

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Minutes of the meeting of Adults Select Committee held at The Council Chamber, Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Monday, 26th November, 2018 at 10.00 am

**PRESENT:** County Councillor D. Blakebrough (Chairman)  
County Councillor L. Brown (Vice Chairman)

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

Also in attendance: County Councillor V. Smith

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Julie Boothroyd	Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Eve Parkinson	Head of Adult Services
Colin Richings	Implementation Lead
Mark Hand	Head of Planning, Housing and Place-Shaping
Stephen Griffiths	Strategy & Policy Officer
Ian Ferguson	Housing Options Officer
Shirley Wiggam	Senior Strategy & Policy Officer
Hazel Ilett	Scrutiny Manager
Richard Williams	Democratic Services Officer

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillor J. Pratt

#### **1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

#### **2. Crick Road Business Case**

##### **Context:**

To provide an updated position with regard to the development of the new build care home that will replace Severn View Residential Home.

##### **Key Issues:**

- This project seeks to replace and re-provide services currently provided at Severn View Residential Home in Chepstow. Previous reports to Adults Select Committee and Cabinet established the background to the proposals.
- The current facilities and environment at Severn View place restrictions on the Authority's ability to deliver the range and extent of services that enable people living with dementia to live well and a life that matters.
- The home is on two floors and restricts free and spontaneous access to outside spaces. Access to outside spaces is integral to people's well-being; not only

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does it improve sleep and reduce stress, it supports people to develop a sense of self and of place.

- The home is severely limited by not having en-suite bathrooms. Shared bathrooms are increasingly untenable in providing care in the 21st Century and the Authority runs the risk of future problems with registration as a result.
- The layout of the building does not support orientation and a sense of home. The layout is one of a number 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.
- Care practice has developed significantly over the last few years following significant investment by the Council in support and training to deliver a relationship based approach to holistic care. The environment does not prevent care teams from adopting this approach but it limits the effectiveness and does not enhance the Authority's ability to support this holistic approach.
- The current model of staffing does not create the ratios that sufficiently allow the team members to practice as they would wish. An amalgamated household support worker model is required that creates better staffing ratios.
- It is well established and recognised the importance of integrating our care facilities with the surrounding community. The current infrastructure and location of Severn View limits the opportunities for community integration. A more radical approach is required to ensure that moving into permanent care does not mean isolation from your local community.
- South Monmouthshire currently has two rehabilitation beds at Severn View. This represents an under provision when compared to Monmouth and Abergavenny. There is a need to increase the number of rehabilitation beds in the south of the County to enhance our ability to facilitate hospital discharge and to prevent admission.

#### Member Scrutiny:

- The proposal is for a 32 bed unit. However, it was considered that there was an opportunity to take this a step further and investigate whether it would be feasible to create a 48 bed unit, and explore the options available with other organisations with a view to enhancing the proposal.
- Revenue funding is available for the re-provision of Severn View Residential Home for a staffing model around 32 beds. However, the opportunity exists, whilst going through the planning phases, to consider a further 16 beds in addition to the proposal. Conversations regarding this matter are beginning and preliminary meetings will be held with potential partners, going forward.
- Two planning applications for detailed planning consent are being pursued with a view to keeping the options open for as long as possible.

