

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 23 February 2023

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.04 am

Meeting Concluded: 12.57 pm

Councillors:

Timothy Snaden (Chairman)

Sandra Hearne (Vice-Chairman)

John Cato

Wendy Griggs

Karin Haverson

Huw James

Richard Tucker

Richard Westwood

Apologies: Councillors: Mark Crosby, Ann Harley, Ruth Jacobs and Roz Willis.

Absent: None.

Also in attendance: Georgie Bigg (Co-opted member, HealthWatch North Somerset)

Officers in attendance: Gerald Hunt, Fiona Shergold, Graham Booth, Elizabeth Langson, Kay Eccles (Adult Social Services); Howard Evans (Public Health and Regulatory Services); Jessika Robinson, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO9)

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None.

ASH Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

23

None.

ASH Minutes

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Minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2022 – to approve as a correct record.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

ASH 25 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)

None.

Change to agenda order – items 8 and 10 moved to before item 6.

ASH 26 Service Development - Reablement and TEC and Falls Pilot Update (Agenda item 8)

The Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing Solutions presented the report, starting with some background to the Technology Enhanced Care (TEC) schemes which included details on the nationally acclaimed projects that the team had been involved with (such as the development of the first commercially deliverable acoustic monitoring system), and linked this to the savings that had been achieved for the Council's budget under the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Workforce challenges in the social care system suggested that the use of TEC would be the best option for care coverage in the future.

Winter pressures on the NHS and social care system meant that fewer people were currently going through the reablement pathway than would be otherwise, and the Wellness and Rapid Response services had been merged to provide close to 24/7 coverage. He also illustrated how close working with partners helped the Falls project to work around fall scenarios.

The Head of Service Development then presented four detailed case studies of people using the TEC service for reablement, utilising everyday technology (such as the Amazon Alexa) to meet people's needs and to prevent the need for long term care.

In discussion, Members raised the following topics:

- The differences between TEC interventions for reablement and virtual wards.
- How referrals to the service were made.
- That although there hadn't been a need to prioritise referrals to the service yet, eventually these would be prioritised by risk.

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

ASH 27 Adult Social Care Discharge Fund (Agenda item 10)

The Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing Solutions updated the Panel on the funding received to execute measures to support hospital discharge arrangements over the winter.

The funding had been provided at short notice, and was short term in nature, and there was extensive financial and activity monitoring with detailed returns required

weekly.

The funding for local authorities in the BNSSG area totalled £3.2 million, with North Somerset's share of this being £769,000. The BNSSG ICB funding was £8.3 million, with North Somerset being allocated £2.1 million. In addition to the 9% increase to domiciliary care providers and other provisions outlined in the appendices to the report, the funding was being used to finance the Falls project for six months.

In discussion, it was suggested that it would be useful to quantify the reduction in care journeys in terms of reduced CO₂ equivalents to help feed into the Council's climate change targets.

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

ASH 28 North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021 – 2022 (Agenda item 6)

The Business Manager (North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board) presented the report, which detailed the work of the Board's work for the 2021-22 year. This included a discussion of the impacts of Covid, some case studies and other policy work.

Also discussed was the ongoing refresh of the Board's activities under the new directorship of Teresa Bell.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- That co-production was a key part of the Board's work;
- The involvement of HealthWatch North Somerset;
- The context around the Board's new vision;
- That self-neglect was an ongoing issue and reviews of the Board's work were being carried out to better manage this in the future;
- How members of the public could refer cases to the Board.

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

ASH 29 Housing Stock Condition Report 2023 (Agenda item 7)

The Private Sector Housing Service Leader presented the report on behalf of the Building Research Establishment (BRE), which had been contracted to carry out the survey. The survey was a modelling survey, and BRE were industry leaders in carrying out this type of work. Members were also reminded that the survey focussed on the private rented sector and energy.

The key results were the comparison to the English Housing Survey (a government national survey), and after clarifying that the SimpleSAP measure was a numerical aggregate of energy efficiency, the report detailed that the average SimpleSAP rating for properties in North Somerset was only slightly below the national and regional levels. Improving as many properties as possible up to an

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of 'C' would help alleviate fuel poverty and carbon emissions.

In discussion, the following topics were raised:

- That there had been a reduction in Category 1 hazards across all wards since the last survey in 2018;
- That pending new regulations would require private rental properties to have at least an EPC 'C' rating (indications were that this would be required by 2030);
- That the survey was a good starting point (along with the Parity Pathways database) for reviewing housing conditions including discretionary licensing of the private rented sector;
- The relative high costs for bringing listed buildings up to an EPC 'C' rating;
- The rogue landlord reporting tool on the North Somerset Council website.

Members commended the Private Rented Sector Housing team for their work, as well as their involvement in the landlord accreditation schemes.

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

ASH 30 Asylum Seeker Programme (Agenda item 9)

The Head of Housing Solutions presented the report on behalf of the Director, Adult Social Services. She clarified that the contingency hotels were not being used for Afghani or Ukrainian refugees, who were administered under another scheme.

There are 218 asylum seekers in North Somerset with 3 hotels around the district currently being used for accommodation (although 5 hotels had been commissioned by the Home Office, 2 had been withdrawn from the contingency list). All residents in hotels had now been registered with a GP, and Community Cohesion is being undertaken by Weston College on behalf of North Somerset Council. The Home Office were looking at sourcing 150 units for dispersal housing in North Somerset.

Members were urged to let the Housing Solutions team know if they were to hear of any indication of protests planned against the hotels, or any other hate type messaging on social media so that this could be reported to the Home Office.

Members discussed the following topics:

- Whether voluntary work was allowed for asylum seekers, given that they were prohibited from seeking employment until their visas had been approved;
- Access to public transport and cycling schemes for asylum seekers housed in the contingency hotels and access to activities;
- That Migrant Help was an organisation that worked with asylum seekers and assisted with visa applications;
- The timelines for Asylum seekers being able to move on from the contingency hotels;
- The percentages of total visa applications being approved.

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

ASH 31 Adult Social Care Finance Update (Agenda item 11)

The Senior/Principal Accountant (Adults) presented the report, updating the Panel on the budget position at month 9 of the financial year. He highlighted how the directorate's predicted overspend at the year end in previous reports had now turned into a small underspend as a result of favourable movements in Individual Care and Support Packages, as well as the release of contingency budgets.

He then spent some time discussing the budget for the 2023-24 financial year. The base budget for Adult Social Care had been increased by £10 million, which rose to about £13.5 million when grants were taken into account. The directorate had however committed to £4 million of savings (some of which were continuations of savings that had been achieved in the current year).

In discussion, Members thanked the Principal Accountant and the overall directorate for their hard work on meeting the budget and finding the savings required.

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

ASH 32 ASH Panel Work Plan February 2023 (Agenda item 12)

The Policy and Scrutiny Senior 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.

The Panel endorsed the addendum to the work plan listing topics for the Panel to focus on in the next administration, as taken from the Chairman's report to February Council.

The Panel also suggested that Georgie Bigg, the Chairman of HealthWatch North Somerset, be invited to continue sitting on the Panel as a co-opted member after the elections.

Furthermore, the next ASH Panel under the new administration was reminded that a new Carer's Champion would need to be elected from all Members.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated.

Chairman
