



To: Executive Councillor for Housing (and Deputy Leader): Councillor Catherine Smart  
Report by: Alan Carter, Head of Strategic Housing  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community 15/3/2012  
Services  
Scrutiny  
Committee  
Wards affected: From Petersfield to Abbey

## **PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT OF CAMBRIDGE ACCESS SURGERY Key Decision**

### **1. Executive summary**

This report details the role of the Cambridge Access Surgery, a primary health care service for homeless people in the city, and its contribution to the Council's strategic response to homelessness and proposals to refurbish the building to facilitate the development of the service.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

To agree to offer a capital grant of up to £100,000 to be drawn from the existing Renewals and Replacements fund to upgrade the facilities at the primary health care service for homeless people at 125 Newmarket Road

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Cambridge Access Surgery (CAS) is located at 125 Newmarket Road and offers specialist primary health care services to around 400 patients who are homeless or have experienced homelessness.
- 3.2 The building was purchased by the City Council with a grant from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) so that the Council could work more closely with health care services to achieve better health and homelessness prevention outcomes for homeless people and is currently leased to Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust (PCT).
- 3.3 The development of this service has meant that Cambridge has very good patient registration levels amongst this client group. A review of the service was conducted in August 2007. The review involved

extensive consultation with patients and stakeholders. A report detailing the findings was published in January 2008. The patient consultation revealed that: in the event of services not being available at the Access Surgery:

- 21% reported that they would not access health care at all
- 26 % reported that they would attend accident and emergency services
- 49% reported that they would access other GP services but many drew attention to the difficulty of doing this in practice. Reasons cited were finding it difficult to maintain clinical relationships and being declined registration.
- Patients also observed that they were likely to be more ill before they sought treatment or were able to access health care

3.4 An additional aspect to the development of the service at Newmarket Road was that other homelessness services were co-located on site and the stakeholder respondents to the review concluded that this provided *'an essential link between health and other services'*

3.5 The Access Surgery currently provides the full range of primary care services and a number of additional services, tailored to the needs of the homeless client group. These include joint drug treatment clinics and joint alcohol treatment clinics (both involving the current provider of adult substance misuse treatment in Cambridgeshire), weekly in-house appointments with a psychiatrist and practice nurse outreach clinics at Jimmy's Night Shelter, Wintercomfort and two main homeless hostels in Cambridge. Surgery staff are also actively involved with the Sex Workers Advisory Network (SWAN), which is working, to promote safe sex and address the health and social needs of street based sex workers in Cambridge.

3.6 The surgery has adjusted its clinical focus to provide care for medical problems more frequently found in the homeless client group, for example those related to mental health, substance misuse, alcohol, sexually transmitted diseases and blood borne virus infections

3.7 It also seeks out patients in need of care (for example, substance misusing patients needing immunisation against hepatitis B, patients with asthma in need of a medication review) through a continuous audit process.

3.8 The outreach service offers health promotional advice and immunisations and GPs and nurses at the surgery have developed specialist knowledge in substance and alcohol misuse (The surgery manages 60 of its patients with substance misuse problems in-house)

and liaise closely with the Alcohol Community Psychiatric Nurse who is part of the Cambridge Street Mental Health Outreach Team and also based on site at the surgery premises.

- 3.9 In spite of intensive intervention and (apparently) easy access to health care at the surgery, the patient group suffers an excess morbidity and mortality related to drugs, liver/gastrointestinal disease often secondary to alcohol problems, mental health problems, infections (often related to drug use and often involving long admissions to hospital and sometimes death). Patients are often 'frequent attenders' at Addenbrookes hospital.
- 3.10 There is a need to further the development of a holistic package of health care services at Cambridge Access Surgery. The City Council is working closely with the surgery to develop and enhance the service offered to homeless people at 125 Newmarket Road. As part of this plan, a significant upgrade to the building is required to ensure that patient consultancy rooms meet clinical standards, to upgrade the information technology services within the building to improve services to patients and to refurbish the building throughout for the first time in the 8 years since the City Council took on the ownership of the property.
- 3.11 Contained within the lease to the PCT is a requirement for the City Council to set aside funds to conduct structural repairs to the building and for the PCT to manage internal refurbishments and repairs. However, sufficient funds have not been available for the PCT to do this. The Council currently has a repairs and renewal fund of £213,000 for the building and a recent assessment of requirements to 2020 showed that only £43,000 was required. Members are, therefore, asked to consider whether up to £100,000 could be released from the repairs and renewal fund for the building upgrade to take place
- 3.12 The grant would ensure that the building is fit for purpose to deliver enhanced health care with services expanding to include:
- Enhanced substance misuse, mental health and alcohol treatments
  - Improved access to dental services foot care and eye tests
  - In house management and treatment of Hepatitis C

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

The financial implications for the Council are detailed at 3.11 above

(b) **Staffing Implications**

None

(c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

The measures proposed in this report will increase access to health care services for a range of vulnerable client groups who have experience of homelessness. As the building works will facilitate an expansion of services to these groups no Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

These proposals have a +L (low positive) climate change impact. The refurbishment works will be carried out via the normal City Council tendering process and, as such, the works will need to meet the Council's regular environmental standards. The building works themselves involve only minor improvements in relation to energy efficiency.

(e) **Consultation**

Cambridge Access Surgery patients have been consulted on both service adjustments and building refurbishment via two consultation workshops. Stakeholders will be consulted on final draft proposals before work begins.

(f) **Community Safety**

There are no direct implications in relation to these proposals, other than improved CCTV provision on site, but it is hoped that more patients / service users will be accessing a greater range of effective treatments and that, this, in turn will have a positive impact on levels of anti-social behaviour and community safety in general. CCTV

## **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Cambridge Access Surgery – vision and transformation document

Cambridge Access Surgery – service review January 2008

## **6. Appendices**

None

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Author's Name: David Greening  
Author's Phone Number: 01223 - 457997  
Author's Email: [david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk)