

## CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & HOUSING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Room 15, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Monday, 24 January 2011

### PRESENT

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

Cllrs Mrs R B Gammons  
Mrs S A Goodchild  
Ms A M W Graham

Cllrs J Kane  
P Rawcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs J Freeman  
P Freeman

Substitutes: Cllr B J Spurr (In place of Cllr Mrs J Freeman)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R A Baker  
D Bowater  
Mrs R J Drinkwater  
Dr R Egan  
Mrs C Hegley  
M R Jones,

Officers in Attendance:	Mrs M Clampitt	– Committee Services Officer
	Mr H Khan	– Head of Housing Needs
	Ms J Mew	– Policy & Performance Manager
	Mr N Murley	– Assistant Director Business & Performance
	Mrs J Ogle	– Director of Social Care, Health and Housing
	Miss C Powell	– Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Others in Attendance	Mr M Coleman	– Chairman, Bedfordshire LINK
	Mr D Levitt	– Head of Public Engagement and Communications, NHS Bedfordshire
	Mr T Medwell	– Head of Primary Care Commissioning, NHS Bedfordshire
	Mr M Thompson	– Interim Lead for Primary Care, NHS Bedfordshire

**SCHH/09/222 Minutes****RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 December 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

**SCHH/09/223 Members' Interests****(a) Personal Interests:-**

Cllr Mrs S Goodchild                      She is an ongoing service user.

**(b) Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

There were no declarations made.

**(c) Any Political Whip in relation to items on the agenda:-**

There were no declarations made.

**SCHH/09/224 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman had 2 announcements as follows:-

- 1) Item 22 – St Neots Road was exempt from publication at the time the agenda was published to the Central Bedfordshire Council website. However at today's date the information was in the public domain and could be dealt with in public.
- 2) Under the provisions of committee procedure rule CM16 the order of the agenda would be varied as follows:-

Item 10 – LINK Update

Item 13 – Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence"

Item 11 – Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence" Implications of  
LINK to Healthwatch

Item 12 – Community Dental Services

Item 22 – St Neots Road (no longer exempt)

Items 14 – 21 remain unchanged.

**SCHH/09/225 Petitions**

The Chairman announced in accordance with Section 6, Part A4, Paragraph 6.1.1 that Mr Francis present the Committee with a petition in connection with the proposals of the care arrangements at St. George's Court, Leighton Buzzard. Mr Francis spoke of his, the residents and their carers frustration over the lack of information provided to date for possible changes to the care arrangements.

The Director of Social Care Health and Housing provided Mr. Francis with the assurance that the Council will take note of the petition and the representation at this meeting. The Director also confirmed officers will be available to discuss the proposals at St. George's Court at a date to be agreed. Correspondence to all residents has been drafted and will be sent to all those affected by the proposals.

The Director reiterated the point that no decision has been or will be made until the Executive meeting to be held on February 15 2011.

**AGREED**

**that the petition be forwarded to the Executive for consideration at their meeting to be held on Tuesday 15 February 2011, to allow their decision to be taken in light of this petition.**

**SCHH/09/226 Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Chairman announced that no questions, statements or deputations had been received.

**SCHH/09/227 Call-In**

The Chairman announced that no call-ins had been referred to this Committee.

**SCHH/09/228 Requested Items**

The Chairman confirmed that no requests for agenda items had been received.

**SCHH/09/229 Portfolio Holders' Update**

The Chairman requested an update from each Portfolio Holder in attendance be provided to the Committee.

Cllr Mrs Carole Hegley, Portfolio Holder for Social Care and Health informed the Committee that she and the Assistant Director Business & Performance had attended the Customer and Shared Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to answer concerns about the base budget.

Members were thanked for their attendance at the Adult Social Care Law and Children's Safeguarding sessions which were held in the Chamber the previous week. The guest speaker was the Lead Member from Leicestershire Council who spoke of the Pilkington case and the lessons the Council could learn as a result of such a tragic incident.

Cllr Mrs Rita Drinkwater, Portfolio Holder for Housing informed the Committee that 16 long term empty homes had been brought back into use. In addition the Government was to reward Council for each long term empty home brought back into use. The reward was £1400 per home. Members asked that Ward Members be informed of any empty homes which are brought back into use within their area. It was agreed that Officers would look into supplying the information.

The Portfolio Holder Housing would be attending a Conference in London on 25 February which would deal with the Homelessness Challenge.

**SCHH/09/230 LINK Update**

Mr Coleman provided his comments in association with the Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence" Implications of LINK to Healthwatch (please refer to Minute No. SCHH/09/232).

**SCHH/09/231 Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence"**

The Committee received and considered the report which provided an overview of the potential changes to the NHS and associated impact for Central Bedfordshire's residents. It was noted that the White Paper had been published in July 2010 and the consultation concluded on 11 October 2010. On 15 December 2010 the Government set out the responses to the consultation.

