

# Minutes

of the Meeting of

## The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 24 February 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 am

Meeting Concluded: 1.00 pm

### Councillors:

John Cato  
Karin Haverson  
Huw James  
Roz Willis

**Apologies:** Councillors: Mark Crosby (Chairman) Gill Bute, Wendy Griggs, Ann Harley, Sandra Hearne, Richard Tucker, Richard Westwood and Georgie Bigg.

**Officers in attendance:** Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt (Adult Social Services); Howard Evans (Public Health and Regulatory Services); Katherine Sokol, Leo Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services). .

### 1 Election of the Vice-Chairman

**Resolved:** that Councillor Huw James be elected Vice-Chairman.

### 2 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

### 3 Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO 9)

Alan Rice, of Weston Housing Action, addressed the Panel on the subject of introducing a licensing scheme for Weston-super-Mare Hillside and Central wards. He ended his address by requesting that the Panel form a working group to take a fresh look at the Private Rented Housing sector, which would include the selective licensing of landlords.

### 4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

### 5 Minutes

5.1 Minutes of the last formal Meeting of the Panel on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 – to approve as a correct record.

5.2 Notes of the informal panel meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – for noting.

**Resolved:**

(1) that the minutes of the meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 be approved as a correct record; and

(2) that the notes of the informal panel meetings held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 and 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be noted.

## 6 Adult Social Care Finance update

The Finance Business Partner took Members through the report, which summarised and discussed the current forecast spend against budget for adult services, highlighting key variances, movements, and contextual information; it also highlighted the main areas of interest in relation to the 2022/23 draft budget and the medium-term financial plan (MTFP), the future social care funding reforms and the business case agreed by the Healthier Together partnership to change the way in which patients were discharged from hospital (“Discharge to Assess”).

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

- With care homes closing to new clients due to Covid outbreaks, were there any plans to mitigate closures by having in-house homes linked with the hospital? *In-house options would destabilise the care home market, and would be costly for the Council to run. The Fair Cost of Care exercise running over the summer would help with this.*
- Had modelling been done for what care would be like in the future, and what actions had come out of it to mitigate demand? *Modelling had been done, and one of the aspects of mitigation was a significant investment in Technology Enabled Care (TEC).*
- What was the current situation regarding underoccupancy in care homes as a result of the pandemic? *The situation was improving, although outbreaks in recent weeks had meant that some homes were closed to new admissions; the occupancy rate in North Somerset had improved at a faster rate than the rest of the BNSSG CCG area.*

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

## 7 Winter Pressures Update

The Director, Adult Social Services, presented the report updating the Panel on this season’s winter pressures affecting the Adult Social Services directorate. These included details of: pressures on hospitals with delays in discharge highlighted, Adult Social Care pressures and activity, pressures on community health, care homes, housing solutions, and pressures on mental health provision. She also indicated that Adult Social Services was participating in a peer review process on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> April which would look at supporting discharge procedures, and which would allow the Adult Social Services directorate to showcase their

work and explain their journey over the last few years.

Members thanked the Director for her report, and conveyed their thanks to all North Somerset Council staff for their work during the pandemic.

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

## 8 Technology Enabled Care (TEC ) and Reablement

The Principal Head of Commissioning, Partnership and Housing Solutions presented to the Panel on the latest developments in the use of technology in the care sector. This included details of: how North Somerset was being represented to external agencies involved in the sector and the Digital Population Working Group; collaboration between the BNSSG CCG authorities and Sirona; care home responses to the 2020 NHS Futures survey on care home digital maturity; the importance of digitising social care records; the piloting of the ARMED and WHZAN acoustic monitoring devices in North Somerset; an update on the Innovation and Sustainability Grant; and the revised reablement pathway launched in January. He highlighted that no funds had been spent by North Somerset Council on developing TEC solutions, and that it presented the opportunity to provide significant savings by enabling risk management with a strength-based approach.

In discussion, the following points were raised:

- Would gains or savings made be redirected to care homes and staff? *Money flow into the market would be influenced, and there would be the ability to deliver more from the currently reduced workforce.*
- What would users do in the event of a power outage? *TEC devices would still be usable as there would be power backups.*

The Director of Adult Social Services congratulated the Head of Commissioning on his work on TEC throughout the COVID pandemic, as well as his pioneering work on TEC at the national level.

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

## 9 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.

He highlighted the draft report of the Carers Enquiry Day, that had been circulated for comment. The Vice Chairman thanked him for his work on setting up the Enquiry Day and his work on the report.

**Concluded:** that the work plan be noted.

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Chairman

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