petitions had been received.

SCHH/09/70 Public Questions, Statements and Deputations

There were no questions, statements or deputations from the public.

SCHH/09/71 Disclosure of Exempt Information

No matters of exempt information were anticipated.

SCHH/09/72 Call-in

There had been no matters of call-in for consideration.

SCHH/09/73 Requested Items

There were no specific requested items.

SCHH/09/74 Bedfordshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) Update

The Committee noted the report which had been submitted by the Interim Vice-Chairman and Finance Officer of the LINK.

SCHH/09/75 Bedfordshire and Luton Partnership NHS Trust (BLPT) Tender Process - Project Handover Update

The Committee received a report of the Interim Assistant Director – Commissioning and a presentation given by Ian White, Strategic Projects Manager, NHS East of England. The slides are attached at **Appendix A**.

It was noted that a S75 Agreement would need to be signed in due course with the successful bidder. A common framework would be sought for all three participating local authorities with an appendix specific to Central Bedfordshire Council.

It was noted that particularly as there were current concerns about mental health service provision, the Council was eager to work with the new provider. Dr Patrick Geoghan had indicated that he was willing to address the Committee on mental health services in Bedfordshire and Members concurred that it would be appropriate for this to be programmed for January or February 2010. Members also welcomed the opportunity to visit some of the places where mental health services were provided.

The Chief Executive of Bedfordshire PCT explained concerns regarding control of the mental health service's assets together with the approach which had been adopted. It was noted that controls had been put in place to ensure that if an out-of-area provider delivered services they would not be able to take assets with them when they left. Assurances were being provided to the Co-operation and Competition Panel accordingly.

The Portfolio holder for Social Care and Health commented that in her recent visit to Weller Wing and Townsend Court she had seen improvements resulting from considerable refurbishment. This had proved so beneficial that a positive impact had been made on the length of stay of patients. The Director added that the shift in staff morale had been transformational.

RESOLVED:-

1. to note the report and the presentation;
2. to record the Committee's recognition of the innovative nature of the transaction to secure the delivery of mental health services in Bedfordshire, the first of its kind in the UK, and the achievement of design and delivery of a preferred bidder in less than 6 months from commencement of the project in February 2009;
3. subject to BLPT and Commissioner approvals, to support proceeding to signing of the contract;
4. that in the event of matters arising in the course of reaching contract finalisation which required a material change to the tender specification, the Committee would be supportive of such steps as were necessary to resolve matters for example requesting bid clarification and/or re-submission where appropriate, the re-evaluation of bids and, if necessary, the replacement of the preferred bidder with the reserve bidder;
5. to review progress in relation to the new management arrangements for local mental health services in January or February 2010.

SCHH/09/76 Overview of Central Bedfordshire Council's Adult Services System

The Director delivered a presentation which provided an overview of the Council's Adult Services system. The slides are attached to these minutes at **Appendix B**.

In response to a question, clarification was given regarding waiting times for occupational therapy assessments. It was noted that a considerable backlog had been inherited from the legacy authority which had now been addressed. Work was currently being undertaken on applications made during 2009. Central Bedfordshire Council was working with NHS Bedfordshire to develop an improved Occupational Therapy service.

A question was asked as to the impact on residents in relation to plans for the Wingfield unit. Members noted that several of the units were not in use and that work was underway in improving delivery of units of sheltered care. Members also noted that there was a need to develop the Authority's extra-care sheltered units. As the numbers of people with dementia increased, more dementia placements would be needed.

It was also noted that many of the people in need of support are self-funding and that supporting them through providing information and advice was part of the Council's welfare responsibilities.

In response to a question regarding measuring the outcome of providing grants it was noted that every Council grant in relation to adult social care had been logged and would continue this year. The impact of the grants would be assessed and reviewed in the future.

In relation to a question as to whether there were sufficient staff to deliver adult care services the Director advised that an exercise was being undertaken to ensure that the right staff were in place to carry out the necessary work. Improvements would be sought and training and development would be addressed. It was noted that a request had been made across the Council for interim and agency staff to be reduced. The Director commented that this would be difficult in Adult Social Care as those posts needed to be covered.

A discussion ensued regarding the difference between "entitlement" and "eligibility" and comments were made in support of people who had paid National Insurance contributions all their working lives but who might not be able to access the care they needed. It was noted that the Government's Green Paper, to be considered later on the agenda today, was proposing that although there would still be eligibility criteria, the entitlements arising from assessments would be portable to anywhere else in England.

