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MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 30th October,
2017 at 10.00 am**

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Howarth (Chairman)

County Councillors: L.Dymock, M.Groucutt, P.Pavia, J.Pratt,
R. Harris, R. Edwards and S. Woodhouse

Also in attendance County Councillor(s): V. Smith

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Ian Bakewell	Housing & Regeneration Manager
Stephen Griffiths	Strategy & Policy Officer
Colin Richings	Implementation Lead
Tracy Finnis	Senior Housing Support Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillor L.Brown

1. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

2. Public Open Forum

No members of the public were present.

3. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on the 12th September 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2017 were confirmed as a true record.

4. Re-provision of Severn View Residential Home

Purpose:

The report presents options for the development of a new residential home to replace the current services provided at Severn View Residential Home in Chepstow. This development is a unique opportunity for Monmouthshire to lead within the county and nationally on a new model of residential care based on bespoke building design and a bespoke staffing model that supports the highest possible quality of life for people needing 24 hour care who are living with dementia. The report presents, for consideration, the reasons that underpin the need for this development, the options available but specifically seeks feedback prior to the commencement of the next phase of the project.

Key Issues:

1. The current home at Severn View in Chepstow was built c1979 and although the layout is good, it has a number of significant weaknesses:

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- i. Bedrooms are not en-suite. This is becoming increasingly unviable and there is the potential to be given a non-compliance order from Care and Social Services Inspectorate in Wales (CSSIW) in due course.
 - ii. The layout is one of long corridors which is seen as poor practice in care home design; particularly in respect of people living with dementia due to difficulties in orientation and feelings of restriction.
 - iii. The home is on two floors, and this prevents ease of access to outdoor spaces.
 - iv. Respite Services for people with dementia are supported on the same wings as those occupied by our long-term residents. Best practice would be to separate out the respite for people with dementia to avoid disruption to our long-term residents. Residential respite for people with dementia is significantly over subscribed.
2. In-house provision has a role to support the market. Demand and availability of long and short terms beds for older frail people [not living with dementia] suggests that this should not form part of future plans for the new build. Before a decision is made in this respect, further detailed discussion is required.
3. There are elements of fragility in the market with two independent sector provider homes closing in the last two years. Demand is set to increase and a balanced, resilient and stable cross sector provision is required to meet the demands of the future
4. The development of the home sits within a complex picture demographically. In summary:
- i. There are 19,863 people over 65 years old in Monmouthshire, approximately 22% of the population, this part of our community is projected to grow by 56.9% to 31,157 between 2012 and 2033. In the South of the County 18% (7,138) of the population is 65+ according to the 2011 census. This shows a 30% increase in people who are 65+ between the 2001 and 2011 census (5484 to 7138).
 - ii. According to research conducted for Dementia UK in 2013 (Alzheimer's Society 2014) 95% of people with dementia in the UK are 65+.
 - iii. The over 85 age group is expected to increase in Monmouthshire by 153% from 2,714 in 2012 to 6,863 in 2033. Between 2001 and 2011, this age group increased by 61%, from 547 to 882, in the south of the county.
 - iv. People are living longer with increased life expectancy as evidenced by the 57% increase in people over 90 in the South of the County between the 2001 and 2011 census (188 to 295).
 - v. The current trends that there is an increase in older people moving to Monmouthshire.
 - vi. Increase in demand and expectation for health and social care services.
 - vii. Increase in people who are 65+ with conditions such as circulatory diseases, respiratory diseases and dementia (or long term health conditions as this is the census measure). The data from the census shows a 42% increase (2858 to 4053) in people with LTH problem or disability who are 65+ between 2001 and 2011.
 - viii. 14.4% of older people in Monmouthshire live alone, in the south of the county this figure is 27.9%. In the south of the county 25% of households are single occupancy, of which 50% are single occupancy households who are 65+.
 - ix. The number of Monmouthshire people aged 65 and over predicted to have dementia is expected to increase by 82% from 1377 in 2012, to 2,506 in 2030.
5. Social care services are developing to keep pace with increasing demand and complexity. Much of the detail around the development of adult social care services is available elsewhere and so is not repeated here but in summary:

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- i. Demand for residential placements has been maintained due to the development and associated training that supports people to continue to live at home for as long as possible. It is anticipated though that demand will increase over time in response to the demographic challenges outlined above.
- ii. The independent market in the provision of residential placements is fragile and a number of providers have given notice in recent years due to the unsustainability of the service. Council provided services are seen as integral to a balanced and stable market.

