

Consultation on the Proposals to close Bramblebrook House

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 The Commission accepts there is a case for closure of one home but does not believe this should be Bramblebrook as it has recently been modernised and there are other homes in far worse condition
- 1.2 Should the Council Cabinet decide to close a home, this should not be carried out quickly because closures place great amount of stress on the residents affected who should be given the time and support they need to find suitable alternative homes
- 1.3 The Council should retain a strategic level of in-house provision proportion as experience shows that fees in the independent sector can raise dramatically if there is no competition
- 1.4 There seems to be significant nervousness in people wishing to be placed in the independent sector and therefore Council should work alongside care providers to promote the positive attributes of independent sector

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 On 31 July the Council Cabinet considered a report on residential homes for older people that showed a steady decline in the demand for residential care in city and which in turn had led to an increase in vacancy rates in Council run homes. Since staffing and other cost have remained largely the same, the report stated that lower occupancy rates provide poor value for money. An appraisal of all eight care homes managed by the Council was conducted against a broad range of factors and in light of high quality provision available in the private sector the report recommended closing Bramblebrook House. The case for closure was based around the home being in close proximity to independent sector homes serving the Mickleover area and its site being shared with Humbleton View Day Centre which is being decommissioned which would enable the Council to maximise its options. The report recommended starting a consultation process on the closure of Bramblebrook House.

2.2 The Adult Services and Health Commission considered the appraisals report at its September meeting and resolved to take a broader look at the provision of residential care in the city as well as responding to the possible closure of Bramblebrook House. During its investigation the Commission received evidence from a range of individuals including the Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Senior Assistant Director for Adult Social Services, relatives and friends of the residents of Bramblebrook House, Derby Seniors Forum and Age Concern Derby.

2.3 The Commission's review was based on two key questions:

- Is there a case for closure of a Council run residential home?
- and if so which home should close?

2.4 In considering the case for the closure of a residential care home in Derby the Commission looked the following issues:

Population forecasts

2.5 The population forecast for older people shows that the numbers of people aged 65 and in the city will increase by 15% over the next ten years from 37500 to 43300. The increase in the numbers of the 85 year and over age group, people who are more likely to require residential care, over the same time period is more profound and will increase by 32%.

Population forecast for people aged 65 and over for Derby UA

thousands

AREA NAME	AGE GROUP	2007	2012	2017	2022	2027
Derby	65-69	9.8	11.7	11.7	11.4	13.0
Derby	70-74	9.0	9.0	11.0	11.0	10.8
Derby	75-79	7.9	7.8	8.0	9.9	9.9
Derby	80-84	5.8	6.1	6.3	6.6	8.3
Derby	85+	5.0	5.6	6.3	7.1	8.0
Derby	65+	37.5	40.2	43.3	46.0	50.0
Derby	ALL AGES	235.0	237.4	240.4	243.6	246.7

People aged 65+ as % of

All Ages 15.96 16.93 18.01 18.88 20.27

The latest sub-national population projections available for England are based on the 2004 mid year population estimates

(published 20 December 2005) and project forward the population from 2005 to 2029.

They are trend based projections, which means assumptions for future levels of births, deaths and migration are based on observed levels over the previous five years. They show what the

population will be if recent trends in these continue

Demand for residential Care

- 2.6 The numbers of care places for older people supported by the Council, according to Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) website show that of the total 1589 care places funded by the Council only 265 (17%) are provided directly by the Council and the remainder are in the private sector. These are broken down as follows:

857 places in care homes with nursing (IS)

467 places in care homes without nursing (IS)

265 places in care homes without nursing (Council)

- 2.7 Vacancy rates are collected regularly by Adult Social Services for both in-house provision and the independent sector and these show that vacancies fluctuate throughout the year. Vacancies figures for September 2007 are shown below:

Sector	Vacancies
Independent sector	24
Nursing Homes	63
Council Homes	10
Total	97

- 2.8 In August there were 102 vacancies whilst in mid May total was 104. It was stated by the Senior Assistant Director that the trend is now stabilising and is likely to continue around these figures if other factors are not changed.

- 2.9 The numbers of placements for residential care made by the Council have declined over the last five years. The greatest reduction has been in the placement to homes without nursing care, which has reduced by more than 26% as more and more people have been supported in their own homes in accordance with national policies. The change in the eligibility criteria from low to moderate level of need has also affected the numbers.

