

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 2 November 2023

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.03 am

Meeting Concluded: 12.35 pm

Councillors:

Dan Thomas (Chairperson)

Timothy Snaden (Vice-Chairperson)

Nigel Ashton

Annabelle Chard

Jemma Coles

Lisa Pilgrim

Luke Smith

Joe Tristram

Richard Tucker

Apologies: Councillors: Wendy Griggs and Terry Porter. Co-opted Member Georgie Bigg.

Also in attendance: Councillors Jenna Ho Marris and Roger Whitfield.

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt, Sarah Stillwell, Abby Murphy, Graham Booth, Brent Cross and Harriet Isherwood.

ASH Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

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None.

ASH Minutes

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Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 6 July 2023 – to approve as a correct record.

Recommended: that the minutes of the meeting of 6 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

ASH Better Care Fund Update

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The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing Solutions presented the report which discussed the Better Care Fund Plan for 2023-25. As

the report had not been included, Members were reminded that this report had also been discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting of 24 August, and could be found in the papers for that meeting.

The report included details of the North Somerset Local Priorities, key changes since the previous Better Care Fund Plan, and the approach to collaboration and joint commissioning. The Assistant Director also gave a verbal update on progression of the Winter Planning preparations.

In discussion, the following topics were raised:

- Even though the coming winter would be challenging, the main reasons behind North Somerset performing comparatively well on hospital discharges were the work on falls interventions, the use of TEC (Technology Enabled Care) and improvements in the capacity of the reablement service.
- The Wellness and Rapid Response teams being linked to create a collaborative model to prioritise responses to incidents.
- Monitoring by Transfer of Care hubs would work to prevent people being discharged from hospital before they were clinically ready, in the context of the national Discharge to Assess model where this was a pressure point.
- That longer stays in hospital could reduce the cost of care packages needed, but that since longer waiting times and delays in elective surgeries that started during the Covid pandemic were still occurring and causing a backlog, it was not always practical to keep patients in hospitals for longer.

Recommended: that with the understanding that the report would be circulated after the meeting, and Member's comments collated, the report be received and comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

ASH 15 Performance Monitoring

The Principal Business Intelligence Lead presented the report which was a response to Members asking for regular performance updates at the previous meeting of the ASH Panel. It was emphasised that the data used was from quarter 1 as that had been what was available at the publication deadline for this meeting.

Members suggested that, to make the data more timely, they could be circulated to the Panel on a monthly basis instead of holding them over to one of the three formal meetings a year.

Members also discussed: the reduction in the number of affordable homes available; the use of the 'local measure' statistic in the reports, and that the KPIs containing these had been agreed as part of the Corporate Plan progress in response to requests from Members; and that officers would return with more detail on the increase in crisis support numbers.

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

ASH 16 Housing Strategy Year 1 Review

The report was presented by the Head of Housing Solutions and provided a

review of the Housing Strategy to ensure that all actions were still relevant and achievable.

Members commented as follows:

- That the use of incentives, as opposed to penalties, for landlords was preferable.
- That the incentives (of up to £5,000) had caused an increase in the number of landlords contacting the Housing team.
- That compulsory purchase of empty homes was always meant to be a last resort.
- That the Affordable Housing working group could investigate whether there was a need for increasing the number of 1-bedroom housing units in new builds.
- That the Local Housing Allowance was a rate set by national government and had not increased since 2020 – Members were urged to lobby local MPs and government directly for an update to this.
- That there had been an increase in the number of people approaching the Housing team because of unaffordable rents.

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

The Panel adjourned for a short break at 11:11 a.m.

The Panel reconvened at 11:20 a.m.

ASH 17 North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board

The Director of Adult Social Services presented the report covering the activity of the North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board for the 2022-23 year. Included in the presentation were details about the funding of the Board, a few case studies showing the work carried out by the Board and an overview of the safeguarding work carried out by North Somerset Council.

Members sought more detail on the case studies and were assured that the lessons learned from the Safeguarding Adults Reviews were shared robustly. Any data that was missing from the draft report was being validated by the Department of Health and Social Care and would be on the Board's website by the following week. Members were also assured that the reviews were multi-agency and that on-site reviews engaged with all staff and not solely at the management level when performing a Safeguarding Adults Review.

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

ASH 18 Adult Social Services Commissioning Strategy

The report, presented by the Assistant Director, Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing Solutions, went into detail on the seven-year overarching commissioning

strategy that identified the commissioning intentions for both statutory and non-statutory (early prevention and intervention) services, given that Adults Social Services was currently spending approximately £100m annually on commissioning.

In discussion, Members raised the following topics: that the majority of out-of-district placements were from hospitals in Devon and Somerset; that the difference between Extra Care housing and Supported Living was that Supported Living accommodation was smaller and focused on more complex need; possible links to the Local Plan to support need; and that the data could be reported on more regularly.

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

ASH 19 Finance Update

The Senior / Principal Accountant (Adults) presented the report summarising and discussing current forecast spend against budget for adult services, highlighting key variances, movements, and contextual information. The forecast was based on figures at the end of month 5 (August 2023) and showed a predicted year end underspend of £0.282m.

Members' input on the data to be used for future reports was requested, and the Director of Adults Services pointed out that difficult savings of £17m would need to be made over the coming four year period as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) process.

Members then had queries and requests for clarification on the following:

- that demands were managed through the use of the reablement service, TEC, adaptations to accommodation, the pathways from Childrens to Adults Services, and a focus on doing more work on preventative strategies.
- The financial projections were made on a combination of volume and price due to the different cost of individual packages.
- The Office for National Statistics produced ward-level population data that were used in financial projections.

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

ASH 20 ASH Work Plan November 2023

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.

Chairman
