

**CARE SERVICES PDS COMMITTEE**  
**12<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

**ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE CARE SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mrs Kay Miller**

1. Are the Committee confident that they are receiving all the relevant information regarding Manorfields from the Portfolio Holder and other sources which would allow informed decisions to be made?

***Reply:***

The Committee has considered the full business case for Manorfields and also receives regular housing reports setting out ongoing pressures and priorities regarding homelessness and housing in Bromley. This includes updates regarding Manorfields and the range of housing options and initiatives as applicable.

As previously confirmed the Committee will also consider a post-works completion report for Manorfields.

***Supplementary question:***

*How does the Local Authority condone an additional £450k refurbishment cost for Manorfields being agreed on top of the previous funding, which is significantly more than the cost of the refurbishment of Bellegrove and will offer fewer family units?*

***Reply:***

*The £450k funding from the Greater London Authority for the provision of temporary accommodation will be used to fund the cost of the planned refurbishment of Manorfields in place of the Local Authority funding rather than in addition to it. Although some further costs have now been identified around the replacement of the boiler and health and safety requirements, the £450k funding from the Greater London Authority will allow a significant proportion of the Local Authority funding to be returned to contingency.*

2. Is it a) morally acceptable or b) legally allowable for the Council to create a hostel with the intention/outcome of making a profit from housing homeless people?

***Reply:***

The scheme has not been developed to create a profit. The financial and business case model has been designed to produce a saving against the current cost of alternative temporary accommodation provision with running costs met through the rental stream that can legitimately be charged. There is a small surplus against the baseline running costs which is held as a contingency to cover ongoing cyclical repairs/maintenance and required

improvements. Should any small sum remain from this contingency this can legitimately be used to cover a small contribution towards the overall administrative costs of homeless service provision.

***Supplementary question:***

*No supplementary question was asked.*

**Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mr Bill Miller**

1. What is the minimum level of occupancy of Manorfields which would allow the hostel to be viable from a neutral funding perspective?

***Reply:***

The current unit levels have already been set at this neutral funding level.

***Supplementary question:***

*The report for Bellegrave talks about additional savings of £250k which could be seen as profit made by the scheme. For the temporary accommodation schemes to cover their costs would they therefore not need to be at full capacity?*

***Reply:***

*The additional savings of £250k reflect the savings the Local Authority has made by placing families in Bellegrave rather than far more expensive overnight accommodation. The cost of providing the temporary accommodation units at Bellegrave and Manorfields to the Local Authority is cost neutral and no profit is made.*

2. Will the Committee please review again the number of households which are being planned to be housed in Manorfields?

***Reply:***

The unit and occupancy levels set comply with the appropriate guidance and planning permission granted.

***Supplementary question:***

*No supplementary question was asked.*

3. in the light of the 'Orpington Gossip' comments regarding Bellegrave provided to the Committee via email on 24 December, is the Committee confident with the quality of the administration which will be delivered at Manorfields by Orchard and Shipman?

**Reply:**

The contract sets out the required level of service and standards. This will be robustly monitored as part of the contract monitoring arrangements. Outcomes will be reported through the regular housing reports.

**Supplementary question:**

*No supplementary question was asked.*

**Oral Questions to the Care Services Portfolio Holder received from Mr Bob Thatcher**

1. There have been at least two break-ins to Manorfields over recent weeks which have been attended by the police. Is the Committee aware of these? and confident on the security arrangements? Have the Council suffered any uninsured losses or excesses as a result?

**Reply:**

Since the refurbishment work commenced there have been 2 break-in attempts – both during bank holiday/weekend periods. The Council has not incurred any loss or damage as a result of either incident. In the case of the latest attempted break-in on 28<sup>th</sup> December, as Security were on site they were able to disturb the intruder who ran off before any damage could be done. In view of the fact that there have been 2 break-in attempts and the advanced stage of refurbishment work, arrangements have been made for overnight and weekend security presence.

**Supplementary question:**

*Out of the additional funding of £450k from the Greater London Authority, how much has been attributed to the need for further security measures or as a result of local residents' concerns?*

**Reply:**

*Additional security has been provided for the Manorfields site over a three week period to ensure it remains secure overnight and at weekends. The cost of this will be confirmed following the meeting.*

2. The comment in the Minutes (17 Nov) of Item 46 'Officers confirmed that no formal complaints had been received, and where concerns had been reported these had been investigated' is at odds with the 17 pages of 'Orpington Gossip' comment. Will the Committee request that an independent 'satisfaction' survey be conducted of Bellegrave residents, please?

