

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2009 at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Tony Hall in the Chair.

County Councillors: John Fox, Dave Peart, Helen Swiers and Herbert Tindall.

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: Bridget Hardy.

In attendance: County Councillor Shelagh Marshall (Older People's Champion).

Present by Invitation: Sue Mann (Help the Aged) and Paul Fisher (Age Concern), David Trusson (North Yorkshire Forum for Older People).

Officers: Seamus Breen (Assistant Director, Commissioning & Partnerships, ACS), Derek Law (Corporate Director, ACS), Ray Busby (Scrutiny & Corporate Performance) and Jackie Harvey (Legal & Democratic Services).

Apologies for absence:

County Councillors: Peter Popple, Pat Marsburg, Brian Marshall and Melva Steckles.

Voluntary Sector representatives: Alex Bird (Age Concern) and Peter Blackburn (MESMAC).

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

16. MINUTES

With regard to minute item 13 (Dementia Commissioning Framework), the Chairman informed the Committee that a peer review in North Yorkshire had been undertaken the previous week by the Yorkshire & Humber Improvement Partnership (YHIP); their resultant comments and baseline assessment were expected to follow in the near future.

County Councillor Shelagh Marshall declared a personal interest in respect of this matter, being a member of the Regional Development Board for the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy and also being involved with the UK Advisory Forum on Ageing.

Derek Law commented that, once the baseline had been established, the findings would be shared with other regional committees. It was noted that other bodies were studying North Yorkshire practices to guide the way forward.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2009, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

The Committee was advised that no notice had been received of any public questions or statements to be made at the meeting.

18. THE GREEN PAPER ON FUNDING OF SOCIAL CARE – THE BIG CARE DEBATE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Corporate Performance and presentations by the Corporate Director, Adult & Community Services and Sue Mann of Help the Aged, introducing the green paper on funding for Social Care in England, explaining its implications and inviting the Committee to take a view on whether it wishes to be part of the consultation response.

Seamus Breen and Sue Mann each highlighted the key points of their presentations (copies in Minute Book). During discussions, the Committee made specific comments that it believed could enhance the County Council's response. These were:

- With regard to a “nationalised” care system, there were concerns that it would lessen local accountability by removing overall decision making from democratically elected local councillors. Local people would effectively lose their voice on a service area that would affect everyone.
- The Committee supported the LGA viewpoint that, on the wider aims, supporting older people and disabled people is more than just about providing services delivered by health adult social care providers; it is about ensuring individuals can access appropriate health, housing, transport and leisure services. Councillors as leaders are perfectly placed to work with a range of partners.
- There needs to be more focus upon the integration of health and social care services, rather than focusing upon creating a national care service parallel to the NHS.
- Notwithstanding these concerns, the Committee understands the Age Concern viewpoint, that a move to a system of national entitlement has some merit. The offer of a system of six national entitlements should be the ‘architecture’ for any model of reform: prevention, joined-up services, personalised care, a national assessment, information and advice and fair funding.
- Whichever funding model is introduced in the future, there needs to be recognition for those who have taken personal responsibility in planning for later life through financial planning and healthy lifestyles, etc.
- Proposals for carers’ support (e.g. funding, respite, family assessments etc.) are not presented explicitly. The vision focuses too much on individuals and needs to give more consideration to those supporting them.
- The Committee supported the view expressed by The Alzheimers Society, that any new system will fail if people with Dementia are not at the heart of the solution in that people with Dementia are among the biggest users of social care and the numbers living with this condition will double in a generation. It is vital that the voices of people with Dementia are heard in this debate.
- More information is needed on the costing assumptions:
 - The level at which the eligibility criteria will be set.
 - How much resource will be available per person?
 - The nature of the means test for both the partnership proposal and for the cost of accommodation under the comprehensive model.

RESOLVED –

That:

- (a) the report be noted;
- (b) the Corporate Director, ACS and Portfolio Holder be advised that the Committee supports the points raised in the presentation by Seamus Breen as being the County Council's position on the Green Paper, but that any response would be improved by incorporating the views expressed during the meeting;
- (c) should it be practicable, a copy of the draft response be circulated to Members of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee before it is sent to the Department of Health on 13 November 2009.

19. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN SHOULD, BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

There was no urgent business to consider.

JAH/ALJ