

## FULL COUNCIL

2 FEBRUARY 2021

### REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

#### 1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

##### 1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members that no decision making session was required, therefore the meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 covering CPH Adult Social Care & Health was cancelled.

##### 1.2 Council Plan and Priorities

1.2.1 The main focus during the current period has been the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

##### 1.3 Good News

###### 1.3.1 Hospital to Home Service

Nationwide Care Services have been commissioned to deliver a service to enable people to leave hospital to return to their own home. This home discharge service includes support for those who have been in hospital to receive treatment for Covid-19, and as such helps to alleviate the pressure on our hospitals. The service is NHS funded, and is free for up to 6 weeks, including for those people who may ultimately need to pay for their social care.

1.3.2 In the 6 weeks that it has been operating, over 100 people have been supported by the service, which operates with a rapid response, including at weekends. From the point of referral by the hospital to the service commencing, it typically takes one day, enabling the person to leave hospital when fit to do so. Approximately a quarter of referrals have been Covid positive. The average length of service needed has been less than a week, but some are for over 4 weeks. No one offered the service has declined it, and some very appreciative comments have been made by people who have received this support. For people who have been very ill in hospital, the opportunity to return home to complete their recovery has been welcomed. For others who are at end of life, the chance to be at home once again to be with loved ones is invaluable.

1.3.3 The service is currently being piloted until the end of March and will be evaluated to see if there is a case to be made for it to continue.

###### 1.3.4 Extra Care Charitable Trust Solihull Village

There has been a good level of interest in tenancies at the Extra Care Village and to date we have been able to accommodate some Covid-19 secure and virtual viewings. Adult Care & Support are now finalising the specification and care contract and will be considering referrals to accommodate a small number of residents at the Extra Care Village.

###### 1.3.5 Digital Champions Pilot - January 2021

As part of the work in tackling loneliness and social isolation levels in the Borough, Digital Inclusion Pilot has been launched. The aim is to enlighten and coach older residents who are at greater risk of loneliness and social isolation to the benefits of digital technology and how they can use it.

- 1.3.6 The support will take a person-centred approach on how to improve an individual's quality of life, whether that be how to zoom with relatives here and abroad, join online forums on subjects they are passionate about, or simply how to order goods and services online. The pilot will see digital champions matched to people who have expressed an interest in taking part, who either already have existing technology but need help understanding how to use it, or in some instances devices have been sourced for them to loan. Working in conjunction with Age UK Solihull who are leading on the project and have already sourced twelve digital champions who are in the process of completing a training package designed by our library team.
- 1.3.7 **Proactive outreach through the Council's contract with Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust for the delivery of Housing Support to Vulnerable Adults**  
The proactive outreach service ensured that several vulnerable individuals identified on the streets were supported over the Christmas and New Year period. It included a female who was rapidly identified, assessed, and placed in temporary accommodation with support provided whilst a full assessment was carried out. The service also supported a male who had initially refused all offers of help and support, however the outreach workers continued to visit and build rapport with him, resulting in him accepting an emergency placement and engaging with wider support services to address a number of health issues.
- 1.3.8 I am particularly reassured that our services continue to be able to offer this rapid and proactive response, ensuring that anyone identified as rough sleeping or presenting as rough sleeping is visited in person, provided with an emergency accommodation placement plus on-going support to meet their needs. This is vital to protecting our most vulnerable residents from the impact of Covid-19 and ensuring health as well as accommodation assessments are carried out to identify those who may be clinically vulnerable and who need support to register with a GP.
- 1.3.9 In Solihull we continue to work to the principles of 'Everyone In' and have done since first implemented in March 2020, prioritising the protection of health and wellbeing and the prevention of wider transmission. This means an emergency housing offer continues to be available for all, regardless of immigration status, priority need, previous exclusion or local connection and services continue to work with individuals once placed to ensure that they do not return to the streets.
- 1.3.10 **Additional support to those in Temporary Accommodation**  
In light of the on-going impact of Covid-19 on our residents Solihull Community Housing and our commissioned providers of homelessness and support services have been continuing to offer wider support to those households placed in Temporary Accommodation with initial assessments carried out which look to identify any health needs and regular contact to determine any health, well-being or wider household needs. Since the start of the second lockdown in November SCH have once again been offering hot food to those in hotels who have limited access to food preparation and cooking facilities. This is through a partnership with the foodbank at The Renewal Centre and a local catering company who deliver hot meals directly to those in hotels who have requested them. It was also positive to publicise the work SCH and partners put in before Christmas to co-ordinate the delivery of festive hampers for almost 200 households in temporary accommodation.  
<https://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/spreading-some-festive-cheer-homeless-families-christmas>

