

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 21 March 2024

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.00 am

Meeting Concluded: 12.56 pm

Councillors:

Dan Thomas (Chairperson)

Timothy Snaden (Vice-Chairperson)

Annabelle Chard

Jemma Coles

Wendy Griggs

Lisa Pilgrim

Luke Smith

Joe Tristram

Richard Tucker

Other Panel Members:

Georgie Bigg

Apologies: Councillor: Terry Porter.

Absent: Councillor Nigel Ashton.

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

Officers in attendance: Gerald Hunt (Assistant Director, Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing), Graham Booth, Martin Hawketts (Service Manager), Jo Hopkins (Principal Occupational Therapist), Teresa Stanley (Head of Strategy and Commissioning) and Brent Cross (Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer).

Other colleagues in attendance: Iain Lock (Chief Operating Officer, Alliance Homes).

ASH 21 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

ASH 22 Minutes

Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 2 November 2023 – to approve as a correct record.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2023 be approved as a correct record.

ASH 23 Alliance Homes Update

The report was presented by the Chief Operating Officer of Alliance Homes. It included details on Alliance's strategic ambitions, operating framework and environment, performance and the evolution of Alliance's engagement policy with the ASH Panel.

In discussion, the following topics were raised:

- The methods that residents could use to contact Alliance, including the new digital offer that would be launched at the end of March.
- That getting customers to understand the services offered was important, and that Adult Social Services had also commissioned services through Alliance to support vulnerable people.
- The Decent Homes standard, and how Alliance was migrating to a higher 'Alliance Standard'; and that there would be a pilot of an MOT model later in 2024 where stock condition and customer needs could be captured in one visit.
- The difference between Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, and that Alliance was working on reducing the turnaround time for both of these.
- The need to give clarity to customers and reduce wait times (and improve the response) in the context of variable turnaround time for maintenance.
- The forecasts for completion of new homes in North Somerset.
- That Alliance was devoting an increased resource to dealing with customer complaints, and that all Alliance services were evolving to meet regulatory pressure and customer expectations.

Concluded:

That the report be received and the Panel's feedback provided in the form of the minutes.

ASH 24 Quality Assurance and Preparedness for Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection

The Principal Occupational Therapist introduced the report which gave the latest updates from the CQC following the pilot inspections and learning from those inspections. The report also outlined the North Somerset position and preparedness and preparation for the CQC assurance visit.

The timetable for the CQC stated that all inspections would be completed by the end of 2025.

Members then discussed the number of vacancies across the directorate, the recruitment of occupational therapists and social workers, that the directorate could only make recommendations to Homechoice to influence banding on the Jigsaw platform.

Concluded:

That the report be received and the Panel's feedback provided in the form of the minutes.

ASH 25 Report of the ASH Adult Social Care Performance Measures working group

The report, delivered by the Chairperson of the Adults Social Care and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel, recommended that the Panel endorse the findings of the Performance Measures working group and give the report's recommendations to the relevant Executive Members.

Concluded: That

- (i) The ASH Panel endorse the recommendations set out in the report; and that-
- (ii) The recommendations set out in the report be sent to the relevant Executive Members; and that
- (iii) The Key Performance Indicators listed in the report be collected and regularly shared with the Panel.

ASH 26 Healthwatch Report: Time to think differently about Social Care

The report, presented by Chair of Healthwatch, BNSSG, was commissioned by North Somerset Adults Social Services to collect qualitative data on the social care needs of people not currently accessing social services, and the considerations that could be taken forward from this data.

The Assistant Director, Commissioning, Partnerships and Housing thanked the Healthwatch Chair for the report that highlighted areas to work on ahead of the CQC inspection. It was acknowledged that the website and language used in communicating social care services needed improvement. The directorate was making progress in changes that had been informed by the report.

Concluded:

That the report be received and the Panel's feedback provided in the form of the minutes.

The Panel adjourned for a short break at 11:33 a.m.

The Panel reconvened at 11:42 a.m.

ASH 27 Adult Social Services and Housing Annual Commissioning Intentions Report 2024/25

The Head of Strategy and Commissioning presented the report. The commissioning intentions set out within the report were intended to support the delivery of the Adults Social Services and Housing priorities, whilst supporting commissioning intentions as part of the new Adult Social Services Commissioning Strategy 2024 -2031. There would be six-monthly updates to the ASH Panel.

Members requested that the six-month update be used to monitor progress on the items marked 'ongoing' on the actions list. It was acknowledged that actions marked 'ongoing' were usually a positive achievement in adult social care as these showed sustainability of services.

Concluded:

That the Panel endorse the recommendations to Council set out in the report.

ASH 28 Update on the management of 'Transitions' between Children's social care and adult social care.

The report was presented by the Head of Service - Mental Health, Learning Disability and DoLS and provided an overview of the overall process and governance of 'transitions', the demand and financial impact for these and planned actions and mitigations to manage complex and challenging behaviours. The Pathway to Adulthood strategy would look at all supported children in North Somerset and their transitions to adulthood, even though the number of individuals supported into adulthood by adult social services was low.

Members then discussed or requested clarification on the following:

- That the transition team usually met the child 12 months before the transition to adulthood.
- That the transition for care leavers was not mentioned in the report as these transitions were for those eligible under the Care Act 2014, and the Care Leavers team in Children's Services had their remit under different legislation (unless they also had specific needs under the Care Act).
- What the support offer for parents and children that were not being supported after their 18th birthday was, and that an element of expectation management was required as the vast majority of children with an EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) were not eligible for support into adulthood.
- The cost and quality of external providers.
- That work was being done with housing developers and the internal development team to identify and support the development of housing suitable for the transition into adulthood.

Concluded:

That the report be received and the Panel's feedback provided in the form of the minutes.

ASH 29 Finance Update (as at month 10)

The Senior/Principal Accountant (Adults) presented the finance update report. The £1.1m underspend would be drawn down to offset overspends elsewhere, and it was not anticipated that there would be a similar underspend in the 2024-25 financial year as the emerging risks indicated that there would be significant challenges to the budget caused by increases in demand and a larger savings target that had to be achieved.

It was suggested that Member feedback on areas to focus on for 'deep delves' for future reports would be welcomed by officers.

In discussion, Members raised the following topics:

- the possibility of a series of briefings on how the savings targets were to be achieved;
- methods of stimulating the market against the context of low profit margins in adult social care;
- that the way that client charges were increased to cover inflation and an increase in benefits followed a strict method laid down by the government to maintain the proportion of gross income spent on charges. It was more helpful to view this as a technical adjustment.

Concluded:

That the report be received and the Panel's feedback provided in the form of the minutes.

ASH 30 The ASH Panel Work Plan March 2024

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
