

Minutes

of the Meeting of

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 6 July 2023

New Council Chamber - Town Hall

Meeting Commenced: 10:00

Meeting Concluded: 12:20

Councillors:

Dan Thomas (Chairperson)

Jemma Coles
Wendy Griggs
Lisa Pilgrim
Timothy Snaden
Luke Smith
Joe Tristram
Richard Tucker
Georgie Bigg

Apologies: None.

Absent: Councillor Annabelle Chard.

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

Others in attendance: Georgie Bigg (Healthwatch BNSSG).

Officers in attendance: Hayley Verrico (Director of Adult Social Services); Michael Hennessey (CQC Assurance Programme Manager); Kathryn Benjamin (Strategy and Policy Development Officer); Melanie Watts (Head of Finance); Brent Cross (Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer); Philippa Penney (Head of Democratic and Electoral Services); Leo Taylor (Policy and Scrutiny Manager).

ASH Election of the Vice-Chairperson for the 2023/24 Municipal Year

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The Chairperson welcomed Members and officers to the meeting, and officers and Members introduced themselves.

The Panel then nominated for the position of Vice-Chairman.

Recommended: that Councillor Timothy Snaden be elected as Vice-Chairman for the 2023/24 municipal year.

ASH 2 Public Discussion (Standing Order SSO9)

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None.

ASH 3 Apologies for Absence and Notifications for Substitutes

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None.

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

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None.

ASH 5 Minutes

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Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 23 February 2023 – to approve as a correct record.

Recommended: that the minutes of the meeting of 23 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

ASH 6 Matters referred by Council, the Executive, other Committees and Panels (if any)

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None.

ASH 7 Co-option of the Chairman of Healthwatch

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The report was presented by the Policy and Scrutiny Senior Officer and requested that the Chairman of Healthwatch BNSSG continue as a non-voting co-opted member of the Panel.

Recommended: that the Chairman of Healthwatch BNSSG be co-opted to join the ASH Panel for 2023-27.

ASH 8 Role, Remit and Work Plan of the ASH Policy and Scrutiny Panel

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The Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer presented the report detailing the Panel's role and allowing the opportunity for Members to discuss the work plan. Members were referred to the appendices for guidance on how best to utilise the Panel's resources to obtain meaningful outcomes. The Head of Democratic and Electoral Services then went into detail about the potential ways of working of the Panel, and how meaningful scrutiny could be achieved.

Members discussed the formation of working groups to scrutinise the Carers Strategy. There was a discussion in respect of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Adult Social Services and Housing Solutions Directorate which could be reported at each meeting. It was agreed that a time limited working group should be established to agree the KPIs. It was also agreed that an update, as a standing item, on preparations for the CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspection would be useful to the Panel. Additionally, a group to scrutinise the availability of good quality affordable housing, fit for the future needs of North Somerset's population should be established. These were to be finalised before the next

formal Panel meeting on 2 November 2023, and would be further discussed at the end of this meeting.

Recommended: that Members of the Panel develop the Work Plan before the next meeting.

ASH 9 Care Quality Commission Assurance Inspection

The report, presented by the CQC Assurance Programme Manager, discussed the arrangements for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment and updated the Panel on how preparations for the visit were progressing. Included in the presentation were details on the governance of the assurance work, the principles behind and the themes being worked to, and the quality statements (developed by Think Local Act Personal) that would support these. The evidence that the CQC would look for and the risks that could affect progress were also discussed.

Members sought clarity and further detail on the following: (officer responses in italics)

- When was the review expected? *Five councils were being assessed between April and September, with the next twenty (identity yet to be confirmed) by December and twenty every quarter from then on. Our preference was to be inspected early, and staff were submitting evidence to support their work into the 'evidence chest' so that we would be ready for the inspection when it was announced.*
- Could raw data be provided to the Panel to provide assurance? *Our self-assessments could be shared with any proposed working group and would give a direction of travel. These were already shared with other councils through ADASS (the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) for review.*
- Could the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the inspection be shared with the Panel? *This could be the focus of a working group set up by the Panel.*
- Would the directorate be using the recommendations of Healthwatch reports into hospital discharges to support this work? *Work on closing this loop was being done, and improving co-production was an area that had been identified and was actively being worked on.*

Recommended: that

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

(ii) the formation of a working group to identify useful KPIs for Members to focus on be formed.

ASH 10 Carers Strategy Update

The Strategy and Policy Development Officer presented the report, which provided an update (and sought input on) the proposed North Somerset Carers Strategy. The strategy had been co-produced with carers, and while the strategy was still in the draft stage, it was hoped that it would be ready for implementation in October 2023. It was also requested that Members begin the process of identifying a Carers Champion to support the roll-out of the Strategy across the Council, which would continue the work of former Councillor Sandra Hearne.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, the following topics were raised: building opportunities for carers into the strategy to help with breaking the caring / underemployment / benefits / housing cycle; that carers needed a streamlined journey when they approached Adult Social Care; the need for the Panel to provide a steer on the priorities of the Strategy; whether the Mockingbird fostering model of peer support being used by Children's Services could be adapted to carers; that there was a possibility of digital exclusion affecting carers, but that more data was needed on who / which groups were affected by this; that data needed to be shared with partners to ensure that carers did not duplicate their efforts in asking for support. Councillors Coles, Tristram and Snaden put their names forward to be considered for the Carers Champion role and would form the core of the working group providing input to the Carers Strategy. Councillor Coles would be the Panel's nomination for Carer's Champion on a first-come-first-served basis.

Recommended: that

- (i) the report be received, and that Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and that
- (ii) a working group to support the Carers Strategy be formed; and that
- (iii) Councillor Jemma Coles be the ASH Policy and Scrutiny Panel's nomination for the role of Carers Champion.

ASH 11 Finance Update

The report, presented by the Head of Finance, summarised the year-end position of the Adult Social Services directorate. There had been a £1.278m underspend, largely from underspends in the Individual Care and Support package and the robust commissioning of services. There were some overspends notably in community meals where the cost of the meals and transportation costs had significantly increased.

The budget for 2023-24 contained growth of £13.7m, with savings of £4.2m to be made under the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In discussion, the Director of Adult Social Services pointed out that while North Somerset was one of the very few councils which had achieved an underspend, there would be a significant pressure on budgets due to the increased cost of living and energy price increases. The number of packages of care were also likely to rise while the NHS was still suffering from long waiting times due to the backlog of elective surgeries which meant that people were requiring more assistance as their conditions worsened during the wait. There was also interest from Members in the work being done to support transitions from Children's to Adults Services, and a report to the next Panel on this was requested.

Recommended: that

- (i) the report be received, and that Members' comments be forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and that
- (ii) a report on the number of care packages/placements be brought to the 2 November 2023 Panel meeting; and that
- (iii) a report on the work being done to support transition from Children's to Adult's Services be brought to the 2 November 2023 Panel meeting.

ASH Work Plan
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The Panel then discussed the Work Plan, and it was agreed that the following topics would be further examined in Working Groups:

- KPIs for Adult Social Services and Housing Solutions which may include preparations for the CQC inspection (and that these would need to align with Corporate KPI reporting by the Head of Business Insight, Policy and Partnerships;
- The Carers Strategy;
- The availability of good quality affordable housing. This could potentially be added to the agenda of the existing ASH Housing Issues Steering Group.

Chairman
