



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE

WEDNESDAY 30TH OCTOBER 2024

Report of the Executive Director – Adult Social Care & Health

Consultation and Engagement of the review and redesign
of the Derbyshire Healthy Home Project

1. Purpose

- 1.1 A report was presented to Cabinet on 25th July 2024 which sought approval to undertake a public consultation on proposals to review and redesign the Derbyshire Healthy Home Project. Following Cabinet approval, the consultation took place between 2nd August 2024 and 20th September 2024.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Committee of information regarding the public consultation and provide an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to submit comments to Cabinet for consideration in making its decision.

2. Information and Analysis

- 2.1 Like councils across the country, Derbyshire is facing increasing financial pressures that are outside its control including inflation and the national pay award. At the same time, there has been an increase in demand for services, particularly for older people. It is essential therefore that the council conducted a review to ensure that it can provide a sustainable adult social care service for the people of Derbyshire.

- 2.2 The DHHP supports the delivery of health and social care system priorities of timely hospital discharge, reducing the risk of readmission, reducing delays when transferring care, preventing unplanned hospital admissions, and ensuring a safe working environment for professional carers to deliver services and also enables the draw down external government grant funding to support Derbyshire residents to improve the energy efficiency of their home.
- 2.3 On 25th July 2024, Cabinet agreed to consult on the three proposals for a redesigned service. There is no statutory duty for the Council to specifically provide this service or to fund this service. However, Section 2 of the Care Act 2014 imposes a duty to contribute towards preventing, delaying, and reducing care and support needs for people and their carers. There is a strong emphasis within the Adult Social Care Reform White Paper 'People at the Heart of Care' to ensure that every decision about care is also a decision about housing.
- 2.4 The proposals for consideration within the Cabinet report were as follows;

Proposal one

This option was to remodel the service and introduce an eligibility criterion to ensure those with adult social care needs and low incomes can access help which Derbyshire County Council would continue to manage.

Proposal two

This option was to work with the District & Borough Councils who have a housing responsibility to support vulnerable people with their homes or a third party to introduce a new service that they will manage.

Proposal 3

This option was to decommission the service and devolve to a third-party provider a signposting and support offer to people to enable access to support via OfGem grants and the wider health and social care system.

- 2.5 Proposals reflected the need for a review of the service which was referred to within the cabinet report of 11th January 2024.
- 2.6 All proposals support the continuation of facilitating of the ECO 4 Flex (Energy Company Obligation) flexible declaration process which enables a range of non-procured installers to access funding to fit free energy efficient measures to owner occupied and private rental properties across the whole of Derbyshire (where specific criteria are met).
- 2.7 The consultation was carried out to seek the views of current stakeholders of the service, and what the proposals to change the service

would mean for them, and the impact they feel that it could have. They were also asked for feedback on how the service could be improved.

2.8 Given the potential impact of any decision there was a requirement and need to consult interested stakeholders and the general public about the proposals and to analyse all the responses before any decision could be made by the Council.

2.9 The formal public consultation ran for a 7-week period between 2nd August 2024 and 20th September 2024 and included.

- Virtual sessions with key stakeholders facilitated using Microsoft Teams at pre-agreed times.
- Online questionnaires with paper versions on request.
- Support from the Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team to ensure people were supported to share their views in the easiest way possible.

2.10 The consultation used quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather people's views about the proposals. Officers enabled as many people as possible to take part, by offering a range of ways in which they could share their views;

- Offering the questionnaire in different formats, such as an easy read version if this was more appropriate.
- Completing the questionnaire online.
- Requesting a paper copy of the questionnaire via the Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Team and sending in comments using the standard or easy read postal questionnaire.
- Opportunity to write to the Council via a letter or a dedicated email address.
- Signposting to further information on the Derbyshire County Council website which gave an outline of the proposals, timelines, the ways in which people could share their views and support available to do so.
- District and Borough councils were informed of the arrangements for undertaking the consultation and the proposals for consideration.

- Virtual meetings (five) using Microsoft Teams were scheduled to enable District and Borough Councils to share their views and ask questions about the proposals.
- Telephone interviews for those people having difficulty completing the questionnaire.
- Media releases which were issued at the start and during the consultation encouraging people to take part and these were published on the county council's website. We also promoted the public consultation on a variety of corporate channels and social media.

2.11 In total, 126 people responded to the consultation. The responses to the consultation include Derbyshire residents, District and Borough Councils, External third-party organisations, health & social care professionals and those who chose to respond via email, letter, or via telephone call.

2.12 Feedback and comments were collated from District and Borough Council colleagues who have engaged the DHHP offer to support their residents. All district and borough areas were offered a one-to-one engagement meeting however three of these did not take up the offer. The feedback collected from Amber Valley Borough Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Erewash Borough Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council and South Derbyshire District Council will be included in the Consultation Report.

