

---

**OVERVIEW OF ADULTS AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

---

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

**Housing Services**

2. The Committee received an overview from the Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services, which outlined the services provided by the Housing Services Division. The overview detailed the structure of the Division, the key Housing Plans in place, the composition of the Council's housing stock, the breakdown of income and expenditure in relation to the Housing Revenue Account, the Council's new-build schemes, asset management, and housing management and the applications process.
3. Particular emphasis was placed on homelessness, and the Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2015-17, and the Lifeline services provided by the Council.
4. Concerns were expressed in terms of the forthcoming introduction of the Universal Credit, and Members were keen to receive more information at future meetings in terms of its implementation.

**Adult Social Care Services**

5. The Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, provided a presentation which highlighted the importance of Social Care. The Committee was informed that Social Care responds to a wide range of needs, aims to help people to live as independently as possible, protects people from harm in vulnerable situations, balances risks with rights, and offers essential help at times of crisis.
6. The Care Act, which came into effect on 1st April 2015, was the most significant change to Adult Social Care in 60 years, with the focus of the Act being on supporting people to maintain their independence and take control of their care and support. The Act will bring about major changes in the way that Social Care is funded (though some of these changes will not be implemented until April 2016), introduce a new approach to assessments and the provision of services, a new emphasis on 'well being' and new responsibilities for early intervention and prevention.
7. The Committee expressed the wish to continue to receive regular update reports, in order to monitor the implementation of the Care Act, and remain abreast of ongoing developments.

## **Performance Management Information (Quarter Four)**

8. The Head of Organisational Planning informed the Committee in relation to a number of Performance Management indicators within the Committee's remit, for the fourth quarter of the previous year. The areas given consideration reflected elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy, and these were 'Healthy and Independent', 'Enough support when needed', 'Corporate Health', 'A place designed to thrive', 'A safe and caring community', and 'More people active and involved'. Members welcomed the information.

## **Work Programme**

9. Consideration was given to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee. Members were keen to maintain the thematic approach developed to the Work Programme, and agreed to add Welfare Reforms and Housing as specific topic areas for scrutiny.

## **Assistant Director, Adult Social Care**

10. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to place on record our thanks to Ann Workman, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care, who was attending her last meeting of the Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee, before leaving the local authority to take up another position in Essex. Ann has been a tremendous support to the Committee during her time with Darlington Borough Council, and I have found her thoughts and advice invaluable and insightful.

**Councillor Sue Richmond**  
**Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee**