

Draft Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 25th June 2020

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 10:30 Meeting Concluded: 13:26

Councillors:

P Mark Crosby (Chairman)
P Caroline Cherry (Vice Chairman)

A Gill Bute
P John Cato
P Ciaran Cronnelly (Substitute for Councillor Ian Parker)
P Ann Harley
A Karin Haverson
A Sandra Hearne
P Huw James
P Patrick Keating
A Ian Parker
P Mike Solomon
P Roz Willis

Georgie Bigg (co-opted Member, Healthwatch)

P: Present
A: Apologies for absence submitted

Officers in attendance: Mark Hughes, Gerald Hunt, Hayley Verrico, Sheila Smith (People and Communities); Katherine Sokol, Leo Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

1

None.

ASH Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 November 2019 (Agenda Item 4)

2

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

ASH Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other committees and panels (if any) (Agenda Item 5)

3

None.

ASH The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 6)

4

In discussing this item, Members agreed that modifications to the work plan prioritising responses to the Covid-19 emergency needed to be made.

This included suggestions about engagement with the voluntary groups, domestic abuse, self-funders in care homes, monitoring of the Healthwatch end of year report, social funding in rural communities and reviewing the Blue Badge policy. Officers were invited to make suggestions and these included looking at the ongoing funding of adult social care (including a potential uptake of younger people by the system) and support for adult social care providers post-Covid.

Resolved: that an informal meeting of the panel be convened to discuss the work plan.

ASH Service response Covid-19: Hospital Discharges (Agenda item 7)

5

The Assistant Director of People and Communities gave a presentation on the service's response to hospital discharges during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members' questions and requests for clarification were as follows:

- Were people discharged from hospital into care homes able to go into homes near where they lived? Was the Nightingale Hospital able to be used for this? *The service had not been able to give people as much choice as to which care home they were discharged to. The Nightingale Hospital had been stood down after a decision by the BNSSG CCG to do so.*
- Could volunteers be used to help people shielding at home to go out for the first time after this? What would the structure of the relationship between voluntary organisations and the Council look like? *There were opportunities around wellbeing services, linking with day care services would be a key link, and the Head of Commissioning was looking to realign resources as much as possible. It was not the role of NSC to dictate the structure of volunteering organisations, and it was too early to be able to say what this would look like.*

Concluded: that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH Covid-19 Commissioning update (Agenda Item 8)

6

The Head of Commissioning presented the report updating the situation with commissioning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members' questions and comments were made as follows:

- What was the situation with PPE before Covid? *The guidance regarding PPE had changed over time. The brokerage service had advocated for more testing and PPE in care homes.*
- How were care homes responding to the Technology Assisted Care initiatives? *These had been suspended during the pandemic, as workers were unable to access the care home to install cables. Homes were*

- interested and the NHS was supportive. Funding had been applied for.*
- Why was the occupancy rate so low at the St George's care home? *There had been two Covid-19 outbreaks in the home, and many staff and residents had tested positive for the virus. It would reopen the week after this meeting subject to no further outbreaks.*
 - Would employees and volunteers in the care sector now move on to other jobs now that the lockdown was easing? *The remuneration offered to employees in this area was now hopefully sufficient. Providers had never before experienced such low turnover of staff or sickness absences of those staff.*

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

ASH Homelessness update (Agenda Item 9)

7

The Head of Strategy and Housing presented an update on the issues surrounding homelessness in North Somerset during the Covid-19 pandemic. This included an update on the funding for homelessness.

He responded to Members' comments and queries as follows:

- Some rough sleepers were unwilling to be separated from their dogs and were difficult to accommodate as there was no suitable urgent accommodation to suit their needs. What was North Somerset Council's position on this? *Individual cases could not be commented on, but all people who wanted to be housed were offered a place. This included those referred by the homelessness outreach team who would have been the ones the most likely to have dogs.*
- What was the extent of rent arrears in North Somerset, and how many people were at risk of homelessness once the courts opened? *These details were not available, but there was an expectation that the number of these would rise. It was emphasised that the Housing team was working with landlords to mitigate this.*

Concluded: that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH Month 12 Adult Care Budget Monitor (Agenda Item 10)

8

The Panel received the report from the Finance Business Partner on the Month 12 Adult Care and Housing Budget Monitor.

The report summarised and discussed the current forecast spend against budget for adult services, highlighting key variances and contextual information. It also provided a high level overview of the potential financial impact of the Covid-19 emergency.

A question from Members was responded to as follows:

- What would happen if central government was not able to provide another tranche of funding to support the increase in costs due to the Council's response to the Covid-19 emergency? *Levels of reserves*

would need to be looked at, and where savings could be made, which would include a re-prioritisation of funding. Some savings plans would have to be brought forward.

Concluded: that the report, including the outturn spend against budget for adult care services and housing, and the risks and opportunities associated with the medium term position, be noted.

Chairman