2.13 The responses received from the consultation were analysed and themed under the following categories in alphabetical order. An initial Council response is made against each theme ahead of the Cabinet Paper where all such matters will be considered and included within a comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Assessment.

Delays

The consultation highlighted the demand for a 'fast track' service that DHHP currently offers with concerns that hospital and residential stays would be extended whilst properties became habitable.

The council commissions a Home from Hospital service and a Low-level support service who are able to support individuals in engaging with ECO4 resources and explore other existing commissioned services to enable people to return home.

Disagree with proposals 2 and 3

Many respondents to the questionnaire highlighted that they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with the proposals.

We recognise that many respondents disagreed with the proposals. We are committed to working closely with people and stakeholders to explore all options available to have their needs and outcomes met (as per our Statutory Duties within the Care Act 2014).

District and Borough Councils

District and Borough council's reiterated that they do not have responsibilities under the Housing Act 2004, to supply this level of service. A number of respondents also highlighted that District and Borough Council offers would vary.

We are committed to delivering the best possible service to residents and will work with District and Borough partners to ensure that their obligations under the Housing Act 2004 and our obligations under the Care Act 2014 are met using financially stable methods.

Fuel poverty

Some respondents highlighted concern that there would be an increase in the number of people living in fuel poverty.

Please see above response provided to impact on people with low incomes/ unemployed.

Increased delivery costs

Some respondents felt that utilising third party providers or having multiple District and Borough Councils offering the same service currently offered by DHHP would not be good value for money.

We understand the importance of getting the best value for every Derbyshire pound and are committed to delivering good services that are cost effective.

Impact on DCC employees

The proposals, if implemented, would impact on a small number of employees currently working in the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project team.

If any recommendations will impact on Council employees, they would be supported through our HR procedures as appropriate.

Impact on people who do not have eligible social care needs

Some respondents highlighted those who do not have eligible social care needs may not be able to receive support.

We are committed to providing accessible information and advice to enable anyone to access this type of support.

Impact on people with long term health conditions and/ or disabilities

Many respondents highlighted concern for people with the above characteristics being impacted by the proposals, which could further impact on their health.

We recognise that changes to eligibility criteria and/ or changes to the service may cause disruption and concern for residents and their families as demonstrated by the number of responses to the consultation on this theme. We are committed to working with people and stakeholders to develop proposals to support the best interests of Derbyshire residents.

Impact on people with low incomes/ unemployed

The consultation highlighted that people with low incomes/people who are unemployed would be impacted.

We are committed to maximising resident's incomes and Derbyshire offers a welfare rights service as well as support by other commissioned services whereby, residents can self-refer.

Impact on Older Adults/ Elderly

Some respondents highlighted older adults / elderly people as being affected by the proposals.

We are committed to working with people and stakeholders to develop proposals to support the best interests of all Derbyshire residents.

Local communities

People were concerned that there could be a "postcode lottery" without a county wide system. People were also concerned that rural and farming communities would be more at risk.

We acknowledge people's concerns and will take these into consideration in our response to the consultation.

Loss of referral route

Stakeholders highlighted that the number of referral routes could be reduced, particularly for fast-track support.

The council commissions several services in addition to our own in-house services which are designed to enable people to live independently in the community.

Medium to Long term impact

Respondents demonstrated a strong feeling that the Council's proposals were 'short-sighted' and would lead to increased costs for Adult Care and the NHS in terms of people requiring more care and support if unable to access the housing services on offer or more likely to be discharged to a care home or specialist care environment if the home environment was still a risk.

We have taken this feedback into account when making the recommendations and planning the future for services going forward. We will also continue to work with health to facilitate hospital discharges for people returning home and into placements where appropriate. We will consider the impact across Adult Social Care and feedback from partner organisations when making any recommendations.

- 2.14 The next steps are for Cabinet to consider the responses from the public consultation and Equality Impact Analysis to decide on future delivery. This is an opportunity for Scrutiny Committee to make comments for the Cabinet to consider.

3. Alternative Options Considered

N/A

4. Implications

N/A

5. Consultation

N/A

6. Background Papers

N/A

7. Appendices

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Cabinet Report - Proposed review and redesign of Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project 25 July 2024

8. Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- a) notes the responses to the public consultation.
- b) notes that all such matters will be considered and included within a comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Assessment which will be incorporated within the future cabinet report, which will be presented in due course.
- c) further notes that Cabinet will consider the Equalities Impact Assessment as part of its decision making.
- d) considers responses to the public consultation and provides comments to Cabinet and the Equalities Impact Assessment for consideration when making its decision regarding the review and redesign of the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project.

9. Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared to reflect the issues raised during the consultation process, which will incorporate comments from the Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.2 The Cabinet will need to have regard to the comments from Scrutiny thereof in any decision making.