

ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10th January, 2017

PRESENT - Councillor S Richmond (in the Chair); Councillors Culley, Knowles, Lyonette, Mills, M. Nicholson, T Richmond and Storr (8)

APOLOGIES – Councillors D Jones, Kane and Lister (3)

ABSENT –

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Copeland.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Christine Shields, Assistant Director, Commissioning Performance Transformation, Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services, Elizabeth Davison, Assistant Director, Finance and Human Resources and Anthony Sandys, Head of Housing and Revenues

AH20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

AH21. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 1st November and 13th December, 2016.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as correct records.

AH22. ADULT SOCIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) setting out the vision, objectives and overall approach to the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme and highlighting the independencies between that programme and the projects being delivered as part of the Better Care Fund.

Reference was made to the need to transform the way adult social care services were delivered in order to manage service demand and pressures and ensure that the best care was available when needed and the submitted report outlined how it was envisaged that this could be achieved through the systematic and controlled delivery of projects and task and finish activities that would result in a robust preventative approach delivered through signposting, self-screening and assistive technology; a delayed and reduced need for care and support through targeted and effective re-ablement support; specialist service provision being delivered through personal budgets and direct payment; and the delivery of the MTFP budget reductions for Adult Social Care.

Reference was made to the six workstreams and 34 individual projects within the programme and it was reported that governance arrangements around each of those workstreams had been established to ensure delivery and accountability. Following further questions by Members about the risks associated with the delivery of the projects, it was reported that if, during the monitoring process, it

became clear that any of the projects were not likely to deliver its outcomes, it would cease and another project would be brought on board.

Discussion ensued on the need to work together with external partners to help deliver the programme; links with the emerging Sustainable Transformation Plan for the NHS; further education around those identified needs which would meet the national eligibility criteria for care and support; and the need to seek the views of front-line staff, carers and service users to ensure that any future service delivery and provision was delivering the best care and support for those that needed it.

The Chair reported that it was hoped that the Scrutiny Committee could meet some front line service staff as part of its work and that it could perhaps assist in seeking views of staff and service users on the services delivered.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

AH23. QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with re-assurance around the current Quality Assurance arrangements which were in place across commissioned care and support provision within the Children and Adult service.

It was reported that the quality monitoring and review of care and support services was currently undertaken by the Contracts and Commissioning Team and had been put in place to ensure services were able to meet the agreed service specification, achieved the required outcomes for service users and carers, were safe and made the best use of all available resources and the submitted report outlined the current position in relation to the two biggest areas of spend in adults services in relation to residential and nursing care and domiciliary care.

Particular reference was made to the work undertaken by the Contracts and Commissioning Team and the quality standard toolkit which was used to assess standards in residential care and it was noted that during 2016/17 there had been an overall increase in the quality of provision, however, one home had been in Executive Safeguarding Strategy since June 2016. Reference was also made to the difficulty in quality assuring domiciliary care services by the nature of those services and the use of other measures, such as mystery shopping, to assess its quality; the re-tendering of both the residential care and domiciliary care contracts in the next financial year and the need to ensure that any revised contracts would involve a revised model of service delivery which aimed to enable providers to meet increasing demand and ensure that services were delivered effectively and provided value for money.

Reference was made to the work the Scrutiny Committee undertook in relation to dementia which had arisen following some visits by Members to care homes previously and the Scrutiny Committee suggested that it might have a role in assisting Officers with mystery shopping, particularly within the domiciliary care settings.

RESOLVED – That the current position be noted.

AH24. LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE FOR TENANTS IN SOCIAL HOUSING

– The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) providing an update on the Government's proposals for how Local Housing Allowance would apply to tenants in social housing and the potential impact on residents and the Council.

The submitted report outlined the background and provisions of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which had been applied to individuals living in the private rented sector since April 2008, together with the Government's intention to apply LHA rates to tenants living in social housing and its potential impact on those tenants and on the future lettings of Council properties.

It was reported that further analysis to evaluate the potential impact of the LHA cap on every Council tenant would be required, taking into account their likely rent and applicable LHA rates in 2019 and that, once this was known, the Council would be in a position to evaluate the level of support that could be made available to affected households.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

AH25. MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – Submitted – A report (previously circulated) of the Chief Officers Executive which had been considered by Cabinet at its meeting held on 13 December 2016, in relation to the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The Assistant Director, Finance and Human Resources reported that there were no major proposals contained within the proposed plan for 2017/18, however, in relation to this Scrutiny Committee, the savings which had been identified within the 2016/17 MTFP to be delivered, although challenging, would be achieved.

Reference was made to two budget pressures within the Adult Social Care service which related to older persons residential fees - increase in framework fees and low attrition rates and it was reported that monitoring of these pressure would continue and that the current position would be reported to Cabinet as part of the quarter 3 budget monitoring report; the Government's announcement to allow Council's the flexibility to increase its Adult Social Care precept by an additional one per cent in 2017/18 and 2018/19 (from two per cent to three per cent) on the condition that the total increase to 2019/20 did not exceed six per cent; and the effect of the increase in the National Living Wage as it related to adult social care contracts.

RESOLVED – That Cabinet be advised that this Scrutiny Committee has no specific comments to make in relation to the MTFP proposals for 2017/18.

AH26. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – MTFP 2017/18 TO 2021/22 – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that this Scrutiny Committee consider Cabinet's proposals in relation to the revenue budget, rent level and service charges for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the financial year 2017/18 in the context of the HRA Medium term Financial Plan to 2021/22 and the 30 year business plan.

It was reported that the revenue from rental agreements was ring fenced for Housing Stock and that it was key to create a balance between rent and service charge levels and investment in the Council's Housing Stock. The submitted report referred to the introduction by the Government to introduce a compulsory one per cent reduction in Social and Affordable rents through the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015 which meant that the Council had no discretion to increase rents, however, it could reduce them lower than the imposed level. It was reported that this would have a significant impact on the level of services which could be provided to tenants and it was therefore suggested that, in line with Government policy, all Council tenants have an average 68 pence reduction in weekly rent.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

AH27. WORK PROGRAMME - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2016/17.

It was reported that work in relation to support for adults with a learning disability would commence in February 2017.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.