

Responses to Scrutiny Review Recommendations

Report to Overview Committee

Title of the review: Homelessness and Hardship in the Borough.

Date review completed: 15 December 2014

Date Presented to Cabinet: 12 February 2015

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Wheeler

Response due to the Overview Committee (28 days): 13 April 2015

Chair of the review group: Councillor Lawrence

Officer supporting the review: Jane Ansell/Helen Lee

Guidance

The final report and recommendations from the above review have been considered by Cabinet and a written response to the recommendations from the responsible Cabinet Member to the Overview Committee is required within twenty eight days of the date the review was presented to Cabinet.

If you need any further assistance in completing this response please contact Helen Lee, Elections and Members Services.

Recommendation 1

1. Gedling Borough Council, in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and our district collaboration agreement partners, to broker dialogue with NNE CCG and other CCG Leads via the Health and Wellbeing Board to help secure future funding for Elizabeth House services beyond April 2016, focusing on high need individuals that have a high impact on local health services.

To be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☒

A meeting is currently being arranged between the County and the neighbouring districts PCT, CCG and probation by Alison Richmond – Business Support at County Hall to discuss the future arrangements / proposals for Elizabeth House and other units of supported accommodation post April 2016. I should know more once this meeting has taken place, and will advise.

Recommendation 2

Gedling Homes to consider providing a ring fenced number of supported accommodation flats for complex move-on cases referred from Elizabeth House.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

This could be raised with Gedling Homes, or the other housing associations that have stock in the borough, but perhaps better to leave this until we know the likely outcome of the County's spending cuts on supported accommodation.

NB I would advise caution here for the Council as this is a statutory function of the County Council.

Response from Gedling Homes

Gedling Homes' would be happy to work with Gedling Borough Council to look into the feasibility and identify funding streams to support such accommodation in Gedling. We at Gedling Homes' share your members concerns around the lack of move-on supported housing for those with complex needs. It is clear that, with the drastic reduction in Supporting People grant across Nottinghamshire, that this can only get worse.

Response from Framework

Framework would prioritise referrals to its floating support services for this population

Recommendation 3

The potential for Framework /Elizabeth House services to receive Crime and Disorder Partnership funding also should be explored.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

Response from Framework

Supports this recommendation.

For information Notts. County Council has given a strong indication that Elizabeth House will be funded throughout 2015/16 which gives them a year to secure ongoing funding.

Recommendation 4

The Council to explore previous good practice and good practice of other Authorities in influencing developers to ensure the most appropriate housing mix on new developments in the Borough. (i.e. an occasion when the Council worked proactively with a developer on Teal Close (Pepper potting, New Housing Markets).)

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

In terms of the affordable housing requirement, ideally this would mirror the provision on site in terms of the size / style of the properties. A further requirement for the affordable housing is the tenure split between social rented and intermediate market solutions (shared ownership, discount for sale etc) and this enables us to not only address housing need, but also to assist people to take the first steps into home ownership, along with the 'Local Lend a Hand' and the national 'Help to Buy' schemes.

Analysis of the Council's waiting list shows

No of beds	bedsit	1	2	3	4	5+
Applicants	349	325	234	112	18	8

It is important to note that applicants can bid on 2 or 3 bedroomed properties, or 1 or 2 and so there will be an element of double counting, but this clearly shows that there is far greater demand for smaller properties. This has been factored into the Councils' recent tendering of 2 sites and some of its commuted sum, as the majority of those properties will be 2 bedroomed, then 1 bedroomed.

This approach is also fully consistent with the Councils' objective about Place in the Council Plan.

Response prepared by Peter Baguley – Service Manager for Planning

The Development Management service encourages developers and landowners to discuss proposals at pre-application stage, and in relevant cases includes advice from other Council services, including Public Protection and Housing. This

ensures that developers are aware of the potential opportunities to include the most appropriate housing mix in their submitted proposals.

Recommendation 5

The Council and partners to consider holding a stakeholder event to address mixed housing stock, inclusive development and the maximisation and streamlining of specialist advice and support; to include CAB, Credit Union, registered housing providers and anyone with a stake in financial inclusion. – see Tameside Money Inclusion Network (MiNT) best practice.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Partly Accepted ✓

The following extract has been included in the response to provide some background information.

The Tameside Money Inclusion Network MiNT has the following objective.

“MiNT is a partnership of organisations based in Tameside. All of the partners share a vision of giving people the right tools and skills to manage their personal finances and avoid the debt trap.

The MiNT partners cover a wide range of organisations, including housing associations, the local Council, independent advice agencies and the credit union. Our aim is to ensure that everyone living or working in Tameside, irrespective of age, race or gender has access to all the personal finance information that they need.”

