

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services & Housing Policy & Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 17th November 2016

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 a.m.

Meeting Concluded: 1.15 p.m.

Councillors:

P Reyna Knight (Chairman)

P Mary Blatchford (Vice-Chairman)

Robert Cleland

A Peter Crew

P Ruth Jacobs

P David Jolley

David Shopland

P Richard Tucker

P Liz Wells

P Roz Willis

P Deborah Yamanaka

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Also in attendance: Councillors Dawn Payne, Ann Harley, Tom Leimdorfer

Officers in attendance: David Jones, Interim Assistant Director; Mark Hughes, Head of Housing and Directorate Governance; Gerald Hunt, Head of Commissioning; James McLoughlin, Housing Development Manager (People and Communities); Leo Taylor (Corporate Services)

ASH Declarations of Interest by Members

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None

ASH Minutes of the Meeting held on

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15th July 2016

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

ASH Butterfly Project update (Agenda Item 6)

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The Head of Commissioning gave an update on the "Butterfly accreditation" and "Dementia Care Matters" initiatives which were looking to bring about significant improvements to dementia care in the district following public concern around services at the Granary care home in Wraxall in 2013.

He said that the project had delivered a significant positive impact, with two providers achieving full Butterfly accreditation and all initially showing

improvements in inspection ratings. However, whilst three providers continued to perform well, a sustained “step-change” in performance across the district had not materialised, with two providers now encountering significant difficulties (one of which had now suspended services). He added that the Dementia Care Matters project had originally been planned as a two year project but the Council had been unable to fund the second year.

He responded to Members comments and queries as follows:-

- (1) He confirmed that Annabel House had been part of the Butterfly programme and that recent CQC inspection ratings had improved.
- (2) In respect to why the programme had not identified the struggling providers earlier, he said that it had a different focus to the CQC, looking at delivering cultural change rather than following the stricter, evidence based, assessment approach used by the CQC. He emphasised that the recent CQC inspection findings were in no way related to the Dementia Care Matters work or its early cessation - the provider difficulties currently highlighted by the CQC reflected the increasingly challenging financial environment faced by providers three years on.
- (3) The Council had some responsibility for privately funded providers since all care providers must be registered with the CQC and the Council was responsible for taking action to support the inspection process.
- (4) Responding to a query about the availability of courses for family carers, he said that although Carers Trust Phoenix had ceased to provide carer support in North Somerset, some related services had been transferred to Alliance Homes Group.

In concluding discussions Members agreed that the issues and growing challenges around dementia care needed further consideration by the Panel and it was:-

Concluded:

- (1) the verbal update be received; and
- (2) that it be proposed to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel (HOSP) that a joint HOSP/ASH working group be established to review dementia care service provision in the district.

ASH 14 Care Home Provider Market Provision (Agenda Item 7)

In providing an update on domiciliary care provision in the district, the Head of Commissioning reported that given the significant challenges facing incumbent provider, Human Support Group, and the urgent need to ensure the continuity of care for vulnerable residents, plans were now in place to novate the “support to live at home” contract to Notaro Homecare Ltd in mid-December. Also the Extra Care schemes at Lakeside Court and Diamond Court in Worle would be novated to Notaro and the Tamar Court Extra Care scheme to Alliance Living Care.

Members noted that the extreme urgency of this situation had meant that specified procurement timescales and procedures could not be complied with, necessitating the use of Regulation 32 of the Public Contract Regulations 2015, allowing the use of a negotiated procedure without prior publication.

He responded to Members' comments and queries as follows:

(1) *Start in Weston-super-Mare* – He confirmed that the contract was now active, but Alliance Living Care had requested that the TUPE transfer be delayed until 7th January. He confirmed that Notaro would be taking on the Start element of the Worle contract.

(2) *Possibility of recovering costs from HSG* – this could be explored but there were potential counter claims in respect of TUPE costs and he had not heard of this happening successfully elsewhere.

