
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.

Work Programme

2. We are continuing work to review and revise our work programme to enable us to adopt a more focussed approach to scrutinising each of our topic areas and we will be inviting the Head of Performance Management to our next meeting to discuss this further.

Dementia Review

3. Our review of dementia services in on-going and since our last report to Council we have met with representatives from the Alzheimers Society to discuss the support services provided by that organisation to help people living with dementia and their carers in Darlington; operational staff from the Adult Social Care and Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation trust and a number of carers to discuss their personal experiences of caring for someone living with dementia and the support available in Darlington. We have also met a representative from Healthwatch to discuss the work it has previously undertaken.
4. Our next steps are to visit a number of care homes who contract with the Council and met with a representative from primary care to discuss the patient pathway from presenting at the surgery.

Medium Term Financial Plan

5. We have had two special meetings to look, in detail, at the proposals contained in phase 2 of the next round of spending reductions as detailed within the Medium Term Financial Plan 2016/17 – 2019/20 which are specifically under the remit of our Scrutiny Committee. In considering the proposals, we also considered the impact assessments in relation to the proposed reductions in the core offer and those specific areas which it was proposed to include in the Futures Fund.
6. In addition, we also established a Task and Finish group to look in detail at two specific areas which were included within the reductions to the core offer namely – cease floating support for Vulnerable Adults and cease floating support for Drug and Alcohol.
7. We held a special meeting of our Committee on 4 May 2016, and taking into account, all the discussions we have had at our meetings, formulated a response on behalf of our Scrutiny Committee which will be submitted to a special meeting of

Efficiency and Resources Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 26 May 2016, as part of the consultation exercise.

Progress on Customer Engagement in Housing Services

8. Members may recall that following consultation and research into the most effective way to engage with housing customers, the Council adopted a new structure in April 2015, which would enable housing customers to engage, with the Council, in a variety of ways in relation to the planning and delivery of housing services in the future. As the revised arrangements have now been in place for a number of months, we asked for an update on the progress and feedback to date.
9. Officers gave a presentation which covered the work undertaken so far and reported that the revised arrangements were proving successful and that positive feedback had been received. More development work to enhance communication was planned.
10. As a Scrutiny Committee we will be working more closely with the Groups which have been established to see how we can better work together to achieve outcomes.

Autism

11. We received an extremely interesting presentation on the services provided for adults with autism in Darlington and heard the views of operational staff from Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and Adult Social Care about the diagnostic journey and support available and the personal experiences of both a carer of a child living with autism and a young man with autism.
12. Listing to the presentation and the personal experiences, it is apparent that there are a number of areas where we feel the Scrutiny Committee could add value and influence the pathway and support and we have agreed to undertake a review of the autism journey in adults as our next major review once the Dementia Review has been concluded.

Councillor Sue Richmond
Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee