

# Report to Full Council

23rd January 2014

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## **Evesham House**

Lead Director: Tracie Rees (Adult Social Care)

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**Useful Information:**

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Tracie Rees – Director of Care Services and Commissioning
  
- Author contact details 37 2301
- Date of Exec meeting N/A

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 A 'call in' has been received in relation to the decision taken by the Assistant Mayor Councillor Rita Patel as the Lead for Adult Social Care, in relation to the closure of Evesham House, which is supported accommodation for people with substance misuse problems.
- 1.2 The basis of the objection to the decision, and the reason for the 'call in' was, the 'requirement to see a clear plan to minimise the impact of the closure on users of the service'.
- 1.3 The matter was referred and discussed at the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 12th November 2013 (members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission were also invited and attended the meeting) who referred the matter to the Overview Select Committee. The Overview Select Committee considered further information on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and referred the matter back to a joint meeting of the Housing and Adult Social Care Commission ahead of Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014.
- 1.4 The joint meeting between the Housing and Adult Social Care Commissions has not yet taken place. However, a further delay to allow the meeting to take place is considered to be unreasonable. Therefore, Full Council is asked to consider the terms of the 'call in' and make appropriate recommendations to the Executive.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Full Council formally consider the 'call in' of the Executive decision of the Assistant City Mayor (Councillor Rita Patel) regarding the plan to close Evesham House.

**3. Supporting Information****2. Background**

- 2.1 Evesham house is one of 2 accommodation based services in the City that provide housing related support for people with substance misuse problems.
- 2.2 As part of the 2011/12 budget setting process, the Council agreed efficiency savings of 20% for this service. However, in addition to the required savings, the introduction of the Welfare Reforms has also impacted on the residents at Evesham House who are subject to the benefits cap from August 2013. This

has accelerated the need to review the service model.

- 2.3 At the time the benefit cap was introduced, plans were already under consideration to deliver a more effective service model within the new financial envelop. These plans were accelerated for Evesham House and it was agreed to close Evesham House accommodation based support for people alcohol misuse issues, supporting those currently resident at Evesham House into alternative accommodation.
- 2.4 As part of the decision making process, consultation was undertaken with the 6 residents of Evesham House, 2 of whom had already made plans to leave before the consultation ended. The remaining 4 residents have left Evesham House since the decision was taken on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013. All residents had reached a natural end to their supported housing 'journey' and are now living independently in the community. No new admissions have been made to Evesham and the building is now secured and empty.

### **3. Scrutiny consideration**

- 3.1 In response to the 'call in' a paper was submitted to the Housing Scrutiny Commission that provided detailed plans for the residents of Evesham House in the event of closure (attached). The members were not satisfied by this response and further detailed information regarding the wider plans for the future delivery of housing related support for substance misuse problems were submitted to Overview Select Committee (OSC) on 28<sup>th</sup> November (attached).
- 3.2 In summary the paper submitted to OSC furnished members with information detailing the national policy context for this decision; the needs analysis underpinning the future model; the financial implications of the new model, compared to the existing provision; and a detailed description of the future plans for housing related support for substance misuse.
- 3.3 Further work following OSC has explored in more depth the needs analysis; the current effectiveness of Evesham; the location of the proposed 10 bedded unit that is part of the future model; and an asset transfer of the property. These are explored in detail in a paper that was prepared for a further special meeting of the Housing and ASC Scrutiny Commission. This meeting has not yet taken place.
- 3.4 To summarise the additional information, the needs analysis underpinning future plans clearly demonstrates the links between homelessness and substance misuse problems. The current accommodation based service only provides 30 places, whereas the proposed model will have capacity to support up to 152 users per year. This will include both accommodation based support and floating support provided to people in their own homes with substance misuse problems.
- 3.5 With regards to the effectiveness of the current model delivered at Evesham House. There are high levels of planned exits from Evesham, but this is coupled with a high proportion of people who come back into homelessness services. The current service model does not provide any kind of follow up / aftercare support. The plans for the future provision will include both early intervention, and follow up aftercare support that will help users to maintain their tenancies following discharge.
- 3.6 The location of a proposed 10 bedded unit which forms part of the future model

of service provision has not yet been decided. However, given the high density of services already located in Castle Ward, the procurement process could make note that the Council does not wish bidders to locate services in that Ward.

- 3.7 Members of OSC and Housing Scrutiny asked for more detail regarding possible asset transfer as a means to keeping the service open and avoiding the benefit cap. Whilst asset transfer could take place, this may not be desirable as the current facility at Evesham House is too small to meet the requirements of the proposed future service model. Additional evidence provided by the Council's Revenues and Benefits service suggest that if the asset is transferred to Registered Social Landlord the level of rental income is unlikely to exceed what the Council currently receives, which would make the service unaffordable for a new service provider.