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- The capital funding is a challenge but not as great as establishing the revenue funding. Securing the revenue funding will be the main issue.
- With regard to the valuation in the sum of £700,000 for the Severn View Residential Home site, officers have been prudent in costings and budget planning and have therefore gone to the lower end of the valuation. A further valuation will be undertaken shortly and then a final valuation at the point of sale.
- Conversations have been held locally and with the Integrated Service Partnership Board, mainly about concept. The opportunity to have some flexible use of beds is being discussed such as end of life care.
- It was considered that it was unpractical not to allow in the design for car parking spaces as the care home needs to be integrated within the local community. The proposal is designed on the basis of the manual of streets which means that the roads are not wide enough to allow vehicles to park on either side of the road and for vehicles to pass by, which creates parking and traffic flow difficulties.
- Concern was expressed regarding public transport issues. The Severn View Care Home is close to the centre of Chepstow and is accessible without having to travel by car. The proposed site is located within the centre of the development. However, concern was expressed that buses might not be able to access the care home easily on a manual of streets design. Currently, a bus route does not exist. Bus stops are to be located on either side on a main road next to a grass verge which could be dangerous for elderly people slipping on the verge.
- A Select Committee Member expressed concern that the whole issue of public transport, car parking and getting people to and from the site has not been properly considered. It was felt that the site was inaccessible with parking and access difficulties.
- In response, the Head of Planning, Housing and Place Shaping informed the Select Committee that Planning Committee has only considered the outline planning consent for this planning application. The detailed stage is yet to be presented to Planning Committee. The bus stops are to be located on the 'B' road so the bus will not be travelling through the site.
- In response to the issues regarding public transport, it was noted that these matters are relevant to staff and residents' families. As the planning phases are processed it was acknowledged that transport is critical and will be a key consideration. With regard to the car park, there are 22 parking spaces allocated. In terms of developing an innovative design, every car parking space is an area that cannot be given to the residents. The aim is to try to maximise the communal recreational spaces for the residents. Minimum car parking requirements, as established, have to be met (one place for three non-resident staff, one place for resident staff and one place for every four residents for visitors). There will be up to 20 staff on site with eight places for visitors and one

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resident member of staff, the proposal falls within the minimum car parking requirements but it is acknowledged that the parking at Severn View Care Home has more spaces and there is likely to be some tension under the new proposal with regard to parking spaces. The maximisation of spaces for residents need to be explored as well as exploring car sharing and park and ride options.

- Pets are important and currently feature in the Severn View Care Home.
- That we will not place any limitations on visiting hours to ensure that families / friends are involved in all aspects of the life of the home.
- The Integrated Care Fund (ICF) is with the Minister with a recommendation for it to be signed and it is anticipated that this will be signed off imminently. ICF has to be spent in year. Therefore, funding for the land purchase has to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.
- The Crick Road Business Case is an innovative model. The staffing model is co-produced allowing for staff involvement in its development. When the model has been agreed, early training for staff will be provided. When Ministerial sign off has been received a staff forum will be established allowing the team to look at all aspects of the proposal.
- It is anticipated that at least one double room will feature within the design.
- Between 10.00pm and 7.00am there are four waking night staff based at the care home and there is also the Team Leader who sleeps in. The households are designed to be interdependent with the central corridor being opened up at night allowing movement between the households. This information should be added to the report that will be received by full Council.
- The pavilion has two purposes. One being a sense of destination allowing purposeful movement by residents. The pavilion is a multifunctional space. It is primarily a space for the residents of the households but will also be accessible by the local community as a shared space.
- Monmouthshire County Council wants to remain a provider in the care home market and the authority can work in partnership with other providers across the sector. It would be beneficial if the proposed model could be replicated in other areas of the County either via the local Authority or via other providers taking a lead from the proposed model for Crick Road.
- Recommendations 2.1 and 2.3 of the report are not recommendations. Recommendation 2.2 is potentially a recommendation. It was considered that the recommendation for the report should be 'that Members consider the various options outlined in the report and come to a conclusion'.
- Add to the recommendations – Further consideration be given to the car parking issues, access to the site and public transport.

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### **Committee's Conclusion:**

- Investigations be undertaken to explore options to increase provision from 32 beds to 48 beds.
- The valuation of the Severn View Care Home site, in the sum of £700,000, is to be further assessed with a view to achieving a final valuation before the site is sold.
- Meaningful partnership working with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board to be undertaken.
- Concerns were expressed regarding potential political changes and the impact that this might have on receiving funding.
- The Authority has not yet received Ministerial approval of the Integrated Care Fund. However, approval is anticipated shortly.
- Parking facilities and public transport issues are a concern and it was considered that these matters should be investigated further. Further detail will be available at the detailed planning stage.
- Between 10.00pm and 7.00am there are four waking night staff based at the care home and there is also the Team Leader who sleeps in. The households are designed to be interdependent with the central corridor being opened up at night allowing movement between the households. This information to be added to the report that will be received by full Council.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of pets within the care home was identified as a means of improving the method of care being provided.
- Identify a blueprint for Monmouthshire with regard to providing similar care home provision in other areas of the County in the future.
- Accommodation for couples to be included in the proposal.