The Director of Social Care Health and Housing informed the Committee how the Government planned to bring about the changes contained within the White Paper and the impact these changes would have on Central Bedfordshire Council directly.

There are 3 main area of change: to commissioning by moving from PCTs and Strategic Health Authorities to the National NHS Commissioning Board and GP Consortia. Transferring some of the public health responsibilities to local councils and creating a national public health service enhancing the role of councils through establishing Health Well Being Boards.

“No decision about me without me” is set to empower and liberate the Health Care process by putting the patient and clinicians at the centre of the service. Some of the decision making responsibilities will be transferred from the NHS to GP Consortia. The proposed GP Consortia in Bedfordshire will cover Central Bedfordshire and Bedford. There will also be a national NHS Commissioning Board.

A presentation was given to the Committee which highlighted the way forward for the delivery. The Director of Social Care Health and Housing provided clarification and further information on a number of specific items namely:

The Health and Well Being Boards will have a membership comprising of GP Consortia, Councillors, Statutory Directors, Healthwatch, NHS Commissioning Board, etc. The Boards will provide the Council and its partners greater influence over commissioning for healthcare and health improvement across children’s and adult services.

The NHS confirmed that the process was very challenging and would deliver huge savings over the next 4 years. The NHS was working with the GPs to help them manage the risk. Some smaller units would be placed within larger units.

Concerns were expressed by LINK that the size of the Consortias should be larger and would Bedfordshire consortia be able to have sufficient funds to provide services In response the NHS representative confirmed that that the size of Consortias would be as flexible and would be shared across Bedfordshire but managed within administrative boundaries.

## **RESOLVED**

**that the proposals made in the White Paper and the wider implications for the council and the local NHS be noted.**

### **SCHH/09/232 Health White Paper "Equity and Excellence" Implications of LINK to Healthwatch**

The Chairman of the Bedfordshire LINK informed the Committee that the LINK would be changing its name and becoming known as the Healthwatch. The LINK had achieved many things during the last four year and would continue to work with Hospitals such as Addenbrookes, the L&D, Kettering and the Lister for patient reform. It was noted that Healthwatch would be looking for funding from other sources due to budgetary cutbacks.

**RESOLVED**

**that the report be noted.**

**SCHH/09/233 Community Dental Services**

The Committee received and considered a report from NHS Bedfordshire on the proposed revisions to be made to the Salaried Dental Services (SDS). The Head of Primary Care Commissioning for NHS Bedfordshire informed the Committee that the NHS commissioned the SDS for residents in Bedfordshire and Luton.

The current budget spend was £7m per 100,000 people in receipt of dental services which was higher than the National average and third highest in the East of England.

The SDS applied for Social Enterprise status and NHS guidance stated that a reasonable distance to travel for treatment was 12 miles. It was noted that the SDS services were to be used for patients who required special treatments such as periodontics, children and adults who would not be able to cope with a normal surgeries and require more time for treatments and the disabled and specialist care, ancillary service and the homeless. It was noted that the service had not been commissioned in the traditional way. In addition there were new rules for DDA compliance including infection control.

The review had identified that there would be no reduction in the quantum of service but efficiencies could be achieved through increased productivity and the reduction in the number of bases where the service was offered. The proposals currently being considered were as follows:-

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Shefford –           | Closure of the existing service which was not providing specialist services but was operating as a High Street dentist. The new medical centre will have a dentistry wing which will provide the specialist services. |
| Dunstable-           | Closure of the existing site as it is not fit for purpose and cannot comply with new DDA requirements. Marsh Farm in Houghton Regis had been closed to bring it up to code and would be reopening.                    |
| Amphill-             | Closure of the existing site as it is not fit for purpose and refer patients to the Flitwick service.   |
| Biggleswade -        | Closure of the existing service and refer patients to Sandy.  |
| Leighton<br>Buzzard- | Closure the existing site and refer patients to Houghton Regis.   |

These proposals would reduce the sites from 14 to 8 serving 5,500 patients.

It was noted that since December 2010 the NHS had been conducting face to face interviews with users to ascertain their use of the service and how they travelled to the service. The Committee asked that the ward members be kept informed of the number of people within the various areas would be affected and of what would be happening during the consultation process.

Members particularly challenge the proposal in respect of Leighton Buzzard where there is a population of 37,000 and including surrounding villages, 50,000.

It was noted that an update would be provided to the Committee in June 2011 and the proposals to the service changes would be consulted on in September 2011.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) that the report of the NHS be noted.**
- 2) that the NHS be asked to review the proposed closure of the Leighton Buzzard Dental Surgery.**

#### **SCHH/09/234 St Neots Road**

The Committee received and considered a report which clarified the plans for the St Neots Road Medical Centre. The Head of Primary Care Commissioning for NHS Bedfordshire informed the Committee that in September 2010 the practice managing company, Chilvers McCrea had requested to end their contract. In addition, it was noted that the lease on the property was not renewable. It was also noted that in March 2011, Dr Giblin would be retiring from the practice.

