

SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING POLICY REPORT OF THE POLICY REVIEW GROUP

Members of the Policy Review Group

Councillor J.M. Khan (Chairman)

Councillor M.A. Dalton,

Councillor T.F. Forrest

Councillor G.W. Scott

M. Thomson – Tenant Representative

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REPORT OF POLICY REVIEW GROUP

Introduction

Scrutiny Committee 1 at its meeting on 3rd September 2002 established a sub-committee to undertake an in-depth review of the proposed closure of Hackworth House, Shildon and other residential care homes within the Borough and the impact of the proposals on the care of the community. The Review was not completed before the annual meeting of Council on 16th May 2003 when it was agreed that responsibility for reviewing and scrutinising matters relating to the Supporting People Portfolio would transfer to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 at its meeting on 16th September 2003 was informed that Durham County Council had decided to close a number of homes and develop six new extra care housing schemes, one in every district council area (Minute No : SC(2)10/03 refers). In the light of that information, the Committee agreed to abandon the review regarding the closure of Hackworth House, Shildon and establish a new Policy Review Group to review the accommodation, care and support needs of older people.

Scope and Remit

The Policy Review Group met on 16th October 2003 and proposed the following scope and remit:

‘To examine how Sedgefield Borough Council works in partnership with Durham County Council and the Health Service to provide accommodation, care and support for elderly people and other vulnerable groups within the Borough to support independent living.’

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 adopted the proposed scope and remit of the review on 28th October 2003.

Review Approach

The Group considered the Strategic Housing Framework for Older People, Housing, Care and Support Strategy for Older People in County Durham, Supporting People Strategy and the Council’s housing needs study and assessed the accommodation and services available within Sedgefield Borough to support independent living.

Contributions were also sought from the Council’s Head of Neighbourhood Services, Manager of Sedgefield Locality Carers Centre and Commissioning Services Manager for Durham County Council Social Services.

Main Conclusions

Members of the Policy Review Group met informally on a number of occasions. The Council's Head of Neighbourhood Services attended meetings on 1st December 2003 and 15th March 2004 to give presentations on housing, care and support for older people in the Borough and integrated teams for services for vulnerable adults respectively. The Manager of Sedgfield Locality Carers Centre gave details of the work of the Centre on 12th January 2004 and the Commissioning Manager for Durham County Council Social Services provided information on the provision of intermediate care in the Borough on 24th February 2004. Copies of the presentations are attached.

The Group also visited Southfield Lodge, Crook, an extra care housing scheme, managed by Bradford and Northern and Sycamore Lodge, Middlestone Moor, an extra care housing scheme managed by Hanover Housing Association.

The Policy Review Group arrived at its main conclusions against a background of an aging population within the Borough, where over the next decade there will be a significant increase in the proportion of older people 85 years and above; where levels of disability are higher than both the national and regional average; where there is a growing incidence of older people with mental health needs, particularly dementia and where there is a major shift in service objectives with a particular focus on maintaining independence / maintaining people at home or in a homely environment rather than within an institutional setting.

The role of Intermediate Care services, supporting people in their homes continued to develop increasing the interface between Council Services such as Carelink Warden Service, Carelink Community Alarm Services including assistive technology and tele-medicine / tele-health with Social Care & Health and Primary Health Services. Additionally, the work of the Borough Council Home Improvement Agency was important in maintaining people in their own homes. In terms of service delivery, the emergence of Integrated Teams of Social Care & Health, Primary Health Care and Housing Support would be critical to service provision in the future. The logical next step for Integrated Teams would be to further develop linkages with the Carelink Warden Service.

The future funding of services would continue to fall in the main to Social Care & Health, however, once again the Integration of Staff Teams providing services to vulnerable adults would also see the development of pooled budget arrangements. The Partnership Board would have a key role in terms of commissioning and planning services. Those services which were not defined as Social Care or Health would continue to be met as Housing Support via Supporting People Grant.

In terms of identifying appropriate accommodation / tenure types there was a recognised need for mixed tenure development. Demand did exist for bungalows for sale however generally there was limited interest from developers. Some specialist Housing Associations had emerged such as McCarthy & Stone to begin to meet this market demand offering ownership / shared ownership options. Traditional Sheltered Housing Schemes were less popular than in former years. Options around Intermediate Care were seen as appropriate in taking up some of the capacity released through under-occupation. The Housing Care & Support Strategy also called for the re-modelling of Sheltered Housing to Extra Care provision. Within Sedgfield Borough the first such remodelling was being

undertaken at Derwent Court, Spennymoor, a Sheltered Housing Scheme owned by Home Housing. Housing Corporation capital together with revenue from Social Care & Health and Supporting People would see the scheme being remodelled to provide accommodation and services for older people with mental health needs such as dementia / learning disabilities.

The Extra Care scheme at Sycamore Lodge, Middlestone Moor in the ownership of Hanover Housing which had been developed on the site of the former Moor Grange Part 3 Residential Home had become well established as a model for future provision. A pilot scheme was underway with local GP's regarding tele-care services monitored via Carelink. At the time of writing a decision by Durham County Council on the future of Hackworth Housing Part 3 Residential Care Home was awaited. This 'home' is included in phase 2 of the DCC proposed closure programme which is currently under review by the County Council.

Development of private provision of Residential Care Homes was an issue. The private sector was taking up an increasing proportion of the market, with Durham County Council reducing its market share in Residential provision. New private provision continued to expand. For example, within the period of the review 2 planning permissions were granted for private Residential Homes in Shildon. From a strategic viewpoint it is questionable whether such provision is seen as the most appropriate accommodation, given the emphasis within the Housing Care & Support Strategy to Extra Care Housing.

Finally, the group recognised the significant role played in the provision of services to the most vulnerable in society by the Voluntary Sector.

RECOMMENDATION

That the work already undertaken to establish Integrated Teams of Social Care & Health, Primary Health Care and Housing Support be welcomed and supported.

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