

North Yorkshire County Council

Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the virtual meeting held on 4 March 2021 at 10am.

Present:-

County Councillor Karin Sedgwick in the Chair.

County Councillors: Philip Broadbank, Eric Broadbent, John Ennis, David Jeffels, Caroline Goodrick, Helen Grant, Andrew Jenkinson, David Jeffels, Stanley Lumley and John Mann.

Mike Padgham (Independent Care Group) and Jill Quinn (Dementia Forward).

In attendance:

County Councillors Caroline Dickinson (Executive Member for Adult Social Care)

Officers: Ray Busby (Principal Scrutiny Support Officer), Richard Webb (Corporate Director for Health and Adult Services), Dale Owens (Assistant Director of Commissioning & Quality, Health and Adult Services), Louise Wallace (Director of Public Health, Commissioning (HAS))

Apologies:

County Councillors Mike Chambers MBE and Cliff Trotter

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

238. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2020 having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

239. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to note.

240. 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.

241. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman updated members on changes to the work programme she had agreed to.

She highlighted some of the adjustments made in order that the committee not only met at the right time, but also accommodated officer priorities in these challenging

As Chair, she would be observing the upcoming meeting of the Outbreak Management Board, which intended to review how Covid 19 had affected suicide rates in North Yorkshire. This topic has been a key concern for the committee. In this context, she had recently suggested that aspects of the mental health first aider training feature as a future members seminar agenda topic. Suicide prevention would be brought before the September meeting of this committee.

She was consulting with John Ennis, Chairman of the Scrutiny of Health Committee, on the prospects for some joint working on the implications of the government's intentions for social care and health provision.

242. Independent Care Sector and the Impact of Covid-19

Considered

Presentation by Mike Padgham, Chair of the Independent Care Group (York and North Yorkshire) and co-opted member of the committee on, from his perspective, the impact Covid-19 has had on the independent care sector.

Mike explained that even before the pandemic the sector was facing many challenges:

- A 'perfect storm': rising demand, falling funding, greater inspection, dire staff shortages, rising fees.
- Care homes closing, homecare contracts being handed back.
- 1.4m people with unmet care need.
- Up to a quarter of care homes at risk.
- Social care funding restrictions.
- Estimated 20,000 staff vacancies on any one day in the England.
- Increasing difficulty for homecare providers to respond effectively in rural areas.

Because of the pandemic, care business have to cope with:

- Stress on staff/management.
- Exacerbated staffing shortages.
- Further financial strain.
- Difficulties in getting insurance.
- Fall in morale.
- Fears for the future for the care sector.
- Need for social care reform.
- Reduced occupancy levels resulting from of a lack of confidence and homes not accepting new admissions.

In his view, the whole care sector has survived by a combination of a massive effort by social care staff, excellent partnership working, government support and plain dogged determination. In particular, Mike praised the North Yorkshire County Council's response. Mike added that the county council's support offered to providers had been exemplary. Some providers were struggling to manage the increased burdens and lower occupancy levels. A number of homes had to recruit additional staff to ensure the required testing in homes could be properly undertaken.

Against the background, it was inevitable that some providers would be lost to the market. Continued financial support was no doubt needed, but he acknowledged the county council faced financial challenges of its own.

He shared his personal perspective on what a recovery might look like, and what might secure a more sustainable future for social care. His ideas ranged, for example, from a cap on social care costs, a minimum wage for social care work through to a new model of social care delivery based on catchment areas.

Anecdotally, a member reported knowledge of some individuals being reluctant to accept the move into a residential setting – known as “Covid fear”. A member reported that some relatives had struggled to persuade individuals to enter residential care because of national publicity around care homes repeatedly reporting that homes were centres of high transmission of the virus. Indeed some concerned relatives had sought to move loved ones out of existing care settings.

The experience of recent months had called some members to question their faith in the join up between health and social care. Therefore, these insights will help broaden the committee’s understanding of how our partners and we respond to the published White Paper Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all.

Resolved –

- a) That the report be noted.
- b) The committee was pleased at the comprehensive and professional nature of the action taken and the support offered.

243. Care Market Update

Considered –

Dale Owens presented the third of his updates on the state of the local Social Care Market.

The presentation covered

- Market Sustainability - The Market Sustainability Board developed in 2020 continues to address strategic issues in the market
- Designated Beds and Hospital discharge
- Financial Support to the Market
- Infection Rates for the 7 districts in North Yorkshire
- Vaccinations

Resolved –

That the report be noted.

244. Extra Care Housing

Considered –

Presentation by Dale Owens giving an update and situation report of the progress of the County Council's Extra Care Programme.

Dale explained that North Yorkshire has a proud record on Extra Care Housing. We have one of the largest Extra Care programmes in the country, recognised as an exemplar of good practice and effective delivery.

Since 2015/16, the Extra Care programme has generated cashable savings of £1.59m with an additional £1m savings in progress linked to other schemes.

The vision of wanting people to live longer, healthier, independent lives and enable people to make the choices that are right for them remains as relevant now as it was at the outset of the programme.

We are consolidating and building upon the success of previous years, with a new wave of extra care schemes to set the pace for extra care living into the middle of this century. Two of the latest to become active being Fry Court in Great Ayton and Webb Ellis Court in Scarborough. By 2023 the ambition to see Extra Care in all key towns will have been met, the programme will have delivered over 30 schemes and approximately 2000 units of high quality, purpose built accommodation with support.

This has proven to be a well-spent investment with buildings that are well designed, environmentally sustainable and integral to our towns and villages.

Resolved –

That the report be noted

245. Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader on the Work Programme.
Members agreed that at the June meeting the committee would:

- Review how the directorate has worked with user groups during the pandemic and hear from representatives of user groups about their experiences during lockdown and the pandemic generally
- Look again at how NYCC is ensuring that Direct Payments enable more choice and control over the support people receive and how their social care needs are met
- Receive the Annual Report of the Older Peoples Champion

Members repeated the views expressed at the last meeting that the committee should consider:

- Looking beyond the current experience to what the future of council social care services might look like and what might be the key considerations of a recovery strategy.

- The respective chairs of the Scrutiny of Health and Care and Independence Scrutiny Committees might want to explore the backlog of undiagnosed conditions, missed operations and GP appointments and so on.

Referring back to an earlier item at the meeting, members would welcome information on the development of a plan to reimagine homecare.

Resolved -

That the work programme be agreed.

The meeting finished at 12 noon