

## **Derbyshire County Council Consultation Exercise – 2014 (an extract)**

- 22 meetings held across Derbyshire, including Aston, Brocklehurst, Catherine, Glebe, Mallard, and Markham – 488 people attended, including 412 service users. There were three main themes, together with some other areas that were raised, and comments attributable to those present at the Chesterfield meetings are included below:
  - People had specifically moved to sheltered accommodation in order to receive the support provided by the warden
    - I came here for the shelter and security (Catherine Court)
    - Face to face contact is essential to build up the trust – lots of people wouldn't see anyone on a daily basis without the warden being present and doing her checks (Mallard Court)
    - One resident had all her money stolen by her son, the warden supported her through it and spent many hours sat with her helping her to sort things out and just being there to talk it through (Brocklehurst Court)
    - The other day one of the residents lost her keys and the warden stayed with her over and above the time she was allocated to calm her down and help find them, and did not leave until they had been located and the resident had calmed down. The warden is great she goes beyond what she is contracted to do (Aston Court)
    - The other day one of the residents who has early onset dementia put her wet washing into the cooker and fused all the electrics – the warden was here to help sort out the contractors who were needed to sort this out and calm the situation down (Aston Court)
    - I've been here four years and I have had a heart attack, my family work, the reason I moved in was that someone was knocking on my door and checking I am ok. Words cannot cover what reassurance they provide (Glebe Court)
    - When I moved here I felt suicidal and if it wasn't for the warden I don't think I would be here, she is the best support I have ever had (Glebe Court)
  - People were worried about the loss of safety, security and well-being as a result of no warden support:
    - When wardens are on holiday it's a different place – the cleaning of communal areas is not kept to standard, the general feel of the place is not the same, we don't feel as safe in our homes. As family members, the warden calls in the morning and we are contacted to follow this up if there is an issue. Providing that secure environment means that family members can relax and give carers peace of mind. My dad is profoundly deaf and the

warden picked up on this and was concerned about the fire alarm, and if dad would be able to hear it. She flagged this up with the correct services and dad now has a vibrating pillow to alert him (Aston Court)

- The security of the unit is an issue – people don't follow the guidelines on who they should let in via the buzzer system. Without the warden this will get worse. The warden acts as peacemaker, there are a lot of people who do not get on and some with mental health issues. The warden keeps the peace, without her the police would be being called all the time. She picks up issues in a timely manner and stops them from escalating (Aston Court)
  - How will people get in? carers family etc are not allowed to have a key fob – the other day I forgot my keys and was locked out of the complex, it was freezing cold and without the warden I would have been locked out for a long time. I don't think I could have withstood the cold for long (Mallard Court)
  - The complex is one of the best in the area and if it wasn't for the warden I don't know what I would do. We feel that the security of the building will be compromised if the warden is not on site to check visitors (Markham Court)
- People were worried about the financial considerations of the possibility of people having to pay more for the warden service in order to keep it
    - Look at charging systems for the warden service – we would rather pay more for the service than lose it altogether – I pay an additional amount on my rent but I am in receipt of housing benefit. Surely I am paying twice for the service as good as it is? Is someone making a profit out of this? (Aston Court)
    - We want it to be a timely decision and if they do decide we have to pay more it needs to be quick, and we don't want a big bill at the end as we cant afford to pay more than we do already. Need to make allowances in our rent if the alarm system is taken away (Glebe Court)
    - I suggest that we have to pay a small amount more each to keep the service – places like this are saving the NHS money in the long run, prevention is better than cure (Glebe Court)
    - Residential care costs more than warden controlled services (Mallard Court)
  - Worries about maintaining independence
    - I have no choice where I live, I need a warden to maintain a bit of independence, without her I would have to go on to a setting which provided a greater level of care, and I don't want that. None of us are getting any better and will only get worse, we need

the warden to maintain our independence for as long as possible  
(Catherine Court)

- Help in an emergency
  - I often just pass out and it is always the warden that finds me. I found my friend last week collapsed on the floor and was reliant on the pull cord to get help. A lady last week was found wandering round in the early morning outside in the bushes and she would have been there maybe all day if it was not for the warden (Brocklehurst Court)
  - I collapsed with a heart attack and without eh warden I wouldn't be here today (Catherine Court)
  - Last week we have a situation of sickness and diarrhoea everything was disinfected by the warden and she managed to contain the infection. Without her being present who knows what could have happened with residents as vulnerable and fragile (Aston Court)
  - We had an elderly gentleman who passed out in the lift – the warden was again there quickly and helped and advised until the medical professionals were able to attend (Markham Court)
- The impact of not having a warden service would have on family and carers
  - I live 40 miles away and I get daily contact and feedback – we are not always told the full story by the ones we love as they feel that they need to protect us and don't want to bother us. Whereas the warden will flag up any issue and we can respond and this alone is a fantastic service. Let alone everything else she does for the residents. My dad is constantly ringing as he does not manage technology well. He struggles to operate his microwave and often thinks it is not working. When you live a distance away it is not always practical to come straight over and sort it out. The warden steps into the breach and ensures that dad is able to heat his meals – you need to be on site to do this (Aston Court)
  - If the way the warden is provided is changed it will put additional pressure on the younger more able bodies residents who naturally want to care for the residents who not enjoy being as mobile – this puts added pressure on them all (Catherine Court)
- Peace of Mind

