

Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 10th July 2014

NORTH DEVON COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held at the Civic Centre, Barnstaple on Thursday 10th July 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Members representing North Devon Council:

Councillor Biederman (Chairman – In the Chair)

Councillors Brown, Clark, Gurney, Lane, Lucas, Luggar, Moores, Tucker and White.

Members representing Torridge District Council:

NOTE: Members from the Overview and Scrutiny (External) Committee from Torridge District Council were invited to attend the meeting for Minute 18.

Councillors Eastman and Pennington.

Independent Representative: Dr McLellan.

Officers:

Chief Executive, Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services (JM), Finance Manager (JT), Communications Manager (CH), Economic Development Manager (EV), Member Services Co-ordinator (KS) and Democratic Services Officer (JG).

Also present:

Dr S. Miller Vice Chair of the Northern Locality
‘Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group’.

Ms K. Burton	Commissioning Lead, Care Closer to Home 'Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group'
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14 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chesters.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Whittaker from Torridge District Council.

15 MINUTES

The Chairman read out feedback received from the CCG and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (circulated previously), following their attendance at the meetings on the 8th and 20th May 2014 respectively.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meetings held on 8th May and 20th May 2014 (circulated previously) be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

16 ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN

(a) CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

The Chairman advised that he had recently visited the Customer Service Centre and found it very interesting. He extended the invitation to any Members who wished to visit the centre to contact him and he would put them in touch with the Customer Services Manager.

(b) MEMBER SERVICES CO-ORDINATOR

The Committee expressed their thanks to the Member Services Co-ordinator, wishing her well for her maternity leave and welcomed the Democratic Services Officer to the meeting.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest announced.

18 CARE CLOSER TO HOME

The Committee welcomed the Vice Chair and the Commissioning Lead, Care Closer to Home of the Northern Locality of the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the meeting.

The Commissioning Lead, Care Closer to Home of the Northern Locality of the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG gave a brief update and outlined the current position in terms of content and process.

She advised that the document titled: "Integrated, personal and sustainable: Community Services for the 21st Century" had been subject to an eight week consultation period, which finished on 8th July 2014. Following the consultation period, a review of the responses and the next steps towards "Integrated, personal and sustainable: Community Services for 21st Century" would be considered by the CCG Governing Body at its meeting scheduled to be held on 16th July 2014.

She drew the Committee's attention to the six strategic priorities, which were:

- Help people to stay well.
- Integrated care.
- Personalised support.
- Co-ordinate pathways.
- Think care, think family.
- Home as the first choice.

During the consideration of the presentation, Members of the Committee raised and debated issues relating to the following:

- The types of services that patients would be able to buy and how they would manage their own personal budget.
- The continuing healthcare budget and the nursing care budget and how funding could be accessed from these budgets.
- The guidance that was available to assist patients in the management of their personal budgets.
- The assessment of the budgets for continuing healthcare by the North Devon Healthcare Trust.
- The potential for the misuse of funding by patients and the lack of safeguards in place to mitigate this risk.
- The urgent requirement for more detailed guidance and better communication in terms of the process. The Committee felt that there was a need for the whole strategy to be reviewed and brought back to a future meeting.
- How the treatment package for patients would be monitored and challenges faced in working practice.
- The affect upon budgets and the management of staff allocated to support patients within their own homes.
- The requirement for personalisation guidance as soon as possible prior to the implementation of the framework in April 2015.
- The latest position regarding the closure of community hospital beds and recommendations which would be going forward to the Northern Locality Board on 21st July 2014. There was an acknowledgement by the CCG of the requirement for community hospital beds to be provided in certain areas.
- In response to a question, the Commissioning Lead, Care Closer to Home of the Northern Locality of the Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG confirmed that they had been held to account on the 16th June 2014 and there had been no restriction in terms of the process. She also advised that there was an option to "spot" purchase community hospital beds in certain areas as and when required.
- Following a question from the Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services regarding the timeframe for the implementation of the overall strategy, the Vice Chair of the Northern Locality 'Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG' advised that different locality areas were working to their own timescales. He stated that the various

scenarios for healthcare in the northern locality would be available for inspection prior to the formal consultation in the autumn of 2014.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a letter be sent to the Health Minister and copied to the North Devon MP and the Head of Public Health at Devon County Council to lobby the Government to request further guidance in relation to how the structure for health provision was designed to work and obtain a clearer understanding of the timetable for the implementation of the Strategic Framework for Commissioning Services in the 21st Century; and
- (b) that the response received from the Health Minister be circulated to the Committee for information.

The Committee noted that Councillor Pennington (Torridge District Council Member) declared a personal interest as an employee of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Pennington thanked the Committee for their invitation for colleagues from the Overview and Scrutiny (External) Committee of Torridge District Council to attend the meeting.

The Committee thanked the representatives from the CCG for their attendance at the meeting.

19 PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT QUARTER 4 OF 2013/14

The Committee considered a report to the Executive on 1st July 2014 by the Leader and Executive Team together with a minute extract (circulated previously) regarding the Performance and Financial Management of Quarter 4 2013/14.

During the consideration of the Performance and Financial Management report for Quarter 4 of 2013/14, Members of the Committee raised and debated issues relating to the following:

- As at 31 December 2013, the Council was reporting a net budget shortfall of £0.076m which was anticipated to close through Quarter 4. The Council was pleased to report that due to effective budget management they were able to turn this around and achieved a budget surplus by the end of the financial year.
- As at 31st March 2014 the final out turn position was a budget surplus of (£0.249m), which was an overall movement of (£0.325m) from the last forecast at quarter 3. A large proportion of the surplus had arisen from the accounting arrangements for the new Business Rate retention scheme. Previously known as National Non Domestic Rates, under the

previous scheme the Council acting as billing authority, paid all monies collected over to a national pool and received pre-determined funding back as part of the government settlement.

