

**Parkview – Response to Call In**  
**Executive Scrutiny Committee**  
**10 April 2008**

**a) Proportionality**

The concept of "Homes for Life" was set out in February 2000 around a framework and action plan to implement a vision for older people in Stockton to promote their independence and quality of life. This policy focuses on a range of community based services to maintain people in their own homes as an alternative to residential care. The range of services available has changed over time and now includes:

Domiciliary care provision  
Development of Direct Payments and Individual Budgets  
Expansion of Extra Care  
Respite Services  
Supporting People services  
Community Alarm services  
Telecare developments  
Community services including rapid response and intermediate care.  
Assessment and Hospital Discharge Support Beds

Residential care is only part of the range of services available but there are places available across the sector for service users to access where appropriate.

From an economic perspective Parkview currently consumes a disproportionate level of resources which could be redirected and reinvested in other services to enable the continued development of the "Homes for Life" policy.

For those currently resident at Parkview there is no expectation that they will progress to independent living. Residents will be reassessed, and based on the service user's needs and choice, will be offered appropriate places in alternative care homes.

**b) Due Consultation**

Throughout 2007 a review of services was underway which included Parkview. As part of the review process the emerging situation around Parkview was explained to Thornaby Independent Councillors on 6 November 2007 in order to clarify the current position. Following this meeting the Northern Echo reported on the speculation. Officers provided a statement, but not before a meeting could be convened to speak to the staff at Parkview about emerging rumours and speculation. The meeting took place on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2007 with Officers, HR and Unions in attendance. It was explained at that time that further to the service review, a report would be presented to Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007 to request a period of formal consultation to look at the options for future services at the Home.

Following the cabinet decision, a formal consultation was set for January 21<sup>st</sup> 2008 to February 25<sup>th</sup> 2008. Within this process, information regarding meetings and other ways in which comments and views could be heard was circulated to members through Democratic Services, Stockton Borough web site and notices in Parkview.

The option of attending one of the 8 meetings arranged, or writing in if preferred either by letter, e-mail or through an independent research organisation, were available.

The meetings were as follows:

24.01.08:	Staff of Parkview Home:	24 attendees
25.01.08:	Clients/Residents and Carers:	10 attendees
28.01.08:	Staff of Parkview Home:	6 attendees
29.01.08:	Clients/Residents and Carers:	11 attendees
29.01.08:	Area Partnership Board:	9 attendees
11.02.08:	Over 50's Assembly:	24 attendees
14.02.08:	Scrutiny Committee:	18 attendees
14.02.08:	Interested Parties:	21 attendees
NWA Research:		9 responses

84 people in total attended one or more of the meetings made up from:

30 staff  
23 family members  
3 friends  
2 Union representatives  
4 members of the Village Park Residents Association (VPRA)  
7 Councillors  
15 others (Area Partnership Board and others not recorded.)

In addition to the above 4 letters were received and a petition signed by 1495 people in support of the VPRA

In order to be completely consistent throughout the consultation meetings the Cabinet paper (of 20/12/07) was used as a tool to both inform and explain the options to the attendees. Copies of the Cabinet paper were available at each meeting.

Two options were to be the focus of the consultation:

- Identify resources to upgrade facilities at Parkview
- SBC closes the Home and resettles the current residents into alternative Homes in the locality and reinvest in preventative community based services

At each consultation meeting both options were raised and the meeting was asked that a period of time be spent exploring each option. Despite this request, it became the pattern that as soon as the meeting was opened up to the floor the questions and comments focussed almost exclusively on the second option of closure. (The actual transcripts of the meetings are available for scrutiny if required). A full question and answer document compiled from the meetings was submitted with the Cabinet paper of March 13<sup>th</sup> 2008 although in this case the questions were grouped together to avoid repetition.

Economic considerations were inevitably discussed throughout the consultation process since they are an integral part of being a publicly funded entity, and this carries a recognised responsibility to promote best value in all our dealings. This was not a one dimensional approach but given the level of attention on the option to close, responses inevitably focussed on this element.

Attached as Appendix 1 is the framework officers used to manage the meetings which evidences an open and transparent approach.

**c) Respect for Human Rights**

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) provides:

“1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and correspondence.

2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the well being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of rights and freedoms of others.”

It is arguable that Article 8 is not infringed in respect of the proposals (as clients affected are not guaranteed a placement at Parkview “for life” and the Council will find alternative placements in suitable accommodation according to their individual needs).

