

ADULT AND COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

20 OCTOBER 2022

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

Present:

Councillor: Sue Little (Vice-Chair) (In the Chair)

Councillors: Gary Allen, Ben Clayton and Ged Hall.

Also present: Councillor David Nicholson as substitute for Councillor Mike Young in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2.

Councillor Jonathan Brash

Tony Leighton, Hartlepool HealthWatch

Frank Harrison and Evelyn Leck

Officers: Jill Harrison, Director of Adult and Community Based Services
Trevor Smith, Head of Strategic Commissioning (Adults)
Jennifer Gant, Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader
Nicole Whittle, Project Officer (Parks and Open Spaces)
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

20. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bob Buchan and Mike Young.

21. Declarations of Interest

None.

22. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022

Received.

23. Levelling Up Parks Fund *(Director of Adult and Community Based Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key decision.

Purpose of report

To provide the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with information on the Levelling Up Parks Fund and the funding allocated for Hartlepool and to seek support for the project proposal.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services introduced the Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader and Project Officer (Parks and Open Spaces) who gave a presentation to the Committee on the proposed project at Burn Valley Gardens.

The Levelling Up Parks Fund had been announced on 1 August 2022 by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Hartlepool Borough Council had been allocated a grant of £85,000 for the creation or significant refurbishment of an urban green space. There was no competitive bidding process for the grant. Authorities were required to confirm acceptance of the grant by 5 September 2022 then to provide DLUHC with a project proposal by 3 October 2022. The project proposal should maintain a level of flexibility and may be amended once it had been reviewed by DLUHC. Authorities must then agree a Memorandum of Understanding for use of the grant before the end of October 2022 and were required to utilise fully the grant funding by 31 March 2023.

The presentation outlined the proposals for Burn Valley Gardens detailing how the funding could be spent and the scheme for the gardens including an interactive trail, natural play area, a sensory maze, community social space and some tree 'uplift' for the park. There had also been some local business support offered for the scheme which included the donation of surplus construction materials and some labour to undertake conservation or maintenance works.

Members welcomed the proposal and the three Burn Valley Ward Councillors were present at the meeting. It was commented that the interactive trail through the park and onto the Family Wood and through to Summerhill would be a welcomed development, though there were some concerns at the crossing point on Catcote Road between the wood and Summerhill.

A Member added that while this scheme was very welcome and very well thought out, the reference to the scheme being 'levelling up' funding, however, was a misnomer in light of the huge amount of money the government had cut from the local authority budget over the past decade. There was concern that should the play area fall victim to vandalism, as had other play facilities, would the £14,000 revenue funding reported in the presentation be sufficient to repair any damage. The Director commented that budgets were under extreme pressure and this funding was welcomed. The Parks and Open Spaces Team Leader stated that the expected life-span of the play equipment was fifteen years. It had been designed in such a way that sections could be replaced quickly and more

cost effectively than some other similar play equipment installations in the past. The revenue funding, while modest, would provide sufficient means to cover most necessary repairs.

Members welcomed the community involvement in the scheme and hoped that officers would engage with as many local community groups as possible during the project. Members congratulated the team behind the development of the proposed project and for developing such a good scheme in the short time demanded by DLUCH.

Decision

That the report and the presentation be noted and the project proposal for the Burn Valley Gardens be fully supported by the Committee.

24. Update on Care Home Provision for Older People (*Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

To provide the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with an update in relation to care home provision for older people.

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services provided an update report on the current situation with care home provision for older people in Hartlepool including details of occupancy and vacancy levels. The report also provided an update on Covid in older people's homes, including incidence of Covid, vaccinations rates and testing. Details of the current position regarding Care Quality Commission assessments of homes was also reported with all but one home being rated as Good.

The Director reported that there had been concerns around capacity following the closure of Gretton Court earlier in the year but a new home, Merlin Manor, had opened and would eventually supply care for 90 older people, including nursing care placements. Care home capacity continues to be monitored on a regular basis, as any reduction in capacity would increase the need for older people to access out of area placements and impact on delayed transfers of care from hospital.