The Chairman agreed to accept a question from Les Ford, a member of the public and of the Way Forward Panel. Mr Ford commented that the Government Green Paper would affect a lot of people and that in his view public consultation had been inadequate. He asked for information on the Green Paper to be brought to the Panel to enable discussion there, and the Panel's views and recommendations would then be sent back to the Council. The Director indicated that she was willing for an officer to attend the Panel and asked that such arrangements be made.

Members noted that the BUPA contract would end in 2010 and that work was being undertaken to look at the BUPA contract.

RESOLVED:-

1. to note the presentation;
2. that the slide in relation to Fair Access to Care (Eligibility Criteria) be sent in readable format to all members of the Committee;

3. that arrangements be made for an appropriate officer from the Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate to attend the Way Forward Panel to enable fuller consultation and clarity regarding the Government's Green Paper on adult social care.

SCHH/09/77 **Green Paper - Shaping the Future of Care**

The Committee received a report summarising options proposed in the Government's Green Paper *Shaping the Future of Care*. The report also set out a draft response to the Government's consultation which would inform the White Paper to be published in 2010.

The Director pointed out that there was an assumption in the Green Paper that people's own homes may be used for payment of residential care. The Committee was aware that many people were very much against this.

The Director also commented that currently the local authority determined the investment of the care budget in adult social care. If this was to be centrally determined, as seemed possible through proposals in the Green Paper, the role of Councillors in this extremely important area would be nullified. Currently local priorities could be woven into the national strategy for adult social care but this could be lost.

Members noted that if there was a move from "eligibility" to "entitlement" for all in relation to adult social care, this would represent a shift from the current position. Local authorities would not currently be able to respond to the needs of the whole of the adult care population if they all came forward.

It was suggested that the ethos of the national health service was that health care should be free at the point of delivery and that this was appropriate for other care needs too. The discussion about paying for care had arisen because of increase in need which the current system could not afford.

Members commented that they were shocked at the speed of the government timetabling of this matter which had been undertaken at the very end of its term of office before the next election. Comments were also made criticising the narrowness of the Government's consultation.

The Director read out to the Committee the recommendations which the Portfolio holder for Social Care and Health would be presenting at the next meeting of the Executive. Support was expressed generally by members of the Committee to these recommendations .

RESOLVED:-

1. to consider the proposals made in the Government's Green Paper and the potential impact on the future provision of adult social care in the Central Bedfordshire area;

2. to support the Portfolio holder's recommendations to the Executive in relation to the Green Paper;
3. to note that the Council's response to the consultation together with responses from the public in the Central Bedfordshire area would be returned before the close of the consultation period.

SCHH/09/78 **Let's Rent - Housing Option**

The Committee received and considered a report detailing an innovative private sector housing option which would allow households a choice in accessing a private sector regulated home with all the requisite support mechanisms for tenancy sustainment, if required.

The *Let's Rent* approach would provide a low cost and high quality alternative housing option which would not require expensive rent deposits but would instead make use of a unique insurance scheme to indemnify any losses for landlords.

Members noted that the scheme would enable greater stability in their homes for vulnerable households which would also lead to a reduction in changes in their children's schooling.

Members were assured that there were sufficient properties available for rent for the purposes of the scheme, and that the scheme would make use of high quality homes. In response to a question it was noted that in view of the exceptional nature of the scheme, it was hoped that approvals would be given to the payment of rents to landlords instead of tenants.

A typographical error in paragraph 10 was amended.

The Committee was assured that rigorous monitoring of the scheme would take place, on a monthly basis with landlords and on a weekly basis with internal officers and officers from Aragon Housing Association. A request was made that an update on the scheme be provided to the Committee in six months time.

Members indicated their support for the scheme and asked that their support be referred to the Executive.

RESOLVED:-

1. to note the report and commend the innovative nature of the scheme;
2. that the Committee would receive an update of the Let's Rent scheme in six months time;
3. to refer the Committee's support of this Housing option to the Executive when it considered the scheme.

SCHH/09/79 Work Programme 2009-2010

The Committee considered its amended Work Programme and noted that there were matters which had been raised during the course of the meeting which would amend it further.

It was also noted that the NHS Bedfordshire Strategy which had been the subject of a refresh would be submitted to the PCT's Board before being brought before the Committee in December.

A report on Substantial Variations in relation to consultation on NHS matters would also be brought to the Committee in December.

RESOLVED to note that the Work Programme would be amended to reflect the current position.

SCHH/09/80 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED to note that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 3 December 2009 at 10.00am, in Room 15 at Priory House, Shefford.

Chairman

Date

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.00 p.m.)