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**OVERVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform and update Members on progress within Adult Social Care and Housing since the last meeting of Council. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio for Adult Social Care and Housing.

**Adult Social Care –Strategic Commissioning**

2. The evaluation of tenders for the provision of domiciliary care and support has been completed and was approved by Cabinet on 1 July 2013. The new Framework Agreement includes 18 providers, 10 of whom are “preferred providers” and the remainder will be used as demand requires. There is a wide range of specialisms and expertise amongst the 18 successful providers to meet the diverse needs of all adults requiring support.
3. Following a review of the Care and Repair service which delivers both Disabled Facilities Grants and a Handyperson Service, a report was presented to Cabinet on 1 July recommending that the service is re tendered and that negotiations take place with the existing provider to decommission the Handyperson element prior to the end of the extended contract period in September 2013.
4. Work has commenced in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Group to develop a local plan that ensures people with complex support needs are supported in line with the recommendations from the review of Winterbourne View, a private hospital for people with challenging needs.
5. Work is also underway to develop a revised specification for a Shared Lives service. Shared Lives is a model of support where vulnerable people who require day to day support live with local people as part of their family.
6. Two very exciting pieces of work on collaboration are being developed:-
  - (a) The first is that the Council and NHS Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group have agreed a joint post to work with the two organisations on ways we can work more collaboratively and in an integrated manner. The post was being advertised in early July.
  - (b) Secondly, Darlington Council as part of work on collaboration with other organisations submitted an expression of interest to the Department of Health to become a part of Pioneers for Integration programme. Alongside this, we also submitted an application to the Department for Communities and Local

Government for their Transformation Challenge Award fund. This fund supports collaboration amongst local authorities and we will be working with Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland Councils with the Darlington and South Tees CCG's to share learning on integration between health and social care.

### **Adult Social Care – Operational Developments**

7. Safeguarding - work is ongoing with regard to two specific ongoing complex investigations, these cases are of a sensitive and confidential nature and the Local Authority is working closely with the Police, Health, Care Quality Commission and the organisations themselves to ensure the safety of all individuals involved.
8. The RIACT service is part of a complete review of Intermediate Care/RIACT Teams across Durham and Darlington. This work is being commissioned by Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group, the two Clinical Commissioning Groups in Durham and Durham County Council. This follows regional work across all 12 local authorities and a review completed by an organisation called Peopletoo. The feedback for Darlington's RIACT service is extremely positive and the next stage of work proposes a model across Durham which reflects some of the positives of the Darlington model.
9. The Life Stages Team in Learning Disabilities is attracting interest from other Local Authorities who wish to look more closely at the model. A presentation will be given to the Heads of Adult Services across the region in August.
10. The restructure of Adult Services operational teams is progressing well and will be complete by August; this is due to changes in Senior Management structure. The next stage of work is considering all front line posts and ensuring the best use of skill mix and staff numbers.

### **Housing Services**

11. Older People's Housing Workshop - A successful workshop took place on 10 April 2013 attended by over 40 people representing a range of organisations including Registered Providers, Voluntary Organisations and the Private Sector as well as older people. The workshop has led to further discussions with a number of organisations about future developments in Darlington particularly concerning specialist housing for those who want to purchase or part purchase. The Homes and Communities Agency who had a speaker at the workshop, are also following up with further discussions.
12. Pets Policy - Consultation has begun on proposed changes to the Pets Policy to allow tenants living in sheltered housing and properties with communal entrances to keep a cat or a dog. This change is being considered because of the fall in demand for these types of properties. There is evidence that some properties are being refused by potential tenants because of the current Pets Policy. Permission will be required and tenants will need to comply with rules concerning the type of pet allowed and its management. Following an initial discussion with the Tenants'

Board a half day workshop took place with a mix of tenants and Officers to discuss the issues associated with the changes. The Dogs Trust was also represented at this meeting and information was provided by the Cinnamon Trust. Consultation meetings are now taking place in all the sheltered housing, Extra Care and Good Neighbour schemes. Tenants living in blocks with a communal entrance and where there is no convenient meeting space are being sent a survey seeking their views

13. Welfare Reforms - 374 of the 620 tenants affected by the Bedroom Tax have now been seen by a Housing Officer. All affected tenants have been contacted at least twice. Since December, 131 tenants have moved out of being affected by the Bedroom Tax and 116 new tenants are being affected. Overall ten per cent of Council tenants are affected by the Bedroom Tax: Since the introduction of the Bedroom Tax in April, there has been no attributable increase in rent arrears, unlike other Local Authorities and housing providers, who are reporting noticeable increases. However, the impact of this reform is likely to be felt in the longer term as the accumulative impact of the loss of income occurs. Housing Officers are working hard to retain contact with those tenants affected and to find solutions. About 50 affected tenants have now moved to smaller accommodation through a mix of transfers and mutual exchanges. A small number of tenants have been allowed to transfer to smaller accommodation with rent arrears where there is clear evidence of the benefit to the tenant and the Council. Approximately 60 tenants have made claims for Discretionary Housing Benefit to support them on a temporary basis whilst more permanent solutions are sought.

## **GOLD**

14. GOLD have over a thousand members now and they continue to work hard to improve the quality of life for older people in Darlington. GOLD have agreed the workplan for the coming year and this will focus on the Dignity in Care priority and Gold Standard Framework activity to ensure that the care people receive is of a high quality.
15. Tea dance preparations are now well under way and, as in previous years, a large number of other services and voluntary sector organisations are planning to attend. This is an annual event that gives an opportunity for people of all generations to socialise and share information and advice. The Tea Dance will be held in the Market Square on Wednesday, 14th August 2013, from 11am until 3pm.
16. I have also :-

Attended meetings in relation to the Peer Challenge Review;  
Attended a meeting of the 'Good Neighbour Scheme';  
Attended the Budget Panel Meeting on Adult Social Care and Leisure;  
Attended the Fly the Flag Ceremony, which gave me the opportunity to talk to many of our Veterans.

**Councillor Veronica Copeland**  
**Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Adult Social Care and Housing**