At the time a number of permanent solutions were being considered the NHS carried out a health and safety inspection of the St Neots Road premises and were advised that the building was not suitable to remain a GP premises.

The NHS had spoken to neighbouring practices and they were happy to take on the additional patients. One practice had taken on an additional doctor to help with the increased number of patients. Residents had received letters and the NHS were holding two drop in sessions for the residents to inform them of the proposals.

#### **RESOLVED**

1. **that the report be noted**
2. **that the Committee receive a report at their June meeting which covers the current patient (demographic) profile.**

**SCHH/09/235 A Vision for Adult Social Care and Transparency in outcomes: a framework for Adult Social Care**

The Committee agreed to defer the consideration of this item to the 28 March 2011 meeting.

**SCHH/09/236 Review of the Eligibility Criteria**

The Committee agreed to defer the consideration of this item to the 28 February 2011 meeting.

**SCHH/09/237 Review of Choice Based Lettings and draft Allocations Policy**

The Committee received and considered a report which provided Members with an update on Choice Based Lettings, the scheme for allocating social housing and the opportunity to comment on the Allocations Policy, a Framework for determining priorities for social housing.

The Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme (CBL) worked in partnership with Aragon Housing Association, Bedford Borough Council, Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association. The CBL had created an Allocations Policy which would be reviewed twelve months after the June 2009 launch.

The Sub Regional Partnership Board monitors the collective CBL performance as well as that of the individual partners. A benchmarking exercise was being undertaken to compare Bedfordshire Home finder with similar sized Sub Regional Schemes across England.

The Committee were informed that there were currently 10,419 people registered for social housing across the partnership. The participation rate is 55% with average bids of 6,685 per month. In addition, it was noted that cross board allocations would fluctuate during the year but evened out by the end of the year.

The Policy and Performance Manager provided a demonstration of the Bedfordshire Home finder software which provided tenants with information about properties which were available for rent and allowed the tenants the opportunity to place bids on three properties in any cycle. It was explained that a cycle lasted for one week and occurred every two weeks.



Members noted that this service provided flexibility as it included Registered Social Landlords. Members were provided with an explanation of the bidding system. It was explained that the higher the band number (1 being the highest) the applicant would be given first refusal of the property. There is a registration team who place people into the correct band having taken into consideration their social, medical or housing need. In response to a question it was noted that Bedford Court and Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard were used for homeless arrangements.

The Committee considered the request of the CBL to improve the current software to include a Village sustainability function at a cost of £20k. The cost would have to be found as it was not part of the existing base budget for CBL. It was acknowledged that whilst a desirable function to have, it was not a required function.. The Committee agreed with Officers that this was not a high priority at the present time.

The Committee congratulated the Housing Team for their good work and endorsed the system.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1. that the contents of the report be noted for information.**
- 2. that the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the changes to the Allocations Policy.**
- 3. that the £20,000 software enhancement for “village sustainability” not be acquired at this time.**

#### **RECOMMENDED to the Executive**

- 4. that the Executive endorse the Allocations Policy.**

#### **SCHH/09/238 Statutory Review of Fees and Charges and Revenue Income Optimisation Business Cases**

The Committee considered the report which outlined the proposed Fees and Charges to be applied for the municipal year 2011/12.

Members discussed the Council’s approach to the application of Fees and Charges to the Directorates. Members expressed concerns about the truly vulnerable and affordability particularly in the context of Telecare.

Members stated the need for the Council to ensure that the assumptions made against income generation when applying a charge for the Telecare Service adhered to accuracy and were the Council’s best estimate, particularly for the Council’s truly vulnerable customers.

The Committee endorsed the need to apply a charge for the Telecare Service but felt that any charges for installation should be waived.

**RECOMMENDED to the Executive****that all proposals be endorsed.****SCHH/09/239 Capital Programme Review 2011/12 to 2014/15**

The Committee considered the report of the 11 January 2011 Executive which set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2011/12.

Members discussed the proposals contained within the Capital Programme, in particular:

- a. Disabled Facility Grants
- b. Renewal Assistance
- c. NHS Campus Closure
- d. Timberlands & Chiltern View Gypsy and Traveller Sites
- e. Empty Homes
- f. Schemes under the Housing Revenue Account

**RECOMMENDED to the Executive****that all proposals be endorsed.****SCHH/09/240 Work Programme 2010 - 2011 & Executive Forward Plan**

Members considered the Committee's work programme and noted that the following items would be moved within the programme following deferment today:-

- 1) A Vision for Adult Social Care and Transparency in outcomes: a framework for Adult Social Care would be considered at the 28 March 2011 meeting.
- 2) Review of the Eligibility Criteria would be considered at the 28 February 2011 meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer agreed to provide an updated work programme to Members.

**RESOLVED****that the work programme as amended above be noted.**

**SCHH/09/241 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on Monday 28 February 2011 in Room 15 at Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford starting at 10.00am.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.40 p.m.)

Chairman .....

Dated .....