
OVERVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council and under the Adult Social Care and Housing Portfolio, Cabinet has received the following:
 - (a) **Learning Disability Short Breaks** – We have approved the proposals to review in house short break services subject to on-going consultation with staff affected and service users, as the current service model is not in line with the wider personalisation agenda and delivering short breaks in different ways can deliver better outcomes and result in more efficient use of current resources. We look forward to receiving a further report providing options for future delivery of the services.
 - (b) **Modernising Day Opportunities for People with a Learning Disability** – We have agreed that the Council funded services at Lifestyles, Grassroots and Lawson Street are closed, and that the alternative arrangements and choices made by individuals are implemented during a transitional period of three months. The Council needs to respond to the roll out of more personalised services where people, through a choice of their own, increasingly direct their own care and where personal budgets are the norm. Expectations of service users and their carers are changing and the facilities to be closed are no longer fit for purpose. Assistance during the transition between services will be offered to the affected individuals.
 - (c) **Mental Health Capital Grant Release of Funds** – We have approved the release of £102,484 from the Department of Health –Mental Health Capital Grant and we have approved the spending of the grant as proposed by Officers; which include Mood/Food Dementia Café – Provided by Darlington Mind, contribution to refurbishment of current day service – Provided by Age UK, to support and make changes to a community allotment project – Provided by Groundworks, North East, to support making some physical changes to current building that supports young disabled people – Provided by DAD and a proposal from Accept Care, to develop a café within Darlington that will support employment for people with a mental health problem. The process has been line with the Capital Grants Guidance and this is a one off capital grant allocation and there will be no future revenue implications for the Local Authority.
 - (d) **Mental Health Day Opportunities Tender** – The evaluation has been completed and Cabinet requested to approve the award of new framework contracts for Adults and Older Peoples Day Opportunities and two block contracts for low level and complex floating housing support.

2. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services:
- (a) **Intermediate Care Plus and updated Telecare Strategies** - Have been developed with consultation ending in June 2011. The aim is to prevent avoidable hospital and long-term care admissions and support earlier discharge and regaining of independence.
 - (b) **Re-ablement and Social Care Monies** - Made available to Adult Social Care through the PCT are being spent on progressing the Intermediate Care Pathway by investing in the Lifeline Service, Tele-Care Equipment and additional capacity for the Re-ablement Service. A low level hospital discharge support service is being piloted with the Red Cross. The Re-ablement monies have been made available for six months to the end of September 2011. Work will be ongoing with the PCT to develop longer term plans.
 - (c) **Learning Disability Life Stage Model** – The individuals who were appointed into the new posts within the Life Stage Service as part of the review of the Service will be coming into post over the next few weeks. Accommodation is still being considered and the plan is for co-location of Health and Social Care staff.
 - (d) **Adult Operational Restructure** - The new structure for Adult Operational Teams is now in place with a range of moves which happened within Central House during week beginning 13th June. This establishes the Intake, Reablement and Ongoing Care Model and will now start to deliver the improvements that we aim to achieve in improved customer experience and outcomes, improved performance, improved use of resources, less “hand off”s” between teams and ensure that we are well placed to deal with any future changes in the delivery of Adult Social Care.
 - (e) **Safeguarding update** – A Head of Review and Development for People has been appointed; this is to establish the Safeguarding Unit. Lisa is currently working on a report with regard to Adult Safeguarding which will be completed during the Summer. The report will focus on the processes, systems and documentation used within Adult Safeguarding and will conclude with recommendations for the ongoing development and continuous improvement of the service. We are currently involved in Safeguarding Executive Strategies with a small number of Residential/Nursing providers, The Care Quality Commission, NHS, Police, Darlington Borough Council Contracts, Providers and Care Management staff are working together closely to ensure the best quality outcomes from any referrals which have been received through Safeguarding.
3. The following are the main areas of work under the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services:
- (a) **Key Housing Establishments** - I was pleased to carry out visits to three key housing establishments, Rosemary Court, Dinsdale Court and Windsor Court. All have in recent years benefitted from significant investment and now provide excellent accommodation. All of the flats are spacious and have level access bathing, benefit from the Lifeline Service and as and when necessary can have additional assistive technology fitted. Staff and residents from schemes encourage people from the local

community to use the facilities and join in the activities.