We recommended that the report be presented to Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018 with the Select Committee recommending that Option Three be considered, namely that Monmouthshire County Council works in partnership with the wider site development to construct its own residential provision.

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### **3. Gwent Homelessness Strategy**

#### **Context:**

The report presents the proposed Gwent Regional Homelessness Strategy 2018-2022 and Action Plan, including the proposed Monmouthshire specific actions setting out the approach for tackling homelessness across Gwent. The report also includes a regional review of homeless services for Gwent, which informed the development of the strategy.

#### **Key Issues:**

- Under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, it is a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a Homelessness Strategy that sets out its plans to prevent and tackle homelessness in their area.
- The impact homelessness can have is devastating, not only on those affected by it but also on society both in terms of financial and social costs.
- The Council has seen improved responses to homelessness since the previous strategy through the introduction of many initiatives such as:
  - Monmouthshire Lettings Agency.
  - Family Mediation Service.
  - Youth Accommodation Service.
  - Financial Inclusion Service.
  - Housing Support Services through the Gateway.
- However, homelessness is still with us and demand continues to rise especially with the impact around welfare reform and the introduction of the new statutory duties under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- There is a need for the Council to continue to find innovative solutions, not only to traditional causes of homelessness, but also to other areas such as mental health and rough sleeping.
- In response, Monmouthshire County Council along with Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council concluded that working collaboratively to prevent and alleviate homelessness in Gwent was the best approach.
- This regional approach would enable the five partners to share resources and consider needs across local authority boundaries. A working group was established consisting of lead officers from the five authorities.
- The working group agreed that the appointment of a Regional Research Officer was required to conduct a homelessness review across the five authorities and produce a review document that would inform the strategy.

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- The Review has taken into account data from various sources and consultations with various partners and stakeholders including internal departments and teams within the five local authorities.
- In particular, it has looked at the following issues:
  - Excluded groups.
  - Families.
  - Single homeless people.
  - People with complex dependencies.
  - Causes of homelessness.
  - Current strategies and policies that support prevention.
  - Current services and support available to homeless households.
  - How this strategy links with Welsh Government aims.
  - It has identified emerging and potential challenges.
- Based on the extensive research the Review Document directed the development of the Strategy, and Regional and Local Action Plans for the forthcoming four years.
- The Strategy reflects the four priorities identified by the review:
  - Priority 1: Help improve access to suitable and affordable housing.
  - Priority 2: Offer fast and effective advice and support, working with partners to help vulnerable people.
  - Priority 3: Minimise homelessness and prevent it through early intervention.
  - Priority 4: Ensure fair, equal and person-centred homeless services.
- Ten strategic objectives and their accompanying actions help deliver on the four priorities.
- As the strategy and action plan is a 'live' document, a working group will be established to monitor and evaluate its implementation.

#### **Options Appraisal:**

Option 1: To do nothing.

Option 2: To produce a Monmouthshire centric strategy.

Option 3: To implement the Strategy.

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#### **Member Scrutiny:**

- The discrepancy between housing benefit and market rents can be as much as up to £100 per month. This has a bearing on whether a household is able to access the private rented sector.
- There are other challenging issues within the private rented sector, namely, landlords not wishing to rent their properties to certain clientele.
- The private rented sector is difficult to access in Monmouthshire.
- The Monmouthshire Lettings Scheme service has been established with a view to encouraging landlords to work with the Authority, which is proving to be successful.
- Homesearch is classed as an inactive market which contributes to a lack of affordable housing within the private rented sector. However, schemes are being introduced with a view to encouraging landlords to participate.
- Landlords are being encouraged via incentives to become involved in the shared Lodgings scheme which provides accommodation for younger, single people.
- Monmouthshire does not have many career landlords with a large stock of properties that they are committed to managing. The majority of landlords have perhaps one buy to rent property that is managed by an agent. Agents are less likely to accept housing benefit claimants.
- One of the main issues is accessing accommodation and affordability.
- Officers are working to expand available stock. However, when this becomes saturated, bed and breakfast and other accommodation have to be used from time to time.
- In February 2019, the Select Committee will be scrutinising Universal Credit and how this will impact on Monmouthshire's residents. Homesearch will also be scrutinised at this meeting.
- It would be helpful if a summary section 5 of the Strategy relating to Monmouthshire could be placed at the beginning of the document.
- In response to questions raised by a Select Committee Member, it was noted that the Monmouthshire Lettings Service offers the landlord incentives and added value. This can be in the way of financial incentives and landlord support, in terms of supporting the tenant. This will generate an extended tenancy up to three years.



