

CWOP/32/10

Policy & Scrutiny Committee Community Wellbeing and Older People

Date 9 September 2010

Report back from Adult Social Care Provider Services

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Update report on the transformation of the Council's residential care homes for people with a learning disability

Purpose of report

This report sets out developments in services for people with a learning disability in Essex with respect to residential care services operated by the Council and reported on earlier in March, 2010. The Committee asked for an update against four headings: the residential review; PFI prospects; closure of Berecroft in Harlow, and; changes associated with economic improvements.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee receive this report and note the progress made in respect of:

1. Completion of the review of residential care offered by the Council;
2. An update on the position of the PFI review;
3. Feedback on the closure of a care home in Harlow, including the views of carers;
4. The impact of economic improvements.

It is suggested that the lessons learnt in closing Berecroft Home are adopted to inform practice in the future and that when the home is closed a formal Lessons Learned Report is produced by the Project Team.

1. Background

- 1.1 Adults Health and Community Wellbeing (AHCW) have planned and continue to plan a series of transformations to services and processes. This report concerns residential services for people with a learning disability operated by the Council.

- 1.2 The transformation elements concerning learning disability commenced in 2008 and aimed to complete the delivery of Valuing People¹, which had stressed the importance of choice and self control for service users and the ability to have fulfilling lives, employment and inclusion and control over where they might live. In particular the work focussed on the options for current inhouse residential care services and short break services: where could people live for the future and how might carers receive respite and service users meaningful holiday experiences?
- 1.3 These questions were amplified with the publication of Valuing People Now² in 2009 which reaffirmed the direction of travel toward choice and control and emphasised the importance of housing options and different use of budgets to shape short breaks. At the centre of the proposals was an intended shift to allow more people to live in supported accommodation rather than into late life with their parents or in residential care: people needed the choice of who they lived with.
- 1.4 At the CWOP Policy and Scrutiny meeting in March progress and developments in the transformation of current hostel services were discussed and in particular it was noted that:
- The Directorate had just commenced a review of residential services and Members wished to know more of the outcomes from this;
 - A submission for PFI credits had been made but the outcome was not known at the time of the meeting;
 - Berecroft, the home in Harlow was in the process of closing and Members wished to know more about the how that was progressing and the views of service users and carers at the next meeting;
 - The impact, if any, of changes in the economy. This arose because the previous proposal to go to the market with a Public Private Partnership proposal had been made unaffordable by the fall in land values and the interest of housing associations and private developers

2. Outcome from the review of learning disability residential services

- 2.1 The review commenced in October 2009, when there was no funding for redevelopment and the planned Public Private Partnership had been deemed unaffordable because of the fall in local property values and the lack of interest from potential partners, who themselves had been impacted by the general economic changes.

¹ Department of Health (2001): Valuing People – A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century

² Department of Health (2009): Valuing People Now – A three year strategy for people with learning disabilities: making it happen for everyone

2.2 The fundamental review was designed to assess whether residential facilities were needed for the future; what was the best service option for the future and could any options be funded from within existing resources.

2.3 The key findings from the review are that:

Demand matters

- There will be continuing growth in numbers of those with the most pressing needs, who will require some specialist but mainly ordinary accommodation i.e. specialist housing with support (such as clusters or extra care), registered residential accommodation and ordinary housing;
- Continuing growth in the numbers coming through transitions, which will need to be managed and for whom accommodation will be important as part of being socially included and holding down a job and employment and having an active social life;
- Continuing growth in different types of condition, such as autistic spectrum disorders, which require commissioning attention in terms of younger people and those with early on set dementia as they age, both requiring a range of specialist or specially focused housing and accommodation resources
- Continuing pressure on accommodation and resources from a more confident and aspirational population younger group, matched by an older group with older carers who may not be able to sustain them in the future

Policy and people views

2.4 The direction of travel for accommodation was tested with national and local policies and through research on user views and those of Local Action Groups. These suggest that:

- The national direction of travel in respect of accommodation is for less reliance on residential care and development of suitable alternatives that offer choice and control to people with a learning disability;
- There are expected to be direct reductions in the volume of residential care, 5% in 2009-11 as part of the Public Service Agreement;
- Users of services experience barriers to securing more independent living options partly because of their own direct lack of experience or knowledge and because of the attitudes of family and carers and practitioners and housing professionals;
- Local Action Groups support the move to supported living but want to ensure the possibility of alternative choices for residential care;

- There is disappointment at the volume of supported living being made available in Essex and some concerns regarding its quality: it has to be appropriate and well supported to be a good option;
- Short breaks are a concern for Local Action Groups who believe local is best, both in terms of placements and in terms of process – they want to be able to manage access more locally. Self directed support and personal budgets offer a way forward on this if the County Council will encourage small local providers to develop and open local units.

