

ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19th June, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Thistlethwaite (in the Chair); Councillors Hutchinson, B. Jones, Kelley, Knowles, S. Richmond and York. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Harman, Mrs. D. Jones, Lister and Maddison. (4)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ann Workman, Head of Adult Social Care, Elaine O’Brien, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Health Partnerships and Heidi Gibson, Safeguarding Adults Officer.

AH22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AH23. MINUTES - Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 24th April, 2012.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

AH24. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of the Special Joint Scrutiny Committee held on 11th April, 2012.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

AH25. WORK PROGRAMME – The Director of Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the current Municipal Year.

The submitted report outlined those areas where this Scrutiny Committee had previously identified it would like to focus its work over the next Municipal Year and also emphasised that the work programme was a rolling programme and any Member of this Scrutiny could request an item to be included provided that a Quad of Aims had been submitted to the Scrutiny Committee prior to ensure that it contributed to the strategic aims of the Council.

The submitted report outlined the original Work Programme and requested Members to reconsider the Work Programme to accommodate further issues that need to be included and approve a number of Terms of Reference for some additional items.

RESOLVED - (a) That the current status of the Work Programme be noted.

(b) That the submitted Terms of Reference in respect of Residential/Nursing care Agreements Agreements, Nutrition in care Homes and Council Tax Support appended to the report be approved.

AH26. RESIDENTIAL/NURSING CARE ARRANGEMENTS – Elaine O’Brien Head of Strategic Commissioning and Health Partnerships gave an informative presentation to Members on the present residential/nursing care arrangements that were due to end on 31st March, 2013, and were currently being consulted on with its contracted residential care providers to review their agreements, including fee levels. It was highlighted that the consultation was open to all residential care providers in Darlington and would run until 23 July 2012. The results of the

consultation, together with other available information would be used to make recommendations regarding the fees to be paid to residential care home providers from the beginning of April 2013.

The Head of Strategic Commissioning and Health Partnerships, during her presentation, made particular reference to the fourteen Quality Standards, which were graded and linked to the environmental standards and fee levels for each of the twenty two care homes signed into the current agreement. Reference was also made to the potential major risks for this Authority on the arrangements in relation to the financial risk of one of the providers, which has been closely monitored by the Contracts and Legal team and also the potential for providers to disagree with fee levels proposed and refuse to sign the agreement.

Discussion ensued on the potential risks to this Local Authority on the care arrangements and whether a contingency plan had been developed, the ratio of people with mental health problems in care homes, the quality standards and the fee levels.

RESOLVED – (a) That thanks be conveyed to Elaine O’Brien for the informative presentation.

(b) That a copy of the Quality Standards be circulated to Members.

(c) That a further update on the Care arrangements and how it links with the health sector be brought to this Scrutiny Committee in November.

AH27. DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PARTNERSHIP BOARD – Heidi Gibson, Safeguarding Adults Officer gave a comprehensive overview to Members on the Safeguarding Adults Board and its functions and also the roles and responsibilities of this Authority within the Board. The Board’s key priorities that were devised by the Care Quality Commission at the Local Authority Safeguarding Inspection in August, 2009 were highlighted and it was reported that at the Inspection Progress Review held in April, 2010 all of the recommendations had been achieved.

It was highlighted that there was currently a review of the Board arrangements on-going, which focused on the purpose of the Board and its membership, the chairing arrangements with three proposed models one of which was an independent chair, the function of the serious case review and the lessons learned from that. Members were informed of local statistical profile against national and it was highlighted that ninety per cent of cases had been closed and all required information had been compiled against each case. The number of alerts and investigations of abuse to vulnerable adults for the last two years was highlighted which showed an increase in the number of alerts which was felt was due to awareness raising.

Discussion ensued on the number of alerts raised on abuse to vulnerable adults and who the alerts were received from and the review of the Board arrangements and the proposed models with the need of an independent chair.

RESOLVED – That thanks be conveyed to Heidi Gibson for the interesting and informative presentation.