	2002-03	2003-4	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Without Nursing care	725	699	640	545	531
Nursing	474	495	515	535	457
Total	1199	1194	1155	1080	988

Number of placements made by the Council

FACS

- 2.10 The Council adopted the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) eligibility criteria in April 2006. This governs access to all social care services for adults over 18 provided by or funded by Adult Social

Services, including services for older people. The criteria set the threshold for Community Care Services between moderate and low level of risk to independent living. This means that:

- Needs arising from moderate, substantial or critical risks to independent living are be eligible for funding
- Needs arising from low risks to independent living are not be eligible for funding

Proposals/ strategies for addressing future needs of older people

2.11 A number of schemes are either in place or being developed by the authority that will have a significant impact on older people's services. These are:

- The Council policy in line with national policy is to provide care to people in their own homes as far as possible and only when the costs become wholly uneconomical are users encouraged to move to a suitable care home.
- The Council is actively pursuing Extra Care provision. This will enable older people to live independently in their own homes whilst having access to care support when needed.
- Increase provision for short term care and provide respite care to enable carers to have a short break from their care duties
- Provide intermediate care for people recovering from medical condition such as surgery at hospital
- Increase provision for dementia care. Evidence shows that more and more people are entering the care system with higher levels of care needs than in the past with many exhibiting signs of early dementia. This has impacted on carers as they are increasingly spending providing greater level of care than in the past. There are currently only twelve places at the secure unit for dementia care run by the Council.

Cost differential between in- house and the independent sector

2.12 It was stated that the reason most authorities were reducing their residential care provision was due to cost differentials with the independent sector. The cost of placements in the independent sector was found to be significantly lower than in-house provisions which would give substantial savings to the Council.

Distinctive features of the Council's Care homes

2.13 There are eight care homes managed by the City Council. The 31 July Council Cabinet report gave brief details of their distinctive features:

Home	Special facilities	Number of beds
Arboretum House	catering for minority ethnic communities & day care	38 beds
Arthur Neal	Extensive community	25 beds

	involvement, day care and future Extra Care site	
Bramblebrook		40 beds
Coleridge House	High Dependency Dementia Care unit	40 beds
Merrill House		40 beds
Perth House	Respite Care	39 beds
Raynesway View		35 beds
Warwick House	Respite care & short term care	40 beds

Summary of comments from Derby Seniors Forum

- 2.14 The Commission held a series of meeting on 27 September and received evidence from the Council Cabinet member of Adult Services, Senior Assistant Director for Adult Social Services, Friends and relatives of the residents of Bramblebrook, Derby Seniors Forum and Age Concern. A group of members also visited the Beacon Park Retirement Village, an extra care village in Litchfield. The Chair also visited all eight in-house care homes to get a better insight into the issues affecting our care homes.
- 2.15 Evidence was received from members of the Derby Seniors Forum stated that there has been anxiety expressed by the group about potential reduction in care services and possibility of losing residential care in the city. People should have a choice on whether to stay in their own homes for as long as they could or to move to good quality homes on advice from their family, friends and health professionals. There should be no reduction in the overall provision of care for older people and the numbers should be replaced if they are to close Bramblebrook. People from ethnic minorities have special needs such as language barriers and cultural behaviours which are not always understood or catered for. These need to be taken into account when developing care provision. If the Council decides to close a home, any money saved from the closure or raised from the sale of the site, should be reinvested back into the service. Standards in the homes should meet government standards and there is view that the government wants all provision to have on suite facilities which are not being provided at Bramblebrook house.

Summary of the views of the friends and relatives of the residents of Bramblebrook

- 2.16 The following is list of the key points raised by the friends and relatives of the residents of Bramblebrook House. More detailed submission is given in Appendix 2.
- No risk assessment was carried out prior to the commencement of the consultation

- Senior AD arrived at BBH on 1 August to announce start of consultation process and no attempt was made to invite relatives/friends of the residents to be present
- letter to residents was impersonal and refers to consultation on possible closure
- not all relevant information has been provided to the residents – one page letter was inadequate
- consultation began before the decision has been scrutinised by the commission
- Cabinet paper uses out dated information from 2001 Census when more up to date estimates are available from ONS. The elderly population is expected to grow significantly and therefore demand will increase
- the Cabinet has not considered the wishes of the residents
- BBH is the most efficiently run home in the city with occupancy level of 97.3%
- the decision on the closure of BBH is premature as wider debate has not been had
- closure of BBH and eviction of the residents from their homes removes choices of the most vulnerable members of society
- residents at Bramblebrook are settled and happy
- how many deaths have been calculated as result of the closure
- the Council has spent considerable amount of money over the last two years in refurbishing this home and may have received a grant from Government
- the overriding factor for the council is the release of the largest amount of capital from the sale of the land
- It is too early to assess whether Extra care will be effective
- professional people with experience of Bramblebrook recognise that it is well run
- If all homes are closed it will cost more in the long run as private sector will put up their fees

