

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 7 July 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.06 am

Meeting Concluded: 12.39 pm

Councillors:

Timothy Snaden (Chairman)

John Cato
Wendy Griggs
Sandra Hearne
Ruth Jacobs
Huw James
Roz Willis

Apologies: Councillors: Ann Harley and Richard Tucker.

Absent: Councillors Karin Haverson, Richard Westwood and Georgie Bigg.

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt, Michael Hennessey (Adult Social Services); Mark Jarvis, Kathy Fisher, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

1 Election of the Vice-Chairman for the 2022-23 municipal year

Resolved: that Councillor Sandra Hearne be elected Vice-Chairman.

2 Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO 9)

None.

3 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

4 Minutes

Minutes of 24 February 2022 – to approve as a correct record.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 24 February 2022 be approved as a

correct record.

5 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)

None.

6 Adults Social Services Annual Directorate Statement (ADS) 2022-2023

The Director of Adults Services presented the report, which highlighted the key aspects of the annual directorate statement and the links to the medium-term financial plan and transformation programme. The Director suggested that regular update reports to the Panel would be useful to scrutinise how the objectives in the Statement were being met.

In discussion, the following points were raised (officer responses in italics):

- How were the outcomes in the statement to be measured? *Organisation-wide commitments were set by the performance team. The Director would be able to bring performance measures for the Directorate to the next ASH Panel meeting.*
- Would there be a renewal of the safeguarding training for Members? *This had slipped during Covid, and would be reinstated.*
- When was the next CQC inspection due? *These were due to restart in April 2023 – the last one had been in 2010. The new regime for CQC inspections was to be based around outcomes and behaviours. The Director introduced Michael Hennessey, who was the newly appointed CQC Assurance Programme Manager, and was the officer leading on preparations for the CQC inspection.*

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

7 Adult Social Care Reforms

The Director of Adults Services presented the report updating the Panel on the key aspects of the reforms along with timescales for implementation, and highlighted the risks to North Somerset Council as well as the actions being taken to address these. The uncertainty on how the reforms were to be funded was explained, along with the background of North Somerset having the lowest cost of care in the south-west (while being close to the England average), and with 54% of the care market being self-funded in the District.

The following points were raised in discussion:

- Who would pick up the bill for self-funders once the cost of care cap had been reached? *The Directorate was undertaking a cost of care exercise, and there were concerns that this would be higher than currently paid. Providers, on the other hand, were concerned that this would be lower than they currently received.*
- What was the process involved for North Somerset to implement the reforms? *There would need to be recruitment or secondment to fill the staffing gaps, and there was a risk that some projects might have to be de-*

prioritised.

There were also concerns raised around the issues of communicating the changes to the community, and whether the £200 per week living allowance was sufficient

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

8 Adult Social Care Finance Update

The Senior Accountant updated the Panel on the current forecast spend against budget for Adults Services, highlighting key variances, movements, and contextual information. The £350,000 adverse variance was an improvement on the 2021 forecast and was better than predicted. The key work for the coming year was to identify where sustainable savings could be made.

In discussion, Members raised the point of the travel allowance being too low, at 45p per mile, and discussed methods of lobbying national government to allow HMRC to increase this.

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

9 Older People's Housing Needs Assessment

The Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnership and Housing Solutions presented the report commissioned from Housing Lin to the Panel, which outlined predicted demand for specialist older people's Housing requirements for North Somerset over the next thirty years and provided granular detail at the local level to evidence market engagement plans and business case for investment in accommodation shift proposals as part of the MTFP (Medium Term Financial Plan) process.

Members then discussed assured tenancies and shared ownership for older people.

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

10 North Somerset Annual Complaints Report 2021-22

The report was presented by the Director of Adults Services, and contained statistics of customer feedback received from April 2020 to March 2021. The report indicated that complaints were lower compared to 2019-20, but also highlighted some trends, learning and service improvements that resulted.

In discussion, Members discussed whether compliments were recorded (they were, but had to be made in writing), and whether complainants were signposted to the appropriate advocates when necessary.

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

11 Draft Carers Inquiry Day Report

With the Strategy & Policy Development Officer unable to attend to present the report, Members discussed the recommendations and next steps. The Inquiry Day and resulting report sought to inform and influence the development of the Carers' strategy.

Members felt that there should be a 'think carer' golden thread running through the work of the Council, as well as that there should be a Carer's Champion promoting an understanding of, and championing support for, carers.

Concluded: that

(1) the Panel recommended that an elected Member be a Carer's Champion; and that

(2) the final report and recommendations be submitted to the Executive Member for consideration.

12 The Panel's Work Plan

The Scrutiny Officer discussed the Panel's work plan and invited discussion with Members for additional items to add to it, as well as picking up any actions from the meeting.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated.

Chairman
