

## **Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

### **Minutes of the Meeting**

**Date: Tuesday 8 October 2013**

**Time: 2.30pm**

**Venue: Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

#### **Present:**

Mrs J Brociek-Coulton  
Ms E Corlett  
Mr A Grey  
Mrs S Gurney (Chairman)  
Mr H Humphrey  
Mr J Law  
Mr J Mooney

Mrs E Morgan  
Mr W Northam  
Mr W Richmond  
Mr M Smith  
Mrs M Somerville  
Mrs A Thomas  
Mr J Timewell

#### **Substitute Member Present:**

Mr T Jermy for Mrs C Walker

#### **Also Present:**

Mr D Roper, Non-Voting Cabinet Member for Public Protection  
Ms S Whitaker, Non-Voting Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services  
Mrs M Wilkinson, Non-Voting Cabinet Member for Communities

#### **Officers/Others Present:**

Harold Bodmer, Director of Community Services  
Janice Dane, Finance Business Partner and Transformation Manager, Community Services (Adult Social Care)  
Jennifer Holland, Assistant Director of Community Services, Head of Libraries and Information  
Beverley Evans, Head of Adult Education, Community Services  
John Perrott, Business Support Manager, Community Services (Adult Social Care)  
Maureen Orr, Scrutiny Support, Resources  
Stephen Andreassen, Strategic Risk Manager, Resources  
Tamsin Lodge, Member of the Public  
Mandy Chilvers, Learner Relations and Operational Planning Manager, Community Services  
Tom Garrod, County Councillor  
Richard Bearman, County Councillor  
James Joyce, County Councillor  
Wendy Simmons, Business Support Co-ordinator, Community Services (Adult Social Care)

Colin Aldred, County Councillor  
Jonathan Dunning, UNISON  
Dawn Filtness, Senior Accountant (Community Services)

**1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B Hannah and Mrs C Walker.

**2 Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 September 2013 were confirmed by the Panel and signed by the Chairman.

**3 Declarations of Interest**

Ms J Brociek-Coulton declared an “Other Interest” in that she is a part-time carer.

Mrs M Wilkinson declared an “Other Interest” in that her husband was in receipt of support from Community Services.

**4 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**5 Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**6 Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

There were no local Member issues or local Member questions.

**7 Election of Vice-Chairman**

It was moved and duly seconded that Ms E Corlett be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the ensuing year.

It was also moved and duly seconded that Mr M Smith be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the ensuing year.

On being put to the vote there were 5 votes in favour of Ms Corlett and 9 votes in favour of Mr M Smith whereupon it was

**Resolved-**

That Mr M Smith be elected Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the remainder of the ensuing year.

**8 Cabinet Member Feedback**

The annexed report (8) by the Cabinet Member for Community Services was received.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services provided the Panel with the following feedback:

- Sarah Stock had been appointed Managing Director for Social Enterprise Matters.
- In response to comments in the media, the Cabinet Member said that where there was a 15 minute visit by a social worker to a care customer the visit was undertaken with the sole intention of checking on that person's welfare.
- There had been a significant improvement in the position regarding the County Council's contract with Care UK for care services in the Braodland area since the matter had been reported to the Panel in September 2013. Where concerns remained about the implementation of the contract they were being addressed at reinstated fortnightly meetings between Care UK and the Department, and Care UK was continuing to be asked to provide daily monitoring figures on its performance.
- A meeting about the Blue Badge issuing process was held recently between the Department and Northgate. Another meeting was planned for early November 2013. A decision had still to be reached as to whether or not it would be desirable for Northgate to be responsible for the whole Blue Badge issuing process. Even if Northgate took on this enhanced role, the County Council would still retain responsibility for undertaking the initial assessment of applicants.

The Cabinet Member for Public Protection provided the following feedback:

- No public protection issues that were relevant to the work on the Panel had been considered at yesterday's meeting of the Cabinet.
- An exploratory meeting had been held with the Police Commissioner on how to achieve greater interaction between the County Council and the Police in the work of the Blue Light services.
- Negotiations between the Fire Brigades Union and the Government were continuing and the Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Panel was being kept informed of developments.
- An exploratory meeting had been held with Norman Lamb MP concerning health monies that would be transferred from the NHS to the Department, and the Panel would be kept informed of developments at future meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Communities provided the Panel with the following feedback:

- The Cabinet Member for Communities said that the Enterprising Libraries Programme, a partnership between Arts Council England, the British Library, and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), had funded 10 projects in England for Libraries to develop their role as community hubs to spark local economic growth and improve social mobility in communities across the country.
- Norfolk was one of the 10 Local Authorities to be awarded a grant and Norfolk's project would build on the existing business support infrastructure in the County, the extensive network of libraries in the County, the Business Library at the Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library and a newly developed relationship with the British Library Business & IP Centre. It aimed to reach out to a wider community of people, thinking about developing business ideas through the provision of "business basic skills" – developing business literacy for

communities in Norfolk. The project would run from Autumn 2013 to March 2015.

