

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, 23 January 2012.

PRESENT

Cllr Mrs R J Drinkwater (Chairman)

Cllr N J Sheppard (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs A L Dodwell
Mrs R B Gammons
Mrs S A Goodchild
Mrs D B Gurney

Cllrs Mrs C Hegley
K Janes
I A MacKilligan
M A Smith

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis
T Nicols
P Williams

Officers in Attendance: Mr N Costin – Head of Private Sector Housing
Mr T Keaveney – Assistant Director Housing Services
Ms S Marsh – Housing Services Manager
Mr S Mitchelmore – Head of Older Persons & Physical Disability Service
Mr J Partridge – Scrutiny Policy Adviser

Others in Attendance Mr M Coleman Chairman, Bedfordshire LINK

SCHH/11/71 Minutes

Councillor Janes stated he had meant to declare a personal interest at the previous meeting (Minute SCHH/11/60 refers) as members of his family run care homes in Central Bedfordshire.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the addition of Cllr Janes' personal interest in Item 11 (Minute SCHH/11/60 refers).

SCHH/11/72 Members' Interests

(a) Personal Interests:-

- Councillor Mrs S A Goodchild (Item 12) – a member of her family is a service user.

- Councillor K Janes – his family run care homes in Central Bedfordshire

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

None.

(c) **Any political whip in relation to any agenda item:-**

None.

SCHH/11/73 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

The Chairman stated that further to the previous meeting (Minute SCHH/11/60 refers) a session had been arranged on 7 February 2012 for the Chairman to meet with the Care Quality Commission. All Members of the Committee had been asked to submit an expression of interest to become a Member of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) (Minute SCHH/11/61 refers). Councillors Drinkwater, Sheppard and Smith had been appointed as Members. Councillors Goodchild and Gurney were appointed as substitutes.

In relation to Item 11 (Minute SCHH/11/78 refers) it was noted that the report would be received as the first item on the agenda due to public interest. It was also noted that the item did not relate to Croft Green, Dunstable as suggested in the title of the item.

SCHH/11/74 Petitions

No petitions were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCHH/11/75 Questions, Statements or Deputations

The Chairman informed the Committee that two speakers had registered to speak in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution. Both speakers wished to raise issues in relation to Item 11 (Minutes SCHH/11/78 refers). Issues that were raised in detail including the following:-

- A preferred residents' option had been developed following the consultation process, this had not been included in the OSC report. Further analysis of the residents option should be undertaken before a decision was made by the Council.
- There was no strategic context contained in the OSC report or references to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, both of which promoted the importance of the local community in identifying service demand.
- Crescent Court was a good community resource.
- Option 1 provided better value for money than rebuilding the facility.

- Further recommendations should be provided to the Executive relating to the development of a community based approach, considering the feasibility of the residents' option and undertaking further consultation.
- Residents had been frustrated throughout the consultation process, which had started poorly. There was fear and uncertainty amongst residents regarding future proposals.

SCHH/11/76 Call-In

The Panel was advised that no decisions of the Executive had been referred to the Panel under the Call-in Procedures set out in Appendix "A" to Rule No. S18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

SCHH/11/77 Requested Items

No items were referred to the Committee for consideration at the request of a Member under Procedure Rule 3.1 of Part D2 of the Constitution.

SCHH/11/78 Outcome of public consultation on proposals for Crescent Court, Toddington and Croft Green, Dunstable

The Committee received a report from the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing that summarised the outcomes of the consultation on the future options for Crescent Court. In addition to the report the Executive Member commented that various meetings had been held with residents and a dedicated officer had been appointed to liaise with a resident and the Friends of Crescent Court group.

The Committee also received a presentation from the Housing Services Manager that set out the consultation process and outcomes of that consultation, options that had been proposed, the new residents' option and an update on the current position. In addition the Housing Services Manager stated that Crescent Court was not currently considered to be fit for purpose. There were issues in the property that included the configuration of the bedsits; poor access; and heating. The Council recognised that the manner of consultation had not been sensitive at the outset but there had been four further phases of formal consultation and the Council had assisted with the appointment of an independent advisory to the residents of Crescent Court.

