

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CARE AND INDEPENDENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2011 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Tony Hall in the Chair.

County Councillors: John Batt, John Fox, Bill Hoult, Caroline Patmore, Pat Marsburg, Brian Marshall, John McCartney, Heather Moorhouse, Dave Peart, John Savage, Melva Steckles, Helen Swiers

Representatives of the Voluntary Sector: Alex Bird

County Councillor Clare Wood, Portfolio Holder – Adult Services

Officers: Seamus Breen (Assistant Director, Commissioning & Partnerships, (Health and Adult Services)), Beverley Maybury, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care Operations, (Health and Adult Services)), Anne Marie Lubanski (Head of Self Directed Care and Transformation, (Health and Adult Services)), Mike Webster (Assistant Director, Contracting, Procurement and Quality Assurance, (Health and Adult Services)), Ray Busby (Policy, Performance and Partnerships)

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

95. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2011, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

96. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

Members of the public were invited to make public statements in connection with Day Services for people with Dementia in the Hambleton Area and Richmond as part of the Work Programme Report.

97. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Development Officer on the Forward Work Programme.

The report gave Members the opportunity to be updated on work programme items and review the shape of the work ahead.

The Chairman decided that this report could be taken earlier in the meeting to accommodate the referral to the Committee by Hambleton Area Committee regarding Dementia Day Services at Stokesley and across the County.

Welfare Benefits Session

Ray Busby reminded the Committee that there will be a welfare benefits session on Wednesday, 5 October 2011 at 2:00 pm. For convenience this date had originally been chosen to take advantage of the Members' Seminar arranged for the morning. The seminar has been cancelled; however the decision had been taken to continue with the discussion session in the afternoon. Ray Busby encouraged Members to contact him regarding their availability for the day.

Carers Strategy and Personalisation Session

Ray Busby also reminded Members that rather than undertake a scrutiny review of how the Council supports carers, as had been suggested by Carers' Resource at Harrogate, the Chairman in conjunction with Group Spokespersons had agreed that an overview be reported to the Committee on 10 November focussing especially on Personalisation and progress against the Carers Strategy.

Dementia

In relation to Dementia Day Services the Chairman welcomed members of the public to the meeting. Sue Hosey told of her experiences of caring for her husband with Alzheimer's. She described the importance of the support she received from the Day Centre at Stokesley, 'the lifeline' it meant for her and therefore the person she cares for.

She referred to the two Alzheimer's Society events; the Café Memoir and a barbeque, presumably intended to be services in lieu of day care. In her view these had not been as successful as the Alzheimer's Society had clearly intended. They could not be an appropriate substitute for carers who looked after individuals with moderate and severe Dementia. The referral to the Centre from the hospital had helped her cope so it had been distressing to hear rumours several weeks later that the Day Centre was closing.

Sue complimented the staff and volunteers at the Centre. It was much loved by people in the area and by people who use it.

Since the Area Committee meeting, she had become aware that the County Council and PCT intended to keep the Day Centres open until the end of the financial year; however she encouraged Members to look beyond that agreement and to secure this service for the longer term. She referred to the petition presented to the Council the previous Monday. Finally, she remarked upon the cost savings to the NHS and the Country by the invaluable work undertaken by carers.

Tony Hall confirmed the receipt of a petition of over 1,000 names by the Area Committee. He mentioned upon the recent meeting since then between the joint commissioners which had concluded that funding of the Service would allow it to continue until April 2012.

The Portfolio Holder, Clare Wood, said she empathised with the circumstances the carers have described drawing upon her personal experience of caring for a relative. The recent press coverage had understandably heightened anxiety in the community and had mistakenly given the impression that a decision to withdraw the service had already been taken. The Commissioning meeting on Tuesday had confirmed funding for the remainder of the financial year.

An allocation from the Innovation Fund in Hambleton and Richmondshire had also become available. The important point moving forward was that the Alzheimer's Society provided equitable and appropriate support across the Country. The focus would very much be directed towards those with early and moderate stages of Dementia, with the following broad aims:

1. To take account of the individual needs of the carer.
2. To provide support as close to the home as possible.
3. A service that was sustainable for the long term.

The meeting on Tuesday had confirmed that there would be no further closures of day centres to allow the directorate to undertake assessments. This would inform decisions so that people could be reassured the right balance was being met as services were modernised.

