



Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 May 2022
at 10 am at County Hall Norwich

Present:

Cllr Steve Morpew (Chair)

Cllr Lana Hemsall (Vice Chair)

Cllr Carl Annison

Cllr Lesley Bambridge

Cllr James Bensly (sub for Cllr Keith Kiddie)

Cllr Robert Savage (sub for Cllr Graham Carpenter)

Cllr Barry Duffin

Cllr Phillip Duigan

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Brian Watkins

Parent Governor Representative

Mr Giles Hankinson

Also present (who took a part in the meeting):

Cllr Bill Borrett

Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention

Christine Futter

Chief Operating Officer at Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support and a member of the Norfolk Care Association Board (participating via Microsoft Teams)

Gary Heathcote

Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services

Simon George

Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services

Peter Randall

Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager

Kat Hulatt

Head of Legal Services

Tim Shaw

Committee Officer

1. Apologies for Absence and related issues

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Carpenter, Cllr Keith Kiddie, Cllr Ed Maxfield, Cllr Jamie Osborn, Cllr Richard Price, Mrs Julie O' Connor (Church Representative) and Mr Paul Dunning (Church Representative).

2 Minutes

- 2.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 20 April 2022 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest,

4 Urgent Business

4.1 No urgent business was discussed.

5. Public Question Time

5.1 There were no public questions.

6. Local Member Issues/Questions

6.1 There were no local member issues/questions.

7 Call In

7.1 The Committee noted that there were no call-in items.

8 Committee Terms of Reference

8.1 The annexed report (8) was received.

8.2 This report would be an annual report that served as an opportunity for members to note and consider the sections of the NCC Constitution that related to the operation and powers of the Scrutiny Committee.

During discussion of the report the following key points were noted:

- The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager said that if any material changes in the NCC Constitution arose during the year that related to the operation and powers of the Scrutiny Committee then the report would be reissued.
- The Chair referred to changes in the NCC constitution that were due to be considered at the next meeting of the Corporate Select Committee before they came before Council. He said that Members of the Scrutiny Committee should have been consulted about proposed constitutional changes that had implications for this Committee and hoped that a way could be found in which this would still be possible.

RESOLVED

1. That Scrutiny Committee note the report and particularly the following documents with relation to the powers and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee:

- **Excerpt from article 5 of the NCC Constitution - Overview and Scrutiny Bodies (pg. 23-25).**
- **Appendix 10 of the NCC Constitution – Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules (pg. 146-147).**

9 **Distribution of Covid-19 Adult Social Care Funding**

9.1 The annexed report (9) was received.

9.2 The report provided an update on the pandemic related spending in Adult Social Care setting out: a) an overview of the money spent through the pandemic explaining the amounts, the intended purpose of the funding and how and where it was distributed b) the process for distribution of the funding and how delivery was audited c) expectations attached to the funding and how these were followed up d) the impact of the funding, with a particular focus on the workforce and how it made its way to people at the front line of care delivery.

9.3 During discussion of the report with Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention, Gary Heathcote, Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services and Christine Futter, Chief Operating Officer at Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support and a member of the Norfolk Care Association Board (participating via Microsoft Teams), the following key points were noted.

- There were 13 separate funding arrangements announced between May 2020 and December 2021 totalling £55.559m for Norfolk.
- The focus of the funding for Covid-19 mirrored the progress of the pandemic; this had started with funding arrangements for infection control measures before moving to issues about testing and vaccination and then to challenges around the workforce. Table 2.2 of the report showed the different types of grants and the amounts available. Table 2.3 showed the timeline for when grants were received.
- Most of the funding came with a set-criteria for its distribution as well as restrictions on which activities it could be used to support.
- Where there was a discretionary element of spending (and where Cabinet Member delegated authority was sought) funding was used to support areas of the care market that were not included in the Government criteria and where there were challenges such as with supported living, day services, housing with care and the wellbeing packs that were made available to carers.
- All grants required returns to the Dept for Health and Social Care on how the money was spent and this information was summarised at paragraph 4.2 and paragraph 4.9 of the report.
- An audit report had shown that the work was done accurately and on a timely basis.
- The timetable for the granting of money and the period in which it could be spent were often very tight.
- There were many logistical challenges at the beginning of the pandemic when there was no testing and a need for an increased supply of PPE. As the pandemic progressed that were staff sickness and staff capacity issues. If it were not for increased levels of financial support (though staff isolation

payments) infected staff might have been turning up for work in increased numbers and thereby putting residents and other members of staff at risk.