Councillor Tom Nicols stated he believed Crescent Court was not fit for purpose and could not easily be refurbished to a sufficient standard for it to be fit for purpose in the long-term. The scheme had to be appropriate for future residents as well as those currently living at Crescent Court. The development of a new Extra Care scheme was the best way to deliver this. Councillor Nicols also stated that provision for people with dementia was a very important aspect of the Extra Care scheme. This could be the only opportunity to develop an Extra Care scheme in the area and as such he felt we should grasp that opportunity.

In response to issues highlighted in the report and the officer presentation Members raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- It was important to engage and listen to residents of Crescent Court during the development of proposals. The deliverability of the residents' option needed to be considered.
- The deliverability of a phased redevelopment approach on the current crescent court site as proposed by residents.
- The need to ensure current residents were guaranteed a place in any new development. The Council also needed to ensure that residents could be rehoused in alternative accommodation in Toddington if a new Extra Care scheme was developed.
- It was important to deliver services that provided care and support as an alternative to residential care.
- Interest from land owners and Toddington Parish Council in relation to the possibility of a 'land-swap'.
- Residents had negative views towards other similar extra care schemes they had visited.
- Concerns of building on land identified as greenbelt and the possibility of this setting a precedent for further development on greenbelt.
- The difficulties associated with refurbishing Crescent Court. It was noted that current problems relating to heating needed to be resolved.
- The importance of enhancing capacity for provision of services for people with dementia in Central Bedfordshire. It was also important capacity of facilities met possible future demand.
- The importance of design standards and ensuring that residents were involved in planning any designs.
- Levels of stress may be increased for residents living in Crescent Court if a new development was to take place around them.

The Chairman thanked residents for attending the meeting and for raising views that informed the Committee's recommendations.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

- 1. That option one (refurbishment) not be progressed.**
- 2. That the feasibility of option three (development of an Extra Care Scheme on a site in Toddington being progressed through a Neighbourhood Plan) be explored. This option to be developed as a mixed tenure scheme in partnership with Toddington Parish Council.**
- 3. That the feasibility of aligning option two (development of an Extra Care Scheme on an existing site) and the resident's option, as a phased development be explored.**
- 4. That a feasibility report be produced by the end of May 2012 relating to recommendations (2) and (3) with a recommendation on a preferred option.**
- 5. That existing Crescent Court residents be guaranteed a place in any new development.**

6. **That exploratory discussion continues relating to the viability of a housing association undertaking the development and operation of a new development.**
7. **That the essential health and safety works and installation of a new heating system at Crescent Court be progressed.**
8. **That it be ensured existing residents are fully involved in the design of any development, in particular to avoid any new building being 'institutional' in character.**

(Note: The Committee adjourned at 11.30am for a short break and reconvened at 11.38am)

SCHH/11/79 **Executive Member Update**

Councillor Mrs Carole Hegley, Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing updated the Committee on the following:-

- The Step Up Step Down Unit at Greenacre residential home in Dunstable.
- An open letter that sought support from local councils to demand the Government to radically reform care and home help services as a result of the findings of the Dilnot Commission.
- A recent meeting with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing at Buckinghamshire County Council.
- A food bank scheme that had been arranged by Church representatives to operate from April 2012. It had been requested that social workers hand out vouchers to those in need.
- The Old Warden scheme was now completed and all units were occupied.

A Member of the Committee commented on the importance of effective promotion for the Houghton Regis Helpers scheme.

NOTED the update

SCHH/11/80 **LINK Update**

Charlotte Bonser, Bedfordshire LINK Operations Manager informed the Committee that Bedfordshire LINK continued to seek involvement in high level discussions regarding mental health provision. Concerns had been raised that the views of Central Bedfordshire service users were not being represented. There was also a need to provide clarity on a pathway for mental health provision.

In addition Max Coleman, Chairman of Bedfordshire LINK commented on the need to ensure appropriate provision of services for users in Central Bedfordshire to minimise the amount of travelling out of area. It was commented by officers that the Council was working with SEPT on this issue to promote the delivery of services locally.

A Member raised concerns in relation to telecare charges and the number of users that may cease to use the service as a result of increased charges. It was agreed that an update should be provided in relation to this.

RESOLVED

That an update be provided to Members of the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC at the end of quarter 1 outlining any changes in the use of telecare services.

