

## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee held in the Library Meeting Room, Library, Paul Street, Taunton, TA1 3XZ, on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr M Healey (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Clayton, Cllr M Caswell, Cllr A Govier, Cllr B Revans, Cllr A Bown and Cllr G Verdon

**Other Members present:** Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr S Coles, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr D Huxtable and Cllr T Munt

### **Apologies for absence:**

#### **152 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

There were no declarations.

#### **153 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 05 December 2018 - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair.

#### **154 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no public questions.

#### **155 Nursing Home Support Service - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee considered a report outlining the Nursing Home Support Service (NHSS). This Service is a joint NHS Somerset CCG and Somerset County Council initiative. The aim is to support local nursing homes with improving quality, raising standards and reducing avoidable hospital admissions.

The presentation was an opportunity for the Committee to understand the vision for its future to better support the delivery of strategic ambitions across key agencies.

The latest assessment for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) gave a rating of Good or Outstanding rating to 91% of Nursing Homes providers in Somerset and none were recorded as being Inadequate. This compares very positively with the national average of 74%.

The NHSS have several areas where they believe they are a catalyst for improvement. They offer the following: -

1. Learning Engagement Meetings – to offer the training and support to Nursing Homes to reduce the number of acute hospital admission,
2. Enhanced Skills and Knowledge - support by a Registered Nurse to improve clinical skills, introduce new tool like NEW2 (an early observation tool to identify changes in clinical presentation,
3. St Margaret's Hospice Project – to design and pilot nursing home end of life training and palliative care,
4. Training and Development – covering areas like tissue viability and observation training,

5. Somerset Treatment Escalation Plan (STEP) – to respect individuals wishes and avoid hospital admission
6. Red Bag Scheme – A simple arrangement on discharge to make sure safer and more collaborative discharge scheme,
7. Tissue Viability - An enhanced tissue viability service to be implemented later this month,
8. Sundown Project – a CQC initiative that will provide weekly real-time bed tracker to assist with providing an overview of nursing provision in Somerset,
9. Quality Concerns – the service provides an information sharing to feed into the quality assurance and safeguarding function,
10. Newsletter – a bi-monthly newsletter providing updates on clinical skills and aiding communication between providers,
11. Mapping of Community Services – NHSS is looking to map all health related to potentially identify any gaps and
12. Proud to Care in Somerset – part of a South West drive to promote care as a career option to address the current challenge in recruitment and retention of care staff.

The Committee welcomed the positive contribution the NHSS was making in Somerset. The Committee agreed that it was evident that there was no room for poor quality care and being in the top 10 Nationally for high quality was to be saluted.

The name of the bed tracking project was considered insensitive and there was a request that this be fed back to the independent organisation operating it. The Committee was keen to be assured that tissue viability was a mandatory part of training for all staff employed by providers. It was confirmed it was.

The Committee congratulated the NHSS on progress to date and asked for an update in 12 months' time.

#### 156 **Fair Cost of Care** - Agenda Item 6

The Committee were given an update on an exercise to ensure the fee levels for 2018/19 that were commissioned by Somerset County Council reflect the actual cost of care in the local market. The exercise was conducted by an organisation who are qualified to carry out the exercise and are independent of the local authority. The report they produced informed the decision to offer an increased rate for both Care at Home and for enablement. The Committee were also informed that there was an oversupply of care home beds in Somerset and this was despite some care homes closing in 2018. The Committee were pleased to be given the reassurance that despite there being over 700 free beds in care homes across the county the authority was working with providers to divert resources into other areas of demand.

While these costs have been agreed for this financial year there was a concern about next year as budgets had yet to be approved and the promised Green Paper from Government has been delayed by 8 months already and without a decision about the ongoing funding for Adult Social Care it was difficult to plan. The Committee discussed the report and asked to assurance that the increase in hourly rate was passed on to employees and that proper travel time was paid to individuals when they were working in the more rural parts of the county. The Committee were pleased to hear of the high quality and effective the service

was maintained despite the significant cut on the budget over the last three years however, they were concerned that this level of service could not be sustained if further reduction in budgets was expected.

The Committee noted that the fees had been agreed for the next year only and to continue to drive the high quality of the service some stability was required. The Committee wanted to ensure these increases were passed onto micro-providers in addition to the main suppliers. They were informed that personal budgets had to be individually approved and they would not be if the hourly rate and service provided was not consistent with the fee structure agreed by the Council.

#### 157 **Medium Term Financial Plan - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The report summarised the report presented to Cabinet in December 2018. This report had been tailored for Scrutiny have sight of the detail going to Cabinet and Full Council in February 2019. This report lays the foundation for the financial plans for 2020/21 and 2021/22.

