

18 Wellington Road (St Gabriel's) – Notes on consultation and discussion March 2009



Consultation through the Learning Disability Partnership Board included talking to:

- Speak Out Link group
- The Learning Disability Partnership Board
- Providers
- Carers
- The A Place to Live sub-group
- Care Management
- Occupational Therapy
- Federation of Disabled People

Issues raised have been considered individually and discussed. Where appropriate, ways of limiting the effect of those concerns have been suggested.

1. Size: A number of people said that the scheme is too large for people with learning disabilities and this would result in an 'institution' that is at odds with aims to support people with disabilities to mix with local communities.

- 1.1 Each flat would be fully self-contained, with final details being tailored to the needs of tenants.
- 1.2 Everyone will have their own tenancy, giving them much greater rights than people had in old institutions
- 1.3 There would be no institutional practices (e.g. set meal times), as people would have a package of care that is personal to their needs and wishes.
- 1.4 It is proposed that the scheme is divided into three distinct blocks with their own entrances, identity and staff support.

- 1.5 Rather than a single, central communal area it is proposed smaller ones are included in the three blocks.

- 2. Accessibility for wheelchairs:** Some people said that there might not be enough space for wheelchairs to move around easily.
 - 2.1 The OT (Occupational Therapist) advises that all parts of the property are wheelchair accessible, though the older part of the development would not allow people to pass wheelchairs easily in corridors.
 - 2.2 If the scheme is separated into three blocks, people could be supported to live in those blocks that are most accessible to them.
 - 2.3 Separating the scheme would mean that not everyone would need to use the more narrow corridors and so they are less likely to be 'busy' with people, meaning less access problems.

- 3. Access to the local area:** Some people were concerned that the local area was not accessible for people in wheelchairs, with it being a short but sharp hill from the Lewes Road. There is also a double traffic light to cross and questions were asked about the accessibility of buses.
 - 3.1 Although Elm Grove is a steep hill, Wellington Road is at the bottom and is itself quite level.
 - 3.2 Some people said that the property was in a more level location than many areas of Brighton and the benefits of the central location outweigh the downsides.
 - 3.3 Information has been gathered about accessible bus routes. Most routes and the several local bus stops are accessible.

- 4. Lease cost:** As the housing development is privately financed, the housing costs of the scheme will be higher than normal and it would mean that people would not be encouraged to get to work.
 - 4.1 Housing Benefit will be available to the residents to meet most of the lease costs
 - 4.2 Care and support costs would be provided at much improved value for money which would offset the higher housing costs
 - 4.3 Benefit advice will be available to ensure people are not financially worse off when they find employment and if any residents are worse off they will be supported to move if necessary.

5. Developer experience: This is a private developer and some people said we should work with organisations such as Housing Associations, who have experience in working with vulnerable people

5.1 There are a lack of other accommodation options available and the developer has planning permission and the ability to build this scheme.

5.2 If we commission the support service, we will be able to influence the design the scheme.

5.3 If we do not commission the support service, the developer could go ahead anyway and may not make all the choices we would recommend.

6. Laundry

6.1 Plans show a laundry in the basement, but each flat will have plumbing for its own washing machine.

7. Communal facilities:

7.1 Some people felt the communal facilities were too small, others felt they were too large. Some people thought a single large communal facility would add to the 'institutional' feel.

7.2 It was discussed that it may be best to have 3 smaller communal rooms based around the three 'blocks'. This would give everyone access to an area close by and would stop the scheme feeling institutional.

8. Soundproofing

8.1 The entire building will meet part E of the building regulations, which are the latest standards in soundproofing.

9. Sensory needs

9.1 The building will be completely adaptable for people with sensory needs, with space for hand rails and the possibility to use colour codes to help visual access.

10. Storage space: Some people were concerned about a lack of space for charging electric scooters.

10.1 It was discussed that there may be some space in wider corridors, but it would be hard to say at this stage.

10.2 It was discussed that people might keep/store wheelchairs in their flats and in fact for practical reasons might have to keep them by their beds.

11. Guest Accommodation: Some people thought there should be guest accommodation and some 2 bedroom flats

11.1 It was discussed that guest accommodation is an unusual thing for a block of flats, and could itself be seen as institutional

11.2 There are two bedroom accommodation options available locally and these have been more difficult to let.

12. Shower Room facilities

12.1 All rooms would have wet rooms with showers as these were most flexible. Baths could be added based on individual need.

12.2 The OT said that there is room in the shower rooms for a support worker to help the person.

12.3 If the person needs two people to help them, there would need to be an assessment of that person to see if there was enough room.

13. Community Links: Some people said there should be a community service that the local community could use, to help the tenants mix with the neighbours, but there are concerns that there is not enough space for this.

13.1 It is agreed that the architect and developer may be open to building in a community service, but it may not be practical.

13.2 The local Wellington Road Day Centre could be used as a site for a community service that tenants and neighbours could use.

13.3 Not everyone thought that a community service was needed, or even a good idea.

13.4 If we tender for a support service, we can work with the developer and community groups to find ways to make links with the community, in consultation with the residents and their families

Mark Hendriks, Project Officer