

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 3 November 2022

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10.07 am

Meeting Concluded: 11.37 am

Councillors:

Sandra Hearne (Vice-chairman)

John Cato
Wendy Griggs
Karin Haverson
Richard Tucker
Roz Willis

Also in attendance: Georgie Bigg, co-opted member; Cllr Mike Bell.

Apologies: Councillors: Mark Crosby and Ann Harley.

Absent: Councillors Tim Snaden, Huw James, Ruth Jacobs and Richard Westwood.

Officers in attendance: Gerald Hunt, Michael Hennessey, Abby Murphy, Kaycee McMahon (Adult Social Services); Philippa Penney, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO 9)

13

None.

ASH Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (Standing Order 37)

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None.

ASH Minutes

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Minutes of the meeting of 7 July 2022 – to approve as a correct record.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting of 7 July 2022 be approved as a correct record.

ASH 16 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)

None.

Change to agenda order – agenda item 6 moved to after agenda item 8.

ASH 17 Amendments to Homechoice allocation policy (Agenda item 7)

The HomeChoice Team Manager presented the report, which updated the policy to reflect changes in legislation, the change to the IT system and changes to wording for clarification since the previous revisions to the policy were published in 2020.

In discussion, the following topics were raised by Members: the changes to the wording of the Emergency Priority Band; housing priority for care leavers; whether the policy on perpetrators of domestic abuse was sufficiently robust to ensure that false allegations of domestic abuse did not exclude individuals from joining the Housing Register; whether signposting, or a journey map for individuals trying to navigate the system over and above the resources on the website was needed; that housing supply was very limited, and that demand was high; that the loss of the front-of-house ability to deal with those needing help with housing was an issue; and that Key Steps was a charity that worked with individuals who were not eligible to join the North Somerset Housing Register.

Concluded: that

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

(ii) an informal briefing on housing supply and demand be offered to Members.

ASH 18 Cap on Care Costs (Agenda item 8)

The Care Cap Implementation Programme Manager presented the report updating the Panel on progress of preparations for the Care Reforms and cap on care costs to be introduced in October 2023.

The Care Cap would be set at £86,000, and the increase in the number of assessments this required would have knock-on effects for adult social care. There were six Local Authorities designated as Trailblazers, who would trial Care Reform work early and provide information about best practice. North Somerset's progress against this advice was ranked. The financial, staffing, funding, and awareness-raising implications were also discussed.

The Cap would apply to all care for an individual, whether across multiple facilities or domiciliary care. In general, care home fees across North Somerset were lower than in neighbouring authorities, but domiciliary care costs were higher.

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

ASH 19 Carers Inquiry Day Action Plan update (Agenda item 6)

Members discussed the item in detail and agreed that there was an urgent need for the Council to appoint a Carers Champion and for there to be a designated liaison officer to assist with that role.

The Executive Member joined the discussion, endorsing the recommendations in the Carers Inquiry Day report and providing Members with an update on the work towards fulfilling them.

It was agreed that a member of the ASH Panel be nominated as the Carers Champion for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year, and that this matter would be brought to the November Council meeting by the Executive Member.

Members nominated and elected Cllr Sandra Hearne for this role.

Concluded: that

- (i) the Executive Member agreed to call for the appointment of a Carers Champion at the November Council meeting; and that
- (ii) Councillor Sandra Hearne be the Panel's nomination for the role of Carers Champion for the remainder of the 2022/23 municipal year; and that
- (iii) the Executive Member return for a six-month update of progress against the recommendations in the Carers Inquiry Day report.

ASH 20 The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda item 9)

The Scrutiny 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.

Concluded: that the work plan be updated.

Chairman
