

ITEM 8

MINUTE EXTRACT

ADULT SERVICES AND HEALTH COMMISSION

29 OCTOBER 2007

38/07 Consultation on the Proposed Closure of Bramblebrook House

The Adult Services and Health Commission considered its final report in response to the possible closure of Bramblebrook House. The Commission had received evidence from variety of sources including older people and relatives of the residents of Bramblebrook House. Evidence shows that older people increasingly want to live independently with dignity, and prefer to have on suite facilities, freedom to cook what they like and when they like and to have complete control to their front doors. The Commission felt that none of our existing residential homes provided all of these facilities and were therefore not fit for purpose. The Commission found that a significant numbers of older people and in some cases up to 50% of the residents in our homes have signs of dementia but we have only 12 places in our secure unit. There are other gaps such as no extra care and insufficient respite care and with the continued increase in older people's population the Commission felt that we need to reorganise services to meet this growing need.

The Commission accepted that there was a case for the closure of one home but did not believe that Bramblebrook should be the first to close. The Commission heard that vacancies in residential homes tend to fluctuate and in September 2007 there were a total of 97 vacancies. However, of these there were only 34 vacancies in care homes without nursing both in the in-house and independent sector combined. It felt that whichever home closes, it will have significant impact on its residents.

The Commission felt 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.

Bramblebrook has recently been modernised and there are other homes which are in far worse physical condition which should be considered first.

The Commission felt that should the Council Cabinet decide to close a home, the closure should not be carried out quickly. Anecdotal evidence shows that closure places great amount of stress on the residents affected which can be exacerbated by placing a deadline and rushing people to move on.

Resolved to report to Cabinet that:

- 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;**
- 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;**
- 3. The Council should retain a strategic level of in-house provision as experience shows that fees in the independent sector can rise dramatically if there is no competition;**
- 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.**