- We are getting older and our needs are increasing not decreasing – we need the warden to assist us to provide both us and our families with peace of mind (Markham Court)
- 19 letters and 3 e-mail's were received – 9 from service users. Comments from these were extensive, but they were not attributed to any specific service user or scheme
- From 468 returned Questionnaire's, 80.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed with DCC's proposals to stop funding for tenants in sheltered housing schemes, with comments including the following:
  - Having somebody on-site who can get to know the residents and how they are is an amazing help to them and their families, and removing this service could put lives in jeopardy – the warden notices changes
  - Would feel less safe and secure which will cause stress – there are times when little things happen, and I would panic without the help of the warden
  - A point of contact each day makes me feel secure and keeps me socially involved, particularly as I am a hard of hearing person
  - I have difficulty in speaking due to cancer, so rely on the warden to do simple things on my behalf. Having them face to face is important
  - Several comments related to the assistance of the warden in maintain the psychological and emotional well being of individuals
  - The cost of the service is greatly outweighed by what it will cost to care for older people if they need other services
  - Having someone on site gives me great confidence and peace of mind, and helps me to get involved with things

Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC) submitted the following letter in response to the proposals:

*'CBC's Cabinet has recently considered DCC's proposed changes to the funding of housing related support, and has resolved that I write to you with the following comments. The Cabinet has also resolved that I request that a meeting be arranged with the relevant Porfolio holders to more fully discuss the impacts as we see them on the Borough Council and its residents.*

*The proposed cuts will meant that 138 elderly and vulnerable Chesterfield residents will have their support provision totally cut. CBC will see a reduction in funding over £100,000 and also the likely redundancy of eight employees.*

*We are of the the view that the proposals, although making savings for DCC in the short term, will inevitably lead to increased costs for the County Council in the medium to long term. The obvious impact of the cuts is that elderly and vulnerable people will be unable to remain living independently for as long, and will move into residential care much sooner. The costs of which far*

*outweigh the costs of supporting individuals to continue living in their own homes.*

*As such the proposals are fundamentally flawed and contrary to the move towards integrated health and social care. A conservative estimate put the costs of providing residential care at around £540 per week, compared to the £13.10 per week received by CBC for providing on-site support. CBC currently has 17 tenants who are over 90 years of age, with 4 aged 95 years and over. If the on-site wardens are removed then many of these will move into residential care much sooner than would normally be the case. And every one of these that does will cost DCC an additional £20,000 per year in funding.*

*This the start financial reality of the removal of this essential preventative service.*

#### *Chesterfield Profile*

*The approach and rationale seems to be 'one size fits all' with no appreciation for the different demographic needs and profiles of each district and borough.*

*The sheltered housing service and floating support services are viewed by DCC as separate services and therefore the cuts have been considered in isolation. We are of the view that a holistic view of each district and borough should have been taken, looking at the specific needs and service provision in each area.*

*For example, some boroughs, Chesterfield being a case in point (although not along), have a number of sheltered housing schemes, whilst other, for example Amber Valley, south Derbyshire and NEDDC (Rykneld Homes) have either one or none. This difference quite naturally is reflected in the numbers receiving support in the floating support contracts, ie those with fewer or no sheltered housing schemes tend to have higher floating support contract numbers and usage.*

*Without this holistic approach, the effects of the cuts will not be equitable and mean that the impacts are felt more keenly by Councils such as Chesterfield. It will also be potentially difficult for DCC to justify to the residents of Chesterfield why the effects of these cuts will be more acutely felt here than elsewhere in Derbyshire.*

*We would also question the methodology in reaching the floating support contract numbers as they seem to bear no relation to the population, demographics, or needs of the various districts and boroughs.*

#### *Sheltered Housing with On-Site Scheme Manager*

*A sheltered housing scheme with an on-site scheme manager for many is the last independent accommodation they will have. It provides the safety and security that living independently in the community does not, and without*

*doubt extends the length of time that an individual can remain living independently. Many of our tenants enter the schemes from private rented or owner occupied properties (40% of our tenants are over 90 years of age), showing that the sheltered schemes are viewed as a viable cross tenure housing option and not one just aimed at or taken up by current council housing tenants.*

*A full needs assessment is carried out by the scheme manager with each service user, addressing issues such as economic well-being, ability to live safely, as well as other social, cultural and health issues. The sheltered schemes also play a vital part in dealing with social isolation via the activities which are held in the common rooms. And these are also extended to other elderly and vulnerable residents living in the surrounding communities.*

*The links between social isolation and health issues are clear and much publicised, particularly in relation to the elderly, and we would not therefore ask if any discussions have taken place in DCC between Adult Care and Public Health or with the various Clinical Commissioning Groups, with a view to identifying resources which could be applied to fund this vital, yet relatively inexpensive preventative service.*

*Sheltered schemes by their very nature have a majority of tenants who are frail and elderly. Of our current tenants 63 are over 80, 13 over 90, 4 over 95. There is little doubt that many of these will be unable to continue living independently without the ongoing support that they currently receive from the on site scheme managers; and as a consequence will have a much reduced quality of life.*

*CBC currently has 8 sheltered housing schemes with 138 service users funded by DCC. Many of the schemes are at the heart of what could be viewed as geographically isolated communities or villages if your elderly or immobile, for example Duckmanton and Barrow Hill, and the schemes are also used for other DCC activities, eg Care Groups.*

*Sheltered housing is at the pinnacle of the continuum of supported independent living for the elderly, with many elderly people progressing from living independently in a bungalow with floating support, to moving to a sheltered scheme with an on site scheme manager. Yet, under your proposals the funding for this vital part of housing support provision is to be totally cut, thus removing an essential element of supported housing provision and potentially hastening progress of elderly and vulnerable people into residential and nursing care.*

*A view has been expressed by DCC officers that any funding shortfalls could be met by district and borough councils levying an additional intensive housing management charge covered by housing benefit. However, this view is incorrect, as this option is not one that is available to district and borough*

*councils, as it only covers services pertaining to the fabric and management of the buildings, eg building cleaning and caretaking services.'*