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Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services & Housing Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Friday, 22nd January 2016

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 am Meeting Concluded: 13.00 pm

Councillors:

P Reyna Knight (Chairman)

P Mary Blatchford (Vice-Chairman)

P Robert Cleland

A Peter Crew

P David Jolley

A Richard Tucker

A Roz Willis

A Andy Cole

P Ruth Jacobs

P Tom Leimdorfer

P Liz Wells

P Deborah Yamanaka

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also in attendance: Councillor Jill Iles (Assistant Executive Member), Clive Bodley (Group Chief Executive Alliance Homes)

Officers (People & Communities) in attendance: Howard Evans (Private Sector Housing Service Manager), Mark Hughes (Head of Housing & Directorate Governance), Gerald Hunt (Assistant Director, Finance, Resources & Strategic Commissioning), David Jones (Interim Assistant Director), Miranda Muirhead (Housing Improvement Officer), Lisa Osborn (Private Rented Sector Team Manager) Sarah Shaw (Service Leader)

ASH 13 Declarations of Interest by Members (agenda item 3)

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None

ASH 14 Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 September 2015 (agenda item 4)

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

ASH Alliance Homes Annual Report (agenda item 6)

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The Alliance Homes Group Chief Executive presented the Group's Annual Report for 2014/15. He highlighted the continuing good performance of the Group but also outlined the significant challenges and future income uncertainties brought about by the implementation of the Government's welfare reforms and the June 2015 budget.

Members asked for and received explanation and clarification on the following issues:-

- The Group's willingness to take up (Section 106) affordable homes in the light of uncertainty around the Government's right to buy scheme;
- Impacts of the Government's proposals around reimbursing Housing Association losses where the cost of replacing "right to buy" housing stock exceeds receipts from sales.
- The impact on choice based letting following the reduction in size of the Council's housing register. The Head of Housing and Directorate Governance confirmed that the Council was investigating letting delays and would feedback to Members on progress.
- The Group's takeover of the Care Plus Agency and its launch of its Carer Academy
- The impact of the Group's proposed redundancies on services – the need for smarter and more efficient operations.

In concluding the item, the Chairman noted that Clive Bodley would soon be retiring as Group Chief Executive and, on behalf of the Panel, thanked him for his considerable achievements.

Concluded: that the report be received and that Members' comments be forwarded to Alliance Homes in the form of the minutes.

ASH Integrated care teams – update report (agenda item 8)

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The Interim Assistant Director (People and Communities) presented the report providing the Panel with an update on progress with a key shared initiative to deliver integrated locality working within North Somerset.

In considering the report members raised concerns about what they felt was a lack of progress, highlighting the following issues:-

- delays in recruitment/premises location;
- delays in the establishment of the Rural and Gordano Valley localities;
- challenges associated with integrating IT systems; and
- lack of progress on engagement with GPs.

Officers reiterated their view that there had been significant progress in the areas outlined in the report - bearing in mind the significant challenges associated with integration and the need for realistic expectations about what could be delivered and over what timescales.

The Panel agreed that there was a need for closer Member engagement in the process in order to build greater understanding of the issues, thereby creating opportunities for the Panel to add value. It was therefore:-

Concluded: that an Integration Working Group be established by the Panel to consider and monitor progress on the delivery of the initiative.

ASH 17 Community meals – update report (agenda item 9)

The Interim Assistant Director and Service Leader (Adults' Support and Safeguarding) presented the report which, following discussions around the findings of the Panel's Community Meals Working Group at the informal ASSH meeting on 20th November, provided an update on the implementation of new arrangements in respect of the operation of the Community Meals Business Support function. This update followed an internal review conducted by the Support Services Partnership to gauge whether the functions were being effectively delivered.

Members sought and received clarification on the following issues:-

- Staffing levels on the Care Hub and level of staff experience in respect to community meals operations;
- the handing back of tasks not deemed to be business support;
- the need to delay further review for three months;
- concerns about operations over the Christmas break;

Officers emphasised that was currently operating effectively within the acknowledged limitations, and whilst there were significant challenges going forward - as identified in the report - the contractor was listening and these were being addressed.

Members however remained concerned about the resilience/level of resourcing of the service and the potential impacts on vulnerable users.

Concluded: that a meeting of the Community Meals working group be convened in two months' time to review the implementation of the new arrangements.

ASH 18 Impact on Care Providers of National Living Wage (agenda item 10)

The Assistant Director, Finance, Resources & Strategic Commissioning gave a verbal update outlining the impacts on care providers of the Government's introduction of a living wage in April 2016 (to £7.20 – rising to £9 by 2020).

In recognition of these impacts, the Government announced a 2% Council Tax levy, ring fenced to meet social care pressures. Taking into account this levy and an assessment (in consultation with care providers) of the cost pressures, the Council re-assessed its fees and is looking at a reduction of 4%. The Council considers this to be a reasonable position and will now put the offer to the sector in writing, confirming the new fees after a period of one month.

There was discussion about the impacts and risks associated with increasing numbers of care self-funders and escalating numbers of self-funder “depletions”.

Concluded: that the update be received and that officers take account of comments and concerns raised by Members.

ASH 19 Private rented sector licensing (agenda item 7)

The Head of Housing and Directorate Governance gave a presentation setting out the Councils proposed private rented sector licensing scheme. A copy of the slides used in the presentation has been added to the signed minute book.

Members noted that the Council was currently consulting stakeholders on the proposals with the consultation due to end on 18th March 2016. With implementation of the scheme planned for 1st October 2016.

Members sought and received clarification on the following points:-

- The position with empty homes
- Multiple occupancy properties
- Properties on the scheme boundary
- The cost of the scheme
- How landlords were being informed about the scheme
- How the scheme would be enforced

Concluded:

(1) that the presentation be received and that Members comments and concerns be taken into account by officers; and

(2) that the scheme proposals be unanimously supported by the Panel.

ASH 20 West of England Housing Rental Standard (agenda item 11)

The Private Sector Housing Service Leader gave a presentation on the West of England Housing Rental Standard. A copy of the slides used in the presentation has been added to the signed minute book.

Concluded: that the presentation be received and that Members comments and concerns be taken into account by officers.

ASH 21 The Panel’s Work Plan (agenda item 12)

As part of the discussion about the Work Plan, Members considered new approaches to Panel work bearing in mind the reduction in numbers of Panel meetings to three per year.

It was noted that other Panels had established standing sub-committees or steering groups to monitor specific areas of directorate activity/performance with a view to advising the Panel/Chairman as to priorities for Panel

investigation. In considering about how the ASSH Panel might similarly divide its remit, the following steering group topic areas were suggested for further consideration (though Members noted that there would be a great deal of crossover between each):

- Social Care
- Integrated working
- Housing
- Budget and commissioning

Members also **concluded**:

- (1) that, subject to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreeing to participate, a Joint ASSH/HOSP **integration working group** be established: to review implementation of the integrated care teams.
- (2) that subject to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreeing to participate, a **joint director post working group** be established; to consider and make recommendations about a proposed joint Local Authority/North Somerset Community Partnership Director post; and
- (3) that an update on Domiciliary Care be provided at the informal Panel meeting in March.

Chairman
