

APPENDIX 3

SAMPSON COURT

More live longer and with dementia. Surely it is wrong to close dementia homes whilst building homes for those with less needs.

Sampson Court purpose built, single storey and only 25 years old is not past it's useful life. Why sanction £135,000 for heating works if the building was redundant. If the site use is changed a £90,000 covenant shall have to be repaid.

Sampson Court functions perfectly, en-suites are not necessary, most clients need help with toileting and bathing. Other features, kitchens and internet cafes and gyms, are distractions to bolster the argument. KCC's proposals sound like sheltered housing not vital needs met by Sampson Court. In the prevailing economic climate KCC must concentrate on necessities not niceties.

KCC have not detailed proposals for re-housing clients. Quality Care Commission's web-site reveals most available homes are older, converted, houses on several floors. A minority - less for those with dementia patients - have en-suites, internet, let alone gyms.

An inspection by a dementia specialist found care at Sampson Court exceeded that found in the private sector. Sampson Court welcomes placement students studying dementia. Relatives are concerned about lack of training and qualifications in the private sector. Lower wages mean inferior staff. What are KCC's plans for monitoring those moved from public care?

To allow carers a break Sampson Court gives day-care for twelve people six days a week and longer periods of respite for holidays. Will private homes keep beds empty to let this happen? Without respite more people will be put into homes at greater cost to the community.

Will the private sector cope without what KCC currently provide? A person staying in one of KCC's new residential became ill with an infection, they couldn't cope so she was transferred to Sampson Court, without Sampson Court what would have happened.

KCC also claim that the additional load will be partly borne by volunteers. We receive assistance from Crossroads, and have been advised that this will be jeopardised by cuts in central funding.

The claim that KCC care costs more than it does in the private sector needs examining. Eight KCC staff were present at our initial meeting. If eight people can disappear from their desks at once it suggests lax management that is top heavy and inefficient.

To ensure effectiveness, homes should be able to do their own purchasing, taking advantage of supermarket offers. Maintenance costs could be reduced by using local rather than preferred contractors. It is absurd for a Maidstone firm to travel to

Deal to repair a leaking tap when a local plumber would cost less. Dedicated staff already raise additional funds for Sampson Court through galas and open days. If it meant saving their jobs they would undertake more of these duties.

The phrase "old person's futures" brings to mind lifeless terms like oil and coffee futures. But the elderly and vulnerable must not be treated like commodities and traded merely to balance the books. More thought must be given to the traumas these closures will create.