

# Minutes

of the Meeting of the

## **Adult Services & Housing Policy & Scrutiny Panel**

**Thursday, 23rd November 2017**

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

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 a.m.

Meeting Concluded: 12.45 p.m.

### **Councillors:**

P Reyna Knight (Chairman)

P Mary Blatchford (Vice-Chairman)

P Robert Cleland

P Ruth Jacobs

David Shopland

A Liz Wells

A Deborah Yamanaka

A Peter Crew

P David Jolley

P Richard Tucker

P Roz Willis

P Donald Davies (Substitute for Cllr  
Yamanaka)

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Jill Iles and Georgie Bigg (Healthwatch North Somerset)

**Officers in attendance:** Jo Baker, Alun Davies, Steve Devine, Rob Hepworth, Howard Evans, Mark Hughes, Gerald Hunt, Lisa Osborn, Sheila Smith, Hayley Verrico, James Wright (People and Communities); Leo Taylor (Corporate Services)

### **ASH     Public Discussion – Review of conditions in the private rented sector 1        (Agenda Item 1)**

Alan Rice, representing ACORN (a group representing private sector tenants) addressed the Panel in support of selective licencing of private sector landlords in Central Ward, Weston-super-Mare. He said that, in an area with acknowledged deprivation issues, this was the best approach for safeguarding tenants and providing a rapid improvement in housing conditions. He expressed disappointment that, despite local support and the success of similar licencing schemes elsewhere, the Council appeared to be favouring a self-regulatory option - an "action area" supported by an accreditation scheme – and urged Members to ensure that the licencing option remained on the table in any further consultation.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rice for his address.

**ASH 2 Public Discussion – Review of conditions in the private rented sector (Agenda Item 1)**

Annie Higgs, local resident, also addressed the Panel in support of a private sector landlords licensing scheme. She referred to the success of a similar scheme in Easton, Bristol and how this had benefited her daughter who was renting in the area.

The Chairman thanked Ms Higgs for her address.

**ASH 3 Public Discussion – Review of conditions in the private rented sector (Agenda Item 1)**

Ms Sam Jackson, Director National Landlords Code of Excellence Ltd (NLCE) addressed the Panel in support of self-accreditation within the private sector rental market in North Somerset. She said the Council already had sufficient powers to regulate the sector and argued that selective licensing didn't work in practice. She said it would add cost that ultimately would be borne by tenants and risked depressing the market by increasing insurance premiums and decreasing property prices.

The Chairman thanked Ms Jackson for her address.

**ASH 4 Declarations of Interest by Members**

None

**ASH 5 Minutes of the Meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

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

**ASH 6 North Somerset Annual Complaints Report 2016/17 (Agenda Item 6)**

The Complaints and Directorate Governance Manager presented the report covering complaints about Adult Social Services (services both provided and commissioned by Adult Social Services).

Officers responded to Members' comments and queries as follows:

- (1) *enablement/reablement complaints* – Most of these complaints were from people who were over the care threshold and felt they had not received adequate information;
- (2) *lessons learnt from the complaint investigated by the Local Government Ombudsman resulting in a maladministration and injustice finding* – This finding had been challenged by the Council and a response from the Ombudsman was pending;
- (3) *the need for appropriate training to ensure self-funders were identified as early as possible in the process and appropriately advised* – Officers were very aware of the need for early identification/advice. The Council's Care Navigators provided free impartial advice and support and ensured that important safeguards were in place;
- (4) *Could Council Tax records or the electoral role be used as a means to advertise the Care Navigator Service?* – Officers said they would explore the potential for using Council Tax leaflets to increase awareness;

(5) *Presentation of complaints data* – officers acknowledged Members’ request that data presented as a percentage also show the correlating raw numbers from which it was derived.

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

## **ASH 7      Housing with Support Strategy consultation (Agenda Item 7)**

The Housing with Support project officer presented the report outlining the outcome of the recent consultation on the draft Housing with Support Strategy. The aim of the strategy was to agree short, medium and long-term actions with regard to accommodation with support.

He responded to Members’ comments and queries about the consultation outcomes as follows:-

- (1) *Engagement with the target groups* – There had been considerable engagement with target client groups in the development of the draft and, going forward, further engagement would be incorporated into the implementation action plan.
- (2) *Sheltered housing and the mapping exercise* – Some “sheltered” properties were no longer fit-for-purpose. Although housing associations had upgraded some, a discussion with them was underway about their strategies going forward (as to how, for instance, those properties no longer suitable for sheltered housing could be re-purposed for other services). The mapping exercise was seeking to fully scope all sheltered provision in the area and how it was currently used.
- (3) *It would be useful, to get a better idea of capacity, for the Panel to be provided with a wider map showing the range of designated older people’s housing across the district* – This would be difficult to provide because there were issues around definitions.