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- Under the Monmouthshire Lettings Service, shared accommodation is running 55 bed spaces. 45 properties are run via Private Sector Leasing (PSL). There are also 20 managed properties and there is the hostel with five units.
- A Select Committee Member provided the Committee with an account of her time when she became homeless and expressed her support for people who open up their homes to people who are less fortunate. The Member expressed her support for the Strategy and in particular the home share scheme.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the proposed creation of a Gwent wide strategy, it was noted that some time ago Monmouthshire County Council's Housing Department went into partnership with Torfaen County Borough Council's Housing Department. Within Monmouthshire there are geographical issues within its own boundaries. For example, a family living in Chepstow encountering housing difficulties might only be offered accommodation in Monmouth, which might be regarded by them as being too far from their home town. Therefore, it might be just as difficult, if not more difficult to accept, if a Monmouthshire resident is offered accommodation in another county.
- Monmouthshire's housing stock already includes a few houses in Cwmbran which form part of the House Share scheme. These are often rejected by Monmouthshire homeless people due to their location.
- Arising from the consultation, it had been noted that within the proposed Strategy, there is scope to look at niche cases, such as high risk offenders, with a view to suitably house these individuals.
- Special needs accommodation is also a consideration under the proposed strategy. There is more scope to provide this accommodation via the proposed Strategy.
- In response to a question raised by a Select Committee Member regarding shared resources and potential Section 33 agreements under the 2006 Health Act, with other authorities with regard to pooling funding, officers stated that they would investigate the matter and report back to the Member.

#### **Committee's Conclusion:**

- A summary relating to Monmouthshire to be attached to the front of the strategy and that appendix 4 also be at the front of the strategy.
- Explore joint ventures, such as hostel provision on a regional basis.
- Lack of housing due to the low numbers of privately rented properties. Private landowners are provided with incentives to provide this service, which the Select Committee should continue to monitor via an annual report.

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- Encourage the development of the Home Share Scheme via a strategy.
- Be mindful of the issues regarding homeless Monmouthshire residents not wanting to be accommodated out of County.

We resolved that the Gwent Homeless Strategy be presented to full Council on the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2018 with a recommendation that Option 3 be adopted, namely, to adopt the strategy.

#### 4. Local Housing Market Assessment

##### **Context:**

To brief the Select Committee on the completion of the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), July 2018 and to seek approval for submission of the LHMA to the Welsh Government.

##### **Key Issues:**

- All local authorities have a requirement to consider the housing accommodation needs of their localities under section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. Local Housing Market Assessments are a crucial part of the evidence base for preparing Local Development Plans and Local Housing Strategies.
- This LHMA has identified the potential need for 468 affordable homes per year over the next five years. This number can be further broken down as:

- Social rent need	102
- Low cost homeownership need	284
- Intermediate rent need	82
- Total need	468
- It is important to note that these figures are not an annual delivery target as new build homes are not the total solution to the supply of affordable homes in the County. The Council's target remains 960 affordable homes (96 per year) over the period of the Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011 – 2021.
- Housing's Private Sector Housing Team has established a new lettings agency, Monmouthshire Lettings Service (MLS), and is working with private sector landlords to increase the availability of units for private rent whilst also trying to bring empty properties back into use. Monmouthshire's shared housing service, which offers accommodation for single persons, also comes under the MLS banner.