Alison Hunt and Sue Hosey made further comments about the importance of volunteers at the Centre and the consequences of closure of the Day Centre in the longer term, both on a personal level and financially. Jo Clark, another volunteer, echoed these sentiments, emphasising that the Day Centre in Stokesley was a most valuable resource and it was disappointing for all concerned that there appeared to be no clear plans beyond April.

She shared the view that the Café Memoir was an inadequate and insufficient substitute for Day Centre services. It couldn't be classed as "relief" or "respite" for carers of people with moderate to severe Dementia, although it could be support for those in the early stages of Dementia.

The Chairman encouraged people to attend the first meeting of the Hambleton/Richmond Area Dementia Forum facilitated by the Alzheimer's Society at the Community Arts building on 22 September in Thirsk.

Clare Wood reiterated that key Health and Adult Services staff had a clear responsibility to talk direct to carers and families. The intention was to enter into a meaningful dialogue about both their individual circumstances and what might be provided in the longer term on a sustainable basis.

The local Member, Heather Moorhouse, expressed the view that whatever solution was found, and she supported the retention of the Day Centre, other alternatives were second best in terms of access and location. If the Day Centre was withdrawn, because of limited day and residential care provision in the Stokesley area in order to access day centre support, people would have to travel to nearby areas such as Northallerton. Apart from the distress it would have adverse financial consequences for people and their carers.

County Councillor Melva Steckles thanked the members of the public for stating their position so clearly. Having been involved in the local Alzheimer's Society she understood the sentiments expressed and empathised with people's experiences. She considered it was important that the Committee and local Members were kept advised and involved in discussions. Members should be able to contribute to discussions on what might happen leading up to April and what was planned for services beyond this date.

Seamus Breen explained his understanding of the discussion. In essence there were three strands, firstly at an individual level – officers would be reviewing and discussing with individuals and carers in day centre provision over the next month or so; secondly with regard to the Alzheimer's Society and the need to modernise services, it was important that optimal use was made of the Innovation Fund; and thirdly at an officer level it was important that this discussion moved forward so that carers and families can plan for the future on the basis that statutory partners were maximising the use of the investment.

In summing up on behalf of the Committee, the Chairman emphasised that having signed the Dementia Declaration it was incumbent upon him to do what he could to ensure that appropriate approaches to support in the community were explored.

RESOLVED:

1. The Committee confirmed that it wished to be kept informed of developments in relation to support for people with Dementia in the community and Day Services in particular, so it can reassure itself that the process of assessing individual needs and modernising services is being conducted sympathetically, sensitively and effectively.
2. In relation to day services in the County leading up to April 2012, the Members of the Committee be advised and informed of the continuing discussions with people affected by services, volunteers and community leaders.
3. Members be also advised what the possibilities might be for community based approaches for providing support for people with Dementia.
4. Regarding discussions between the PCT and the County Council about the shape of commissioned services past 2012, in the short-term the Chairman and Group Spokespersons maintain a weather eye on this issue, having given a positive commitment that Committee Members will be updated on a regular basis but additionally be given the opportunity to attend any separate meeting that is arranged in this connection.

98. LEARNING DISABILITY STRATEGY

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services.

Anne-Marie Lubanski presented the report.

Within the next day or so the documents which had been circulated separately will be full public documents and made available to Members. The reality moving forward was that the Authority would not be providing the same type of services as people had experienced in the past. There would still be an assessment of need but more people will be encouraged to do different things with a Personalised Budget and the aim would be to help people to choose. She acknowledged it was important to ensure that there was adequate monitoring of Personalised Budgets.

RESOLVED:

1. That the vision statement of social care as outlined in Book 1, attached at Appendix 1, be noted.
2. It be noted that HAS is making progress on a number of fronts in Learning Disability Services.
3. Further reports be received particularly on the process and feedback from users and carers and families on the direction of travel in Learning Disability Services.

99. VALUING EMPLOYMENT NOW

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group, County Councillor Dave Peart.

To report the work undertaken by the Members examining the implications of the National Strategy – Valuing Employment Now.

To set these discussions in the context of conclusions around priorities for day services and supported employment services in the future for people with disabilities, mental health needs and other vulnerable adults.

Time constraints at the last meeting meant consideration of the Task Group's report had to be deferred. The Director of Health and Adult Services commented on the matters raised in this report and broader issues around the Learning Disabilities Strategy.