SCHH/11/81 Continuing Healthcare

The Committee received a report produced that provided an update on progress in relation to NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC). In addition to the report Jim Ledwidge, independent reviewer of CHC, commented that there was a good approach by NHS Bedfordshire and the Council in relation to the delivery of these services. Nationally the delivery of CHC had presented issues for all Primary Care Trusts (PCTs). It was also commented that progress in relation to the action plan had been positive and only two areas were not rated green.

In response to the issues highlighted in the report Members raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Effective and consistent training for staff across agencies in relation to various aspects of CHC was crucial. This was particularly important during the period of transition before PCTs were abolished.
- The need to identify deadlines for the delivery of actions within the CHC action plan. Members also commented on the importance of continually reviewing the impact of actions that had been implemented.
- The importance of making information available to the public including information relating to assessment and appeals processes. It was important to ensure that communication with the public was maintained during the period of transition before PCTs were abolished.
- The importance of delivering CHC services at a location appropriate to the needs of an individual.
- The incompatibility of NHS Bedfordshire and Council databases and the benefits that could be achieved by the development of a single system.
- In 2009/10 NHS Bedfordshire ranked low in relation to other PCTs for the number of CHC cases per 10,000 population. Considerable work had been undertaken locally resulting in an improved position in both the East of England and national rankings.
- NHS Bedfordshire's CHC staff structure was reviewed and all posts had been recruited to. The department continued to see a rise in referrals and would need to monitor staffing levels to ensure service delivery in the future.

NOTED

The contents of the report, the review recommendations and subsequent action taken as detailed within the joint action plan.

RESOLVED

That a report be presented to the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC in 6 months to provide an update on performance in relation to NHS Continuing Healthcare.

SCHH/11/82 Private Sector Property Accreditation Scheme

The Committee received a report from the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing proposing a Property Accreditation Scheme for Central Bedfordshire.

In response to the proposals Members raised and discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Concerns relating to plans to re-inspect 10% of accredited properties on an annual basis. It was felt that this could lead to some properties not being re-inspected for a considerable period of time.
- Feedback from the initial Landlords' Forum that had highlighted landlords wanted to work closer with the Council.
- Properties should be required to fit devices for the detection of carbon monoxide gas.
- The feasibility of housing benefit being paid directly to private landlords and how the Council pursues tenants for housing benefit that has been paid to them.
- The need to ensure that landlords were eligible for the scheme as well the individual properties.

RESOLVED

That a briefing note be received by the Social Care, Health and Housing OSC relating to the payment of housing benefit direct to landlords and any powers that the Council may have in relation to pursuing tenants for housing benefit that has been paid to them. The note should detail the extent of any current problem in Central Bedfordshire.

RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE

- 1. That the approach to develop a Property Accreditation Scheme for Central Bedfordshire be supported.**
- 2. That the content of the Property Accreditation Scheme and the Code of Standards intended to quality assure accredited properties be supported subject to the addition of the following:-**
 - (i) that a maximum length of time be identified before an accredited property must be re-inspected; and**
 - (ii) that properties be fitted with a form of device for the detection of carbon monoxide gas.**

The Committee received a report that set out the performance for the Social Care, Health and Housing directorate for quarter 2 of 2011/12. In addition to the report officers commented they were confident that performance in relation to SCHH2 (clients receiving self directed support) would be on target by the end of the financial year. There continued to be positive performance in relation to aspects of housing.

In response to a Member query relating to SCHH2 it was stated that the support planner roles had been appointed to. The Council was considering the means by which care packages were delivered and a recent grant would help to consider various options.

Noted the report

SCHH/11/84 Work Programme 2011-12 and Executive Forward Plan

Members considered a revised draft work programme for 2011/12 that had been circulated at the meeting and the Executive Forward Plan. Members noted that several changes had been made to the published work programme following the recent Chairman's Briefing.

RESOLVED

That subject to the following amendments the draft work programme be approved:-

- 1. That the item titled "Map of NHS architecture" be removed from the work programme as it had already been considered by the Committee at a previous meeting.**
- 2. That the item titled "Strategic and Change Agenda for Housing (in response to the Localism Act)" be considered in April 2012 rather than March 2012.**
- 3. That the item titled "Local Lettings Policy" be considered at an alternative meeting to be identified.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 12.56 p.m.)