Consultation

- 2.17 Formal consultation started on the 1 August and ends on the 29 October. It was decided that staff and residents should be informed of the Council Cabinet decision relating to Bramblebrook as soon as possible rather than they learning from other sources. A meeting was therefore held on the following morning to explain the outcome of the Cabinet decision.
- 2.18 The Commission received evidence from the relatives and friends of the residents of Bramblebrook who are very critical of the consultation process. They stated that not all of the relevant information had been provided to the residents and felt that the one page letter inviting residents to the meeting was very impersonal and inadequate. They also stated that no attempt was made to invite relatives/friends of the residents to be present for 1 August meeting starting consultation. They

felt the process could have been better handled as it has given the impression the home is scheduled for closure without properly assessing all the evidence.

Conclusion

- 2.19 The Commission considered evidence from variety of sources on the future provision of residential care and the case for closure of Bramblebrook House. Evidence shows that older people increasingly want to live independently with dignity. They want on suite facilities, freedom to cook what they like and when they like and to have complete control to their front doors. It was apparent that none of our existing residential homes provide all of these facilities and are therefore not fit for purpose. It is also clear that people have high expectations on the type of facilities and care they want and will need in future and expect the residential care providers to deliver these.
- 2.20 It is evident from visit s to the Council's care homes that more and more people are entering the service with higher levels of needs than in the past. Entry to care is influenced by the FACS criteria adopted by the Council in April 2006 and this may also have influenced entry to residential services.
- 2.21 A significant numbers of older people and in some cases up to 50% of the residents in our homes have signs of dementia. National and local evidence shows that dementia is on the increase and our only secure unit has 12 places which is totally inadequate for the scale of the needs in the city. The Council therefore needs to reorganise its services to meet this growing need.
- 2.22 The Commission recognises the Council's duty to provide value for money especially as there are significant differences in the cost of provision between in-house and the independent sector. It also feels that we should offer choice between in-house and the independent sector, especially as users seem to have a higher level of confidence in the council run provision.
- 2.23 The Commission heard that vacancies in residential homes tend to fluctuate and in September 2007 there were a total of 97 vacancies. However, these there were only 34 vacancies in care homes without nursing both in the in-house and independent sector combined.
- 2.24 The Commission is also of the view that the consultation on the closure of Bramblebrook was premature as it is not convinced that this should be the first home to be closed. There are other homes which are in considerably worse condition than Bramblebrook that should be considered for closure first. Arthur Neal House for example has been mentioned as a possible future site for extra care.

Recommendation

- 2.25 The Commission accepts there is a case for closure of one home but does not believe this should be Bramblebrook. The Commission also accepts that whichever home closes, it will have significant impact on its residents.
- 2.26 Bramblebrook has recently been modernised and there are other homes in far worse condition which should be considered first. Although the closure of Bramblebrook house and the subsequent sale of the site may release the greatest amount of capital, there does not appear to be sufficient vacancies in the combined sectors to cater for all residents, especially in the Council run homes in order to give meaningful choice to the residents. Also should the Council wish to establish extra care on the Arthur Neal site or refurbish the home, which is clearly needed, it should allow the home to continue to provide much used community facilities.
- 2.27 Should the Council Cabinet decide to close a home, this should not be carried out quickly. There is anecdotal evidence that closure of homes places great amount of stress on the residents affected. This can be exacerbated by placing a deadline and rushing people to move on. It is suggested that a skilled Social Worker is assigned to each resident, charged with the responsibility of planning, co-ordinating and implementing his or her moving on. It is essential to retain in-house services during this period for the remaining residents and to time the final closure carefully, according to circumstances.
- 2.28 The Council should retain a proportion of homes for strategic purposes as experience from Children Services show that fees in the independent sector can raise dramatically if there is no or little competition.
- 2.29 There still seems to be significant nervousness in people wishing to be placed in the independent sector. A number of the witnesses stated that they had poor experiences of the independent sector. They mentioned higher level of turnover of staff resulting in lower the level of care compared with Council run homes. And accepting that the standards are unlikely to be worse than the Council run homes, there is still a negative image of the independent sector. The Commission therefore recommends that the Council works alongside the care providers and promotes the positive attributes of independent sector.

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Background papers:	Options Appraisal for Council's Residential Homes for Older People 2007/8
List of appendices:	Report Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Summary of evidence

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. There will be financial implications as a result of the closure of Bramblebrook House.

Legal

2. None.

Personnel

3. None arising from this report.

Equalities impact

4. Many of the residents of Bramblebrook House are elderly people in their eighties and nineties.

Corporate Priorities

5. This report links with Council's priority for 2007-10 to help us all to be healthy and active and giving excellent services and value for money.