



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 2 MAY 2013 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Dr Moore - Chair

Councillor Alfonso
Councillor Aqbany

Councillor Gugnani
Councillor Willmott

Also present:

Councillor Connelly – Assistant Mayor (Housing)
Councillor R Patel – Assistant Mayor (Adult Social Care)

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45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bajaj and Councillor Westley.

Although not a member of this Commission, Councillor Chaplin had hoped to attend the meeting as the proposed new Vice-Chair of the Commission, but had been unable to do so.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

47. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Commission received the minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2013.

The Chair advised that it was anticipated that the review of alternative care for elderly people would be completed soon, (minute 40, "Alternative Care for Elderly People", referred).

The Chair also advised that, further to minute 41, "Domiciliary Care Review", a meeting of the review task group would be held as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Commission held on 4 April 2013 be approved as a correct record.

48. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

49. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

50. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission noted that work on Gypsy and Traveller Sites in the City would be programmed in to the new Housing Scrutiny Commission's work programme.

The Chair thanked members of this Commission for the work they had done over the past year.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the work programme for the Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Commission be received and noted; and
- b) That the summary of the Adult Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Commission's work during 2012/13 be received and endorsed.

51. PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL'S ELDERLY PERSONS' HOMES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERMEDIATE CARE FACILITY

The Strategic Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing submitted a report outlining proposed options for the future of the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes and the development of an Intermediate Care facility.

Councillor R Patel, Assistant Mayor with responsibility for Adult Social Care, advised the Commission that national research showed that increasingly people wanted to stay in their own homes as they get older. Community services, such as assistive technology, home care and the use of personal budgets made this easier to achieve, but it also meant that the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes were now under occupied by about 40%.

Councillor Patel then drew attention to the following points:-

- During the last 18 months there had been a 50% turnover in the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes;
- People appeared to understand why the Council was undertaking its review of Elderly Persons' Homes, but there was still a lot of uncertainty, which the Council wanted to resolve;
- The Council had assured residents that, if they had to move, the Council would support them;
- An initial consultation approximately two years ago had been held on the possible closure of all of the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes. From this it was suggested that the possibility of selling them as a going concern should be considered. Consultation and soft market testing on this therefore had been carried out;
- It was proposed to progress in two phases:-
 - Elizabeth House, Herrick Lodge and Nuffield House to be closed, plus Abbey House and Cooper House to be sold as going concerns. The development of a proposed built 60-bed Intermediate Care facility;
 - Depending on the outcome of the first phase, Preston Lodge to be closed, with Arbor House and Thurncourt to be sold as going concerns;
- 27 places currently were available for intermediate care, but more were needed. Spare beds at some homes were sometimes used for intermediate care, but it was difficult for homes to operate with both short and long-stay residents. It therefore was proposed to invest income from the sale of the named homes in to creating a purpose-built facility;
- The number of people who would have to move as a result of these changes had been minimised as much as possible. Approximately 30 people were likely to have to move as a result of the first phase and 16 as a result of the second;
- As people liked to stay in their own homes for longer, they often were frail when they came in to the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes. However, Council Homes could not offer nursing care, so people had to move out if this was needed; and
- Trades unions were being consulted about the implications for staff of these proposals.

In response to a question from the Commission, Councillor Patel agreed that the results of the current consultations could be reported to either this, or its successor, Commission.

The Commission suggested that it would be useful to see the initial report on proposals that had been considered, (minute 54, "Review of Elderly Persons' Homes", 8 December 2011 referred), as this contained the arguments for either retaining, closing, or selling the Homes.

The following points were made in discussion:-

- The Council already had reduced the number of Elderly Persons' Homes it operated, so the city was not over-provided. Not offering the right sort of care did not justify selling them;
- Intermediate care facilities should be built now and consideration given to whether Homes should be closed afterwards;
- Reassurance was sought that a full analysis of the Council's ability to provide the care described in the report would be undertaken before any Homes were closed;
- It was important that the Council remained a provider of these services, otherwise people would be reliant on private sector homes, which had to make a profit;
- There was still a demand for residential care, as private providers would not be interested in providing it if there was not;
- There was a high rate of failure amongst private providers in this field, so problems could arise in finding adequate provision if any of the larger companies failed;
- It was important that a discussion was held about whether the Council should be providing care, irrespective of occupancy rates;
- Uncertainty about the future of the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes could lead to a reduction in the number of people taking up places in them. In some cases, there had been a view that the Homes were being deliberately run down and referrals discouraged;
- It had been established that the cost of running a Council Elderly Persons' Home was the same as running a private one. As such, one of the only ways in which private homes could reduce their charges was to reduce wage levels;
- Some competition could be useful, but if the Council withdrew from the market, competition would be reduced;
- An alternative option could be for the Council to consider working with the third sector in the provision of these Homes;
- The report made no mention of other systems of care, such as the Shared

Lives scheme or Extra Care;

- Problems caused by loneliness needed to be considered, along with how they could be addressed, (for example, through domiciliary care services); and
- The creation of a 60-bed intermediate care facility was contrary to the current move by the Council to provide smaller, localised facilities. It also was not in keeping with current Council policy of bringing services in-house.

