

Minutes of the Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Graham Snell (Chair), Steve Liddiard (Vice-Chair), Yash Gupta (MBE), James Halden, Charlie Key and Tunde Ojetola

Ian Evans, Thurrock Coalition Representative
Andrea Valentine, HealthWatch

Apologies: Kim James, HealthWatch

In attendance: Councillor Barbara Rice, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Ceri Armstrong, Strategy Officer
Christopher Smith, Adults, Health and Commissioning
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

31. Minutes

The Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on the 1 December 2015, were approved as a correct record.

Councillor Halden asked the Officers for an update on Domiciliary Care. Roger Harris confirmed that the service was still quite fragile at the moment with one Domiciliary Care provider given notice before Christmas which has now been taken back in house and another provider having given six months' notice. The existing contract only has 14 months left to run, until March 2017. The report will be returned to HOSC in the new municipal year.

Councillor Gupta asked the Chair if he had written to NHS England regarding the Learning Disability Health Checks. The Chair confirmed that he had written and that a response had been received. Copies of this letter will be issued to all Members and Officers for information.

32. Urgent Items

There were no items of urgent business.

33. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Gupta declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda 8 'Consultation on the proposed changes to the way Social Care is provided in Thurrock' as he was a carer.

Councillor Halden declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda 7 'Changes to Fees and Charges 2016-17' and Agenda 8 'Consultation on the proposed changes to the way Social Care is provided in Thurrock' as he had a member of his immediate family in St Anne's Court who is in receipt of Thurrock's support.

34. Items Raised by HealthWatch

Items raised by HealthWatch will be covered in Item Number 8.

35. Consultation on the proposed changes to the way Social Care is provided in Thurrock

For the record Roger Harris thanked HealthWatch and Thurrock Coalition for their contributions to the consultation.

The Officer presented the report that provided Members with details of the actions to reduce costs and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of adult social care services in Thurrock.

Andrea Valentine, HealthWatch, referred Members to the two reports that were tabled for information and explained how the impact of these proposals would have on some of our most vulnerable residents.

Ian Evans, Thurrock Coalition, referred Members to the Thurrock Coalition submission in relation to the impact of the proposed changes in Appendix 2 of the report and asked that it be used for the evidence and impact assessment. Ian would be happy to take questions from Members if required.

It was respectfully requested that those comments made by HealthWatch and Thurrock Coalition members be heard when final decisions around implementing cuts were being made.

Councillor Gupta asked Officers how many people were involved in the consultation. Roger Harris confirmed that all those directly affected were written to and consultation events were held at the majority of the sites affected. It was also stated that the 528 responses received was considered to be quite a good return rate.

The Officer continued to summarise the proposals of the consultation.

Day Care

The Officer confirmed that a careful and clear consultation had taken place on the best use of the proposed sites. The option to change the day care offer from provision on six sites to three sites was recommended. The service at each site will be expanded at Kynoch Court and Bell House from 15 to 20 places and at the carer's centre to 25 places. This would result in the provision of 65 places at these centres per day.

Councillor Halden stated that it made logistical sense and asked Officers do we envisage that 20 place will actually reach capacity in the next couple of years. Roger Harris confirmed that there is often a waiting list and will need to look how to deploy the services best. Care will need to be taken to manage the days and availability which is normally based on residents own circumstances and choice.

Councillor Halden asked if logistics were being reduced slightly do we have capacity in the transport used to enable residents to go get to sites. Roger Harris confirmed that we use our own transport but it is encouraged that family or friends bring residents to and from the sites. It is the aim that journeys are no longer than 45 minutes.

The Chair asked for clarification that reducing sites to three that the service will not be at full capacity straight away. Roger Harris confirmed that this is a high demand service with flexible services being offered. Managers were always looking at numbers and availability.

Ian Evans asked if there would be any staffing implications if the sites were reduced to three. Roger Harris confirmed that staff would be deployed better, able to attend training and obtain specific qualifications. It was hoped to do this without having to make any redundancies but there was no guarantee.

Councillor Ojetola asked Officers what the future plan is taking into account the reduction in site against the probable increase in population in Thurrock. Roger Harris confirmed that this was only one part of the range of services offered to older people. The traditional services offered will need to be radically re-thought.

Councillor B Rice reminded the Members of the reasons for these cuts and stated that in the five years she had been Portfolio Holder for Health the budget per person had been reduced from £1550 to £1000. Grant money had also been reduced by £500 per household. It was agreed that money had to be saved but this would be done in the least disruptive way possible and the quality of the service would remain.

The Chair stated that although there were budget cuts this could be seen as an opportunity to do things differently and be more flexible when responding to problems.

Charging for Day-Care and Transport

The Officer briefed the Members on the proposals to the increased charges for Day Care and Transport. The option to increase the charges for day care over a period of three years and to increase the charge for transport to cover the full cost of that service was recommended.

The Chair asked what the Sitting Service Charge was at the moment. The Officer confirmed that this service was not chargeable at the present time.

Councillor Ojetola commented that a case scenario on how these impacts would affect a service user would have been more helpful in the report. The Officer stated that this is a very complicated area as each service user would be affected differently but agreed to provide some examples and these would be forwarded to Members.

