

## 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, 4 March 2013.

### PRESENT

Cllr Mrs R J Drinkwater (Chairman)

Cllr N J Sheppard (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs P A Duckett  
Mrs R B Gammons  
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs Mrs D B Gurney  
P Hollick  
M A Smith

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs D Bowater

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs G Clarke (In place of D Bowater)

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R D Berry  
C C Gomm  
C Hegley

Executive Member for  
Social Care, Health &  
Housing

M A G Versallion

Executive Member for  
Children's Services

Officers in Attendance: Mr B Carter – Corporate Policy & Scrutiny  
Manager  
Mr N Costin – Head of Private Sector Housing  
Mr T Keaveney – Assistant Director Housing  
Services  
Mrs J Ogley – Director of Social Care, Health and  
Housing  
Ms E Saunders – Assistant Director Commissioning

Others in Attendance Dr D Gray Director of Strategy and System  
Redesign (Bedfordshire Clinical  
Commissioning Group)  
Mr B Smith Chairman, Bedfordshire LINK

SCHH/12/102 Minutes

### RESOLVED

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 January 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record with the exception of**

**Minute No. SCHH/12/93, whose reference to “Swiss Cottage Care Home” should be amended to read “Caddington Hall”.**

**SCHH/12/103 Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest or political whip in relation to any agenda items.

**SCHH/12/104 Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman confirmed that the work of the Housing Task Force had now been placed on hold pending consideration of the Allocations Policy.

**SCHH/12/105 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/12/106 Questions, Statements or Deputations**

No questions, statements or deputations were received from members of the public in accordance with the Public Participation Procedure as set out in Annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

**SCHH/12/107 Call-In**

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

**SCHH/12/108 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/12/109 Executive Member Update**

Cllr Mrs C Hegley, the Executive Member for Social Care, Health and Housing updated the Committee on issues that were not included in the agenda, these included:-

- An event hosted by Hertfordshire County Council, which she had attended and which had showcased that Council's current work and

achievements. It was the Executive Member's view that Central Bedfordshire should also consider hosting such an event.

- The Domiciliary Care tender evaluation panel, which she had taken part in.
- Her attendance at a number of meetings of the Housing Task Force, whose work had proved very helpful with regard to the formulation of the draft Tenancy Strategy.
- Her attendance at the Older People's Reference Group.
- Her attendance at a regional networking meeting.
- A recent design workshop regarding the Dukeminster extra care housing scheme.

Members of the Committee raised a number of related issues during the course of the update, listed below, which the Executive Member agreed to address at the next meeting:-

- The Council's bid to pilot an innovative IT solution to minimise loneliness.
- The latest position with regard to Timebanking.
- Funding for lymphoedema in Central Bedfordshire

#### **SCHH/12/110 LINK Update**

The Committee received an update from Mr B Smith, Chairman of Bedfordshire LINK, on the key work and issues the LINK's 3 working groups were presently engaged in, which covered Health, Mental Health & Learning Disabilities and Social Care.

In addition to the update the Committee were informed that a final annual report was presently being prepared by the LINK to be published by 31 March and on 27 March the LINK would meet with the new local Healthwatch group to discuss legacy issues.

**NOTED the update**

#### **SCHH/12/111 Joint Community Bed Review**

The Assistant Director, Commissioning and the Director of Strategy and System Redesign (Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) delivered a joint presentation, which provided Members with an update on Step Up, Step Down: Short Stay Medical Unit and the Community Bed Review. The presentation specifically covered:-

- The Greenacre service and current statistics.
- An analysis of the outcomes for people leaving Greenacre.
- Case examples and learning points.
- Changes made or being considered.
- The Sub-Acute South service, outcomes and challenges.
- The Community Bed Review update, which confirmed the continuing commission of 29 beds at Biggleswade hospital in 2013/14.