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### **Member Scrutiny:**

- Social rents are set by the Welsh Government. Intermediate rent is a rent that is above social rent but below market rent. In Monmouthshire, intermediate rent is below Local Housing Allowance.
- At the bottom of each table identify what the acronyms are.
- This document links in with the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP). The figure of 468 affordable homes per year is challenging as only 250 homes in total are currently being built per year (market and affordable homes).
- Some of the people who do not appear on Monmouthshire's housing register, as they have moved to a neighbouring county where properties are cheaper, are in the 20 – 40 year old category. For economic and demographic purposes, there are the people that the Authority should be trying to retain in the County.
- However, the strengths of the County are that it is a pleasant place to live and easily accessible by car. The turnover of affordable housing being relatively low, in terms of community cohesion, is positive. However, this is not good for people on the waiting list for housing.
- The backlog of housing need is an issue for all local authorities.
- Affordable housing means housing that people cannot access on the open market and therefore require assistance. It incorporates social rent, intermediate rent and low cost ownership.
- The Adults Select Committee and the Economy and Development Select Committee could provide a steer with regard to affordable housing and how this will be taken forward in the next LDP.
- Empty properties on the high street could be altered and utilised to provide social rented properties / hostels.
- An internal call for brownfield sites had recently been undertaken. However, there had been a low response due to the limited number of brown field sites available within the County. Another call for brownfield sites, both externally and internally, across the County will be undertaken in the near future.
- Monmouthshire Housing Association has been asked to buy back as many ex right to buy properties as possible to increase the existing housing stock.
- Low cost home ownership (LCHO) is a shared equity scheme operated by Monmouthshire County Council's partner Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). LCHO is generally 50/50 in Monmouthshire as 70/30 is not affordable due to high house prices. The successful applicants own the home and have an interest free equity loan from the RSL.

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- Monmouthshire County Council's policy does not include shared ownership, as this product is not considered to be affordable. Applicants would only own the percentage of the home that they have purchased and would have to pay rent to the RSL for the remaining percentage. Their mortgage plus their rent would equate to the price of buying the home on the open market.
- Empty properties are going to be looked at with a view to bringing these forward with the Authority's Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners.
- Monmouthshire's Housing Association partners are only permitted to advertise on Rightmove if the houses cannot be occupied from the housing register. All properties are advertised via Homesearch.
- With regard to people not wanting to housing in other areas of the County, some of the reasons for this are the difficulty in accessing work; children having to change schools and moving away from family. For example, if someone is working in Chepstow and on a low wage and is offered a house in Monmouth, this could make it difficult for that person to access work.
- Community consultation is undertaken regarding village sites which helps to identify the mix and tenure of build required. When the land is secured and is scheduled to come forward, community consultation is held allowing people to come forward to register their housing need. These consultation events also allow members of the community to comment on layout and design.
- In response to a question raised regarding whether Monmouthshire County Council might have a case with the Welsh Government for additional resources for areas where the local housing cost is higher than other areas in Wales, it was noted that the Welsh Government uses a formula for allocating the Social Housing Grant that does take all issues into consideration. It would be difficult to state a case for more funding as every authority has this need. Monmouthshire has successfully lobbied for a rise in the Acceptable Cost Guidance (ACG) rates for small sites, which will help in the rural areas.
- If a family is sharing with another family in a rural location, the family that is sharing could bid for a property through the Rural Allocations Policy.
- Monmouthshire County Council is continuing to allocate social housing grant to fund the buy-back of former council houses sold through the Right to Buy. These properties are bought back at market value – SHG funds 58% of the cost and the RSL funds the remaining 42%.
- The Welsh Government is funding the Innovative Housing Programme. This is a programme of demonstrator schemes to inform the Welsh Government on the types of homes that they should support in the future. The first phase of the programme is supporting 22 affordable housing projects with a wide variety of different models and methods of delivery. The second phase of delivery will also be open to the private sector. Monmouthshire Planning Committee has

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approved two schemes put forward by Monmouthshire Housing Association. These are in Abergavenny and Caldicot. One is a development of four courtyard bungalows for older persons and the other is for four one-bed mews style houses.

#### **Committee's Conclusion:**

- The amended presentation to be circulated to Select Committee Members.
- The Select Committee would write to Welsh Government outlining a case for Monmouthshire to receive additional resources as it is an area in Wales where the local housing cost is higher than other areas of the Country.
- Investigations are being undertaken to use empty homes on the high street to provide social rented properties.
- There is a need to be clear on what the definition of affordable housing is, going forward.
- Joint Select Committee working will be undertaken between the Adults Select Committee and the Economy and Development Select Committee to address the issues identified with regard to the housing market.
- The Authority's company should look to build affordable housing itself to support people in need in their areas.

We recommended that Cabinet adopts the Local Housing Market Assessment.

**The meeting ended at 12.51 pm.**