In any event any interference with Article 8 can be justified in accordance with Article 8(2). The Council must balance the needs and interests of those affected by the proposed closure and the needs and interests of others in the Council’s area. The Courts have acknowledged that it is appropriate for a Council to seek the most effective ways of fulfilling its various statutory responsibilities within the existing financial constraints and that they would be slow to interfere with decisions which involve balancing service needs and resources. In the case of the Service review of Parkview this can be justified in respect of

- national and local policy;
- business rationale;
- refurbishment costs;
- places available in independent sector;
- individual assessments;
- managing and supporting moves;
- grant funding recently available for extra care option

Although the Human Rights Act only applies to the provision of services by a public authority, and therefore currently the Act does not apply to the care services provided by the independent sector, the Council has included within its revised residential and nursing care contracts with the independent sector a requirement for compliance with the Act. Clients transferring to independent sector homes which contract with the Council under the revised terms and conditions will continue to have some protection under the Human Rights Act.

The vast majority of care provided in independent sector care homes is of a satisfactory or higher standard. Standards are monitored by CSCI and by commissioners on an ongoing basis.

During the consultation period the concern was expressed regarding the possible impact on clients of a move to an alternative facility. During the closures of 2000/2002 each client/resident who moved to an alternative Home was supported by

a professional individual Social Worker, an Advocate where necessary and equally importantly the staff from the Home. As each client moved, the preparation work was explicit. This included an in depth pen picture of the client outlining the finer points of their care, personality, likes and wishes etc. in order to fully inform the new service provider with as much detail as possible. Staff accompanied each client whenever possible and stayed with them in their new surroundings for the remainder of that day in order to support and assist familiarisation. The staff member also carried out a comprehensive handover to the new care staff. Visits were then carried out by staff and managers intermittently for several weeks after the move.

This process would be followed, where appropriate, in the case of residents moving from Parkview to alternative Homes.

d)

Cabinet meetings are held, and its decisions are made in public unless exempt or confidential information is being discussed. All Cabinet decisions are publicised after each meeting and made available to all Council members and the public.

e) N/A

f) **Maintenance Works**

Care Standards, (or The Commission for Social Care Inspection as they are currently known), submit a detailed report to the Registered Manager of the Home and also to the responsible person within the Authority following their inspection. Within this report if any building or decoration work is recommended by the Commission, the manager is required to forward the details to Buildings Manager for attention. This ensures that work is identified within the priority rating requested by the Commission. The Registered Manager would submit an action plan identifying what had been done and when the job was expected to be completed. The next inspection would carry this plan forward and would be checked.

In the case of the lift at Parkview, it was the routine annual servicing of the lift that caused the engineer to raise concerns to the Building Manager that the lift was getting old and although it was working perfectly well, getting spare parts for it was becoming difficult and with this in mind a replacement should be considered. The appropriate action was taken in respect of this advice and the work to replace the lift was put out to tender.

The decision to hold on the work being carried out was entirely in line with the uncertainty of the future of the service and the need to be prudent about incurring unnecessary expenditure.

Similarly with regard to the heating system, there had been a minor leak from the underground oil storage tank that had been repaired but was seen as symptomatic of the age of the equipment. The prospect of further work being necessary to maintain the system introduced the possibility and opportunity of moving to a more economical heating system. This was considered as part of the ongoing capital maintenance spending review where work is prioritised. Although agreed, this was not progressed further while discussions were taking place about the service at Parkview. The current heating system is fully functioning and always has been.

**Conclusion**

The work to review the future of Parkview was undertaken given a whole range of factors and not just one single issue. The information, evidence and analysis has been set out through reports to Cabinet on 20th December 2007, 13th March 2008 and to a thorough Scrutiny process on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2008, together with the answering of multiple enquiries throughout the timetable to date from all interested parties.

The consultation process was extensive, open and transparent and amid the understandable emotions, officers have remained focussed on the facts in evidencing the history; the present situation; and indeed the options for the future. Economic issues have been an inevitable focus of the work but have centred upon the investment required for Parkview to continue to provide residential care or alternatively the re-investment and development of services in community based services within the SBC policy "homes for Life" if the decision was taken to close Parkview.

In respect of the potential to develop Extra Care on the Parkview site, this opportunity has only arisen through the Cabinet, Scrutiny and Consultation process when comparisons of existing care models were made. Further more the DH announcement of a further £80million funding for extra care bids was only announced on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Far from withholding information we have responded quickly to the opportunity to further develop modern community services in the Thornaby locality and are required to submit a bid against this grant by May 12<sup>th</sup> 2008. Linked to Cabinet's request for Extra Care to be explored on the Parkview site, this is both timely and opportunistic.

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**2 April 2008**