

Draft Notes

of the informal Meeting of the

Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 7th July 2021

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 10:00 Meeting Concluded: 12:05

Councillors:

P Mark Crosby (Chairman)
P Huw James (Vice Chairman)

P Gill Bute
P John Cato
A Wendy Griggs
P Ann Harley
A Karin Haverson
P Sandra Hearne
P Patrick Keating
P Richard Tucker
P Roz Willis

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

Other Members (as appropriate): Georgie Bigg (co-opted Member, Healthwatch);
Councillor Mike Bell

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico, Gerald Hunt, Kathryn Benjamin, Howard Evans (Adult Social Services); Mark Jarvis, Leo Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH Election of the Vice-Chairman (Agenda Item 1)

Resolved: that Huw James be re-elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel, to be ratified at the next formal Panel meeting.

ASH Adult Social Services Directorate Statement (Agenda Item 2)

The Director of Adult Social Services went through the 2021 Annual Directorate Statement, which included details how the Directorate would work towards it's goals of ensuring an open and enabling organisation,

ensuring a thriving and sustainable place, and ensuring the council would empower and care about people.

In the discussion that followed, Members had comments and questions about the current reablement strategies and capacity, the use of volunteers in providing community meals, the aspiration of committing paying the National Living Wage to staff in the care sector, integrating discharge procedures, whether other sources of funding had been investigated for adult social care, and whether accessibility to wi-fi could be provided for those who needed it to allow for Technology Enabled Care in their own homes.

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (2) that the Chairman congratulated the Head of Commissioning for his hard-won expertise in developing Technology Enabled Care solutions.

ASH Month 12 Budget Monitor (Agenda item 3)

The Senior Service Accountant presented a report on the budgetary position of the Adult Social Services Directorate at the end of month 12. The overspend against the budget of £1.241 million was highlighted, as well as that this overspend included £0.335 million associated with the Covid-19 pandemic. The budget transfer of £1.53 million to the 2021/22 Care Home Recovery Plan was also highlighted.

In discussion, Members raised the issues of client debt reclamation; the funding for those with a primary health need from the CCG (and the Director applying for a transformation bid to expand the team working on this); the costs of someone living independently compared to them staying in a care home; the trends in complex cases and what the direction of travel was for this in the future.

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (2) that the Senior Service Accountant provide a briefing report to Members covering the issues raised in more detail.

ASH Adult Care Commissioning Issues (Agenda Item 4)

The Head of Commissioning presented the report on issues in the commissioned adult care sector. Among these were that care bed occupancy had started to recover, and that care providers had begun indicating that they were losing available staff to illness and self-isolation. He also highlighted an innovation grant of £600 000 to providers, with 78% of them responding to a questionnaire designed to help finalise the grant criteria. Three care homes had also closed in the previous six months.

Members commented and received clarification on the following points:

- Why was another specialist housing needs assessment being commissioned? *The previous one was at the BNSSG level, and this one would be more granular and would look at individuals and localities in more detail. It would help to inform the future business cases around accommodation shift in the district.*
- The need to balance between supporting care homes and allowing for domiciliary care – *The care sector was a private market running according to supply and demand – there would always be a need for nursing homes and it was our duty to ensure capacity. A goal was to ensure that care homes to recognise that they could be community assets and that activities run by care homes need not be inwardly focused; inter-generational activities, such as bringing children into care homes needed to be improved on.*
- Dementia care – *a blended model of care was the way forward so that care homes would be able to care for dementia patients as well as their other residents – but it needed to be ensured that quality of care across the board was maintained.*

Concluded:

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

As Members felt that agenda item 5, Development of Discharge to Access Pathways, had been addressed in this and previous items, the meeting proceeded to the next agenda item.

ASH Supporting Staff Carers (Agenda Item 6)

The Strategy and Policy Development Officer presented the update report on supporting staff carers at North Somerset Council. There were estimated to be 244 members of staff with caring responsibilities employed by the council, and the report detailed some of the ways that existing policies could provide support for them, as well as some feedback of their experience of the offer.

In discussion, Members suggested that the leave purchase scheme would not always help carers and possibly be challenged.

Concluded:

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

ASH The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 7)

The Scrutiny Officer discussed the Panel's work plan and highlighted three work areas that were in progress:

(1) Planning Policy review – this was waiting for feedback from officers, anticipated later this year, before the Local Plan working group could meet.

(2) Cladding and Fire Safety – another meeting of the Housing Issues Group be convened to take stock of the recent changes to legislation.

(3) Carers Enquiry Day – letters defining the case for the enquiry to potential participants would be going out shortly; an informal meeting of the Carers Enquiry Day group would be convened once replies had been received.

Additionally, an informal meeting of the Panel was to be convened to discuss issues that had arisen in this meeting – leave purchase for council staff, re-enablement and discharge from hospital, and adult exploitation.

Concluded:

That the work plan be updated.

Chairman
