

## 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, 23 June 2014.

### PRESENT

Cllr Mrs R J Drinkwater (Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs D B Gurney (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs R D Berry  
P A Duckett  
Mrs S A Goodchild

Cllrs N J Sheppard  
M A Smith

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs Mrs G Clarke  
C C Gomm

Substitutes: Cllrs Mrs C F Chapman MBE  
Miss A Sparrow

Members in Attendance: Cllrs P N Aldis  
Mrs A Barker  
A L Dodwell  
Dr R Egan  
C Hegley  
M R Jones  
A M Turner  
M A G Versallion

Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Deputy Executive Member for Children's Services and Community Services  
Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing  
Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources  
Deputy Executive Member for Social Care, Health & Housing  
Executive Member for Children's Services

Officers in Attendance: Mr D Jones – Interim Consultant, Adult Social Care  
Mr T Keaveney – Assistant Director Housing Services  
Mr N Murley – Assistant Director Business & Performance  
Mr G Muskett – Head of Revenues & Benefits  
Mrs J Ogley – Director of Social Care, Health and Housing

	Mrs E Saunders	– Assistant Director Commissioning
	Mr C Warboys	– Chief Finance Officer
Others in Attendance	Mrs A Evans	Director of Housing Services, Aragon Housing Association
	Ms R Featherstone	Chair - Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
	Miss A Florio	Systems Redesign Manager, BCCG
	Mr A Humphreys	Chief Executive Grand Union Housing Group
	Dr G Newmarch	Interim Director of Strategy & System Redesign, BCCG

#### SCHH/14/16 **Minutes**

##### **RESOLVED**

**that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Care Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 May 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.**

#### SCHH/14/17 **Members' Interests**

Cllrs Mrs R Drinkwater and P N Aldis declared an interest as appointed members of the Aragon Housing Association Board. Cllrs Mrs A Barker and M Smith declared an interest as appointed members of the Citizens Advice Bureau Board.

#### SCHH/14/18 **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman announced the adjournment of the meeting at 10.15am so Members present could join the flag raising ceremony for Armed Forces Day.

The Chairman also announced the postponement of the Domiciliary Care and Mental Health Member briefings for which a new date would be circulated to Members.

Members were updated on the outcomes of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny (JHOSC) meeting held on 11 June 2014. The JHOSC had considered the first draft of the proposed models of care for community and hospital services and received confirmation that the business report would be completed by 31 July, 2014.

The BCCG continued in its pre consultation work and wished to engage with 'hard to reach' groups, especially the frail and elderly. Members were requested to support this engagement work. The next meeting of the JHOSC, scheduled for Monday 07 July, 2014 at 4pm at Priory House, Chicksands, and would include the latest iteration on models of care, a report on travel and transportation and the draft consultation plan.

#### SCHH/14/19 **Petitions**

None.

#### SCHH/14/20 **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

The Committee had received a question from Mr M Lewis relating to changes in mental health and learning difficulties provision in the county. Mr Lewis highlighted the need to ensure the workforce was suitably trained to deal with a varying age range of people in the community with mental illness problems. Mr Lewis also circulated a letter he had received from Lord Earl Howe at the Department of Health in support of his question.

The Assistant Director Commissioning thanked Mr Lewis for his question and provided the following response:-

- That provision of service user and carer engagement work was undertaken in partnership with the Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and providers to address the local mental health agenda.
- That contractual arrangements included the provision of training opportunities for staff. From March 2015 all health care workers and adult social care workers will be required to complete the new 'Care Certificate' on entry to the sector.

The full question from Mr Lewis and response are attached as an addendum to the Minutes.

#### SCHH/14/21 **Call-In**

None.

#### SCHH/14/22 **Requested Items**

None.

#### SCHH/14/23 **Executive Member Update**

The Chairman added an urgent item to brief the Committee on matters pertaining to the Executive Member's portfolio that were not already included on the Agenda. The Executive Member commented on the following:-

- Attendance at meetings regarding the Housing Investment Plan.
- Consideration of revised performance monitoring criteria for the directorate.
- A visit to the Commission Team at Houghton Lodge, Ampthill
- A successful Member briefing session on the Welfare Reforms.
- A meeting to discuss a refresh to the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy.
- The Healthier Communities and Older People Partnership Board meeting and projects being undertaken on suicide rates.

