

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 24 July 2012 in Brampton Community Centre.

13 members were present for lunch and 16 members attended the meeting.

The Chair, Jean Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Bob Allan a volunteer on Brampton and Beyond Community Trust.

When Bob had first been invited to talk to the Forum about developments on the community centre site it had been anticipated that the Trust would have been at a consultation stage but this has been postponed for 2 months so he would only be able to give us an update. He began by giving a brief history. In 1998 about £0.5 million was spent converting the site from a school to a community centre. Since then there has been very little investment. 6-7 years ago a project was started to get some investment but this was blighted by county and city councils carrying out reviews. A plan to develop the site as a health campus fell through. The site belongs to the county council; the Trust was established with the aim of placing the site more securely in the hands of the local community. Part of the site is earmarked by the county council for extra-care housing and this has hampered development of the rest of the site. Two years ago the Trust suggested that it could be responsible for the extra-care housing. The council agreed in principle and since then members of the Trust have been finding out about this type of housing. It consists of self-contained units but with some communal facilities such as recreational space, an outside area, and space for a care provider. The current plans are for 38 self-contained living units, mainly 2-bedroomed. The estimated cost is £4 million. It is a difficult time for raising finance; grants are no longer available. The Trust is in dialogue with a variety of bodies who lend money; they expect to be able to make decisions in a month or so. A planning application is being prepared; some plans and details will be presented at a meeting on 4th September. It is expected that most units will be offered at an 'affordable rent' - defined as 80% of local market rent - but some units may be offered for sale (possibly in the region of £100,000). Forum members asked questions about parking and access for public transport. The Trust is working with and drawing on the experience of the Green Design Group and Impact Housing for help with the design, building and running of extra-care housing. The County Council is responsible for financing adult social care and the City Council is able to provide statistics related to housing. Forum members then initiated some discussion about eligibility for the housing, and about what restrictions might or could be placed on potential owner-occupiers.

The Chair then thanked Mr Allan and members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

The Vice-Chair, Ann Oswin, then gave some updates:

- Age UK: recent booklets are available in the community centre.
- Ann reported on the previous week's meeting of the Carlisle local stakeholder group - this group allows discussion between the public and the NHS commissioning groups, now mainly GPs.
 - A Cancer Action Plan is being set up to try to reduce the number of premature deaths from cancer, mainly lung cancer, which result from late diagnosis. If you know someone who has a persistent cough, try to persuade them to see their doctor.
 - Ann Farrar of Northumbria Healthcare Trust will be responsible for the running of the Cumberland Infirmary and the West Cumberland Hospital later this month.
 - In a survey conducted by the patients panel, 90% of people being discharged from hospital were happy with the care they received.
 - Access to GP practices is an issue (not just in Brampton). [Members made some comments about difficulties they had had making appointments. We should complain!]
 - There are new link workers for assisting people with mental health problems.
 - The Macmillan information centre at the infirmary was discussed.

Ann then initiated a brief discussion about how we should pay for care in old age. The cost per week in a residential care home is at least £500. If you own your own home, would you be willing to sell it to cover your care costs? Several members said that they would and that this was not an unreasonable expectation of society.

The meeting ended with tea and biscuits.

The next 50+ Forum meeting is on 25th September 2012.