The Head of Commissioning also gave an update on care homes in the district. He said that six homes had closed in the last few months (for quality or financial reasons) and several were under suspension due to Care Quality Commission (CQC) performance issues. The Council was supporting providers in meeting CQC requirements with the close monitoring of “at risk” care homes and assistance with and focus on improvement plans. He explained that there were also capacity issues (particularly in dementia care) and upward pressure on fees, caused in part by the impact of capacity constraints in a neighbouring authority and the higher price paid for care by that authority.

Members noted that North Somerset was able, to some extent, to offset these impacts by drawing on the loyalty of local providers but were concerned that the growth of self-funders and increasing financial pressures faced by the funded care sector would increasingly diminish this premium.

The Head of Commissioning said that a more pressing risk, with potential implications for North Somerset Council, related to a Court Case in which a group of Torbay care home providers (some of whom had care home interests in North Somerset) were challenging the fees paid for care by Torbay Council, which it claimed were significantly lower than those paid by neighbouring Devon County Council. He agreed to provide Members with the outcome of this case once judgement had been handed down.

In the light of the earlier discussion about dementia care and the establishment of a working group to review dementia care provision, Members:-

Concluded: that the remit of the proposed joint working group on dementia care, referred to in minute ASH 13 above, be widened to include, contextually, consideration of the broader issues of care capacity in North Somerset outlined above.

ASH 15 Affordable housing delivery through the Joint Spatial Plan

The Head of Housing and Directorate Governance presented the report which set out the detail behind the affordable housing (AH) projections included as part of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) consultation papers.

Officers responded to Members comments and queries as follows:-

(1) It was acknowledged that there would be need to update the Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in the light of the JSP proposals and new/emerging Government affordable housing guidelines. Work had already started on this. Members noted that the review of the Council's Core Strategy would provide an important opportunity to reconsider the required benchmark (currently 30%) of AHs for new developments.

(2) The National Housing Federation and developers were lobbying the Government on starter homes proposals. For Local Authorities, although definitive technical guidance had not yet been provided, it was clear that the introduction of starter homes would reduce the availability of traditional AH, and rented affordable accommodation in particular (and it was still unclear whether existing AH commitments would be impacted).

(3) Members noted that there were also considerable longer-term risks for the Council associated with policy consequences leading to a growing private rental sector as this could significantly impact on people's ability to self-fund care costs later in life.

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

ASH 16 Panel engagement with the development of the Empty Properties Delivery Plan (2016-2021)

The Chairman presented the report outlining the work of the Panel's Empty Properties Working Group in engaging with officers on the development of the Council's Empty Properties Delivery Plan prior to public consultation on 12th October 2016. The Panel noted that the results of the consultation would be published on 13th December and that the Plan would go before the Executive Member for approval soon after.

Members fully supported the finalised consultation document, noting Officers had taken account of a number of Members' suggestions, including the potential for the recovery of administration costs associated with enforcement action.

Concluded: that the Panel recommend approval of the plan by the Executive

ASH 17 Sustainability and Transformation Plan

The Interim Assistant Director, People and Communities, briefly outlined the background to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan process: following on from NHS England's publication of the 'Five Year Forward View' for the NHS in England, the development of STPs were a new approach to planning health and care services across over the next 5 years. Local organisations were required to work together to develop a shared understanding of the challenges and to agree joint plans (STPs) for addressing these.

The principal aims of STPs were to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of local people
- Improve the quality of local health and care services
- Deliver financial stability and balance throughout the local health care system.

Members noted that there would be a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Meeting on 1st December involving Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire health scrutiny committees and that the ASH Panel had also been invited to attend and participate.

Concluded: - that the update be received.

ASH 18 Reports from ASH Steering Groups

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Chairmen of the Panel's four steering groups (SGs) gave verbal updates on the work of their respective SGs.

In discussion, it was **recommended** that the Services Steering Group call a further informal meeting with officers for an update on Community Transport (to which all ASH Members will be invited to attend).

Concluded: that the updates be received.

ASH 19 The Panel's Work Plan

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Members considered the Work Plan which had been updated to reflect the outcomes of discussion from the previous Panel meeting.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated to include actions and proposals arising from the current meeting.

Chairman
