

ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st October, 2014

PRESENT – Councillor Thistlethwaite (in the Chair); Councillors Culley, Harman, D. Jones, Kelley, Knowles, Lister, S. Richmond and York (9)

APOLOGIES – Hutchinson and J. Lyonette (2)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Ann Workman, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director Housing and Building Services, Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning and Philippa Rayner, Process Manager, Organisational Planning.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Newall (1)

AH13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AH14. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 26th August, 2014.

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

AH15. TENANCY MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINMENT – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) advising Members of the processes currently in place from applying for a Council tenancy to the long-term sustainment of a successful tenancy.

The submitted report outlined the Council's approach to tenancy management over the last few years on prevention, with the focus being on identifying risks and dealing with any problems effectively and as quickly as possible, and in providing the right support to tenants which would significantly improve their chances of maintaining and sustaining their homes.. Members were advised of the 12 month introductory period introduced for new tenants to ensure they were settled and maintaining a secure tenancy and the option to extend that period for a further six months if problems arose to enable Officers to work with the tenants or, if a serious breach of tenancy arose, legal proceedings could be implemented to remove the tenant.

The submitted report outlined the role of the Tenancy Enforcement Team; the new complaints categories and the different levels of response that they worked to; processes to curb neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour; and the more formal solutions that could occur. It was reported that the majority of Council Tenants did not cause any problems and that the problems that did occur were mainly due to rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.

Discussion ensued on the positive work being undertaken by the Housing Team; the processes in place to assist tenants with a housing issue, the transparent working relationships with other agencies and Local Authorities with regards to tenants; debt

management and the implementation of the new Housing Plus service.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that a further report on the Housing Options Service be submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

AH16. LIFELINE PROJECT UPDATE – Pursuant to Minute AH43/Apr/14, the Director of Commissioning submitted a report (previously circulated) further updating Members on the work being undertaken to achieve the proposed savings which had been identified in the medium-Term Financial Plan in relation to the Lifeline Service by removing the level of subsidy.

It was reported that the work to achieve the proposed savings was making good progress and that the consultation exercise with service users and the Equality Impact Assessments had now been undertaken and that the results would be reported to Cabinet in December 2014. Although the results were still being compiled, early indications showed that almost 70 per cent of clients would be able to absorb the loss of subsidy but that further analysis would be required for those affected.

Discussion ensued on the on-going work regarding the service level agreement (SLA) with CCTV, the variation of the subsidies which was detailed in the appendix to the submitted report, the risks involved if the subsidy was removed and the mitigating actions that had been developed to reduce the impacts on the clients and the service provided.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee to monitor how the service is working.

AH17. THE CARE ACT: AN UPDATE AND OUTLINE OF INTERDEPENDENCIES – The Director of Commissioning submitted a report (previously circulated) advising Members of the work undertaken to date on the implementation of the Care Act within Darlington and how and where this aligns to wider Health and Social Care integration and, in particular, the Better Care Fund.

In addition, the Committee also received a presentation on the Act which highlighted its key aims of helping people to stay well and independent; promoting people's wellbeing to enable people to prevent and postpone the need for care and support; and to put people in control of their lives so they can pursue opportunities to realise their potential. Key changes were also highlighted to Members which included; financial controls, a duty placed on the Council to provide advice and information, more rights for carers, more collaborative working with other organisations and a greater focus on prevention.

The submitted report also advised Members on the approach being taken in Darlington, the work streams which had been devised to deliver the main legislative changes, the progress on those work streams to date and the individual resource implications; and the interdependencies between the project and other change projects with intrinsic links to the Adult Social Care Programme, specifically the savings targets within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Discussion ensued on the work being undertaken regionally to share best practice and implementation approaches with each authority taking a lead on a specific piece of work, with Darlington taking the lead on developing the workforce.

Discussion also ensued on the work that could be undertaken by this Scrutiny Committee to assist with the work stream it was leading on together with the funding element.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that further work be undertaken by this Scrutiny Committee as, and when, appropriate.

AH18. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE – Pursuant to Minute AH45/Apr/14, the Head of Organisational Planning gave a presentation on the revised Performance Management Framework which had been developed to measure achievement and performance against the outcomes contained within the approved Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

It was reported that the revised Performance Management Framework had been developed around the eight key outcomes contained within the SCS and that each individual outcome had a number of high level strategic indicators aligned to it, which would be used to measure the performance and achievement against the Vision and those outcomes. It was also reported that information at that strategic level would be available on an annual basis to ensure that progress towards the key outcomes was being achieved and that information from the low level delivery indicators which are linked to the strategic indicators would be available on a more frequent basis to enable Members to assess delivery performance and to test whether services provided by the Council and its partners were delivering towards the Vision and outcomes and the cost of those services.

RESOLVED – That the current position of the Performance Management be noted.

AH19. MEDICATION IN CARE HOMES TASK AND FINISH REVIEW GROUP – FINAL REPORT – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) together with a final report (also previously circulated) of the Medication in Care Homes Task and Finish Review Group which had been established by this Scrutiny Committee to provide Members with an overview of medication and polypharmacy within those care homes with agreements with this Council and the work currently being undertaken in relation to aligning GP practices with care homes.

It was reported that the Task and Finish Review Group had met on a number of occasions and, as a part of its investigation, had undertaken announced visits to a number of care homes and had examined standards in relation to Medication and the relevant Quality Standards.

It was also reported that following the work, the Task and Finish Review Group had concluded that it was confident that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that the ordering and administration of medication was being correctly managed and there

were examples of good practice and that any issues that might occur in the future would be dealt with promptly and efficiently by Officers within the Contract Team in liaison with other external/partners agencies.

RESOLVED – That the following recommendations of the Group be approved :-

- (a) the thanks of this Task and Finish Review Group be conveyed to the Assistant Director – Adult Social Care and all staff within the Council’s Contracts Team and the external partners for the support and advice given during this investigation;
- (b) this Task and Finish Review Group is confident that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the ordering and administration of medication in those care homes visited is being correctly managed and there are examples of good practice within the homes visited; and that any issues which might occur in the future would be dealt with promptly and efficiently by Officers within the Contracts Team in liaison with other external partners/agencies;
- (c) in relation to Wilton House, this Task and Finish Review Group is satisfied that good progress is being made against the Improvement Action Plan and that there are good management arrangements now in place at Wilton House;
- (d) there is evidence to suggest that this GP alignment to care homes project is working in those care homes where it is in place and requests the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group to continue to support and fund this scheme so that all the care homes in Darlington are aligned to a practice;
- (e) there is evidence to suggest that savings could be made if there was better medication management in relation to medication ordering and requests the Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group to investigate this further; and
- (f) in relation to the discharge of patients with medication from hospital, the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee be requested, through the Quality Accounts of the County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust, to look further into the issues around the discharge of patients with medication from hospital.

AH20. WORK PROGRAMME – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and 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 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 to ensure that it contributed to the strategic aims of the Council.

Members requested that the following be added to the work programme; Housing Options Service, GP and Community Matrons alignment to care homes, the Care Act – Funding and Workforce Development, as well as a possible joint piece of work with the Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in relation to the Dementia Strategy.

Members also requested that an update report on the impact of Welfare Reforms and the Better Care Fund be submitted to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the current status of the Work Programme be noted and updated accordingly.