
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.

Council Housing New Build Programme

2. We have received an update on progress in respect of the Council Housing New Build Programme.
3. The current new build programme began in 2015 and by December 2017, the Council will have completed 160 additional dwellings at a total cost of £23.3 million which has been funded from the Housing Revenue Account, in addition to £3.2 million grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme.
4. A total of seven sites have been developed with a mix of houses and flats and all of the properties have been designed to be energy efficient and to meet lifetime homes standards. Ground floor flats have flat floor showers and are designed to higher levels of mobility.
5. Our Scrutiny Committee will be going to visit the final development in the current programme at Earl Carlson Grove, Lingfield in October.
6. A new programme is now being developed which will cover the period 2017 to 2020 and a total of £17.7 million has been identified within the Housing Revenue Account to support the programme and additional funding from the Homes and Communities Agency will again be sought.

Advocacy

7. We have been advised of the range of Advocacy available within Darlington to people who need social care or who are detained under the Mental Health Act.
8. Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) is the Council's single commissioned provider of statutory advocacy services to qualifying individuals and its services ensure that those people without a 'voice' through ability or capacity are supported to stay in control and exhibit choice and are safeguarded where necessary.
9. We heard that for the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017, there had been 715 referrals to the service and that the current contract spend was £180,000.

10. We are interested in doing some further work around the service in terms of the referral and assessment processes, awareness raising and signposting and support and we will do this through a task and finish group.

Consultation on Adults Social Care Eligibility Criteria

11. Our views have been sought on the review of the eligibility criteria for residents of the Borough who access adult social care services following the introduction of the Care Act 2014.
12. The Council is proposing to remove 'managing medication' as an outcome within the eligibility criteria, to bring it in line both with the national criteria that is set out within the Care Act 2014 and other local authorities. There is no legal requirement to include managing medication within the eligibility criteria.
13. If agreed, it is anticipated that the majority of people currently receiving care and support from the Council will not see any significant change to their support plan because the majority of them already meet two or more of the agreed outcomes as specified within the Care Act. For those that might be affected, and it is thought that this might be approximately 42 service users, signposting to other avenues of support will be provided.
14. The consultation ends on 22 October 2017.

Adult Social Care Transformation Programme

15. Scrutiny has received information regarding the Adult Social Care Transformation Programme, which is being implemented and delivered to meet service demands and pressures within that Service area. We were advised that the programme is progressing well and, overall, remains on track.
16. As we are all aware, changes in local demographics have created challenges to the delivery of social care and health services in Darlington, with people now living for longer with multiple long-term conditions who require some form of social care support. As well as this increased demand, the financial challenges are also significant as a result of reducing resources and the delivery of the programme is paramount.
17. We will continue to receive reports to monitor this Transformation Programme until completion.

Performance Indicators Q1 2017/18

18. We have received an update on performance against those key performance indicators under the remit of our Scrutiny Committee for the period April to June 2017.

19. Three of the housing indicators have a year-end target however, it is pleasing to note that, at quarter 1, all three are on course to achieve or exceed the year-end target, with the trend in relation to the number of days spent in bed and breakfast and homelessness prevention being positive across the first quarter.
20. In relation to adult social care, these indicators are based upon the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework and the information we were provided with was more detailed because of the diversity of information and the scale of the budgets involved.
21. As Members will be aware the new casework system, Liquid Logic, has now been introduced and, although the previous system was frozen in June in preparation for this, a large number of indicators have shown an improvement in performance from that previously reported last month or when compared to the same period last year. It is particularly worth noting that all of the Self Directed Support indicators have performed significantly better than the same period last year and that both permanent admissions indicators also continue to perform better, with 15 less permanent admissions of older people aged 65 plus than the same period in 2016/17 and no permanent admissions for 18-64 year olds.

Work Programme

22. In continuing our visits to commissioned service providers, the Committee very recently visited Foundation to find out about its accommodation based services.

Councillor Marjory Knowles
Chair of Adults and Housing Scrutiny Committee