Business case issues

- 2.5 A business case for future development of the hostels has been prepared, based on supported living, separating short break provision from long stay residential care and building the future for short break provision around options with local facilities and spot purchases or purchases funded through Personal Budgets.
- 2.6 The most affordable option would be to use the Private Finance route, as this offers a capital grant to the Council to redevelop the hostels. If this is not forthcoming then the Council needs to look at other funding options through a revised Public Private Partnership (PPP) or exercising its Prudential Borrowing (PB) powers.
- 2.7 The Business Case shows that it would be possible to undertake a new build of supported housing units for existing residents and the refurbishment of the hostel in Chelmsford as a focus for short break places within the existing resources invested in the service using a Public Private Partnership or Prudential Borrowing.
- 2.8 This would mean that Local Action Group preferences for local short break facilities could not be met, beyond those currently in place, although this could be achieved if the spot price for short break places were contained within a fixed budget and a lower number of places, or such a sum offered as a series of Personal Budgets for individuals.

3 Update on the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

- 3.1 The County Council submitted a PFI Expression of Interest to the Department of Health in October, 2009. This was in support of personalisation and sought to improve supported living for vulnerable people in Essex and comprised a bid for 72 units of cluster accommodation for people with a learning disability or mental health need and 80 places of extra care sheltered housing, in either one or two schemes. The latter were submitted with support from partners in Epping District Council and Uttlesford Council who would provide local sites. The bid was entitled *Getting Personal – improving supported living for vulnerable people in Essex*.

- 3.2 On the 30th March the County Council were informed that the then Minister for Care Services had agreed the allocation of £36.25M PFI credits in principle to the authority to deliver *Getting Personal*. This bid was in addition to that for Community Wellbeing Centres of some £28.62M which had been awarded under the 2007/8 bidding round. In discussion with the Department of Health Capital Branch it was agreed to integrate the two projects into a single Business Case for submission to the Treasury for some £65M credits.
- 3.3 However, with the advent of the Coalition Government, all decisions made by the former Government since January 2010 were under review. This took place and the Council were advised in June that it was free to proceed with the PFI Outline Business Case.
- 3.4 However, there were provisos: the OBC would be subject to individual review by Ministers before being submitted to the Treasury, and; all PFI expenditure would be subject to wider decisions and review as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), which will report in October 2010.
- 3.5 This latter review has meant that the Council has stood down work on the OBC until the outcome of the CSR is known and the future for social care PFI understood for the next three financial years: there is little point in committing time and resource until the future of the overall programme is known. If the programme proceeds and PFI credits continue to be available the OBC will go to the Cabinet for a local decision on whether to proceed.
- 3.6 This means that funding was in principle available to redevelop existing hostels in a systematic and comprehensive manner. That has now been put on hold. Any future development in the absence of PFI will have to be on the basis of a PPP with a more limited programme.

4 Feedback on the closure of the Harlow Home including feedback from carers

- 4.1 CWOP Policy and Scrutiny Committee requested information on the closure of the home and feedback from carers.
- 4.2 The home is almost ready to be closed, with the remaining four residents awaiting the refurbishment of a shared home in the Harlow area.
- 4.3 Closing a home and moving is always a major change and impacts significantly on people's lives. Engagement with services users, their families and carers is an integral part of any closure to ensure that the resulting outcomes are best for all. This happened prior to the decision by Cabinet to close the home and has continued since that decision was made.
- 4.4 The detail of the consultation recently and feedback on the move to new homes is shown below. This entailed local meetings in Harlow and a separate opportunity for residents and carers to complete questionnaires showing their views.

- 4.5 A full analysis of all questionnaire responses, as summarised below, can be made available to Members, if required. Because of the small numbers some individuals and their families might be identified from their response: as a consequence these are not reported here.

Process of engagement with Residents and Carers

- 4.6 All residents, their families and any carers have had the opportunity to participate and were supported in their ability to make their views known. Support arrangements were made using independent advocates to ascertain views where this was requested. Key steps in the process are shown below:
- 4.7 Initial consultation took place in June 2008. Meetings were held and plans were presented to close the hostels and replace them with specially designed supported living apartments, giving former residents their own tenancy and care package.
- 4.8 In order to properly engage with the concerns and views of relatives and friends two roadshows were organised in August 2008 and featured a specially made DVD of Essex people who had already made that transition. This involved residents in supported living and their families and friends, showing how supported living worked and the benefits to service users, both practically and financially.
- 4.9 The road show meetings showcased professional inputs from OTs, Benefits Advisers, Telecare, social workers and care managers and relatives and service users who had made the transition. Relatives had an opportunity to meet and talk over their issues. The mood at the end of the roadshows was of greater confidence in the process and the future outcome of supported living. The issue would then be as to whether the Council could deliver on the new arrangements.
- 4.10 There were two meetings for relatives and friends at the end of July 2009 and their service user relatives at Berecroft where the Council spoke about the issues and what they and their relative wanted. A Project meeting on 4 August 2009 decided that all future communication with residents and relatives should be through the assessment process (apart from periodic general updates).
- 4.11 Service Users formal consultation began in December 2008 and January 2009 and was conducted by an Inclusion Worker and Advocates. Reviews were then carried out during 2009.
- 4.12 In 2010 it was decided to organise meetings for relatives and follow that up with a structured questionnaire to collect information on the closure process and capture views and comments on the outcomes and the process.