#### 1.3.11 **Homelessness Funding**

In December the Council received confirmation of the 2021/22 allocation of the Homelessness Prevention Grant which enabled it to commission a wider range of specialist accommodation and support options for homeless households and plays a crucial role in helping to deliver the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-23). The allocation is a 20% uplift on the current financial year, increasing by £143,465 to £872,994 for 2021/22 and will also therefore provide opportunities to develop existing provision and implement new services where required to address gaps in the current offer.

1.3.12 This is welcomed given the impact that Covid-19 has had on household circumstances and the increasing number of temporary accommodation placements that have been required during 2020/21. In addition the Council have successfully bid for £10,000, the maximum amount of the Cold Weather Funding available to Solihull, to ensure suitable provision to protect rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness from severe weather and SCH have sourced 2 one-bed self-contained units to support the emergency placement of those individuals who are not suitable for shared environments or who need to self-isolate / shield as a result of Covid-19.

#### 1.3.13 **High-rise Safety**

This year will see the launch of a major new safety initiative around the high-rise buildings, managed by SCH on behalf of the Council. This will include the installation of sprinklers across all 37 blocks, with SCH and SMBC working together on this in conjunction with West Midlands Fire Service. The pilot projects in each of the 37 blocks is now underway. Work is then scheduled to begin on the full sprinkler installation programme in April. This key investment reinforces the long-term commitment from SCH and SMBC to our residents living in high-rise blocks.

#### 1.3.14 **Christmas Rents Campaign**

The annual SCH Christmas Rents campaign helped reduce the amount of arrears. Although the closure of Connect offices impacted on promotional activities, the campaign was still heavily pushed through the Christmas newsletter, website and social media platforms.

1.3.15 Following the campaign, rent arrears were reduced which shows an improvement at a time when many tenants have been impacted financially by Covid-19. And we thank residents for responding in this way. Prior to Christmas the Money Advice Team was expanded to assist more residents with financial advice and work continues to provide support and advice to any resident facing financial hardship due to Covid-19 or any other reason.

#### 1.3.16 **Saxon Court**

Shortly before Christmas, Saxon Court launched its 'visiting pod' a wonderful new facility designed to allow relatives to visit residents in a safe and welcoming environment. This is a great addition to the facilities at Saxon Court, helping to reduce the feeling of social isolation suffered by many when estranged from loved ones due to social distancing and shielding. The visiting pod allows two people to meet safely and comfortably, either side of a dividing window. This allowed Saxon Court residents the chance to see and talk with family members over Christmas and of course will continue to be used throughout the New Year.

### **1.3.17 New Build Developments**

1.3.18 The next few months will see SCH complete three of its current new build schemes; the Shared Ownership scheme at Brackleys Way and two social rented schemes at Willow Way and Faulkner Road. Faulkner Road consists of seven bungalows all built to mobility standards and is SCH's first Net Zero development. All properties are built in line with the council's net zero carbon ambitions with a 'super insulated' timber frame to reduce heat loss, solar panels, energy efficient glazing and an air source heat pump renewable heating system. Lettings for the social rented schemes are in progress and sales are commencing for the shared ownership. These developments are great news.

### **1.3.19 Online Campaigns**

1.3.20 Alongside all the regular online Covid-19 messages delivered to tenants, SCH is also starting the year supporting Public Health England's Better Health Campaign. The campaign aims to provide people with simple steps to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. The key focus is around losing weight, healthy eating, getting more active, looking after mental wellbeing and quitting smoking. A recent survey revealed that 80% of adults plan to make at least one positive change to their health and wellbeing after adopting unhealthy lifestyles during the pandemic. The Better Health Campaign is designed to help people achieve these goals and SCH have been signposting residents to the NHS Better Health website which is packed with the tools to help people reappraise and manage their health and wellbeing.

[Better Health - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

## **1.4 Future Decisions**

1.4.1 At my future decision sessions, I will consider the Revenue and Capital Monitoring report long with the Housing Capital Programme for 2021/2022. (A fuller list is available on the Forward Plan).