- (i) Rosemary Court Extra Care Housing Scheme - I saw evidence of the excellent housing provision. This scheme is an example of good shared provision. There are 42 individual flats for people aged 50 and over who have a housing and personal care need, all of the tenants have physical and mental health needs. We have a Service Level Agreement with Hanover Housing who own part of the building and work alongside the Lifeline and Home Care staff to provide safe accommodation with stimulating activities. I was pleased to learn that a reminiscence room is in development and MIND are to develop the garden and grow food for their Mood Café. There will be an opportunity for the tenants to be part of this.
- (ii) Dinsdale Court at Middleton St George – A 22 flat complex newly built last year. This is a vibrant scheme with lots of activities, many led by the tenants. The work that the tenants have put into the gardens is to be commended and I wish them luck in their Britain in Bloom entry. On the same site are 10 newly built flats for rent.
- (iii) Windsor Court Sheltered Housing Scheme – Has just undergone major transformation. There are 32 flats and of particular note is the partnership work with Groundwork Trust who have worked with the tenants to design the hard and soft landscaping and planting is currently in progress.

(b) Housing Investment - There continues to be a high level investment in the housing stock and during the last financial year the following work was completed:

- (i) Internal Planned Maintenance - 161 properties completed which now have new kitchens bathroom, rewiring and heating as necessary and also 41 Level Access Showers. Work was carried out in North Road and Parkside areas.
- (ii) External Work - Paths were upgraded and replaced at Harrowgate Hill, Arnold Road, Shelly Road and Byron Road.
- (iii) Fencing - Replacement took place to improve the security to the front and rear of properties in Middleton St George, Harrowgate Hill, Red Hall and rural areas.
- (iv) Roofing - 48 properties in Hurworth received improvements to their roofs and 63 properties in Middleton St George
- (v) Garages - Skeeby Road, Coxwold Drive, Ramsgill and Fenby Avenue garages have had new roofs and repairs

(c) New Build - In early July the final of the 65 new homes built across the Borough at a combined cost of nearly £7M were let. The development at Springfield of eighteen two-bed apartments and sixteen three-bed houses is on the surplus school site at Beadnell Close. Designed and built by the Council and their contractors after consultation with residents, the two-bed apartments are classed as Code for

Sustainable Homes Level Three and the two and three-bed houses are Code for Sustainable Homes Level Four. Energy efficient features include photovoltaic panels (solar panels) on the roof and a grey water collection system which harvests rain water to use to flush toilets. The ground floor homes are fully accessible for disabled people. Tenancies for the new complex were taken up very quickly as potential tenants applied through the choice based lettings service Compass. Priority was given to people who have a local connection with the immediate area.

- (d) **Local Housing Allowance Safeguard Policy Update** – We have approved the updated Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Safeguard Policy to minimise the risk of people renting accommodation in the private sector from falling into arrears with their rent and losing their accommodation. This will also minimise any negative impact the changes to LHA from April 2011 will have on private landlords and continue to give them the confidence to rent their properties to people on low incomes. This will ensure the aims and objectives of the LHA in promoting independence and financial inclusion are achieved.
- (e) **Write Off Former Housing Tenant Arrears Housing Benefit Overpayments, Non-Domestic Rates and Council Tax** – A total amount of £120,808 of former tenant arrears, £245,112 of Housing and Council tax benefits overpayments and £459,026 of Non-Domestic Rates and Council tax has been written off and steps of recovery to be taken, where possible. This is in accordance with Audit Commission best practice for good financial management.

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