County Councillor Dave Peart reported on the work done by the Task Group on Valuing Employment Now. This work was familiar having been deferred from the last meeting so he did not go through it in detail. He commented that Members would see changes in provision in their wards and also when they sit in Committee based upon a different approach to commissioning. Some of these changes will not be popular or easy adjustments for users and carers and providers to make.

The latter part of the report explored about how the County Council might become an exemplar authority and increase the number of people with a learning disability. This would be challenging in the current financial and local authority climate. In the short-term he suggested that County Councillor Liz Casling's Corporate and Partnership Scrutiny Committee be asked to monitor progress on this and report as appropriate.

With regard to the wider issues around VEN and learning disabilities, he suggested that the Group meet again in six to nine months to take stock of how far this Strategy has been implemented and report its findings back.

RESOLVED:

The Committee confirmed this view and agreed that the Task Group be reconvened in six to nine months time and report accordingly.

100. PREPARATIONS BY THE INDEPENDENT CARE SECTOR FOR NEW COMMISSIONING ENVIRONMENT – PRESENTATION BY MIKE PADGHAM

Mike Padgham, Chair of the Independent Care Group, spoke to slides regarding the preparations by the Independent Care Sector for the new commissioning environment. He reminded Members that he is a provider himself in both day and domiciliary care.

He explained that the sector occupied a significant place in the social care market. Its representative body the Independent Care Group supported providers and worked with the Statutory Sector to give the best possible service to clients. A significant percentage of providers were members.

The sector was committed to providing choice, dignity and independence and to meeting the 'Think Local, Act Personal' agenda.

He outlined the changes the sector faced in terms of increased costs, poor national publicity and the economic downturn. He concluded that the market remained fragile with many providers, although by no means all, arguably still under prepared for the move from traditional commissioning and delivery. The scope for investment was limited.

Moving forward successfully would depend upon the following factors:

- Good quality care
- Excellent people
- Commitment and flexibility from both sides
- Partnership working
- More dialogue

- Harder work towards a fair price for care.
- Invitation to come and see work IS providers do

There was some discussion around the new registration process under the Care Quality Commission and Mike conveyed the dissatisfaction within the sector regarding the CQC's approach to its regulatory responsibilities. At the same time that fees were being increased and there was a need for a strong regulator; most areas of the sector had lost confidence in the CQC.

RESOLVED:

That the presentation be received and be taken into account should the Committee make changes to its work programme.

101. INDEPENDENT CARE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT & COMMITTEE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Development Officer.

To invite Members to consider the appointment of a representative from the independent care sector as a member of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

The Executive be recommended:

1. That the Independent Care Group be invited to appoint an individual to serve as a non-voting member of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the current County Council term only.
2. The decision be reviewed by the Committee prior to the 2013 County Council elections.
3. The Independent Care Group be asked to appoint a substitute for this member.

102. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF REABLEMENT SERVICES IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services.

This report provided an update to the committee on the implementation of START reablement in North Yorkshire and provides an evaluation of the outcomes to date.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

103. EXTRA CARE HOUSING AND REGENERATION PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The Executive report of the Corporate Director – Health and Adult Services.

To advise members of the mechanism for selecting a partner to enable the delivery of the North Yorkshire Extra Care Housing and Regeneration Programme and seek Members' approval to launch the first stage of this process.

To report on initial funding for legal advisors.

Clare Wood advised that the report and proposal had been received favourably by the Executive. It builds upon current developments and explains how the County would move forward in meeting assessed needs.

It would now be subject to a major procurement exercise. County Councillor Brian Marshall referred to continuing issues regarding local planning and the development of extra care in Selby. The chances of a successful development and it being accepted on the ground were improved if the feasibility of extra care provision was incorporated into the Local Development Framework.

Melva Steckles suggested that at some point the Committee review the provision of extra care and residential support for the age group of 20 to 65. Mike Webster confirmed new development wasn't limited to people over the age of 55. It was agreed that a report on this subject be made to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents and appendices of the Report be noted.
2. The decision to enter the first stage of the procurement process to select a partner to enable the delivery of the North Yorkshire Extra Care Housing and Regeneration Programme be supported.
3. It be noted that the initial funding of £50k would be made available towards the costs of specialist legal advisors.
4. That the Committee receive further reports on the nature of the emerging proposals and funding requirements to support the procurement.
5. The Forward Work Programme be amended to include some work by the Committee in relation to provision of extra care accommodation for people under the age of 50, especially those with a long term condition.

The meeting concluded at 1pm.

RB/ALJ