

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services & Housing Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 19th September 2014

held at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Meeting Commenced: 9.45 am Meeting Concluded: 12.50 pm

Councillors:

P Anne Kemp (Chairman)
P Jill Iles (Vice-Chairman)

A Michael Bell	P Mary Blatchford
P Robert Cleland	A Andy Cole
- Peter Crew	- Stephen Fudge
P Catherine Gibbons	P David Jolley
P Tom Leimdorfer	P Ian Parker
- Robert Payne	- Marcia Pepperall
P Arthur Terry	P Liz Wells
P Roz Willis	

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also present: Councillors Reyna Knight and Dawn Payne (Assistant Executive Members) and Charles Cave; Eileen Jacques (North Somerset HealthWatch)

For Minute ASH 16 only – Simon Sweetingburgh (Chairman, Alliance Homes Board) and Clive Bodley (Chief Executive Officer, Alliance Homes)

Officers in attendance: Mark Hughes, Gerald Hunt, Claire Leandro, Alun Davies and Donna Miles (People and Communities Directorate), David Jellings (Corporate Services)

ASH 11 **Declarations of Interest by Members (Agenda Item 3)**

None

ASH 12 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 13th June 2014 (Agenda Item 4)**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

Care Home Enablement Update (Agenda Item 6)

The representative of the Director of People and Communities introduced the report which provided an update on the Care Home Enablement Pathway and highlighted current priority work areas. The following points set out in the report were highlighted-

- The number of people accessing enablement so far this year had increased substantially since the same period in 2013 (up by 25%)
- Over three quarters (77%) of those accessing the pathway so far this year were local authority funded, 23% funded their own care
- The average length of time spent on the enablement pathway so far this year was 29 days (just over four weeks) but this varied considerably depending on the outcome of the service users. For those who returned home the average length of time on the pathway was 51 days (over seven weeks). This reflected the additional time and work needed in order to manage the transition from care home to home
- Key priorities
 - (i) Training and Promotion of the pathway
 - (ii) Increasing numbers of those who fund their own care accessing the pathway
 - (iii) Extending the enablement period for those who need it
 - (iv) Improving successful outcomes
 - (v) Developing/ improving the pathway for dementia patients
- Recent Developments

Panel Members welcomed the ongoing success of the scheme and concurred with the key priorities.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities responded to Members' questions and queries.

It was reported that in comparison with North Somerset, neighbouring authorities were experiencing significant demand pressures. In addition, discussions were taking place with those authorities regarding protocols for accessing North Somerset services and the need for them to approach North

Discretionary Housing Payments (Agenda Item 9)

Somerset's Brokerage Services.

Concluded: that the proposed priorities of the service into 2014/15 and the current position within the Enablement Pathway service be acknowledged.

Councillor Dawn Payne gave a brief update regarding with particular regard to the breakdown of spend for April to August 2014 (this was just about on target), applications assessed, breakdown of age groups and the reasons for

unsuccessful applications (not including rent in advance/deposit applications).

It was reported that

(1) the Affordable Housing Bill had received its Second Reading on the House of Commons and would now progress to the Committee Stage and
(2) Discretionary Housing Payment would continue for the next two years – North Somerset's allocation was not yet known.

The Panel Members thanked Councillor Payne for the comprehensive report and she undertook to provide an update regarding the discretion used by the Council for people on the Council Tax rebate scheme who are in arrears and have been some summoned to Court.

Members raised the issue of money advice. Councillor Payne undertook to speak with the Council's Web Manager to ensure the inclusion of a link on the website to the money adviser Which.co.

ASH 15 Verbal Report of Councillor Reyna Knight, Assistant Executive Member (Agenda Item 11)

Councillor Reyna Knight referred to a survey carried out by the Care Quality Commission of 13,500 people who use community mental health services. She would forward the details to the Scrutiny Officer to be circulated to the Panel Members.

(see also Minute ASH 19)

ASH 16 Alliance Homes Governance Arrangements (Agenda Item 7)

The representative of the Director of People and Communities introduced the report which invited the Panel to consider and comment on Alliance Homes' proposed revised governance arrangements in the light of additional information provided in response to Members' questions, queries and comments at the last meeting in June.

The issues and concerns raised, had been discussed further with Alliance Homes representatives including, at a meeting attended by the Executive Member for Housing, Strategic Planning, Highways and Economic Development, the Chair of the this Panel and the Head of Strategic Housing. This had been a very productive meeting and the report summarised the following issues-

- (i) Arrangements for recruiting tenants to the boards – including skills and competencies requirements
- (ii) Future arrangements for recruiting all Board Members
- (iii) Future Council involvement in Alliance Homes
- (iv) Scrutiny arrangements
- (v) Additional Information regarding the 4 year rule, Chief Executive Officer membership of the Board, and co-option.