Concern also was raised that, although currently there was not a high demand for places in Council Homes, problems could arise in future years if the places were not available. It therefore was questioned whether there could be a shortage of places if these proposals were acted on.

Councillor Patel acknowledged the concerns raised and assured the Committee that work was being undertaken to see if there were other ways in which the Council could provide the services needed and to identify possible partners, (particularly in the public sector). Councillor Patel then gave an assurance that Homes would continue to provide intermediate care and short term beds until the new facility was available.

Councillor Patel also gave an assurance that she would investigate whether Homes were being deliberately run down and take action to stop this if it was happening.

The Strategic Director for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing advised the Committee that the Council had made a financial contribution to support the development of a 78 bed Extra Care facility at Abbey Mills, which was an option for supporting independence.

The Strategic Director assured the Committee that the Council currently had 49 independent providers. Fees were negotiated and currently were quite competitive. The Council was confident that these providers were stable and that, if that situation changed, it was very unlikely that all of the providers would fail at the same time. Service provision would continue, as there was capacity to move people elsewhere. If a large part of the market was at risk, the Council would have to take action to reduce that risk.

It was suggested that special meetings of the Commission could be held to consider the points raised during this discussion and the qualitative assessment undertaken by Salford University in more detail. It also was suggested that it would be beneficial to consider whether the services proposed were the right ones and how the proposals should be implemented, if agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That special meetings of the proposed Adult Social Care Commission be held to consider in more detail:-

- a) The points raised during this discussion recorded above and the qualitative assessment undertaken by Salford University;
 - b) Whether the services proposed were the right ones, (for example, whether they made people feel happy, safe, secure and well cared for); and
 - c) The sequence that should be followed, (for example, whether current Homes should be kept operating while new intermediate care facilities were built); and
- 2) That the initial report on proposals for the future of the Council's Elderly Persons' Homes, (minute 54, "Review of Elderly Persons' Homes", 8 December 2011 referred), be recirculated to members to assist with the discussions to be held under resolution 1 above.

52. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: PHASE 1 DELIVERY PROPOSAL

The Director of Housing submitted a report outlining the recommended first phase of the delivery proposal for the transformation of homelessness services.

Councillor Connelly, Assistant Mayor with responsibility for Housing, advised the Commission that a significant response had been received to the recent consultation on the Homelessness Strategy. These responses, and the views of this Commission, had been taken in to consideration in drawing up the current proposals.

Councillor Connelly then drew attention to the following points:-

- The Homelessness Strategy would drive the budget, not vice versa;
- The Strategy focussed on prevention, rather than support, and enabling people to get back in to accommodation as soon as possible if they became homeless;
- A pilot of the Eligibility Criteria was being undertaken to ensure that the criteria being used were suitable;
- The Family Support Service was based at Border House;
- Support to teenage parents in the allocated units of accommodation would be provided by the voluntary sector; and
- Leicestershire County Council and the district councils within the county would provide funding for beds for homeless ex-offenders from their respective areas.

The Commission welcomed the changes made to the proposals as a result of

its previous comments, but expressed disappointment that it had not been possible to find a better way forward for procuring with voluntary organisations.

At the invitation of the Chair, David Brazier, (Chief Executive of the Shelter Housing Aid Project), addressed the Commission, making the following points:-

- The prevention measures and “no second night out” policy were particularly welcomed;
- The changes to the budget were welcome, as was the retention of voluntary provision, (although it was recognised that the latter was to be renegotiated);
- There had been a decrease in the number of rough sleepers in the city from approximately 50 to approximately 7. Much of this was due to discussion on the new Strategy;
- Homeless people had been very involved in the Strategy, for example by preparing newsletters and raising awareness by camping in Town Hall Square;
- There was some concern that a single access point would not cope with demand. If the process was too slow, it could lead to an increase in void properties;
- The purpose of renegotiating contracts was questioned;
- It was felt that the new system could lead to some projects closing and buildings being left empty;
- A transition plan was needed;
- Homeless people should not be put in inferior accommodation just because they were homeless; and
- It was hoped that there could be some continued use of decommissioned buildings.

Councillor Connelly welcomed these comments and gave an assurance that the Council would not be using sub-standard accommodation.

Councillor Connelly noted that homeless people had been engaged in the Strategy in a way not seen before. This had been very constructive, so it was hoped that it could continue. He assured the Commission that the delivery of the Strategy would be monitored and thanked Councillor Dawood, the former Assistant Mayor with responsibility for Housing, for the work had done while in office on reducing the number of rough sleepers in the city.

In response to the queries about the need to renegotiate contracts, Councillor

Connelly advised that, because there would be a significant reduction in the number of units provided, it was necessary to put the work out to tender, rather than renegotiate existing contracts.

53. PRIVATE SESSION

RESOLVED:

that the press and public be excluded during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and taking all the circumstances into account, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

54. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: PHASE 1 DELIVERY PROPOSAL - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED:

That the additional information to the report on this matter at agenda item 8, ("Homelessness Strategy: Phase 1 Delivery Proposal") be noted.

55. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.07 pm