Councillor Halden had no principle objections to the recommendations but asked that the means testing is done in a sustainable way. The Officer confirmed that the Charging Policy would be used and agreed to send a copy of this to Members.

Councillor Gupta shared his concern that if charges were increased too much, service users would not use the services available. The Officer confirmed that every effort would be done to guard against this and be conscious not to set the changes to high.

The Chair asked the Officer if all service users were means tested. The Officer confirmed that this service was offered legally to everyone and that financial assessment would be undertaken. If a financial assessment was refused the process would be explained by the financial and benefit assessors. Although it could be considered if that person refused they would be able to pay.

Councillor Key stated that a regularly review on transport was good for users and that he considered that the price increase from £1 to £1.50 is fair in comparison to a private company taking over the service.

Councillor Halden asked for reassurance from Officers that the assessments were being undertaken by the adult's team. The Officer confirmed that this was the case.

Charging for Careline

The Officer briefed the Members on the importance of this service and proposed that no decision on this option is made at this time; this will enable Officers to take the opportunity of the recent re-structure to undertake a full review of the community alarm service to establish how effective it is.

Councillor Halden stated his concern that this item had been up for review so many times at HOSC and asked how healthy this was for such a service.

The Chair agreed with the Officers and recommended that the item is deferred until the review is complete.

Items of Equipment and Adaptions costing less than £50

The Officer briefed the Members on the proposal to change the list of equipment and adaptations the Council provides so that items costing less than £50 were excluded. It was considered that most of those who need these equipment items can source them from high street shops or on the internet by themselves, a carer or friends or family members. The option to no longer provide items costing less than £50 but establish an exceptional circumstances system was recommended.

The Officer confirmed that it related to any one item under £50. If items required to be fitted the use of the handy-man service would be offered or friends or family members could assist. In most cases, service users get items themselves and not actually go through the council process. Those service users with no access to the internet could be assisted by friends and family members also.

Ian Evans stated that although some service users will still require guidance on how to fit certain items.

The Chair asked the Officers what would qualify for an exceptional circumstance. The Officer confirmed that this could be a very urgent request or someone coming out of hospital.

Ian Evans referred Members to the concerns of users in the Thurrock Coalition consultation report and stated a disabled person is 20 per cent less likely to have access to the internet.

Andrea Valentine stated her concerns received from the public on who would be coming into their properties to do these assessments.

The Officer confirmed that Service Users would be assessed by Thurrock OTs and closely reviewed which will be undertaken at three and six months.

Councillor Ojetola suggested that the recommendation be changed to include that report will be returned to HOSC in six months' time.

Councillor B Rice stated that items were available to buy in second hand shops at reduced prices compared to those on the internet. She said that this would be a good opportunity for someone to set up.

Extra Care Housing

The Officer briefed members on the two separate proposals regarding the provision of extra care housing. The Council's extra care housing schemes recognises that schemes of 65 flats or more were usually needed to ensure financial viability. The option to no longer provide extra care housing at

Kynoch Court and increase the number of units at Piggs Corner to 55 flats was recommended. The Officer confirmed that an assessment had been carried out on both options.

Councillor Halden registered his concerns that residents should be kept in their own community close to friends and families. Officers confirmed that no resident at Kynoch Court will be required to move and appropriate packages of care and support would be offered to them.

Councillor Gupta had concerns in the increase number of units at Piggs Corner and asked Officers what consultation had been undertaken with residents. The Officer confirmed that letters were sent out to all residents and visits had been arranged. If required, Roger Harris would make arrangements to visit Piggs Corner and speak to residents.

The Chair asked Officers what the future held for extra care housing. The Officer confirmed that larger complexes offering a broad range of services and schemes would need to be available, especially with the challenges faced with dementia

A debate took place between Members on the options; it was recommended by Officers that both recommendations be agreed. Members in agreed of both options were Councillors Snell, Liddiard, Key and Gupta. Those Members in favour of just option b were Councillors Halden and Ojetola.

Elizabeth Gardens

The Officers briefed Members on the charging proposals to all existing and new leaseholders at Elizabeth Gardens. The option to charge new leaseholders only from 1 April 2016 was recommended.

The Officer confirmed that only new leaseholders will be charged the £40 per week from 1 April 2016 and that this may not have been made clear to existing residents.

Tenants nominated by the Council, per person, currently pay a £40 charge a week towards the cost of this service which is subsidised. Some Hanover leaseholders do not currently pay this charge but could well benefit from the services available.

[Public Interruption]

Roger Harris stated that Elizabeth Gardens is different to what it was when it opened three years ago. This was in-avoidable as people's care does get higher. Managers were working with Hanover on a daily basis.

Roger Harris offered to visit Elizabeth Gardens with his social care staff to discuss resident's issues and concerns.

[Public Interruption]

Roger Harris stated that it was not the practice to place residents with severe dementia into Elizabeth Gardens. Those with mild dementia and living with a carer could be placed in there. Although there have been some issues with residents, alternative accommodation has been found in these instances.