Simon Sweetingburgh (Chairman, Alliance Homes Board) and Clive Bodley (Chief Executive, Alliance Homes) attended for this item. They reaffirmed that

a review had identified a need to strengthen Alliance Homes' governance arrangements in light of the changing environment in which they work. They also explained that the main drivers for change were

(i) Alliance Homes' changing role

Alliance was no longer just a housing provider. It was involved in a wider range of activities such as a provider of supporting people services and domiciliary care services. Alliance was also increasing its role as a supplier of services to the Council. This meant there was a need to ensure that governance arrangements were as robust as possible and that the Board had the breadth of skills and experience necessary to support the delivery of services.

(ii) The Regulator's view

The Homes and Communities Agency, had taken an increasingly robust view on how Registered Providers managed their affairs. The focus was a reduced board size boards and a move away from a representational form of governance which was not considered to guarantee sustainable management.

(iii) Increased tenant involvement

Alliance Homes' was a service organisation and there was recognition of the need to be closer to the customer. Tenant membership of the Board would be maintained with three places reserved for Alliance Homes' tenants.

Alliance Homes would provide necessary training for tenant members of the Board.

Members raised a number of concerns and queries with regard to the following-

(i) Future Councillor involvement in Alliance Homes and conflict of interest

Members queried how a conflict of interest could arise.

It was explained that Alliance Homes had recently acquired a registered domiciliary care provider which had a significant commissioning relationship with the Council. Increasing the range of services which Alliance Homes was commissioned to provide by the Council could increase the potential for conflicts of interest to arise for councillors sitting on the Board. The proposed changes to Alliance Homes' governance arrangements would reduce the potential for any conflicts of interest in the future.

Some Members reaffirmed their concern that the Council would no longer nominate Councillors to sit on the board of Alliance Homes.

Officers and Alliance Homes were asked to investigate whether or not it would be feasible for a councillor to sit as a co-opted non-voting Board member.

(ii) The Chief Executive Officer sitting on the Board

Some Members commented that the Chief Executive Officer sitting on the Board was in itself a conflict of interest and additionally, that by sitting on the board, the officer was taking up a position that could be occupied by a councillor.

(iii) Size of the Board and Representation on the Board

Some Members reaffirmed their concern about the reduction in the size of the Board to 10 and suggested 12 would be more appropriate.

The Panel was advised that the Regulator was strongly in favour of registered providers reducing their overall board size.

It was noted by the Panel that a minimum of 3 places on the Board would be reserved for tenants. Some Members referred to the expansion of Alliance Homes' role into domiciliary care and asked whether representation on the Board by this sector should be taken into account.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities undertook to raise Members' issues and concerns about the proposed governance changes further with Alliance Homes. These would be addressed in the report to the Council.

Concluded (8 Members in favour and 3 against): that in principle, the Panel supports, the revised governance arrangements for Alliance Homes, subject to the issues and concerns raised by Members in the preamble above, being covered in the report to go forward to the Council.

ASH 17 North Somerset Healthwatch Annual Report 2013-14 (Agenda Item 8)

The representative of the Director of People and Communities introduced the report which covered the first full year of operation of HealthWatch North Somerset.

Panel Members welcomed the report, highlighting the close links between the HealthWatch and the Council, the complimentary way in which they worked together and the effective work undertaken. The Chairman on behalf of the Panel thanked Eileen Jacques, Chief Officer of HealthWatch North Somerset.

The Panel asked that next year's annual report highlights matters where as a result of concerns raised, actions were taken.

Concluded: that the report be received.

ASH 18 Performance Monitoring Report (Agenda Item 10)

The Panel received the latest finance and performance figures, including key performance indicators.

The representatives of the Director of People and Communities commented on the finance and performance figures and the areas of performance

regarding adult social care and housing, and highlighted the reasons and explanations where performance was either was exceeding target or below target. They also responded to Members' questions and queries.

The Panel welcomed the overall good performance in both adult care and housing as well as in revenues and benefits.

Concluded: that the General Performance Update report be noted.

ASH 19 Report of Councillor Ann Harley, Assistant Executive Member (Agenda Item 11)

The Panel welcomed Councillor Harley's report.

The representative of the Director of People and Communities clarified a few matters at the end of the report.

(1) The Weston team was based at the Town Hall (hub) with Worle Health Centre a spoke base for staff.

(2) The Worle team was based at the St George's GP practice (hub) with Worle Health Centre being a spoke base for staff.

(3) In the north of the district, all options were being considered, and would likely include Castlewood and GP practices in the north to ensure services were delivered from where they need to be.

ASH 20 Work Plan (Agenda Item 12)

Officers' reports dealt with at this meeting would be deleted from the Work Plan.

Empty Homes Project – It would be timely to report this matter to the Panel on 6th March rather than 16th January 2015.

Panel Members were reminded that the all councillors' seminar to consider the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Partnership Annual Report would be held on Thursday 2 October, 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm, in the New Council Chamber.

Alliance Homes Governance Arrangements – Arising from the discussion earlier in the meeting and prior to the report to Council, officers would consult with the Chairman and have further discussions with Alliance Homes. A note would then be sent to Panel Members to provide an update.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated to reflect work in progress.

Chairman