Member Scrutiny

Following a report from the Integrated Service Manager (Abergavenny) and Direct Care Service Lead (Countywide), Select Committee Members asked questions.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health supported the presentation stating that this was an opportunity for the Council to lead following on from the successful Raglan and Monmouthshire models in providing bespoke design and staffing models that will suit the needs of the residents, especially those who have dementia. She welcomed the design feature of individual homes to overcome the institutional feel and provide a more communal approach to care.

The Chair asked why the report was before the Select Committee believing that it should have been the subject of a members' seminar as it is a long term investment. It was noted that the report had been supplementary to the wider Crick Rd development and, due to oversight, had only just been separated. It was agreed that there should have been a members' seminar and apologies were accepted.

A Member asked if the commercial and affordable housing planned for this mixed development site will be affected by the proposal and what proportion of the site for each. The Member added that the existing Severn View site will be surplus to requirements so both elements should be considered together in planning terms. The member questioned if the estimate of £700,000 for the existing Severn View site as a capital asset was low.

In response, it was explained that the proposal won't affect the number of houses. The Estates Team will be able to provide further details. It was explained that the number of houses in the wider proposals is fixed on the new build residential home being part of the site. The wider site is owned by the Council but a small parcel of land behind Mitel is under private ownership for which an agreement is under negotiation. The new build will occupy 2.3 acres and buying the additional land will meet or exceed the proposed 285 houses.

A Member requested information on the percentage, in 20 years' time, of older persons forecast to be suffering from dementia and from other different needs. It was agreed to circulate this information.

A Member questioned why the south of the County was chosen to provide such a facility, how the outreach service will work and if it will be available to all Monmouthshire. It was replied that the design is community focussed so outreach will be available to the immediate locale. It was agreed that there is inconsistency between provision in the north/south of the County and equity is an issue. The Member responded that it was very concerning that there will be good provision in the south of the County, and the north will be neglected.

It was confirmed that the Home will continue to offer short respite for the Abergavenny area (noting some individuals currently travel to Chepstow for this service). The importance of working flexibly alongside independent providers to develop equity was emphasised.

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It was asked if it is proposed to have a strategy in the longer term to provide services similar to the Raglan Project and also if the Council should be looking at delivering homes in other parts on Monmouthshire. It was suggested that a detailed business plan for residential provision across the county should be commissioned. The need to identify funding to deliver such a strategy was stressed.

A Member referred to the clear statutory responsibilities for scrutiny and the consequent need to be fully informed. It was commented that the report option appraisal doesn't provide options, instead directs Members to just one option, stating that Councillors should be making the decision not officers.

The Cabinet Member commented that the proposal is for a replacement plan not a new scheme and added that if extra homes are considered, all options can be reviewed.

A Member felt it was ambitious to plan for twenty five residents living independently as progressively it is likely they will become less able. He queried the shortfall (6.5.4), the plan to build the ground floor and the viability of exploring partnership with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) to develop the first floor. He commented that the Health Board is due to consult on a proposal to close St. Pierre Ward (dementia care) at Chepstow Hospital and questioned if it might be better to utilise St. Pierre Ward at Chepstow Hospital instead of building a new facility.

It was clarified that the reference to independent living is to maximise what residents are able to do encouraging as much participation as possible. In terms of partnership with ABUHB, positive collaborative steps have been taken and monthly meetings are held with Senior Managers. These proposals have been discussed broadly with them, and interest has been expressed in partnership on the new site. It was also explained that there will be opportunities related to Clinical Futures and the opening of the Specialist Critical Care Centre. There have also been discussions with the Neighbourhood Network Lead (South) who is interested in urgent social care beds in that area. The Member questioned how the Health Board will manage elder and dementia care in the north of the county in the future.

A Member recalled that a planning application was submitted previously for a private residential care home in Llanfoist that did not progress but remains live. It was commented that a planning application was approved recently on the McDonalds site for a large complex, and there are facilities in Lavender Court (run by Melin) and Mardy Park in Abergavenny.

In response to how the proposal will proceed, it was confirmed that another detailed report will return to this Committee after March 2018, will go to Cabinet then Council.

The Chair agreed that there is a need for a long term strategy to deliver cohesive specialist care in the County, and also a need to identify who the partners will be.

A Member was in favour of the proposal, also supporting the continuation of St. Pierre Ward in Chepstow Hospital and suggested that there are experts in Swansea and Bangor who could be engaged in the consultation to ensure that the design is right.

The need to ensure that the design is right for residents with quiet spaces for visiting relatives was emphasised.

