

North Yorkshire County Council

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2013 at 10.30 am at County Hall, Northallerton.

Present:-

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan in the Chair

County Councillors: Liz Casling, Bill Hoult (as substitute for Lindsay Burr), John Ennis, Helen Grant, John McCartney, Penny Marsden, Brian Marshall, Heather Moorhouse, Chris Pearson, John Savage

County Councillor Don Mackenzie, Portfolio Holder – Adult Services

Representative of the Independent Sector: Mike Padgham

Representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector: Jackie Snape, Jon Carling

Officers: Helen Taylor (Corporate Director Health and Adult Services), Mike Webster (Assistant Director Procurement, Partnerships and Quality Assurance (Health and Adult Services)), Tony Law (General Manager Performance & Change, Performance and Change Management (Health and Adult Services)), Ray Busby (Corporate Development Officer, (Policy and Partnerships))

Apologies:

County Councillors: Lindsay Burr, Joe Plant

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

11. Minutes

Resolved –

Subject to: Lindsay Burr's name being deleted and substituted by Jean Butterfield, the inclusion of Bill Hoult as a Member present and the deletion of John Ennis, the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2013, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

12. 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.

13. Appointment of Co-opted Members – Oral Report of the Scrutiny Team Officer.

The Chairman welcomed the two new added members to the Committee representing the Voluntary and Community Sector; Jackie Snape and Jon Carling, from Disability Action Yorkshire and the York and North Yorkshire Forum respectively and also welcomed Mike Padgham, currently chair of the Independent Care Group, who had been reappointed as the Independent Sector representative.

Resolved –

That the appointment to the Committee of Jackie Snape, Jon Carling and Mike Padgham as added members, be confirmed.

14. FACS Consultation: Making Difficult Decisions in Adult Social Care

- Covering Report of the Scrutiny Team Leader
- Consultation documents

Helen Taylor spoke to a shortened version of the presentation on the consultation documents which would be shown at each of the forthcoming consultation events.

In response to questions, Helen clarified the numbers of people whose needs would be re-assessed. Current figures were 10,000 people were thought to be in receipt of support, of which 2,600 were currently classed as 'Moderate'.

Bill Hoult believed that the tone of the document implied a presumption that the Council would move from 'Moderate' to 'Substantial'. He recalled his comments at the last meeting, when he had reminded the Committee that when the Council had decided, some years ago, to move to 'Moderate' from 'Substantial' on the premise that supporting individuals at a lower eligibility threshold would result, over a period of time, in the Council seeing less pressure on social care budgets. He could not recollect seeing any further evidence to indicate whether this had indeed been the case.

Helen Taylor emphasised that it is a legal requirement to consult and there certainly had not been any pre-assumption of the outcome. The Directorate and the Portfolio Holder did genuinely want to listen to people's concerns and take them into account. The effects upon individuals had been clearly outlined in the Equalities Impact Assessments, which were included with Members papers. Of the 2,814 questionnaires sent out to date, 900 had been sent back at the time of the meeting, an encouraging response thus far, with many more expected.

Helen referred to evidence from recent research that suggests that providing certain types of support at an early stage can result in higher rates of dependency and residential care. In this context it was important to bear in mind the benefits of Re-ablement, whereby 70% of those people who received rehabilitation would not, in the short-term, require a service afterwards.

There was a continuing and critical challenge to meet the financial constraints upon the Council; setting the eligibility criteria at 'Moderate' potentially leaves the Council in a position of unlimited liability. Raising the threshold could protect services, but also allows the Council to be more targeted in its prevention approach.

Helen explained that because of resource constraints, the choice of locations for the consultation events had been influenced by prior experience of where attendance had been high.

A Member was concerned that some elements of the charging proposals, particularly the new arrangements around two people providing care, might impact upon particular communities more than others. Potentially, there seemed to be a disproportionate effect on some sections of the population, particularly those who had savings and capital. Helen Taylor acknowledged the significance of this issue in terms of people's ability to pay.

The Portfolio Holder, County Councillor Don Mackenzie, emphasised that neither he nor County Councillor Clare Wood (Portfolio Holder), nor any other Member or officer, had yet made up their minds: a decision would not be reached until all comments received and responses had been taken into account in February. The changes were predicated on a need to continue to provide services and meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

The Director answered questions in relation to Telecare and provision of housing related benefit. On behalf of the Independent Sector, Mike Padgham expressed the sector's general disappointment with the proposed tightening of criteria but acknowledged the financial straits under which the Council was operating.

