

ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

9 SEPTEMBER 2013

The meeting commenced at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Carl Richardson (In the Chair)

Councillors: Keith Fisher, Brenda Loynes, Linda Shields and Kaylee Sirs.

Also Present: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.2;
Councillor Allan Barclay as substitute for Councillor Ged Hall.

Steve Thomas, Liz Fletcher, Maureen Lockwood and Ruby Marshall –
Healthwatch Hartlepool
John Lynch

Officers: Jill Harrison, Assistant Director, Adult Services
Jeanette Willis, Head of Finance (Child & Adult Services & Public
Health)
Joan Stevens, Scrutiny Manager
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

28. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Ged Hall and Alison Lilley.

29. Declarations of Interest

None.

30. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 August 2013

Confirmed.

The Assistant Director, Adult Services circulated for the Committee's information, an update on the issues at Hartfields discussed at the meeting on 12 August 2013 (min. no. 26 refers). The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust were concerned that Members were updated as to the actual situation in relation to the heating system and the works which were scheduled to be completed this month. The Trust had indicated that it would attend a future meeting to update Members should they so wish.

Members expressed their concern in relation to the ongoing works and their potential to resolve the issues at Hartfields. A Member indicated that even during the summer months, the heating was a constant issue at residents meetings at Hartfields. The Member also raised concerns in relation to other maintenance issues at Hartfields and quoted specific issues with one of the lifts. The Member had been concerned that a lift, which was the only one in one of the three storey blocks at Hartfields, had been out of action for over a week and he was aware of elderly residents on the upper floors that had been unable to leave the building due to the lift failure.

Members were concerned that the local authority should be exercising whatever power it had through any inspection regime to address the obvious issues at Hartfields. The Assistant Director, Adult Services commented that Hartfields was an extra care facility and not a care home and as such the council's authority to inspect would need to be clarified. Action could be taken should a referral be made in relation to the standard of care of any individual receiving services commissioned by the Council falling below the contracted standards. Otherwise a clear distinction needed to be drawn between commissioned care standards and maintenance issues affecting independently owned property.

Healthwatch representatives commented that concerns were being expressed by Healthwatch groups across the country in relation to these types of extra care facility and how local authority and independent inspection was restricted. If there were care issues then it may be necessary to involve the CQC (Care Quality Commission). It was not felt that the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust was a provider that would necessarily warrant such concern but action needed to be taken earlier, rather than later, to address issues that were obviously present.

The Chair considered that it would be appropriate for representatives of the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust to be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to address Members concerns and update the Committee as to the measures taken to resolve residents concerns.

31. Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/15 Savings Proposal *(Assistant Director, Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Budget and Policy Framework decision.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to enable Members to consider the initial 2014/15 savings proposals relating to the Committees remit and to feedback comments to the Finance and Policy Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Adult Services outlined the current financial situation affecting the Council and the savings required over the forthcoming

financial years. The report to the Finance and Policy Committee on 2nd August 2013 provided an update on the latest position. In relation to the 2014/15 budget, the report advised Members that the Council faced a gross budget deficit of £8.524m. The gross budget deficit could be reduced to £4.594m without impacting on services through a combination of permanent budget savings and one-off factors. The Finance and Policy Committee report also detailed departmental savings proposals with a total value of £4.376m.

Assuming the proposed departmental savings were implemented there was a net unfunded deficit for 2014/15 of £0.218m. At this stage it was anticipated that this amount could be bridged from the 2014/15 New Homes Bonus which would be payable for 7 years commencing 2014/15. This income was not yet guaranteed and would depend on the share of the national New Homes Bonus funding the Council received, although at this stage this was a reasonable planning assumption. It should be noted that this proposal would mean that in 2014/15 total support for the core revenue budget from the New Homes Bonus would be £1.4m.

The Assistant Director, Adult Services highlighted to Members the savings proposals outlined in Appendix A to the report that had been identified within the remit of the Adult Services Committee. The Assistant Director gave Members a brief outline of the individual savings proposals and indicated that the report to the Committee in November would outline more specifically how these savings would be achieved; either through changes to service provision and/or staffing. Some savings could also be achieved through the re-negotiation of contracts and some others through the utilisation of NHS funding for social care.

In response to Member questions, the Chair indicated that the apportionment of the savings across departments had been identified by the Finance and Policy Committee. While some of these savings may be seen as unwelcome, if they were not supported, alternative measures to the same level would need to be identified. Healthwatch representatives were concerned at any potential savings affecting support for carers and also concerned that services that assisted people to remain in their own homes should not be reduced. The Assistant Director advised that there would be no reduction in support for carers as a result of the proposed 2014/15 saving and also stated that the council and Clinical Commissioning Group remained committed to supporting people to remain independent in their own homes. Services that promote and support independence will continue to be supported through NHS funding for social care and NHS reablement funding.

The Healthwatch representatives did request that the reports on the proposals in November give an indication of how the various funding streams came together and how front line services and core strategic objectives would be affected. The Assistant Director indicated that the reports would include these details alongside the staffing implications and highlighted that all the savings proposals would require an Equality Impact

Assessment.

Decision

That the report be noted and that Members' comments be reported to the Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 19 September 2013.

32. Six Monthly Monitoring of Agreed Scrutiny Recommendations (*Scrutiny Manager*)

Type of decision

Non-key Decision.

Purpose of report

To provide Members with the six monthly progress made on the delivery of scrutiny recommendations that fell within the remit of this Committee.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Scrutiny Manager reported on the progress made against the investigations undertaken by the previous Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum. The recommendations that now fell within the remit of the Adult Services Committee were set out in the report which provided a detailed explanation of progress made against each scrutiny recommendation since the last six monthly monitoring report had been presented to the Adult and Community Services Scrutiny Forum in February 2013.

Decision

That the report be noted.

33. Quarter 1 Financial Management Report (*Assistant Director (Adult's), Child and Adult Services and Chief Finance Officer*)

Type of decision

None – the report was for information only.

Purpose of report

The purpose of the report was to inform Members of 2013/14 forecast General Fund Outturn budget outturn for the Child and Adult Services department and specific details of the services for which this Committee had responsibility.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Adult Services updated the Committee on the overall budget position for the Child and Adult Services department budget broken down by Committee, together with a brief comment on the reasons for the forecast outturn.

Decision

That the report be noted.

34. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

35. Extra Care Evaluation 2013

The Healthwatch representatives reported that Healthwatch Hartlepool had issued 500 questionnaires in relation to domiciliary care to residents in Hartlepool in receipt of services, and had received over 150 responses. Healthwatch Hartlepool would be developing a report based on the responses given which should be available to this Committee at its November meeting.

Decision

That the update be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.50am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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