In response it was explained that the Council is mindful of the need to manage demand and expectations in the future. The Chair's point that proposals need to sit within a wider strategy,

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working with partners and third sector was accepted. It was explained that the level of dependency that can be supported in the community is much higher than before. It was queried if future models are going to be looked at as part of the design stage with a view to expansion in the future. The Cabinet Member explained that this is just one strand of provision, balanced with the Monmouthshire Project working alongside supporting people in their own homes to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

A Member recognised that the proposal represented one strand but noted that it will involve a significant amount of taxpayers' money from all of Monmouthshire so it will be important to see how it fits in the wider strategy. It was agreed that Select Committee Members would be sent the location of the parcel of land concerned.

Committee Conclusions

- As a committee, we are in agreement with the principle that the Council should take a lead in providing a future long-term sustainable care model for Monmouthshire. Given the success of the Raglan Project, we understand the advantages of the Council providing care facilities to ensure a high quality service. We recognise that our primary objective remains to support people to live independently for as long as possible, but that a range of services will be needed to support future complex care needs such as dementia, given the increasing ageing population.
- The Committee supports the recommendations of the report to progress to the next phase of a detailed business case for the Severn View Proposal, however, Members agreed the proposals should be discussed at a future member's seminar.
- The Committee concludes that there is a need for an overarching Commissioning Strategy for residential care provision, respite and other services, to outline a strategic direction for services across the county and that this should be undertaken to inform the revision of our Local Development Plan.

5. Housing Gateway Support

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Supporting People funded Housing Support Gateway, to raise awareness of the benefits, (to clients and partner agencies) and to highlight activity levels and future risks.

Key Issues:

1. The role of the Gateway team is to provide a single point of contact and access for Monmouthshire Housing Support services. The Gateway manages the receipt and processing of housing support referrals, undertake support assessment from or in respect of vulnerable households, manage the waiting list and arrange the 'timely' allocation of support packages to a range of Supporting People funded support providers.

2. As part of this core function, the team will provide information, advice, assistance and assessment of need(s) to households prior to referring to a suitable Support Provider. For example, Gwalia who provide generic floating support; MIND who provide mental

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health related support and Llamau who provide support for victims of domestic abuse and those needing to overcome barriers to accessing employment, skills or training.

3. An additional function of the service and when appropriate, is to provide direct support to individuals and families through the Prevention & Intervention service. This service is in effect a crisis service, where the Gateway will seek to address any immediate issues prior to referring on to a suitable Support Provider. For example, the team can undertake immediate visits, assisting with urgent appointments (e.g. benefit interviews) or form filling where time is critical and directly re-housing people. Liaising with Foodbanks is not uncommon.

4. The Gateway has recently been commissioned to provide a review service on behalf of Supporting People Commissioning. This is important because this supports quality assurance, ensuring eligible activities have been undertaken; contributes to operational efficiency (e.g. making sure cases aren't open longer than a client needs and collating 'what matters' and satisfaction feedback.

5. The Gateway is a key partner to a number of other services. The Housing Options Team being one of these. All approaches made to the Council and the Housing Options Team in respect of homelessness are simultaneously passed to the Gateway in order for housing support to commence as soon as possible for individual homeless applicants.

The aim of this arrangement is for support providers, including the Gateway Prevention & Intervention Service, is to provide a complementary prevention service over and above the statutory role of the Housing Options Team.

6. Other partnerships include supporting Social Care, collaborating in the development of the "place based" Housing & Well-Being and Social Inclusion services which is housing support delivered through an integrated approach from the four Monmouthshire Hubs.

7. The Gateway provides an important role in respect of supporting the Council's Safeguarding responsibilities and helping to identify and support vulnerable people in circumstances such as domestic abuse and the abuse of both children and adults.

Member Scrutiny:

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Senior Housing Support Officer with Monmouthshire's Housing Support Gateway and had the opportunity to ask questions. The Officer was thanked for the excellent presentation and the work that the Gateway undertakes.

A Member commented on the removal of the Severn bridge tolls, increases to rent and mortgages, and rising interest rates and asked if these factors create pressures within the service. It was responded that any kinds of changes can impact on services acknowledging that it is difficult to find affordable housing within Monmouthshire anyway. Affordability is at the heart of many housing applications received, and it was noted that, typically, market rental rates are above benefit levels.

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A Member explained that, in planning terms, applications for or changes to multiple residency houses are rarely seen. It was confirmed that this is the case. There is a shared housing scheme that provides the main units in the County but commented that housing associations are beginning to consider this approach. This is unlikely to have an impact in the short term.