In light of the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Current usage of Biggleswade Hospital and the contractual levers available to Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group to improve the performance of SEPT.
- The challenges of funding the Sub-Acute pathway from 2013/14 using a partnership approach with Luton & Dunstable hospital and the ability to extend further the service into other localities.
- The frustration felt in some quarters regarding the delay in the publication of a final report on the Community Bed Review. The Director of Social Care, Health & Housing acknowledged the frustration but stated that she would rather the review take a while longer in order to get it right and address issues such as governance, funding and location. She confirmed however that a final report should be published in May 2013.
- The fundamental importance of good communication with carers, particularly those caring for the elderly aged 75+, who tended to have multiple health issues.
- The importance of advance planning discharges for those patients leaving Greenacres and the SSMU.
- With regard to the Sub-Acute South service and patient reported outcomes, there was some concern regarding the sufficiency of patient involvement in decisions regarding their clinical treatment.
- The Liverpool Care Pathway and the need for the Committee to receive further information regarding it.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Director, Commissioning and the Director of Strategy and System Redesign (Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group) for a comprehensive and informative presentation.

## **RECOMMENDED**

**That the Committee receive a presentation at a future meeting regarding the Liverpool Care Pathway.**

### **SCHH/12/112 Evaluation of the Short Stay Pathway**

This issue was covered in the previous item (Minute SCHH/12/111).

### **SCHH/12/113 Mental Health**

This item was deferred until a future meeting to be advised.

### **SCHH/12/114 Domiciliary Care Retender**

The Executive Member and the Assistant Director Commissioning introduced a report and delivered a presentation, which provided the Committee with an update regarding the retendering of the current domiciliary care contracts using a framework agreement. The presentation specifically covered the following issues:-

- An explanation of domiciliary care.
- What the Council wanted to achieve via the retendering process.
- The Framework Agreement approach.
- The commissioning and procurement process.
- Example tender evaluation questions.
- Additional evaluation criteria.
- How the Framework will work.
- Transition arrangements.
- Ongoing improvement and monitoring.

In light of the report and points contained in the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The position of Cranfield in the locality. It was confirmed that Cranfield would be included within the West Mid Bedfordshire geographic lot.
- Whether providers would be guaranteed a minimum number of care packages. It was confirmed that the Framework approach did not allow this.
- The introduction of an Electronic Monitoring system to measure the performance of providers in terms of duration of visits, late calls, missed call, etc. It was confirmed that other systems within the Framework approach would measure the quality of the service provided during a visit.
- The Council's aim of achieving value for money and the impact this may have on the pay and conditions of carers, and therefore the quality of care provided. The Director of Social Care, Health and Housing confirmed that there were robust safeguards in place, such as a clear specification, contract monitoring and standards of practice, which would ensure the quality of care provided.
- The need for the Committee to receive a progress report on the implementation and operation of the Framework Agreement within 6 months.

The Committee requested that its thanks to the Social Care, Health and Housing Directorate for their hard work on this scheme be recorded.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1. That the approach to securing future Domiciliary Care services in Central Bedfordshire be endorsed; and**
- 2. That a progress report be received within 6 months on the implementation and operation of the Framework Agreement.**

The Assistant Director for Housing Services introduced a report and delivered a presentation, which proposed the adoption of a Tenancy Strategy in order to fulfil the Council's legal requirements conferred on it by the Localism Act 2011. The Committee was informed that the Tenancy Strategy has been developed following a Member's seminar held in August 2012 and through work undertaken by a Member's Task & Finish Group, which had worked on associated Housing issues, to make use of the freedoms and opportunities created by the Localism Act, and in response to the National Housing Strategy. The Strategy has been subject to a significant amount of consultation over a 12 week period. The presentation specifically covered the following issues:-

- The new freedoms under the Localism Act, the National Housing Strategy and strategic alignment.
- The key tenets of the Tenancy Strategy covering the best use of stock, under-occupation and the "hand up" approach.
- Introductory Tenancies.
- The principles behind tenancy renewal
- Consideration of the presumption of tenancy renewal for older people at or above state retirement age.
- Consideration of under-occupation of 2 bedroom dwellings by 1 bedroom.