It was **agreed** therefore that Members would be provided with total (rather than type specific) numbers of accommodation designated for older people.

- (4) *Were people with autism sufficiently taken account of in the strategy?* – The strategy linked with the Council’s Autism Strategy and for the first time provided a “context” within which improved focus on supporting those diagnosed with autism could be provided alongside those with other needs.
- (5) *Concern about budget proposals to reduce spending on “floating support” and the impact on housing support for people with learning difficulties* – There was a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) commitment to reducing costs but this was linked to discussions with Alliance Care about different and potentially more effective approaches to delivering the service.

**Concluded:**

- (1) that the report be received and Members’ comments and queries forwarded to Officers in the form of the minutes; and
- (2) that it be **recommended** to the Executive Member for Adult Social Care that the Housing with Support Strategy be formally adopted.

**ASH 8      Review of condition in the private rented sector (Agenda Item 8)**

The Private Sector Housing Service Leader outlined the recent comprehensive review of conditions in the Private Rented Sector and presented the consultation report setting out the options considered for improving conditions and a recommendation for the way forward.

Officers responded to Members' comments and queries on the consultation report as follows:-

(1) *Concern that the report recommendations asked Members to comment on the consultation via the Council's consultation portal. The Panel as a whole should have had an opportunity to comment prior to the approval of the consultation report by the Executive Member* – It was always intended that the Panel would be engaged in the process before a final decision on the way forward. In the meantime, individual Councillors were encouraged, should they wish, to submit any comments on the consultation document via the portal as this would help streamline the response analysis.

(2) *there was some concern that the options appraisal section appeared slanted towards the recommended option* - It was confirmed that the document set out an objective review of the options, that the recommended way forward was based on the appraisal, and that clarification could be provided in relation to any specific queries on the appraisal during the subsequent Panel engagement.

(3) *There was a need to consider equalities impacts in the options analysis* – This was acknowledged and would be undertaken to inform a final decision. The intention was to work with Acorn to better understand the tenant's perspective.

(4) *Queries about the comparative costings of the options* – Members would have an opportunity to consider the costings in more detail during the subsequent Panel engagement.

**Concluded:-**

(1) that the report be received;

(2) that, should they wish, individual Members submit comments on the consultation document via the Council's e-consult portal; and

(3) that the Panel's Housing Steering Group be tasked with engaging with officers in reviewing the outcome of the consultation and the development of finalised recommendations to the Executive Member.

**ASH 9      North Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report 2016/2017 (Agenda Item 9)**

The Safeguarding Adults Manager presented the report assessing the impact of the work undertaken by the North Somerset Safeguarding Adult Board (NSSAB) on service quality and on safeguarding outcomes for adults in North Somerset in 2016/17.

Members noted that Tony Oliver, Independent Chair, North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board, had intended attending the meeting but unavoidable circumstances had prevented him from doing so.

In considering the report, Members **concluded:-**

- (1) that the NNSAB Annual Report 2016/2017 be received: and
- (2) that the Panel endorse the NSSAB Business Plan for 2016/17.

#### **ASH 10 Performance Monitoring (Agenda Item 10)**

Members considered the report informing Members of the management performance position at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017 (Quarter 1). The report contained the following information:-

- an overview of key Corporate Performance Indicators (KCPIs), Key Service Measures (KSMs) and volume measures and
- details of achievements against KCPIs and KSMs relevant to the remit of the Panel

**Concluded:**

- (1) that the report be received; and
- (2) that the service delivery achievements and proposed actions to further improve performance set out in the report be endorsed.

#### **ASH 11 Steering Group updates (Agenda Item 11)**

Councillor Ruth Jacobs, Chair of the Panel's Housing Steering Group presented the report outlining, and recommending the implementation of, proposed changes to the Homechoice North Somerset Lettings and Assessment Policy.

She explained that, in accordance with the Panel's "new ways of working" and having consulted all Panel Members, the Steering Group recommended on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017 that the Executive Member for Planning, Highways, Transport, Housing and Economic Development implement the proposed changes.

Having considered the report, the Panel:-

**Concluded:** that the Housing Steering Group's recommendations to the Executive Member be retrospectively endorsed.

Councillor David Jolley, Chair of the Panel's Budget Steering Group gave an update on the 2017/18 Adult Social Care budget showing projected key variances by service type and by support need/service area. He also updated Members on key risks and challenges going forward.

#### **ASH 1 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 12)**

Having considered the Work Plan which had been updated to reflect outcomes of discussion from the previous meeting, Members:-

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

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Chairman

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