



WHARFE BRIDGE, BOSTON SPA

BOSTON SPA PARISH COUNCIL

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Ms S Keene
Director of Adult Social Services
Merrion House
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Leeds
LS8QB

May 2013

Dear Ms Keene

Better Lives for People of Leeds: Residential Care for Older People Report:- Consultation -Proposed Closure of Primrose Hill Residential Care Home

With reference to the above report and consultation, particularly on the proposed closure of Primrose Hill Residential Care Home, Boston Spa Parish Council has serious concerns with the proposal and wishes to raise the following issues:

Presentation to the Parish Council

Dennis Holmes (who produced the above report) and Michelle Tynan attended the Boston Spa Annual Parish meeting on Wednesday 24th April to give a presentation on the proposed closure. There is strong local opposition to the closure and around 80 people were present.

It was disappointing that the presenters had not come prepared with detailed information on the business case to close Primrose Hill or the options that will be available to the residents of the home if the closure is to go ahead. Many of the residents were represented by their families at the meeting and there was a sense of frustration at the failure of the presenters to provide meaningful responses to the robust questions raised.

The Parish Council submits the following comments and questions:

1. In an ageing population, the demand of care will increase and what evidence is there that this demand will be met?

Para. 3.2 in the above report highlights the growing population over the age of 75 years who are likely to be living with a disability for many years. There are currently an estimated 8,400 people in Leeds with dementia and this figure is estimated to increase by 40% in 15 years. Leeds has taken the decision to reduce the provision of residential and nursing care.

Para 3.7 in the report says "When, for reasons of safety, security and social isolation it is no longer feasible to support a person in their existing home, they should be given a choice of alternative accommodation and support. This requires that suitable, affordable, flexible, and accessible accommodation is available to all older people. Increasingly this will take the form of sheltered and housing and extra care housing where any support that is needed is purchased by the individual resident through public or private funding."

- Boston Spa has a high percentage of older people and this trend is likely to continue.

- There are no other residential care home facilities in the village and limited access to homes in the immediate area, including Wetherby. The demand for residential care in the north East villages around Leeds will increase in line with LCC's own predictions.
- Primrose Hill provides the 'suitable, affordable, flexible, and accessible accommodation' for local residents you say will be provided. In the absence of any 'sheltered and housing and extra care housing' in the area the closure of Primrose Hill will add to the pressure on the service you are aspiring to provide. Your own report talks of a 'vision', and a 'strategy', there does not appear to be a well thought through development plan. Closing Primrose Hill and the other 5 homes will reduce access to quality care.

2. How many care home beds are there within a 5 mile radius of Boston Spa and how many vacancies do they have?

- Focusing on the current residents of Primrose Hill, what work have you already done to identify where there are suitable homes with vacancies in the area that would be offered to residents?
- You will already have information on where the relatives of residents live, how have you factored in the impact the closure will have on their ability to maintain close and regular contact?
- The Council understands Primrose Hill has facilities that are under used for long and short term use. The closure of the home will remove the access you have to provide a flexible service in the community for intermediate and long term care, including the care of people with dementia. Your report acknowledges that there is insufficient capacity and quality offered by the independent sector.
- Primrose Hill currently provides care for people with dementia. Your report states that one dementia specific home will be retained in each area of the city in order to meet current demand. Where will the specific dementia care home for Boston Spa and the surrounding villages be?
- Will you genuinely listen to the needs of the residents and their families/advocates or will you be steering them towards the providers within the independent sector with whom you have negotiated long term fee settlements?
- These questions will also have a longer term impact as the closure of Primrose Hill would remove the choice of local people to stay in the area in which they live.

3. Primrose Hill – residents and services

- The majority of residents are from the village or surrounding area. Some people have moved from elsewhere to be near to their families. When people can no longer maintain their independence at home it is important to remain in the area and with people you know. The closure of Primrose Hill will end friendships, familiarity and the trust the residents have in the care they receive. As part of your Duty of Care to residents, this should not be ignored.
- There are empty rooms in Primrose Hill. Can you provide information on when you ceased to offer Primrose Hill as an option to people seeking information on Care Homes for long and short term care?
- Can you provide information on the number of people receiving long and short term care in Primrose Hill over the last 5 years, and how many were from the immediate area? Did you factor the value the local community places in having this local facility?

4. Duty of Care

- Leeds CC acknowledges it has a duty of care to existing service users. The majority of the residents of Primrose Hill are over 90 years of age, with some over 100 years of age. It is recognised by healthcare professionals that moving people who are very frail and of a great age from a settled home will in most cases be damaging to their overall health and wellbeing and can shorten their lives.

- No information has been made available outlining options considered by you to meet your duty of care by enabling the residents to stay where they are alongside developing perhaps an intermediate care service for the community.

5. Resources and Value for Money

- The report lacks sufficient detail to comment on or challenge the quoted net savings of £875k following the closure of all six care homes. This figure is extremely small in the context of the overall budget of about £200m (quoted by Councillor Lamb).
- A more detailed financial report of maintenance and running costs, refurbishment/upgrading should be provided for each care home where closure is proposed, plus costs of decommissioning, including potential redundancy costs.
- The detailed financial reports should be provided as part of the consultation together with the offer of presentations to inform the understanding.

6. Loss of Employment and impact on the local economy

- Primrose Hill is a significant local employer and closure will impact on the local economy. For some people their personal circumstances will mean redundancy will be the only option. Whatever choices employees have to make will impact on the money spent in the community at a time when localism through Neighbourhood Planning is encouraging the development of a healthy local economy.

The Parish Council is strongly opposed to the closure of Primrose Hill. The Save Primrose Hill Care Home Campaign organised by local people is supported by the Parish Council; Alec Shelbrooke MP; Wetherby Ward Councillors, neighbouring Town and Parish Councils; local Doctors and Harrogate hospital; and a number of local church groups.

The Parish Council asks that you address the concerns and questions raised above and would welcome a further opportunity to meet with Adult Social Care to address those concerns and questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V. Skinner
Clerk to the Parish Council

By email