The Committee noted the report and discussed the high-level detail. Discussion included:-

Questions around the predicted increase in people with learning difficulties yet the number of old people is predicted to be stable. This was because more people with learning difficulties now reach adulthood and Somerset is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the country for providing funding for adults with learning difficulties. Transformation of the service has enabled the service to continue to deliver a quality service in a different way.

The Committee noted that a further spending review is due in 2019 and direct representation and through the LGA was going to be made to ask for a long-term funding solution. Mid-year and mid-cycle grants; although welcome, did not assist in long term planning.

The Committee voted to make a Recommendation to Cabinet: -

Councillor M Healey proposed the following recommendation: -

The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults & Health Committee recommends that the Cabinet, in partnership with other stakeholders including Group Leaders and Somerset MP's, takes a leading role in proactively lobbying central government about the urgent need for sustainable long-term funding for adult social care in Somerset.

This was seconded by Councillor B Revans and carried unanimously following a vote.

The Committee then looked at each element of the paper in detail as contained in the summary paper: -

1, Rationalisation of Extra Care Housing provision in Somerset – There has been a review of Extra Care schemes and three have been decommissioned and a further 8 of the 22 remaining schemes do not provide good value for money and will continue to deliver a general needs housing or specialist

sheltered housing. The Committee asked to be informed confidentially of the 8 schemes set to be altered. It was confirmed that appropriate consultation and discussions would take place prior to the change.

2, Review of Care Packages – 6,832 people living in Somerset receive funded support. Under the Supporting Independence strategy over 5,000 people have had a review under the same framework as would be used for a new assessment. Of the 5,000 about 500 had a change, 150 had an increase in support. This review resulted in a saving of £3 million. The Committee welcomed such reviews and stressed the importance of carrying out regular reviews to make sure that appropriate support was being delivered and the funding came from the correct source.

3, KeyRing Grant Reduction – This is a network providing a variety of housing related support for clients. The network in Glastonbury/Street is going to be removed as the necessary support is now available in the local community. The Committee were concerned about the community living down on the levels but were assured this was not the area where KeyRing had been operating.

4, Recommissioning Care Home Dementia Support – The proposal is to review existing high cost complex mental health cases who have complex dementia to ensure the most appropriate care is being provided to each individual. Currently there are a number of individuals who receive 1 to 1 support and it is not clear that this is the best way to support this complex illness.

The discussion included the use of shared best practice from neighbouring counties. The use of micro-providers and supporting them to be the best. The challenges of supporting families as well as individuals when dementia is diagnosed. The use of village agents to support and the fact that there are families who do not seek support until the family has reached crisis.

5, Managing Demand/Reduction in placements in residential nursing Care – The strategy here is to promote independence by using village agents to work in local communities. This direct approach reduces the need for individual funded support and is quicker, more creative and more responsive. The Committee discussed this and agreed that to sustain the considerable savings and more effective delivery of services it was important to have a clear idea of funds for the next three years at the outset.

The Committee discussed the 700 Care Bed availability to be sure there was a plan to support providers and to use the capacity in a different way. It did not make sense to have such unused capacity in the long term. The Committee were interested to know how closely the authority worked with self-funded placements. In the past there used to be minimal contact but the Care Act 2014 required better communication, and this has started.

6, Reduction of Independent Assessor support in the deprivation of Liberty safeguards service – This service is currently delivered by a mix of internal and external assessors. To deliver the required savings it is proposed that the majority of these assessments it has been decided to do all of these in-house. The Committee were concerned to note that by doing this the level of risk increased. It was explained that with all the cases coming in-house the spread was reduced.

After discussing all the items individually, the Committee came to the agreement that the high level of achievement and ratings of all the services in Somerset was to be commended however, the need for a commitment to a long-term funding arrangement that reflected the demand and cost of these services was vital. The this end they agreed another Recommendation to Cabinet as follows: -

Councillor B Revans proposed the following recommendation: -,

The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults & Health Committee wishes the Cabinet to be aware of the future risk to adult social care funding, particularly the future capacity to deliver further savings and the impact this will have on preventative services.

This was seconded by Councillor M Healey and carried unanimously following a vote.

**158 Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee considered and noted the Council's Forward Plan of proposed key decisions in forthcoming months including Cabinet meetings up to date. It was agreed that as the Somerset Partnership had been inspected and given a rating of Good it was not necessary to have an update again.

Similarly, there was no need for a further update on Community Hospitals. The next meeting will be 13 March and will focus on Performance – due to the anticipated number of attendees the meeting will be held in Shire Hall.

The Committee added a request from an update on NHSS in 12 months' time.

**159 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9**

There were no other items of business.

**(The meeting ended at 1.00 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**