Councillor Halden supported the recommendation option and stated that Elizabeth Gardens is a phenomenal facility and would not like to see it become unviable.

Councillor Liddiard supported the recommendation option having visited the site and spoke to residents.

Councillor Gupta asked if new contracts will be given to new leaseholders. Roger Harris stated that this was not made clear enough to existing leaseholders but it will be made absolutely clear through Hanover, the landlord of the property, part of the Elizabeth Gardens offer that it is a core service which is available 24 hours and will be chargeable.

Councillor Ojetola asked Officers what guarantees or reassures were given to existing leaseholders. The Officer stated that the arrangements for leaseholding in extra care were part of Home Buy where a housing association marketed the properties on behalf of the Government. New residents were not meet until they arrive. It had been expected that new prospective buyers would note in literature provided by Hanover explaining there was an extra charge for extra care and to contact the Council to discuss. This has become apparent this was not the case and will need to be much clearer with Hanover on the process.

Councillor Ojetola left the committee room at 9.10pm.

Chair suspended standing orders at 9.10pm. All members agreed to continue.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the summary of consultation and the summary of the impact of the proposed changes by Thurrock Coalition were noted.**
- 2. That the members commented and agreed on the proposed options for cost savings and increased charging income to achieve the budget savings required prior to the report going to Cabinet in February for final agreement.**
- 3. That the recommendation to change the day care offer from provision on six sites to three sites, resulting in an estimated saving of £200,000 in 2016/17 was agreed by Members.**
- 4. That the recommendations to (a) increase the charges for day care (except Short Breaks) over a period of three years until the charge is half the full cost of the service, raising in 2016/17 an estimated £56,695 and (b) to increase the charge for transport to**

cover the full cost of that service, raising an estimated £2,649 were agreed by Members. The Officer agreed to supply Members with some service user case scenarios.

5. That the recommendation to take the opportunity of the re-structure to undertake a full review of the community alarm service was agreed by Members.
6. That the recommendation to no longer providing equipment and adaptation items costing less than £50, saving an estimated £60,000 but also establish an exceptional circumstances system was agreed by Members and the report would be returned to HOSC in six months' time.
7. That the recommendation (a) to no longer provide extra care housing at Kynoch Court would provide savings in 2016/17 saving an estimated £81,000 and (b) to increase the number of units at Piggs Corner to 55 flats and also charge concierge costs to rent and service charges would produce savings in 2016/17 saving an estimated £143,000 were agreed by Members. Note for the record that Councillors Halden and Ojetola were against recommendation (a).
8. That the recommendation from 1 April 2016 charging only new leaseholders at Elizabeth Gardens for the care and support service residents receive which may raise no increase in 2016/17 was agreed by Members.
9. That the recommendations 3 to 8 above be referred to Cabinet in February 2016.

36. Changes to Fees and Charges 2016-17

Roger Harris briefly presented the report and explained that similar Fees and Charges Reports were being presented to all overview and scrutiny committees and referred Members to the Appendix 1, the Fees and Charges Booklet. The Appendix identified the proposed changes to charges.

It was further explained that the items under consultation were discussed at the HOSC tonight and the remaining other items were at their maximum therefore no increase could be made.

RESOLVED

That the Committee considered the proposed charges as detailed in the Appendix.

37. Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019

The Officer presented the report which outlined the rationale for the refresh of Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the case of change, the proposed areas of focus and the draft priorities for the refreshed Strategy. Members were referred to the draft priority areas which were:

- Prevention and early intervention
- Build strong and sustainable communities
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Transform health and social care
- Ensure that all agencies work together to deliver services that collectively improve the lives of all children and young people.

The Officer confirmed that this report was in the consultation period and asked Members for their comments and views as part of this consultation. The first stage of the strategy development engagement activity will conclude on the 22 January 2016 and will form part of the report for the February HOSC.

Councillor Key stated that the Strategy was broader than it had been in the past and commented that as Dementia appeared to be an item of discussion at tonight's committee, could this be integrated into the Strategy. Councillor B Rice confirmed that this could be incorporated into the Strategy.

Councillor Liddiard supported the recommendations and asked Officers how they propose to monitor the Strategy's success or not. The Officer confirmed that this will be undertaken through the development of a Strategy Outcomes Framework that would be monitored by the Health and Wellbeing Board..

Councillor B Rice also commented that the voluntary and community sector will also play a vital part in this.

Councillor Halden noted his concern on what the value of a three year strategy could have and the possibility of moving away from this and extending the strategy period. The Officer replied that whilst the Strategy's life span was three years, the vision and direction of travel represented a longer-term view.

The Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-19 report is an item on the Work Programme on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2016 and be recommended to Cabinet and Council in March 2016.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Committee commented on the refreshed strategy proposed priorities and areas of focus as part of the engagement process.**

2. That the Committee agree to the final report of the strategy being brought to a future meeting prior to sign off by Council in March 2016.
3. That the Committee note the progress made on the development of the refreshed strategy.

38. Work Programme

The Chair and Members agreed the work programme as a correct record.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting finished at 9.32 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk