



CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2013

SUBJECT: PARK VIEW, Highbury Drive, Blackwood

REPORT BY: CHRIS WALSH, TEAM MANAGER SOCIAL WORK DRUG AND ALCOHOL TEAM

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Crime and Disorder scrutiny committee on the Supported Housing Project Park View.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This Report provides an overview of the Supported Housing Project at Park View. Having opened in 2009 Gwalia provides care and support services to residents of Caerphilly County Borough who have undergone residential rehabilitation or community treatment for drug or alcohol addiction and who also have issues of homelessness. Some detail of the project is provided illustrated by 2 case studies.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 A Safer Caerphilly is a key outcome within the Single Integrated Plan – Caerphilly Delivers.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Charter Housing owns Park View. Gwalia provides care and support services. The project was commissioned by Caerphilly County Borough Council. The project provides supported accommodation to residents of Caerphilly County Borough who have undergone residential rehabilitation or community treatment for drug or alcohol addiction and who also have issues of homelessness. The project has eight places and residents must commit to abstinence. The principle that people referred must have homelessness issues, been through residential rehabilitation or community treatment, and have expressed a commitment to abstinence is still applied.
- 4.2 Park View opened in November 2009 following lengthy public consultation that commenced in 2006. Initially, there was considerable opposition to the project from local people and a sustained campaign against it. Residents frequently stated that they were not opposed to the principle, merely the location. The opposition was not universal.
- 4.3 Liaison meetings were set up with local people living in proximity to the project to provide a forum where a dialogue could be continued with the residents to address whatever concerns they might have and also build relationships. The meetings were divided into contract compliance and liaison. Since the project opened Officers of the Council and representatives

from Gwalia, Charter Housing and Supporting People have attended numerous meetings with the neighbouring residents. Officers remain available to meet with the neighbouring residents but there have been no liaison meetings since November 2012. (see 2.10 below)

- 4.4 There have been 4 Managers running the project since 2009 and the present Manager has several years of experience working with Homeless people and is well known locally for his work in coaching rugby teams.
- 4.5 The project has been running now for nearly four years and it has provided a valuable resource and element in the Caerphilly treatment system. All people referred to the project have received either community treatment for drug and alcohol issues or have been through residential rehabilitation organised by the Social Work team. All referrals to the project are screened and interviewed by the Project Manager and by the Social Work Team Manager.
- 4.6 The Supporting people team have conducted a review of the project and undertake regular monitoring visits. The conclusion of the review was that Gwalia were providing a quality support service that was meeting the strategic objectives of the Local Service Board and Community Safety Partnership in respect of reducing the harm caused by alcohol.
- 4.7 In keeping with the aim of the project many of its interventions have provided support for vulnerable adults who would otherwise have been at extreme risk. I have provided two examples below and changed the names to preserve confidentiality.
- 4.8 Joe Dirac was 19 and doing well in University when he returned home to care for his sick single mother. She died during an operation and he suffered a profound grief reaction. He was accommodated with a drug dealer who gave him drugs and Joe lived on drugs to blot out his grief. He suffered a psychotic episode after taking mephadrone (meow meow) and was arrested and given probation. He became homeless and was referred to the Social Work Team after being hospitalised through self-neglect. At the age of 19 he was filled with grief for his mother and he lacked the life skills and experience to deal with the dark side of an adult world into which he had been propelled. Park View has given him the support of friendly professionals at a critical time when his life could have gone one way or the other.
- 4.9 Vincent VanGelder is 46 years old and had been homeless. He was hospitalised with acute cirrhosis, ascites and was gravely ill. His parents could not face him sleeping rough but could not cope with his illness and distressed by his condition, shed bitter tears at the discharge-planning meeting. Vincent accepted that he could not drink again and after working with the Social Worker was eventually placed at Park View. Since that time Vincent's health improved dramatically though there is the occasional fluctuation because of the damage to his liver. At the time of writing in July 2013 Vincent has applied for Council accommodation and is planning to move out to independence with the next few weeks.
- 4.10 One of the neighbouring residents has and is currently expressing concerns about the project and this report also addresses these by describing how the project is adhering to its service specification. Should the neighbouring resident not wish to discuss concerns with the Manager of the project then he may contact the Social Work Drug and Alcohol Team Manager (currently Chris Walsh) who works closely with the Manager of Park View and is Gatekeeper to the service. Should a neighbouring resident wish to complain and there is no local resolution then the appropriate course is to invoke the Social Services Representation and Complaints process. As gatekeeper to the project the Social Work Team Manager is the Council Officer responsible for responding. There is a leaflet available on the Council website that describes the process and the steps a complainant may take if they are still dissatisfied.
- 4.11 The project has a zero tolerance approach to drug and alcohol misuse on the premises. Chemical tests are carried out at random or on suspicion. New entrants to the project are breathalysed every day for the first month, and a random day each week thereafter. Some residents ask to be breathalysed daily as it provides the same boundaries they are accustomed to in residential rehabilitation.

4.12 Currently the tenants are on Assured Short hold Tenancies, which gives a person an initial tenancy for six months. If a tenant lapses then they are given a warning then a final warning and then notice to quit, although the stage of the process depends on the nature of the behaviour. Should a tenant refuse to leave then Court proceedings would be needed. This has never been required because staff at Park View have worked with people who have not done so well to encourage them to take up more appropriate opportunities. Gwalia is seeking to move to Licences for residents, as this would offer the opportunity to be timely in interventions around residency. For example Licences would give staff the power to access rooms as and when required when appropriate. One current resident has a final warning, and two current residents have had notices to quit. Others are doing very well. Those people with notices to quit are being supported by Gwalia into appropriate accommodation.

4.13 **Services Delivered By The Project**

The service at Park View is primarily aimed at giving people the skills and abilities to live independently. Anyone going through residential rehabilitation will have been away from his or her community for a period of up to six months in an intense environment. Park View gives people with previous issues of addiction and homelessness the kind of support needed. This support would include:

Social Work review. Cases are open to the Social Work Team and their progress is monitored through the project.

Relapse prevention. This service is offered by CRI who have been commissioned to deliver adult alcohol services in the borough and GOALS who deliver services to former drug users.

Motivational interviewing. The staff on site and the social work team provides this.

Life skills. Staff on site provide cookery classes budgeting etc.

Gardening. Park View has a productive garden.

Training and education. Residents of Park View are encouraged to take up education and training courses at local colleges.

Lifestyle. Park View residents take part in sporting activities organised by Gwalia for example 5 a side football tournaments and camping trips.

As the goal is for people to move out and live independently the staff at Gwalia have regular review meetings with the residents where they agree their progress towards moving out into independent living.

5. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The work undertaken at Park View are targeted at a specific group of people and any equalities issues regarding the individuals would be considered at the point of them accessing the service.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below. There are no responses that have not been reflected in the report.

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- 9.1 This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below. There are no responses that have not been reflected in the report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The members are asked to:
- Note the contents of this report.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To ensure that Members of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee are updated in relation to the Supported Housing project at Park View.

12. STATUTORY POWER

- 12.1 Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Author: Chris Walsh, Team Manager Work Drug and Alcohol Team
Consultees: Councillor Hefin David, Chair Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee
Councillor David Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Superintendent Brandon Williams, Safer Caerphilly Strategic Lead
Sandra Aspinall, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection
Chief Inspector Simon Jeffries, Caerphilly Local Policing Unit
Inspector Kevin Childs, Caerphilly Local Policing Unit Partnership Inspector
David A. Thomas, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)
Mike Eedy, Finance Manager
Lynne Donovan, HR Services Manager, Customer Services