

ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

21 NOVEMBER 2019

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

Present:

Councillor: Sue Little (In the Chair)

Councillors: James Brewer, Amy Prince, Carl Richardson and Barbara Ward.

Also present:

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4; Councillor Paddy Brown as substitute for Councillor Stephen Thomas.

Councillors Marjorie James and Ann Marshall.

Frank Harrison and Gordon and Stella Johnston.

Officers: Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services
Danielle Swainston, Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning
David Ward, Head of Finance, Children's and Adult and Community Based Services
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

29. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Thomas and Mike Young.

30. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Carl Richardson declared a personal interest in relation to Minute no. 33.

31. Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2019

Received, subject to the addition of Councillors James and Marshall to those present.

32. Emergency Duty Team (EDT) *(Director of Adult and Community Based Services)*

Type of decision

Key decision tests (i) and (ii). Forward Plan ref. CJCS94/19

Purpose of report

For members to approve a change in the governance arrangements for the Emergency Duty Service which was currently commissioned from Stockton-on-Tees Council.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning reported that the Tees Valley Directors of Children's Services and Directors of Adults Services had considered the existing service specification and contract for the Emergency Duty Team in Spring 2018 and discussed the continuation of the current commissioned arrangements or an alternative model of a shared service.

It was subsequently agreed following investigation through a working group that an alternative arrangement based on a shared service arrangement was the preferred option on the basis that the current service worked well but the governance arrangements needed to include all the Tees Valley authorities. It was proposed that Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council would continue to provide the service and be responsible for delivering an out of hour's social work service that will respond to urgent or crisis situations.

An executive board/steering group would be established to act as the responsible body to manage the service governance arrangements under the new shared service arrangement. Each authority would appoint a person at assistant director level and a finance officer to act as their representative in relation to the operation of the agreement and representatives will be expected to meet at least once a year. There was not anticipated to be any financial implication to the new arrangements with Hartlepool's contribution expected to continue at £115,000.

A Member questioned how many staff would normally be working during an evening and had any need gone unmet. The Assistant Director stated that she was unaware of the actual staff numbers but there were staff employed and present during out of office hours to respond to calls. Later in the debate, a Member indicated that their experience had been that staff were 'on call' rather than present at a weekend. The Assistant Director stated that there were a core group of staff available at Stockton to provide the out of hours service, though some specialised staff may be on call. As part of the shared service arrangements, the issue of the staff available could be examined.

A Member questioned what involvement elected Members would have in the governance and when the finalised agreement would be presented to Members. The Assistant Director stated that the executive board would only involve senior officers to manage the statutory function. The agreement document was somewhat lengthy and technical and it had not been expected that it would be presented to Members, though if Members did wish to see it for their own information that could be facilitated. Members requested that this happen together with an update report once the arrangements were finalised.

A Member also questioned if there was the ability for the Council to withdraw from the agreement at any future date should it so wish. The Assistant Director stated that this was the case, though the costs of providing a service in-house had been estimated at over £300,000.

Decision

1. That the proposal for the council to make arrangements for the discharge of its statutory duty relating to the provision of an Emergency Duty service by entering into an agreement to participate in a shared service across Tees Valley be approved.
2. That officers be authorised to negotiate and enter into an agreement to formalise the service specification.
3. That an update report together with details of the finalised shared service agreement be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

33. Care Homes for Older People *(Director of Adult and Community Based Services)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide the Committee with an update in relation to care home provision for older people.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Assistant Director, Joint Commissioning reported that since the previous report in March, there had been one change to the CQC (Care Quality Commission) ratings with Wynyard Woods moving from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good'. There had been two other homes that had been inspected since the last report (De Bruce Court and Warrior Park), however, the inspection reports were not available at this time.

There continued to be no homes in Hartlepool rated as 'inadequate'. Homes rated as 'requires improvement' had action plans that were closely monitored by link officers to ensure improvements were made. Hartlepool

currently had 13 homes rated 'good' 81% and 3 rated as 'requires improvement' (19%). This was an improvement from 75% rated as good in March 2019. The report also outlined the continued support being given to the care home market in Hartlepool, including the Managers Forum.

The Chair welcomed the low number of out of borough placements which it was indicated were a result of people exercising choice rather than necessity. Members asked that future reports show the operators of the homes in the table detailing the CQC rating. This would assist in identifying if there was a problem with an operator rather than just a specific home.

In terms of the capital improvements carried out using the Improved Better Care Fund, a Member questioned if the works undertaken were inspected by Council Health and Safety Officers to ensure the works had been completed and were appropriate. The Assistant Director stated that health and safety was the responsibility of the home and their chosen contractor, but officers did check that the works the funding had been provided for were completed.

The issue of staffing within homes was raised with a member of the public highlighting the staffing issues affecting the Butterwick Hospice which had recently been reported by the media. The Assistant Director stated that recruitment of nurses continued to be a challenge for care home operators, as had been reported to Committee previously, and confirmed that this was a national issue.

Decision

That the report be noted and that a further update report be submitted to Committee in six months' time, or sooner should any of the CQC ratings for homes change.

34. Strategic Financial Management Report – as at 30 September 2019 *(Director of Adult and Community Based Services and Director of Finance and Policy)*

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

Issue(s) for consideration

The Head of Finance, Children's and Adult and Community Based Services, outlined the background to the Council's financial situation and the updated budget forecast reported to the Finance and Policy Committee on 11 November 2019. In relation to the budgets managed by this Committee, the Head of Finance reported that at this stage a favourable underspend of £100,000 was forecast though it had to be acknowledged

that demand over the winter period could drastically affect that situation. The report also set out details of the Committee's Capital budget.

A Member questioned one of the listed budget pressures which related to Community Hubs which was due to a "proposed closure of branch libraries in 2018/19 that had not been implemented". The Director of Adult and Community Based Services stated that this pressure linked to a decision to close two libraries in 2018/19 linked to the development of the Community Hubs. The two libraries, Seaton Carew and Throston were still open though their funding had been removed as part of the decision, hence the current pressure. Proposals for the libraries would be included in the forthcoming Library Strategy and officers were continuing to explore options to maintain an effective library offer while also managing the financial pressure. The Chair indicated her support for retaining the libraries and hoped alternative solutions could be found to avoid closure.

A Member expressed some disappointment that this policy committee was receiving its budget information after Finance and Policy Committee instead of in advance, as was normal practice and sought assurance this would be avoided with future quarterly Financial Management reports. The Director stated that, in the case of savings proposals the Committee had received the information in advance and had been able to provide responses to inform the discussion at Finance and Policy Committee. The information being presented today was for information only and the scheduling of reports for future meetings would be considered.

Decision

That the report be noted.

35. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 19 December 2019 commencing at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

The meeting concluded at 10.30 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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