#### SCHH/14/24 **Better Care Fund Report**

The Director of Social Care Health and Housing advised the Committee that the April Better Care Fund submission had received positive feedback and included zero red indicators, nine amber and 17 green indicators.

Further work is required to quantify the performance targets and measures that will apply to the Fund. Similarly the outcome of the Strategic Review of Healthcare in Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes will have an impact on the shaping of services and how investment through the Better Care Fund is used for best effect.

In light of the update, Members raised the following issues:

- Concern that no progress had been made to improve the IT and data flow amongst providers. The Director of SCHH explained that Government guidance was expected, however, there had been no significant improvement in this area for a number of years.
- Acknowledgement that a transformation fund was required to help deliver the reforms, the Healthcare Review and the importance of this piece of work.

**NOTED the update.**

#### SCHH/14/25 **Specialist Fertility Treatment Local Criteria**

The Chairman welcomed Angelina Florio, System Redesign Manager and Dr Gail Newmarch, Interim System Redesign Director at Bedfordshire Clinical Commission Group. Mrs Florio introduced her report on Specialist Fertility Treatment Local Criteria and updated the Committee on progress which included consultation work to be undertaken with the Consultation Institute.

To capture the views of Bedfordshire people, the consultation would be split into three phases:-

- Pre-consultation stage to end July 2014
- Stakeholder events and
- Formal consultation 1 September 2014 – 31 October 2014

A web page would also be made available to those residents who wished to contribute to the consultation anonymously.

In light of the presentation, Members discussed the following :-

- That the BCCG should consider the views of cancer patients who might face fertility issues.
- That NICE guidelines recommended three cycles of IVF treatment where as the proposals were for two cycles in the region. In response Mrs Florio explained two cycles was affordable and equitable and had been agreed by a consortium of clinicians in the Eastern Region.
- The need for clarity regarding the number of successful outcomes for the 40-42 year age group receiving 1 cycle of treatment. It was agreed that this information be provided to the Committee outside of the meeting.
- That the consultation would describe alternative offers to patients, for example fostering and adoption.
- That the Committee receive a copy of the consultation document and the outcomes of the consultation.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1. That the Committee's comments be considered in the consultation work undertaken by the BCCG.**
- 2. That the consultation document and outcomes of the process be reported to the Committee.**

SCHH/14/26 **Housing led Investment in Central Bedfordshire to deliver new homes and regeneration**

The Chairman welcomed Alan Humphreys Chief Executive of Grand Union Housing Group and Alieen Evans Managing Director of Aragon Housing Association. Mr Humphreys gave a presentation that outlined the history of the Grand Union Housing Group and Aragon Housing, the services provided to residents and their achievements to date. A significant investment in new homes and existing properties had been met by Aragon and grants received from the Housing Corporation was outlined along with their future programme and tenure breakdown.

The Grand Union Group and Aragon Housing Association had established a consortium with neighbouring Housing Associations to enhance the number of projects it could deliver but emphasised it had the capacity to do more and work in partnership with Central Bedfordshire colleagues. Members recognised the work undertaken by Aragon Housing in the community particularly with young people.

In light of the presentation Members discussed the following:-

- The provision of lifetime homes for older people. Mr Humphreys explained whilst life time homes were being built, the housing group wished to provide a range of property that would encourage residents to move out of family accommodation as and when their circumstances changed. However, he recognised that this was dependent on suitable alternative accommodation being available.
- The steps the Association had taken to provide smaller properties in order that residents might downsize as a result of the impact of the Welfare Reforms. In response Aragon proposed new build schemes to meet this need, however, the changes had resulted in fewer requests for 3 bedroom properties within its existing stock.
- Concerns regarding the cost of market rents and that shared ownership also needed to be affordable. These concerns were acknowledged and whilst Aragon had little influence with private developers, they were able to keep costs down through its own developments. Aragon was also re-letting properties at social rent rather than the higher affordable rent with little flexibility on the initial shared purchase. It falls on the LA via its S106 agreement to prevent this happening.
- Whether the amount of outside space could be increased on new build sites in order that children could play and reduce the risk of obesity and other health issues. Aragon supported this in principle, however, the cost implication was an issue and they had little influence on the section 106 developments.