- The Business Rate retention scheme was introduced for 2013/14 which saw billing authorities receive a 'baseline funding' but in addition to this they were exposed to the risks and rewards of retaining a proportion of the income collected. This was driven by collection rates, movements on the tax base and decisions on outstanding appeals; however this exposure was mitigated by participating in the Devon-wide pool that collate all of the Business Rate growth and decline and return a share of the impact to each local authority.
- The overall revenue budget surplus of (0.249m), it was proposed to set aside £0.226m as an additional contribution into the Improvement Programme Reserve. The reason for this was the Council were committed to funding the one-off cost of voluntary redundancies / early retirements for posts approved at Personnel Committee on 28 April 2014. The total one-off cost for 2014/15 year is £0.333m which was offset by in-year savings of (£0.142m), the remaining £0.191m to be funded from the Improvement Programme reserve. There would then be on-going savings of (£0.273m) per annum, which would be factored into future revenue budgets and help reduce the funding gap.
- The remaining balance from the surplus of £0.023m would be placed into the Council's General Fund reserve. The balance in this reserve would increase to £1.009m at 31st March 2014. The recommended level of general fund balance was 5%-10% of the net revenue budget; the Council's balance above equated to 8.3% (2013/14) and moving forwards equated to 8.6% of the 2014/15 net revenue budget.
- The Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2015/16 of £8.696m was funded by Capital Receipts (£5.660m), External Grants and Contributions (£1.087m), Reserves (£0.660m) and approved possible future external borrowing (£1.289m), dependent on internal cash-flows (this was currently managed by utilising internal cash resources).
- In response to a question regarding the recycling of trade waste, the Chief Executive advised that the Council was not looking at externalising or creating a separate trading company at the present time.
- In response to a question regarding the collection of Council Tax, the Finance Manager advised that although collection rates (%) were down from the previous year the Council had collected almost £2m more in Council Tax in 2013/14. He further advised that the Council had not incurred any additional costs to recover any outstanding payments.
- In response to a question regarding Assisted Area Status, the Economic Development Manager advised that the Council was working with companies to encourage bids to funding streams and Regional Growth bids.
- In response to a question regarding the re-opening of Ilfracombe Pool, the Chief Executive advised that there was no date fixed at present.
- In response to a question regarding the apparent increase to the figures for rough sleepers since 2013, the Head of Environmental Health and Housing Services advised that there had not been a significant increase in the number of rough sleepers and that the graph represented people at

risk of rough sleeping where interventions had taken place by the Council. He also highlighted a new trend for people rough sleeping with 20 people currently rough sleeping around Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, 50% of which had no local connection.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the decisions and recommendations of the Executive be endorsed;
- (b) that the reduction in employee sickness absence levels be noted and that the staff be commended for the improvement to the figures;
- (c) that the figures for the collection of Council Tax for those households now billed under the new Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme be presented to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (d) that the link to the blog for the swimming pool at Ilfracombe be circulated via email to the Members of the Committee.

Councillor Biederman declared a personal interest as a Member of Devon County Council.

20 CCTV SERVICE TASK TEAM

The Committee considered the notes of the CCTV Service Task Team, which was held on 20th May 2014 (circulated previously).

The Economic Development Manager advised that the Task Team had met for its initial meeting on 20th May 2014 to receive an update regarding the current position of the CCTV Service and advised that the review process was underway.

She further advised that of the two vacant posts within the service, Senior Management Team (SMT) had agreed to appoint one of the posts on a temporary basis for three months to commence on 14th July 2014.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the notes of the CCTV Service Task Team held on 14th May 2014 be noted; and
- (b) that the scope for the review be circulated to the Committee for their information.

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HOUSING STRATEGY TASK TEAM

The Committee considered the notes of the Housing Strategy Task Team meetings, which were held on 13th March and 6th June 2014 (circulated previously).

The Head of Environmental Health and Housing stated that he was pleased the Committee was providing Member support to the development of the strategy, advising that the Task had met on the 13th March and 6th June 2014. He provided an update to the Committee regarding the latest position and the next stage for the development of the strategy.

He advised that he had arranged to meet with the Commissioning Lead, Care Closer to Home 'Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG' to discuss opportunities to develop areas to jointly commission services.

The Committee agreed that the content of the CCG document titled "Integrated, personal and sustainable: Community Services for the 21st Century" was very vague and that the Council needed to work closely and engage all relevant bodies as and when required regarding housing provision.

The Chairman of the Task Team advised that the strategy was an important piece of work and that it only became apparent just how important it was when the Task Team was presented with the evidence.

RESOLVED, that the notes of the Housing Strategy Task Team meetings held on 13th March and 6th June 2014 be noted.

22

WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the work programme (circulated previously).

The Chairman advised that following a busy couple of months for the Committee, the meeting scheduled to be held on Thursday 14th August 2014 had been cancelled owing to the lack of business to be considered.

The Committee discussed the availability of guidance on the emerging structure for health provision in the United Kingdom and raised concerns regarding the knowledge of the landscape and importance of the requirement for further guidance from the government.

RESOLVED, that the work programme be noted.

Chairman

The meeting ended at 3.27 p.m.

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NOTE: These minutes will be confirmed as a correct record at the next meeting of the Committee.