A Member referred to the upcoming national rough-sleeper count fortnight and questioned if there is likely to be an increase in rates. It was explained that a slight increase is expected; more than previous years.

It was queried if there were any common themes causing persons to be rough sleepers. It was responded that there are mixed reasons.

Committee Conclusions:

The Select Committee received the report and considered how the Housing Support Gateway supports vulnerable households, particularly those threatened with or actually homeless under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The team were thanked for their hard work.

6. Gypsy and Traveller Services

Purpose:

To seek approval for the introduction of the Pitch Allocation Policy for any future Council owned Gypsy and Traveller Site in Monmouthshire.

Key Issues:

1. Under the requirements of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Council carried out its duty to assess the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community in 2015 when it undertook the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). The GTAA identified a need for eight pitches in Monmouthshire over a five year period.

2. As part of the 'next steps' section of the GTAA there was a commitment to introduce a pitch allocation policy.

3. The Welsh Government's Managing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in Wales strongly recommends that Local Authorities operate such a policy as a positive and proactive means of engaging with Gypsy & Travellers. Councils are expected to publish their policies and procedures for allocating pitches, including assessment criteria, expected timescales and how to apply and how priority need is defined. Where a waiting list is in operation, the Local Authority should clearly explain how the list operates and inform applicants of their general position on the list when requested.

4. The Policy

4.1 The proposed policy is intended to be structured similar to the Monmouthshire Homeseach allocations policy.

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4.2 The proposed policy sets out the criteria that will be used to establish eligibility and ineligibility to register for a pitch in Monmouthshire and the criteria that will be used to assess need.

4.3 The proposed policy would ensure an appropriate 'needs assessment' is completed and a system of prioritisation is applied to determine that pitch allocation is based on those households with the greatest need.

4.4 All applicants will have their housing needs assessed and be placed in one of five housing needs bands according to their circumstances.

4.5 The Bands will be bands 1 to 5 with band 1 being the highest priority and band 5 the lowest priority.

Member Scrutiny:

Following presentation of the draft report by the Housing Strategy and Policy Officer, questions were asked by Members of the Select Committee:

The Chair asked if there will be a need to revisit the policy due to applicants from within the EU after Brexit. It was explained that there is no information available at the current time so the Council will have to work within current rules.

Clarification was sought on the term "over a 5 year period". It was responded that the 5 year period referred to the needs assessment that ends in 2021 when a new needs assessment will be undertaken.

A Member stated that the Council is 3 years into the Local Development Plan and is without any pitches. He questioned what sanctions might be applied. It was explained that the Welsh Government have the power to force local authorities to act on their needs assessment.

A Member asked if there was a different issue in Monmouthshire as it does not have a typical seasonal horticultural/agricultural culture that travellers might follow noting that some Gypsies and Travellers live in the County. It was queried if there were different criteria of need for a site (e.g. nomadic in summer and housed in winter). It was explained many Gypsies and Travellers don't want to live in houses, and would prefer a mobile home on a pitch to travel from and return to Monmouthshire.

A Member supported the eight pitches as a minimum. In response to a question, it was confirmed that there is no site available in the county for a group moving through the county but a transit site is going to be provided on a regional basis.

A Member urged that full support was given to support the education of Gypsy and Traveller children when a site is established. It was confirmed that Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS) have appropriate education programmes and are represented on the Gypsy and Traveller Forum. It was also added that the Council also works with the SE Wales Equalities Council work with them.

It was commented that the eight pitches don't have to be provided by the local authority and some Gypsies and Travellers wish to purchase land to establish their own pitches so would seek assistance with planning processes.

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The Chair recalled that a planning application was passed on appeal and queried if this would contribute to the required pitches. There was no certainty that this was the case. Welsh Government regularly enquire and will expect progress upon the availability of pitches.

Clarification was sought if the Council has a duty to provide a passing through site and responded that there is a need for public provision of eight pitches and also assistance with planning permission. It was added that the transit issue is an all Wales issue that needs to be addressed.

Committee Conclusions:

The Committee, having discussed how the Council engages with the Gypsy & Traveller community and how it provides its statutory response to addressing identified needs, agreed the report recommendations.

The Committee considered and agreed the first draft Gypsy and Traveller Pitch allocations policy prior to consultation.

It was requested that the Committee receives a further report following the consultation.

7. Cold Weather Homeless Policy

Purpose:

To consider the attached Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which details the Council's proposed response towards rough sleepers in times of severe weather conditions and make recommendations as appropriate

Key Issues:

1. Although there is no strict definition of what counts as "severe weather", it is proposed the Council will adopt a common sense approach and identify any weather that could increase the risk of serious harm to people rough sleeping, this can include extreme cold, wind or rain.