The Director also outlined work taking place on a regional level to support a campaign to bring more workers into the sector. The department had also produced a Market Sustainability Plan as required under the Care Act 2014. All local authorities were also required to undertake a Fair Cost of Care exercise for older people's care homes (as well as home care services) during 2022/23. This was currently underway in Hartlepool and the majority of care homes had submitted returns to inform this work. The

outcome of this exercise was not yet known and the impact for the Council would need to be assessed in further detail, taking into account national guidance. Any financial impact for the Council will need to be assessed once the results were known.

New national funding for 2022/23 had been allocated to Hartlepool of approx. £330,000, with 25% of this to be used to support Council costs and the remaining 75% was to be distributed directly to care providers. Options for allocation of this funding to providers were currently being considered and would be distributed in the period October 2022 to March 2023.

A Member questioned if any information had been forthcoming from government to outline where the funding that had initially been promised from the rise in National Insurance, which had now been reversed, was now to be provided. The Director stated that there had been no indications on future funding. The department was also now working towards charging reform to be introduced from October next year and the requirement for all local authorities to be subject to CQC assessment from April next year. This was all having to be undertaken from existing resources.

A Member asked if there was any scope for the new care workers to be trained at the new Social Care Academy to open in the town to be retained within the local care economy rather than being attracted elsewhere. The Director commented that the majority of care staff tended to work locally and there were good levels of worker retention in Hartlepool. The Head of Strategic Commissioning (Adults) added that there was now a virtual free job centre for care staff on Hartlepool Now which was free to users.

Members also discussed the numbers of out of borough placements. The Director reassured Members that the vast majority of out of borough placements occurred where the individual chose to go to a home out of the area.

Decision

That the report be noted.

25. Update on Commissioned Services (*Director of Adult and Community Based Services*)

Type of decision

For information.

Purpose of report

The report provided the Adult and Community Based Services Committee with an update on quality ratings for all commissioned social care services, other than care homes for older people, which were regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Issue(s) for consideration

The Director of Adult and Community Based Services submitted a report updating the Committee with updates covering pertinent issues for commissioned services and the latest CQC ratings. The report covered home care for older people, non-residential services for working age people, residential care for people with learning disabilities, residential care for people with mental health needs and extra care support. A summary of the current CQC ratings for all of these services was set out in an appendix to the report. It was positive to note that 17 out of the 18 services (94%) were rated as 'good'. The service rated as 'requires improvement' had worked with the Council to put plans in place to deliver the required improvements, and progress is monitored against these plans.

The Director referred to a previous update to Committee which made reference to a new development at Whitethorn Gardens. This was now providing supported living for adults with learning disabilities and / or mental health needs within four three-bedroom bungalows and sixteen self-contained one-bedroom apartments. The support provided is registered with CQC as domiciliary care provision, provided by Elan Care.

Also, since the last update to Committee, Home Group had re-developed Gainford House (formerly a service for young people) to provide 10 units of supported accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and / or mental health needs. As with Whitethorn Gardens, this development had been undertaken at the developer's risk with no contract or guarantee that the Council would use the accommodation.

The Vice-Chair commented that there had been a question on out of borough placements under the previous item and questioned if the reverse was happening with people coming into the town from out of area due to the new homes and availability of places. The Director commented that the numbers of such placement were extremely low. One of the aspects of the fair cost of care exercise that had been undertaken was to identify those clients in homes that were fully self-funded and those placed by other local authorities. An update on those figures could be provided for a future meeting.

A Member questioned what replaced CQC assessment in supported living provision and if families had access to that. The Director stated that there was a limit to what the CQC inspected. The department did have its own internal quality standards framework and there were also regular reviews and assessments by social care staff that would involve family members if appropriate and enable any concerns to be addressed.

A Member referenced the recent Audit and Governance Committee investigation into mental health issue and considered there was significant unmet need in the town. The Director indicated that the majority of people needing support with their mental health needs were in their own homes

and there was a significant amount of support available through Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust and also the wide range of voluntary sector groups in the town many of which could be accessed through the Community Hubs.

Decision

That the report be noted.

26. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

A Member questioned if a reply had been received to the letter sent by the Committee to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in relation to Members concerns around the implementation of the Adult Social Care White Paper. The Director stated that no reply had yet been received.

It was noted that the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Buchan, had been appointed Older Peoples Champion at the last meeting of Council.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 24 November, 2022 at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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