At GBC we already have close links with the CAB who provide drop in sessions both at the Civic Centre, local bases and the town centre. The Council pays a grant of £40k p.a. for this service. In addition the Housing Needs Team also pays the Nottinghamshire Housing Advice Service to provide specialist debt and financial advice to residents. So in some terms the ideas of MiNT are already in place at GBC, however there is the potential to work more closely with the local housing providers to see what support / advice they can bring to the table, as well as assessing what current services / support is available to our residents and seeing if better use could be made of that, for example the Kings Money Advice in Mapperley which currently operates in the borough.

Recommendation 6

Ensure that the aspirations and plans of Gedling priority neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Planning areas and the knowledge of local social housing providers are taken into account in pre application discussions on major development sites.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

Adopted Neighbourhood Plans become part of the Development Plan, and so are material considerations which officers consider as part of the pre-application process. Sharing good practice from other housing sites is also encouraged as part of this process, and has already resulted in schemes being amended at this stage to reflect this

Recommendation 7

The Council to revive the reporting back mechanism for representatives on key outside bodies, i.e. Gedling Homes, which was in place when we had the Committee System.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Partly Accepted ✓

Further work will be undertaken after the election on the roles and accountability of those elected members who sit on such boards.

Recommendation 8

Seek to influence the development of more one and two bedroom properties in the Borough.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

Analysis of housing need evidenced greater demand for 2 and 1 bedroomed properties though there is demand across all property types e.g. 3,4 and 5 bedroomed houses. This knowledge has been used to shape the delivery of the two sites and some of the councils commuted sum which is being used in partnership with Nottingham Community Housing Association to deliver over 60 homes by the summer of 2016, the majority of which will be 2 and 1 bedroomed properties.

Recommendation 9

The Council to continue to raise public awareness and advocate against the dangers of payday loans and encourage more people to invest in the credit union as well as to borrow, which improves sustainability and increases access.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☒

The council has already and will continue to raise awareness and advocate against the dangers of payday loans and direct individuals towards alternative financial advice and support, as well as encouraging investment in the credit union.

This will be delivered and monitored through our service level agreements with the Citizens Advice Bureau, Gedling Community and Voluntary Services and RCAN. These organisations are funded by GBC to promote the credit union and provide either signposting to, or to directly deliver, financial advice and guidance to Gedling residents.

Recommendation 10

10A Greater publicity to be given to the services and facilities provided by local Sure Start Children's Centres in order to increase registration, to include:

Response from Sure Start. Yes we desperately need this as many families do not know we are out there despite our own internal promotion and publicity mechanisms. We were a Labour initiative (like your current elected Council!) and we were set up to help deprived families and so hoped that involvement in the Homeless and Hardship review would yield some recommendations that would get implemented. Also parents/families know that we are part of your review so we will need to feed back any positive outcomes as a result of the review . RE: Publicity in

particular, GBC covers wide area and has many useful communication conduits we would love to 'tap' into.

- 10B Concessionary access provided for Children's Centre staff to use our Leisure and Community Centres to conduct outreach sessions.

Response from Sure Start Yes the cost of room hire is phenomenal at RHLC as we use both sides of the Millennium Suite most weeks! We do not get a discounted rate as it is classed a Leisure Centre but do at the Brickyard CC as GBC CC's offer this for under 5's and over 60's but Leisure Centres don't when you book their rooms. It is a disincentive to keep using the venue to be honest and will be a loss of revenue for you eventually.

- 10C Use of the digital screens in Leisure Centres and the Civic Centre to promote Children's Centre Services.

Recommendation Accepted ✓

This suggestion will be considered and appraised, though there may be the requirement to charge at the public sector rate.

Response from Sure Start. Like Contacts magazine below- how do we go about this?

- 10D Health Visitors to promote registration with Children's Centres at the two year child health check.

Response from Sure Start We try to do this anyway as have good links with HV's employed by the NHS also.

- 10E GP Surgeries to be more proactive in publicising and referring patients to Children's Centres.

Response from Sure Start Would we approach the CCG for this or who? I have done this with a local surgery (Trentside Medical group) and persuaded them to put up notice board for us (only because I have link there as a patient!) and my colleague Penny was invited to talk to the Dr's about what we offer but obviously that is only one practice.

- 10F GBC Housing Needs Service to strengthen referral links from their customers to Sure Start services.

Recommendation Accepted ✓

This is an excellent suggestions and one which the team are keen to progress. Whilst the team have a protocol in place to make referrals to the statutory agencies,

formalising a means of encouraging the people they work with to engage with Sure Start Services, would be a valuable addition to the service.

