

Minutes

of the Meeting of the

Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 5th November 2020

held in the Virtual Meeting.

Meeting Commenced: 10:30 Meeting Concluded: 12:20

Councillors:

P Mark Crosby (Chairman)
P Caroline Cherry (Vice Chairman)

P Gill Bute
P John Cato
A Ann Harley
P Karin Haverson
P Sandra Hearne
P Huw James
P Patrick Keating
A Ian Parker
P Roz Willis

P: Present

A: Apologies for absence submitted

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

Officers in attendance: Gerald Hunt, Hayley Verrico (Adult Social Services); Leo
Taylor, Brent Cross (Corporate Services).

ASH 9 Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interest (Standing Order 37)

None.

ASH 10 Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 June 2020 (Agenda Item 4)

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

ASH 11 Supporting Carers during Covid-19 (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Adult Social Services gave a presentation on work being done to support carers during the Covid-19 pandemic (a copy of which has been published with the agenda). The presentation concluded with a list of

considerations for maintaining and potentially improving support for carers going forward.

Members were urged to let carers in their wards know that they could ask for a carer's assessment if they were not registered as a carer; if they were struggling, to call the Care Connect number; and to encourage carers to go to their GPs for help and not to miss any hospital or GP appointments.

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

- The BNSSG CCG had previously undertaken to insert a marker flag onto the patient notes of carers. Was this still being used? *The flag was still present, but there were concerns that it was not leading to meaningful conversations between carers and their GPs.*
- Members expressed surprise at the scale – 10% of the population of North Somerset were registered as carers. *This was only those who had identified themselves as carers, and so was likely to be a large under-reporting of the actual figures.*
- Did we have a list, or any idea of the number, of young carers in North Somerset? Was there any differentiation between mental and physical health needs of carers? *Any information on registered young carers could be obtained from the Director of Children's Services. NSC did not distinguish between mental and physical health needs, although there were reports that Covid-19 could affect long term cognitive ability in vulnerable people which could cause eventual issues with adult social care.*
- Healthwatch was familiar with the issues facing carers, which were unfortunately not unique to North Somerset. There were a large number of hidden carers. Other HealthWatch areas could be looked at to see if there were any ideas or solutions that would help carers in North Somerset.
- Did carers have a strong voice in the Council? Was there still a Carer's Champion? *There was not a Carer's Champion at present. The Carers' Strategy Group had been re-established and had had their first meeting.*
- What was the transition for young carers becoming adult carers? *This had been brought back in-house, which enabled the team to identify young carers moving towards becoming adult carers.*

Concluded:

- (1) that the report be noted and the Members' comments forwarded to officers in the form of minutes; and
- (2) that an ASH panel-led "enquiry day" be arranged to consider options for, and make recommendations in respect of, better supporting carers going forward.

ASH 12 Winter Plan Assurance, Service Continuity and Care Market Review - Self-Assessment by Councils (Agenda item 7)

The Head of Commissioning presented a report on the Council's Winter Plan, service continuity in the care sector, and a review of the care market. He highlighted that care homes in North Somerset were currently at an average of 83% occupancy, and reminded Members that 95% was the target for long term sustainability. This was being closely monitored. Discharge arrangements for acute placements was being looked at to support care homes. There was less of a stress on the domiciliary care area, as this had now rebounded and a recruitment campaign was under way to provide further opportunities to strengthen the market.

Members' questions and requests for clarification were as follows:

- Was there any guidance from government on 'hot' care homes? *These were 'designated facilities' for Covid-19-positive patients being discharged from hospital using care workers, not nurses, as staff; a facility had been identified subject to an assurance process from the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and was a care home that had suffered during the first wave. Many staff and residents had contracted Covid-19, and the home had epidemic insurance cover. The idea of designated facilities had mixed support from the BNSSG CCG and other health colleagues. The commissioning team were also doing live contingency planning (including live-in care) which could be put into place within 24 hours of a discharge notification being received.*
- Did we have confirmation from the CCG that Covid-19 status of patients was checked before hospital discharges to care homes? *These were always checked within 48 hours of discharge. There had been some mistakes due to human error. Acute facilities provided this information to brokers.*
- What was the full cost of PPE so far during the epidemic, and what was the source of funding for this? *The Head of Commissioning did not have these figures to hand, but would provide them separately. Funding had changed over time, and PPE from our own supply had only been provided as a last resort. Funding had come from North Somerset Council's Covid funding, then moved across to the Infection Control Grants. PPE supply from government was now more reliable.*

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

ASH The Panel's Work Plan (Agenda Item 8)

13

Members discussed the Panel's work plan.

The Chairman of the Housing Issues Group provided an update on work undertaken by the group, including (but not limited to) feeding back on the draft HomeChoice policy, the current enforcement policy, homelessness including information from the North Somerset Citizen's Advice Bureau, and a preliminary input into updating the unauthorised encampment policy. He highlighted that Members had requested that the group revisit licensing, as well as spend some time focusing on Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Violence where these impacted housing. Councillor Jacobs was invited to attend the meetings of the group

There was concern that the November issue of North Somerset Life had an article that did not follow Council resolutions on how to communicate about domestic violence, as it did not contain any reference to men suffering from domestic violence.

The Chairman reminded Members that the inaugural meeting of the Commissioning Issues Group was to be on the 16th of November.

The Chairman reported back on the Planning Policy and Review task-and-finish group. There had been some progress on the issue of 'granny flat' annexes in rural locations. The Chairman requested that more Members attend the next meeting to provide a wider range of viewpoints to officers.

With respect to item 6, it was noted that an enquiry day would be arranged and that consideration would be given to lobbying the Government on the wider issue of funding for social care and reform, and to formally engaging with the Council in that aim.

There was also discussion about proposals for a Council Carer's Champion and it was agreed that the Panel formally support this.

Concluded:

- (1) That the work plan be updated; and
- (2) that the Panel's support for the establishment of a Carer's Champion be referred to the Executive Member.

Chairman