- There was some limited success in recruiting alternative staff as money was used to fund pay rises and reward staff who continued to work throughout the pandemic. Without financial support and a strong partnership approach there would have been operational and cash flow issues. This was an important lesson should there be a future pandemic.
- A research project was looking into the financial effects of Covid-19 on care homes which was due to be published by July 2022.
- The Cabinet Member said that while the response of the Government to the affects of the pandemic on the care sector was very quick it had remained a top priority of the Council to get grant money to those working on the front line as soon as possible. A lot of the money provided to small home care providers was used to limit the movement of care staff between venues and put in place infection control measures.
- Of the grant funding received, £201,000 was returned to the Government as unallocated funds (a grant condition). This was the second lowest return for a Local Authority in the Eastern Region.
- A key lesson learnt was that without the additional funding for care providers during the pandemic Norfolk would have lost a large part of the care sector and not been able to keep its most important care services running. Some providers had indicated to the Council that they would not have been able to remain in business without the support that was made available to them.
- The recruitment campaigns assisted by Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support had resulted in additional people working in the care sector. The “Air to Care” campaign had been one of the most successful: this had encouraged those who would otherwise be working in the Air Industry to take up vacancies in the care sector. There were also similar successful recruitment campaigns for those working in hair dressing and cooking sectors of the economy. How many of these people remained in the care market today remained unclear.
- There remained questions about the sustainability of the care market generally.
- The impact of mandatory vaccinations meant that there were about 350 staff (some 5%) who had left the care sector.
- The Chair said that the money that came into the care sector by way of grants had provided a lifeline for many small providers however it was important to know that this money had gone where it was intended as there were disturbing reports in the press from other areas of the country.
- In reply, it was noted that the County Council had entered in agreements with care providers which set out how grant monies had to be spent according to set criteria. Details of where the money had been spent could be found at paragraphs 4.2 and 4.9 of the report. Where there were material discrepancies these were followed up with providers.

- Because of the nature of the pandemic, Norfolk along with other Councils, chose not to send staff into care providers at the time of the pandemic to probe where the money was being spent. At this stage in the pandemic there was no intention to go back to care providers and ask them for an open book on where the money was spent.
- The care market was in a precarious place throughout the pandemic and some providers were having to leave the market which showed that there was no large-scale misappropriation of funding.
- The County Council had found, after several attempts with partners, that there were insufficient people available to create a bank of staff to support the care market because everyone was already committed.
- About half of County Council expenditure was spent on Adult Social Care. The money from the 13 funding arrangements in Norfolk represented about a seventh of County Council expenditure. The grant money had got to the County Council in a timely fashion and represented about 95% of that which was spent.
- In response to questions about the long-term effects of grant funding no longer being available, it was noted that care providers were seeking support with the training that was available to their staff.
- There was a report due to be presented to Cabinet in July 2022 about the care market that would set out suggestions for how small care market providers could be assisted with issues around training and recruitment.
- The Cabinet Member said that the Council would continue to press the Government for greater clarity on how social care would be funded in future and impact on the County Council.
- The Chief Operating Officer at Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support said that many lessons had been learnt from the pandemic but perhaps the greatest lesson was the importance of getting people to work together quickly and put in place an integrated response.
- The Chair paid tribute to all those who were involved in Norfolk's response to the pandemic and said that issues of structural resilience, workforce capacity and the amount of money that was available to the sector remained important issues to be resolved and the Scrutiny Committee would need to return to such matters in the future,

9.4 **RESOLVED**

- **That Scrutiny Committee note the report and the areas of discussion set out in these minutes which were matters to which the Scrutiny Committee would need to return at a future time.**
- **That Scrutiny Committee place on record thanks to Bill Borrett, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention, Gary Heathcote, Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services and Christine Futter, Chief Operating Officer at Norfolk and Suffolk Care Support for their help in answering Councillors detailed questions.**

10 Appointment to the Norfolk Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub-Panel

The annexed report (10) was received.

The Scrutiny Committee was asked to appoint 3 County Council members (2 Conservative and 1 Labour) to represent the County Council on the Countywide Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel. A copy of the terms of reference for the Sub Panel were attached at Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Committee appoint the following Councillors:

- **Cllr Emma Corlett (with Cllr Rumsby as sub)**
- **Cllr Graham Carpenter (with Cllr Mackie as sub)**
- **Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris (with Cllr Kirk as sub)**

11 Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme

11.1 The annexed report (11) was received.

11.2 The Chair and Vice Chair both thanked those Members who had attended a recent training session about the future work programme. The Democratic Support and Scrutiny Manager said that arising from that training session he would be circulating to Committee Members a long list of possible items that Members would be asked to prioritise. He also said that the item on the LEP (the update on the economic renewal strategy) that was due to have come to the Committee in June 2022 had now to be rescheduled. It was unclear at this stage when this would now come to the Committee because of the uncertainty around the future of the LEP.

11.3 RESOLVED

That the Committee:

- **Note the forward work programme as set out in the appendix to the report subject to the rescheduling of the LEP item to a meeting possibly in Autumn 2022.**
- **Note that a long list of possible items for the future work programme will be circulated to Members shortly which Members will be asked to prioritise.**

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am

Chair