- 4.13 There were originally 22 residents in Berecroft although one died before the meetings and the move to new accommodation. Of the original 21 residents, five have no family.
- 4.14 For the residents that responded (some 16 people), 80% recognised that they were helped that Berecroft was closing and people felt that, in the main, people were listened to what they wanted.
- 4.15 With respect to carers they were all positive about the formal reviews that were undertaken, with one exception.

Consultation outcome

- 4.16 Results from the residents' survey is that 50% of those that responded (16) felt that their new home was right for them, 31% were unsure as they had not yet moved and the remainder were less than satisfied, when asked.
- 4.17 Eleven relatives responded to the questionnaire, two of whom had not attended the open meetings. Of those responding, 7 were very satisfied with their relative's new accommodation, 2 satisfied and there were two non responses.
- 4.18 For those relatives attending meetings there were a range of views but people were broadly content with the outcome of the moves in most instances but concerns were expressed regarding the length of time taken to effect moves and some of the detail of the mechanics of communication over what was a relatively lengthy period.
- 4.19 For those families who still have any reservations about alternative accommodation, both the Operational Service Manager and Social Work Practitioners continue to work with families to ensure the outcomes for Service Users are positive.

Closing Berecroft: concluding comments

- 4.20 Closing a home and moving is always a major change and impacts significantly on people's lives. It requires clear and consistent communication with residents and relatives and a well worked through plan for engagement and for managing the move.
- 4.21 The majority of families who attended meetings were happy with the outcome of the moves. Those who sent in questionnaires were also happy.
- 4.22 The County Council has worked closely with those service users / relatives who expressed concerns regarding the changes to ensure that they are moved to accommodation that suits their needs.
- 4.23 An issue with the Berecroft closure was that what would have been the first step in a programme of change for all hostels became a one off change with a somewhat different set of outcomes from the original discussions.

- 4.24 These had aimed to offer all residents supported living in the local area in new apartments. There had been initial opposition to this but the 2008 roadshows went a long way toward showing the benefits of supported living to the lives of people with learning disabilities.
- 4.25 However, the impact of the credit crunch deflected the programme and meant that the changes for Berecroft, which needed to happen because of the building and its future life and for greater independence for residents, were undertaken in a slightly more disjointed manner, offering incremental solutions for residents rather than as part of the previously agreed programme of change.
- 4.26 The key learning from the Berecroft closure, scheduled now for October when the remaining residents relocate to supported living at to a shared house with individual tenancies in Harlow is that:
- Specific, clear and consistent communication is the key to supporting choices and meeting needs and preferences of service users and their carers;
 - Project management must be in place and well resourced and supported;
 - Local opportunities to access supported living and local tenancies can work for some service users, others may benefit from shared houses and collective tenancies, although these are recognised as not being ideal in terms of personalisation and individual choice and control;
 - Timescales and elapsed times must be as short as possible to allow people time to adjust but not be so elongated that they lose track of the process or belief in it happening;
 - Being open and honest means a continual dialogue between all parties concerned and this needs to be recognised as a key feature of change management between residential and supported living.

5 The impact of economic improvements

- 5.1 The impact of economic improvements is reflected in the Business Case prepared for the Residential Redevelopment Review. Revised valuations for premises taken in 2006 and 2010 show a difference of over £1.5M between them but less than the gap was in 2008 when values dipped significantly and meant the programme in its entirety was unaffordable.
- 5.2 If the PFI is approved this will mean the programme can continue with external capital funding. If not, funding will need to be generated through investment by a contractor and recharged as rent and service charges or by a combination of this and leasehold sales or with a contribution from capital

investment from receipts by the Council or that and a combination of Prudential Borrowing.

- 5.3 All routes will require a competitive procurement programme entailing competitive dialogue. The PPP route will probably be preceded by a soft marketing exercise with registered housing providers and others to shape and design the best route forward using existing sites and seeking the best way forward for an affordable programme.

Background papers*

1. Essex County Council Cabinet Report (14 October 2008): *A new direction for adult social care provider services- learning disability residential redevelopment and short break services*
2. Essex County Council Cabinet Report (14 October 2008): *Transforming Adult Social Care Provider Services – the creation of a Local Authority Trading Company, EssexCares.*
3. Essex County Council Cabinet Report (March 11, 2008): *A new direction for Adult Social Care Provider Services*
4. Essex County Council (June 2008): *Report of the Policy and Scrutiny Committee for Community and Wellbeing CWP/04/08*
5. Department of Health (2007): *Valuing People Now – from progress to transition*
6. Department of Health: *'Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services'* (2006);
7. Department of Health: *'Putting people first: a shared vision and commitment to the transformation of adult social care'* (2007)
8. Berecroft Survey: findings from the survey of residents and the survey of relatives (June and July 2010)