

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 25 February 2021

Virtual Meeting

Meeting Commenced: 10.30 am

Meeting Concluded: 2.09 pm

Councillors:

Mark Crosby (Chairman)

Gill Bute
John Cato
Wendy Griggs
Ann Harley
Karin Haverson
Sandra Hearne
Huw James
Patrick Keating
Richard Tucker
Roz Willis
Georgie Bigg .

Also in attendance: Councillors Ruth Jacobs; Mike Bell .

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt, Richard Orson, Martin Hawketts, Howard Evans (Adult Social Services); Mike Rigall, Katherine Sokol, Mark Jarvis, Leo Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services). .

1 Election of the Vice-Chairman

Resolved: that Huw James be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

2 Public discussion (Standing Order SSO 9 as amended by SO 5A)

None.

3 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

4 Minutes

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

5 Covid-19 Commissioning update

The Head of Commissioning gave an update presentation on work being done to improve the adult social care offer to North Somerset residents. This included details on the Wellness Service and collaborative work to avoid hospital admissions, Technology Enabled Care, work with the Community Integrated Care Bureau, social care brokerage, as well as updates on vaccinations and PPE to Care Homes. He concluded with an update on domiciliary care, North Somerset Council's action plan, and the Covid response from North Somerset Together and commissioned voluntary services.

Included in this update, the following points were made:

We were experiencing fewer problems around hospital discharges than our neighbouring authorities; our Wellbeing Service had more some capacity in the event of a further wave of the pandemic; the 76% uptake of the vaccine among frontline staff was higher than the national average; the PPE situation had now stabilised, and the team was now focussing on training in the correct use of PPE; the team had made deliveries of PPE and offered assistance in care homes over weekends and out of office hours during previous waves of the pandemic; there was still only 83% occupancy of care home beds in North Somerset, which posed issues for financial viability of the sector and could be a predictor of a long-term problem for occupancy in this sector.

Members' comments and questions were as follows (with officer responses shown in italics):

- What did the 'Right to Reside' refer to? *This was a new NHS term that referred to the choice and direction of hospital discharges.*
- Had there been problems with the takeup of the Covid vaccine among Black and Ethnic Minority (BAME) staff in care homes? *The team had been working on training, workshops and translating documents to reach BAME staff. Attention had been given to North Somerset BAME staff, and there had been a 95% takeup of the vaccine in this cohort.*
- In cases of care home staff refusing the vaccine, was local leverage being used? *There had been debate on making this a contractual obligation for new staff; persuasion and more information was being given to existing staff. There was knowledge of who had been vaccinated, and close work was being done with Bristol and South Gloucestershire on strategies to reach out to these members of care home staff.*
- Was there a policy on supplying FFP2 vs FFP3 masks to mitigate the risks of aerosol spread of the disease? *These had not been supplied by the Council, but rather by the NHS and therefore did not show on the list of PPE supplied.*

Concluded:

(1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and

(2) that the Panel thanked the Head of Commissioning and his team for the hard work, over and above their normal duties, that they had done during the Covid-19

pandemic so far.

6 Care Act Easements

The Principal Social Worker gave a presentation on Care Act easements under the Coronavirus Act 2020 (a copy of which is available in the minute book) and explained why they had not yet been used by North Somerset Council. He provided details of the ethical framework that was being used instead, as well as details on the circumstances within which implementing the easements could be considered.

Members' questions and requests for clarification were as follows:

- Had there been a fall in care staff and their recruitment from the European Union following Brexit? *There had been no appreciable impact, as North Somerset was less reliant on the EU workforce than other areas.*
- There was concern from Members that Deprivation of Liberty orders were being delayed in the court system, and the Principal Social Worker assured Members that all work was done according to the standards of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Had there been a risk assessment taken out for unpaid carers and family members when day centres and other facilities were closed, as this was the only opportunity for many to get some time for themselves? *All vulnerable adults had been identified and contacted at the start of the pandemic, and had been RAG-rated in terms of their vulnerability. The Adult Social Services directorate was preparing for a potential increase in concerns at the end of the lockdown period.*
- Was there more detail available on which Councils had been acting under easements? *There were some large Councils in the Midlands – more detail would be available on the CQC website.*

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (2) that the Chairman thanked the Principal Social Worker and his team for the hard work that they had been doing.

7 Mental Health Support Pilot

The Service Manager presented a briefing on the Mental Health Support Pilot. He explained how the pilot programme would focus on delivering structured short term interventions.

Members commented and received clarification on the following points:

- What was the anticipated need for the outreach services? *This was about 50-60 users, based on capacity of the project and information coming from the Mental Health team; there had been acknowledgement from the Mental Health system that there was a gap or need that required filling.*
- Would this project be linked to the Safe Haven Centre and other voluntary sector organisations? *Although this was not directly linked to the Safe Haven Centre, there would potentially be referrals from the team there;*

links with the voluntary sector were being looked at.

- How easy would it be to fill these two new roles? *The remuneration was set to be above that of the private sector, and it was not anticipated that this would be an issue.*
- How did people present at the lowest tier for intervention? *There were multiple pathways, with the most common being through a GP. People could also be referred by Care Connect, AWP and other organisations.*
- Did individuals have unique identified champions to guide them through the Mental Health system? *There were Care Coordinators in secondary services, and there was discussion of this for the child to adult transition, but not apart from those.*

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (2) that an informal meeting to look at the issues in more detail be organised, to include the Chairman of HOSP; and
- (3) that a six-month update report on the project be brought before the Panel.

8 2020-21 Month 9 Adult Social Care Budget Monitor

The Finance Business Partner went through the Month 9 report of the Adult Social Care Budget Monitor. She highlighted the predicted overspend of £5.2 million, although this did not take into account any allocation from the £14.6 million General Covid-related funding from central government. The additional funds had been added to the overall Council budget but had not yet been allocated to directorates.

Concluded:

That the report be noted and Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes.

At this point, the Chairman suggested a short break before the next item.

The Panel adjourned at 13:10 p.m.

The Panel reconvened at 13:17 p.m.

9 Private Rented Housing Review

The Private Sector Housing Sector Service Leader presented a review of private rented housing in North Somerset, a copy of which is available in the minute book. He provided more information on the Area Action approach, the Rent with Confidence scheme, and suggested that an updated review of housing conditions in the form of a Stock Condition Survey would be required to fulfil the Council's obligations under the Housing Act (2004).

Members had the following queries:

- Could the scheme be used to help landlords link together to promote

economies of scale when improving their properties? *The Private Sector Housing Forum did this to some extent, but some further thought would be given to this.*

- Did the cladding of high-rise buildings fall within the Service Leader's remit? *In part, and engagement with SPEDR on this issue had begun.*

Concluded:

(1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and

(2) that the Panel's support for the need for an updated Stock Condition Survey be referred to the relevant Executive Member.

10 Ash Panel Work Plan 250221

Members discussed the Panel's work plan.

The Chairman updated Members on the activity of the Local Plan Working Group. He also gave an update on the planning for the Carer's Enquiry Day and invited Members who wanted to participate in the planning for this to contact him.

Members suggested that more detail on the schemes to return patients home from hospital and the involvement of the Red Cross in them be sought.

Concluded:

That the work plan be updated.

Chairman