**Reply:**

The extract which was provided by Mr Miller focuses in the main on the current pressures around housing and homelessness which the Council has reported on through the Committee and Executive. The extracts do highlight the

frustration felt by residents around the lengthy timescales they face in temporary accommodation waiting to secure settled accommodation, but reflect that this situation is not limited to Bromley with homelessness and housing need outstripping the available supply of accommodation that is affordable. It is this housing pressure which was directly referred to in the business cases for the refurbishment and use of both Manorfields and Bellegrove. Whilst still temporary accommodation, this does provide much needed accommodation for homeless households in the local area which is not available through alternative provision.

Satisfaction surveys are regularly undertaken across the service and will include Bellegrove in the next financial year.

**Supplementary question:**

*Does that reflect you are happy with the service provided by Orchard and Shipman?*

**Reply:**

*As far as the delivery of the contract is concerned, the Local Authority is currently satisfied with the way that Orchard and Shipman are carrying out their duties. The Local Authority understands the frustration of people being placed in temporary accommodation, but it takes time to place people in suitable permanent accommodation and does provide a better alternative to being placed in nightly paid accommodation, possibly outside of the Borough.*

3. In the light of Councillor Evans response to Bob Thatcher of 5 January (provided below at \*), will the Committee accept that there has been at least 24 police call outs to Bellegrove since it opened in May 2013? Will the Committee also accept that the number of affected local residents to Bellegrove are insignificant (because of its siting) compared to the number who would be affected by issues at Manorfields?

**Reply:**

The breakdown provided confirmed 24 calls within approximately a 2 year period. Of these 24 calls:

- 7 were of a medical nature
- 7 were of a planned nature to interview/take statements from residents in their home settings
- 3 were planned calls to offer a presence in the event that a disturbance was caused by a resident asked to leave the premises.

Of the remaining 7 calls of a more immediate nature:

- 2 were for investigations regarding an attempted break-in
- 5 were to diffuse arguments or incidents within Bellegrove.

In all of these cases the issue was dealt with immediately with no arrests or requirement for further action, nor did any incidents have any impact on the

surrounding area or local residents, having been contained in all cases within the unit itself. I can find no evidence to suggest that there would be a more significant impact with regards to Manorfields.

**Supplementary question:**

*Would you confirm that it was stated at the meeting of Care Services PDS Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015 that Members were not aware of any trouble at Bellegrave when there must have been feedback from Orchard and Shipman?*

**Reply:**

*As previously stated, none of the incidents at Bellegrave relating to the 24 calls during a 2 year period had any impact on the surrounding area or local residents. The Local Authority accepts that Bellegrave and Manorfields have different surrounding communities, but if similar incidents to those at Bellegrave had taken place at Manorfields, there should have also been no impact on the surrounding area or local residents. There are a number of vulnerable residents living closely to Bellegrave and the reported incidents had no impact on these communities. The Care Services PDS Committee will continue to monitor the situation regarding Bellegrave and Manorfields and will consider any issues that arise.*

*\* Councillor Evans response to Bob Thatcher of 5 January*

*Dear Mr Thatcher*

*Regarding your comments about police call outs to Bellegrave. I have been puzzled for some time about the discrepancy between the figures that you quote and what I have been told by staff.*

*Several weeks ago I asked for a complete detailed breakdown of these calls- verified by the Met. I have finally received the results which I am happy to pass on to you.*

*The figure of 65 CAD calls you quote actually covers a wider area and period. They date back to May 2013 and are not a figure of calls out specifically to Bellegrave.*

*The actual figure for Bellegrave since its opening is 24 not 65.*

*These 24 (Twenty-four) may be further broken down as follows:*

*7(Seven) were for police attending with medical staff- not crime/incident related. In fact 6 of these 7 were police attendance with ambulance relating to one vulnerable individual who was at Bellegrave for a very short time before being moved to specialist accommodation.*

*7(Seven) were for police attending in relation to incidents/investigations not directly related to Bellegrave. 1 was a safeguarding investigation relating to a child of a resident and whilst resident was no longer on site police attended to take witness statements. 5 were police attending to take statements from residents regarding domestic abuse which had taken place before they moved to Bellegrave. 1 was police attending to interview a resident about an incident in another area.*

*2(Two) were for police attendance due to a break in to the building.*

*8(Eight) were for police attendance to diffuse/prevent arguments/incidents inside Bellegrave. 3 of these were for police to be present for eviction/termination of licence. 1 for police to intervene due to an argument between two residents- Quickly calmed and no further action taken. 3 for police attendance to diffuse a domestic argument between partners- Again no further action taken. 1 for police attendance to deal with an incident of abuse towards a member of staff. Again no further action.*

*No calls have been made relating to any incidents/crimes/ disturbances which would have impacted on local residents.*

*I hope this clarifies the situation a little.*

*Regards*

*Robert Evans Cllr*