For the purposes of the protocol a rough sleeper is as defined as:

- i. People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting in/on or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People bedded down in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes").

2. Every year Local Authorities have to report to Welsh Government on the number of rough sleepers there are within their area. Data collection takes the form of two counts, a one night count and a count over a period of time.

- i. One Night Count - this takes place on a pre determine date and in known geographical areas where rough sleepers are known to bed down or likely to bed down. During 2015 the count took place on the 25th November between the hours of 11pm to 3 where one person was identified as sleeping rough. For 2016/17 the count took place on the 4th November between the hours of 10pm to 5am. No rough sleepers were identified.

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- ii. Count Period – data is collected over a two week period with assistance from the voluntary sector, faith groups, local businesses/residents, health and substance misuse agencies, and the police. For the winter of 2015/16 this took place during 2nd – 15th November and identified five people sleeping rough. For the winter 2016/17 and took place during the 10th – 23rd October and identified one person as sleeping rough.
3. There is an expectation within Welsh Government that local authorities should ensure that there is provision in place to address the needs of rough sleepers in their area during period of severe weather conditions, particularly so during the winter months.
4. It is aimed to introduce what is known as the ‘Severe Weather Emergency Protocol’ or SWEP from winter 2017. The protocol will ensure that any verified rough sleeper with or without a local connection is found accommodation during periods of severe weather, particularly when extreme cold temperatures for extended spells can threaten their safety and wellbeing.
5. Who is Eligible?
- i. Any person sleeping rough on the streets in the extreme cold. This includes those without recourse to public funds such as A10 nationals from the EU accession. This states the rough sleeper must:
 - be at risk if they continue to sleep rough during the course of the severe weather
 - have nowhere to sleep indoors during the course of the severe weather (Indoors does not include cars, sheds or garages)
 - agree to the assistance offered by the Council
6. The Process
- i. The protocol is triggered by a weather forecast from the Met Office predicting three consecutive nights, or more, of a temperature of zero degrees Celsius or lower. For other forms of extremes of weather, for example wind and rain, the Council will take a pragmatic approach based upon meteorological warnings designated red and the likelihood of serious harm occurring because of extended periods of rough sleeping before triggering the protocol.
 - ii. As soon as the protocol is triggered, the duty Housing Options Officer will contact the relevant organisations both external and internal agencies, to advise that SWEP is in place, with details of who to contact if they identify any rough sleepers.
 - iii. If an identified rough sleeper meets the above criteria they will be offered emergency accommodation, which is likely to be B & B, for the duration of the severe weather.

Member Scrutiny:

Following presentation of the report by the Housing Strategy and Policy Officer, questions were asked by the Committee Members:

In response to a question, it was agreed to double check that the emergency accommodation phone number is available outside office hours.

A Member queried why the process is initiated after three nights and it was confirmed that this was standard accepted practice.

A Member questioned if accommodation would be available at short notice if the weather changed unexpectedly. It was explained that officers monitor the weather on a daily basis. It

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was added that there are limited sources of Bed and Breakfast but the team usually resolve situations promptly.

It was asked if there is there an opportunity to seek medical or other help and support. It was confirmed that an offer is made to work with the person to get them off the street.

It was queried and confirmed that there is a general fund for homelessness with a budget of £60,000-£70,000 to cover e.g. placing families in B and Bs.

Committee Conclusions:

The Committee considered the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP).

It considered the implications of rough sleeping and the role of the Council, particularly during periods of severe weather and recommended to Cabinet that the proposed Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is adopted with immediate effect.

8. Actions arising from the last meeting

The Actions listed from the last meeting have been addressed.

9. Council and Cabinet Forward Plan

The Council and Cabinet Plan was noted. Members were advised to look out for the weekly e.mail that provides an updated version of the Plan each Friday to enable Members to keep abreast of changes and developments. Members requested forward dates only.

10. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 12th December 2017 at 10.00am

11. Adults Select forward Work Programme

The Forward Work Programme was noted.

A Special Meeting of Children and Young People's Select Committee will be held on 13th November 2017. One of the items under consideration is a Safeguarding Evaluative Report. Members of Adults Select Committee are invited to attend.

The Scrutiny Manager was requested to send out the mandates relevant to Adults Select Committee.

Budget report for each and proposals split according to relevance. Organise a special Joint Select Committee in the new year to review all the mandates to be attended by Cabinet Members.

A Member was advised to contact the Assistant Head of Finance for a list of statutory duties.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

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