

**ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

13<sup>th</sup> June, 2017

**PRESENT** - Councillor Knowles (in the Chair); Councillors Copeland, Culley, D Jones, Kane, Lyonette, Mills, M. Nicholson, T Richmond and Storr. (10)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Lister (1)

**ABSENT** –

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillor S. Richmond

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – James Stroyan, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services, Ken Davies, Housing Strategy Officer and Emma Chawner, Safeguarding Boards Business Manager.

**AH1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**AH2. TIMES OF MEETINGS – RESOLVED** – That, for the Municipal Year 2017/18, meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 10.00 a.m. on the dates as agreed on the calendar of meetings approved by Cabinet at Minute C133/Mar/17.

**AH3. MINUTES** – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> April, 2017.

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

**AH4. CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN THE HOUSING SERVICE** – The Housing Strategy Officer gave a presentation on how customer engagement in housing services had changed to meet the changing profile and expectations of tenants.

The presentation covered the revised structure of customer engagement which was introduced in 2015, and the initiatives since that date which had been introduced to ensure that the voice of the customer was heard, including the introduction of the Housing Connect website and Housing Connect magazine.

It was highlighted that, as part of the changing approach, the aim was to empower individuals and communities to take control and particular reference was made to the excellent work which was going on in Red Hall and to the need to transfer that learning to other areas of the Town to build resilience within communities.

Discussion ensued on the significant changes made to engage with tenants through increased use of digital technology and social media; the changing profile of tenants, with 63 per cent now being female; the appointment of Management Officers to each Council estate to work with communities and to bring agencies

together to make the best use of resources; the emerging role of community ambassadors and the role of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel.

**RESOLVED** – That the presentation be noted and that the Officers make arrangements for Members of this Scrutiny Committee to meet with representatives of the tenants Scrutiny Panels.

**AH5. SUPPORT FOR CARERS IN DARLINGTON** – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) advising Members of the support available for carers in Darlington and requesting that Members act as champions for those carers.

It was reported that the 2011 census had identified 11,048 carers in Darlington, 2,758 of whom were providing care for 50 or more hours per week, with 197 of them being within the age group 0-15 and the largest group being within the 50-64 age group.

The submitted report outlined the wide range of support provided to carers, including commissioned support services for adult and young carers; the provision of breaks from 3<sup>rd</sup> sector providers; support with breaks/services in their own right as carers following the identification of eligible need through a carer's assessment from adults/children's social care.

Reference was made to the Darlington published Carers' Strategy and Implementation Plan and Young Carers' Action Plan for 2013-16 and it was reported that a one-year Implementation Plan was being worked on, whilst publication of the new national carers strategy was awaited. The Implementation Plan focussed mainly on work with health, schools and employers to raise awareness of carers and their needs and the support available to them and to increase career identification.

Discussion ensued on the receipt of funding for a free one-year membership to Employers for Carers which would enable both the Council and small and medium enterprises in Darlington to benefit from its expertise around identifying and supporting caring workers and it was reported that although the take up of this, to date, had been limited as it had just been publicised, it would be promoted as part of Small Business Advice Week which was taking place in September 2017.

The Chair reported that some Members of the Scrutiny Committee had visited Durham County Carers Support, the new providers of the adult carers service to see how the contract was operating and the support provided, and, although it was early days, they had, to date, registered approximately 400 carers.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and that this Scrutiny Committee awaits the new National Carers Strategy and continues to monitor the operation and support by the new providers of the adult carers service.

**AH6. YEAR-END PERFORMANCE** – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) providing information on the year-end performance for 2016/17 against the key performance indicators for Adult Social Care.

The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care reported that, overall, performance across the service was good, however, there were some areas of challenge and these were highlighted in the submitted report.

Particular reference was made to the carers survey which was carried out bi-annually and which showed Darlington's performance to have fallen since the last survey in 2014/15 and it was reported that this was in line with both regional and national trend, however, it was acknowledged that further work needed to be undertaken during the period up to the next survey in 2018/19. The fall in response rates was the main issue to be addressed, and although rates had fallen in Darlington from 63 per cent in 2014/15 to 51 per cent in 2016/17, it was still the highest response rate out of the North East Regional Performance Group for the second consecutive time.

References were also made to the performance in relation to permanent admissions both 65 plus and 18-64 year olds to residential or nursing care which had performed better than last year and were under the targets set; learning disabilities/mental health in settled accommodation and employment both of which had continued to perform well during the year with a slight drop in the number of adults with learning disabilities in employment, which could be attributed to the number of adults retiring in the year, and, in relation to reablement, although there had been a reduction in the number of packages offered due to the service targeting those individuals with a higher level of need, the proportion of individuals with no on-going care needs had remained the same as with the proportion of individuals whose need reduced home care increasing.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

**AH7. 2017/18 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS** – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to enable Scrutiny to be advised of the proposed indicators at the earliest possible opportunity, the Head of Strategy, Performance and Communication submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to a number of proposed performance indicators which could be monitored by this Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18 and which might help to inform its work programme.

It was reported that the draft indicators were based on those being monitored by the Chief Executive and would be reported to Scrutiny on a quarterly basis, with the relevant Assistant Directors attending meetings to update Members and answer any questions.

Members suggested that additional indicators be included in relation to reassurance around adult safeguarding.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be received and that any further comments or suggestions from Members in relation to the proposed performance indicators be forwarded to Officers.

**AH8. 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 2017/18.

The Chair reported that the review in relation to support for adults with a learning disability or impairment, including autism, would be commencing and that a presentation from representatives of MAIN, an organisation which offers advice and services tailored to individuals and families living with autism, on the different types of autism, how wide ranging and complex the condition was and how it was characterised would be given to the first meeting of the Review Group to be held on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2017.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.