Response from Sure Start. How do we go about this- is there a manager I/we could meet with to help do this?

10G Gedling BC Contacts magazine to run a feature raising awareness of what Children's Centres can provide.

Recommendation Accepted ✓

Will be included in the editorial of the July edition.

Response from Sure Start Yes we would like a feature in this publication to promote our services and have previously done this for the GBC Brickyard Community Centre (through Leisure and Sarah Dunn) where we delivered services- we currently deliver services at RHLC as you are aware and will shortly use the BY CC again. We need to get our Netherfield, Carlton and Stanhope services accessed a lot more as aforementioned.

Recommendation 11

Alongside vocational development work currently underway within the Gedling Employment and Skills Group communities and localities to be encouraged to access external funding for the provision of community based training and life skills. An ideal scenario would be for Gedling residents to have access to a year round calendar of local courses and personal development opportunities.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ✓

In terms of funding, there is existing funding within the borough which is readily accessible. The problem we have is identifying the skills needs of our local communities. Once this has been captured then we can start to put provision in place which would include both soft skills (confidence and self-esteem building) then progressing to accredited courses including functional skills. There is already a lot of support and training available around softer skills such as employability, budgeting, managing your own job search and ICT.

There are a number of providers delivering this provision including; colleges, private training providers and the community and voluntary sector. The remit of Employment and Skills Group members would then be to co-ordinate and oversee the delivery of the training to address skills deficits to support local residents in securing sustainable employment.

Once need is identified if a gap in provision exists then we would work with partners

agencies to secure external funding to fill this.

The real test of any provision is residents engaging with these opportunities. The Council and partners have considerable experience in providing training and support events etc., but the key is to ensure residents attend and benefit from this.

Recommendation 12

Improve the level of specialist medical and social support available to those at risk of, and moving on from, alcohol and drug dependency and homelessness.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☐ Partly Accepted ☐ Do not accept ☐

This recommendation has been forwarded to NNE CCG for comments

Awaiting response

Recommendation 13

Training and awareness to be made available to GPs and frontline staff in alcohol /drug dependency issues, sources of referral and treatment.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☐ Partly Accepted ☐ Do not accept ☐

This recommendation has been forwarded to NNE CCG for comments

Awaiting response

Recommendation 14

The Health and Wellbeing Board to reinstate / enhance availability of drug and alcohol recovery programmes that clients can attend locally, supported by Elizabeth house staff and Framework support workers.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☒ Partly Accepted ☐ Do not accept ☐

Response from Framework
Supports this recommendation

Referred to Health and Wellbeing Board/Public Health Committee.

Awaiting response

Recommendation 15

The NNE CCG to consider commissioning informed health advocacy for those in hardship and dependency situations.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☐ Partly Accepted ☐ Do not accept ☐

Forwarded to NNE CCG for a response.

Awaiting Response

Recommendation 16

Under our commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant, enhance support for ex-military personnel at risk of dependency, hardship and homelessness by strengthening referral links to SAFFA and other Service benevolent organisations.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☒

As part of the Armed Forces Community Covenant Action Plan, support for ex-military personnel has been embedded as a cross cutting aim in the Council's service planning process, which means that individual service plans will increasingly need to assess the impact of services in relation to the access needs of military and ex-military clients.

The Covenant Action Plan has already resulted in the provision of outreach sessions by the Royal British Legion, running on a monthly basis from the One Stop Shop. Additionally, the Community Relations Team is currently reviewing its Service Level Agreements with CAB, RCAN and Gedling CVS. Part of that review will include maximising those Service Level Agreements in order to strengthen partnership referral links between the Council, its partners and military support organisations for

the benefit of forces citizens.

Recommendation 17

Consider the provision of DWP outreach at Elizabeth House, and the reinstatement of DWP outreach in Sure Start Children's Centres.

This recommendation has been forwarded to Sure Start and Framework for comments.

Part 1 – to be completed after the report has been presented to Cabinet

(Please tick) Recommendation Accepted ☐ Partly Accepted ☐ Do not accept ☐

Response from Sure Start We have not had any communication from DWP (JC+) since they pulled out of our Centres in June 2014. This is proving a real deficit to parents as this service was well used and assisted a lot of parents onto training and employment which helped lift them out of poverty (like your review alleviate hardship)! And JC+ helped further parents career aspirations and thus their positive role modelling to their children. Could GBC make an approach to DWP over this? I know at a local level Cllr J Creamer was trying to follow up the pulling out of JC+ through Vernon Coaker and and also Cllr B Miller is aware and concerned about this too. Also we don't even have named contact for our parents to contact at Station Street the nearest JC+ Service to them!

Response from Framework

Supports this recommendation