The Assistant Director Housing introduced a presentation that had been deferred from the previous meeting. The draft Housing Investment Plan

outlined the investment potential available to the Council that was in the region of £150m over the next 30 years. The approach to investment included opportunities to bring schemes forward of varying sizes and the opportunity to work with Aragon and other Housing Associations in all wards. Schemes in Croft Green Dunstable, 26 units and Creasey Park Dunstable, four units, would be submitted for approval shortly. Other considerations for development included the redevelopment of garage sites, improvements to current housing stock, estate improvements, new build and partnership opportunities.

The Council had achieved partnership status with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) and secured a grant of £1.7m for Priory View in Dunstable. Officers would be looking to strengthen their relationship with the HCA to maximise the Council's opportunity for develop and investment.

A set of 'golden rules' to guide the Council's investment approach in addition to the programme and the approach to be taken forward, including the formation of an investment panel was also outlined on which Members views were sought.

In light of the presentation, Members discussed the following:-

- Support for the estate improvements that included the redevelopment of some garage blocks.
- Support for the proposal to offer small new build developments for smaller wards and local people
- A request to refer to affordable housing as 'social housing' in the plan.
- That the Tenants Scrutiny Panel be fully involved in the process.

Members fully supported Housing Investment Plan golden rules as a basis to plan Housing Investment for the future benefit of Central Bedfordshire residents.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- 1. That the Social Care Health and Housing OSC fully support Aragon Housing Association and help to build on the current excellent partnership arrangements for the residents of Central Bedfordshire.**
- 2. That the 'Golden Rules' principle to guide the Council's investment plan be supported.**

#### **SCHH/14/27 Welfare Reforms**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced a report that followed recent Member Briefing. The report provided highlights of the work undertaken by the Welfare Reform Board and the impact of the Welfare Reforms on residents, key partners and the Council.

In light of the report, Members discussed several issues and commented in details as follow:-

- Whether reference in the report to Credit Unions in Central Bedfordshire was correct. The Director of Social Care Health and Housing advised that

that the Credit Union had previously covered the Mid Bedfordshire area, however, was now able to support the whole of Central Bedfordshire.

- Concern there was no support available to help those with disability or ill health back into work because of employers concerns. The Portfolio Holder for Social Care, Health and Housing advised of an initiative called 'Two Tick' that had been established for this reason.

**NOTED the report.**

#### SCHH/14/28 **Discretionary Housing Payments Policy**

The Chief Finance Officer introduced the draft Discretionary Housing Payment Policy. The purpose of this policy was to standardise the current procedures in place to award discretionary housing payments to assist residents with their housing costs, following guidance issued by the Department of Work and Pensions. It was noted that 75% of applications received were successful. With the increase in activity in this area, officers proposed that a strategy to formalise the process was necessary.

In light of the report and draft policy, Members raised a number of points of clarification that were addressed by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources and Chief Finance Officer as follows:

- Whether Priory Group 2 and the list of those claimants the Council was able to help were in any order of priority and whether claimants had to meet one or more of the priority areas. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed the list was not in order of priority and the Council would seek to help claimants if they met one or more of the areas shown.
- Concern relating to the high costs of removals offered to claimants. The Chief Finance Officer confirmed just one claimant had received this payment in the year and it was the Council's policy to meet the payment if circumstances require this, as part of assisting claimants to downsize their accommodation.

**RECOMMENDED that the Social Care Health and Housing OSC fully support the proposed policy for Discretionary Housing Payment.**

#### SCHH/14/29 **Work Programme 2014-15 and Executive Forward Plan**

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan. The Chairman proposed that an item be added to the current arrangements for Stroke Services and where provision had been identified for Central Bedfordshire residents

**RECOMMENDED That the work programme be approved subject to the inclusion of the Stroke Service report.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 1.50 p.m.)