Resolved –

- a) That the Portfolio Holder and the Director note the comments made at the meeting.
- b) That Group Spokespersons be advised of the initial results of the consultation process and responses received at their Mid-Cycle Briefing in December.
- c) That the Chairman and Group Spokespersons consider the merits and feasibility of convening an earlier meeting of the Committee than that scheduled in January in order that the proposals could be considered in depth before recommendations are made to the Executive.

15. Safeguarding

(a) North Yorkshire Adults Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2012/13 -
Covering report of the Scrutiny Team Leader

Ian Spicer presented the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Board. He highlighted recent activities and priorities of the Board.

Resolved –

1. That the Report be received.
2. The Committee acknowledged that from the Annual Report that the Board is attending to the right priorities.
3. Relevant information in the Report will be fed into the Committee's review of the Financial Abuse of Adults.

(b) Financial Abuse of Vulnerable People - Report on the Initial Task Group Briefing

The Committee received the report of the initial task group meeting.

Resolved -

1. That the Committee noted the discussion at the first meeting.
2. That the proposed project plan, as initially agreed at the last meeting, be approved as final.
3. When the next meeting of the task group is arranged and invitation be extended to all Members who might wish to attend.

16. 2013 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire

- Covering Report of the Scrutiny Team Leader
- Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire (sent out separately with agenda papers)

Dr Lincoln Sargeant introduced the Report and spoke to a presentation.

Members complimented Dr Sargeant on the clarity of his presentation and Annual Report.

Lincoln highlighted some of the investment in relation to alcohol strategy and drug use.

In response to Members questions Lincoln advised that in four years' time, as a result of the intervention of public health described in the report, he would expect to see:

- Evidence of improved integration and health and social care emphasising prevention with better linkages to the voluntary sector.
- Reduced rates of alcohol related harm.
- An overall reducing figure of premature mortality.

The Portfolio Holder commended Dr Sargeant's report to Members. The repositioning of public health within local authorities was giving rise to the opportunity to direct activity to areas which would benefit the population and local authority priorities generally.

Resolved –

That the report be received.

17. Local Account – Report of the Director of Health and Adult Services

Helen Taylor advised this was the third local account; it was coming before the Committee in draft format in order that comments might be made prior to publication.

Tony Law explained that 2,700 hits had been made on the website relating to the Local Account. Efforts were made to connect with networks to ensure that people were made aware of the Local Account and how they could offer their views. It was important that the Local Account was an honest assessment of the Council's performance and some of the case studies highlighted areas of interest, for example, Serious Case Reviews.

Resolved –

The Committee was satisfied with the format of the current Local Account and offered no further changes or corrections.

18. Development of Procurement Arrangements for Domiciliary Care for Older People and People with a Physical Disability - Report of the Director of Health and Adult Services.

The report outlined the progress on developing new arrangements for the purchase of domiciliary care.

Mike Webster explained this report had been submitted at the request of the Group Spokespersons. It was understood that the Committee would wish to take a key interest in the months ahead as the new procurements arrangements came into being. The next

stage in the process would be the circulation of proposals to providers as part of the engagement process.

Jon Carling had concerns that the proposals might threaten the viability of small local providers; reconciling the move towards greater economies of scale by contracting with a smaller list of providers, whilst at the same time attempting to ensure that small local providers were sustainable, could be more challenging. Mike Webster acknowledged this argument, but this concern in part explained why a uniform approach would not be right.

Given that, would organisations look to win more services by potentially reducing costs? A Member asked how the standard of care provided would be monitored. Mike Webster advised that the Quality Control Team was relatively small in number and monitoring of the scale required was always going to be a challenge, however, the more contracts were undertaken by larger organisations with more sophisticated monitoring systems, the easier it would be for the assessment staff to monitor quality by accessing that data, which, it is expected, would release capacity to take a more active part with services provided by smaller, local organisations. Six Monitoring Officers covered 120 agencies. With a smaller number of agencies, this task would potentially become easier and facilitate better procurement working and monitoring relationships with those organisations.

Resolved –

That the report be received and Members kept advised of progress and update reports be submitted regularly to Group Spokespersons.

19. Work Programme - Report of the Scrutiny Team Leader.

Resolved –

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 12:35 pm

RB/ALJ