The Committee also received a verbal report from Councillor Charles Gomm, as a member of the Task & Finish Group, which informed the Committee's discussion on the final two bullet points in particular.

With regard to under-occupation, the Committee recognised that welfare reform will precipitate significant change in the social housing sector (and wanted this issue captured in the Strategy) and also that there is a limited supply of both one bedroom and two bedroom accommodation, that will constrain the opportunities for people to downsize. However, there was also recognition that one bedroom accommodation was less than ideal, and in particular may not suit older and vulnerable people, who may have a carer who stays with them on a regular basis. Mention was also made of the potential adverse impact on children of separated parents who shared residency on an informal basis.

On balance, the Committee recommended to the Executive that the Tenancy Strategy does not allow under-occupation of two bedroom accommodation; but that the position be reviewed in approximately 3 years time, to consider the impact of welfare reform. The material consideration was that during the next two years, people will choose to downsize from three bedroom accommodation and there will need to be a supply of two bedroom accommodation for people to move to. On balance, therefore, the Committee believed that it was unreasonable to allow under-occupation of two bedroom accommodation, whilst people were seeking to downsize and the demand for 2 bed properties was likely to be high.

The Committee also considered whether older people should be subject to tenancy review and at what age reviews should cease to take place. It was

recognised that contact should be maintained with older people and that the increased emphasis on Tenancy Audit and regular visits to tenants' homes was a potential benefit to older people. The Committee considered the specific question of an age after which reviews should no longer take place and recommended to the Executive that the state retirement age, whatever that would be in future, should be the prescribed age at which tenancy reviews should stop and the presumption thereafter was that an older person should enjoy their home for the remainder of their life, if they so chose.

From a more general perspective, the Committee discussed the need for discretion to be established within detailed operational procedures, to consider each and every case on their individual merits, taking account of relevant circumstances to achieve the appropriate outcome, in each case. The Committee was concerned that the Tenancy Strategy, when implemented, could be applied in a way that was too stringent and potentially insensitive to considerations that are unforeseeable at this time; or fall outside of the Policy boundaries. The Committee recommended that appropriate discretion is established within the Review procedures and that the Appeals Process, when developed, be used and embraced as an opportunity to test the intent and outcomes of the Policy so that, if necessary, the policy could be refined.

### **RECOMMENDED TO EXECUTIVE**

#### **3. That the Tenancy Strategy 2013-2018 be approved, subject to:**

- (a) a presumption of tenancy renewal for older people at or above state retirement age; and**
- (b) no allowance for under-occupation of two bedroom accommodation (but that the position be reviewed in approximately 3 years time, to consider the impact of welfare reform).**

### **SCHH/12/116 Home Energy Conservation Act New Requirements**

The Head of Private Sector Housing introduced a report and delivered a presentation, which provided the Committee with details of the approach to be taken in order to ensure Central Bedfordshire Council met the new requirements of the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. The presentation specifically covered the following issues:-

- Background to the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA).
- A description of the new HECA duties.
- The Council's approach to meeting the new requirements.
- Research findings.
- Recommended approach, including a focus on tackling fuel poverty, targeted ECO grant funding; a focus on cost effective measures, pilot schemes, continuing advice and improving understanding.

In light of the report and points contained in the presentation the Committee discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The Council's ability to encourage and if necessary, enforce, minimum standards in private sector housing.
- The need to take an holistic approach to home energy conservation including whole house assessments.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Committee endorses the general approach to be taken to meet the Council's new obligations under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.**

### **SCHH/12/117 Work Programme 2012/13 and Executive Forward Plan**

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan and were content with the agenda items proposed for consideration at forthcoming meetings, with the addition of the following items:-

- A presentation at a future meeting regarding the Liverpool Care Pathway.
- A progress report be received within 6 months on the implementation and operation of the Domiciliary Care Framework Agreement.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**That the Social Care, Health & Housing OSC Work Programme be noted.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.45 p.m.)