- The Chairman of the Panel and the Cabinet Member for Communities congratulated the Library and Information Service on the success of this year's Reading Challenge and asked for this message to be passed on to the staff concerned. It was pointed out that many of the children who had completed the challenge had received medals at the end of the summer, given at special ceremonies, often attended by locally elected Members.

## **9 Changes to Adult Social Care Funding: Norfolk's Response to the Government's Consultation – "Caring for our Future – Reforming What and How People Pay for Their Care and Support"**

The Panel annexed report (9) by the Director of Community Services was received.

The Panel received a report which provided a draft response by Norfolk County Council to the Department of Health's consultation document.

In the course of discussion, the following key points were made:

- The Director had been advised by the Head of Democratic Services that the views of the Panel should be sought before the Director "signed off" on the Council's response which had to be with the Department of Health by no later than 15 October 2013.
- Members said that they had some difficulty in understanding all of the technical issues mentioned in the consultation document and would have welcomed an opportunity for a Member workshop to have been held on this important matter.
- While Members recognised that there was now insufficient time to put together a workshop, they said they would like to be invited to attend such an event when the Government's intentions as to the future funding of adult social care became clearer.
- Members expressed some concern about the lack of clarity in the consultation document regarding resources and funding that would be made available to the County Council for implementing the changes.
- The potential additional funding pressures on the County Council as a result of the proposed changes to social care were considered to be very significant. For example, the consultation document spoke about placing new duties on the County Council to provide a universal information and advice service which required additional resources to implement. The introduction of the cap on care services would create an incentive for those who currently funded their own care to come forward for a Department assessment and support plan.
- The cap on care costs excluded general living (board and lodging) costs for individuals in residential or nursing care who would be required to pay for this.
- It was pointed out that social care users who had an eligible care need at the time they reached 18 years of age would not be required to contribute towards their social care costs at all which meant that changes were needed in the way in which the transition of young people from Children's Services to Adult Social Care was funded.
- Members spoke about wanting more clarity from the Government about how the proposed statutory requirement for Local Authorities to enable individuals to defer payments against the security of their homes (a policy which was already in place locally in Norfolk) would be applied nationally, and the effects that this Government policy could have on Local Authority cash flow, particularly as the

legal process of probate could often take between 9 months and 12 months to complete.

- Officers said they had no doubt that the Department had the skills to develop the infrastructure required to run the new proposed care system, if the Government provided it with sufficient funding.

### **Resolved-**

(a) That the County Council's response to the consultation document should take account of the issues raised in the meeting and be shared with the Chairman and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services before being sent to the Department of Health.

(b) That a Member seminar about the proposed changes in adult social care funding should be held at County Hall when the Government's intentions became clearer.

## **10 Review of Adult Education**

The annexed report (10) by the Director of Community Services was received.

The Panel received a report that put forward four options for the future delivery of the Adult Education Service.

In the course of discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following key points were made:

- Officers explained that the Further Education Colleges had expressed some uncertainty about how, if they were to take on the Adult Education Service, they would be able to maintain a spread of adult education provision across the whole county, particularly in the area of Community and Family Learning.
- The approach suggested in the report (to merge the Adult Education Service with the Library and Information Service) had received the support of the Skills Funding Agency. The four Norfolk Further Education Colleges had been notified of the proposal.
- The crucial question for the County Council was whether it wanted to continue to be a provider of Adult Education courses or not. If not, then the final decision on the transfer of provision to another organisation would rest with the Skills Funding Agency and not the County Council, and there was no guarantee that the current level of funding within Norfolk would remain.
- Officers spoke about how the last of the two options set out in the report would enhance the Council's leadership role in delivering the Government initiative called "City Deal" to stimulate growth in the local economy.
- It was pointed out that the Thorpe Adult Education Centre was smaller than the other two main permanent Adult Education sites in the county at Attleborough and at Wensum Lodge and that the annual running costs for Wensum Lodge amounted to £490,000.
- The Panel asked for a breakdown of the total funding available to the Adult Education Service, and the maintenance costs provided from the Council's Building Maintenance Fund.
- The Panel asked for information about how the Council might work more closely with Further Education Colleges in providing adult education courses. Officers explained that the aim of this would be to secure improvements in the local economy through the City deal arrangements and would be secured in

consultation with the colleges.

- Members spoke about how any changes in the operation of the Adult Education Service had to result in improved outcomes across the whole county and not just in the central area. Members asked for more information on the innovations that the Service had introduced in the North Norfolk area. Officers explained that this was a new project to increase provision outside of the central area of the county. As it had just started there was nothing yet to report. If it proved to be successful, the approach would be adopted in other areas.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities said that the report demonstrated the positive impact that the Adult Education Service had across the whole of Norfolk, and the need for the service to continue to be provided by the County Council. She added that she wanted to see Wensum Lodge continue to be used as a valued community resource long into the future but not necessarily solely as a base for the Adult Education Service.
- A number of Members spoke about how they wanted to wait for the conclusions of the feasibility study into Wensum Lodge, and to hear how this building could be used to generate income for the Council (issues which were being considered by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Corporate and Personnel) before the Panel made any recommendations to the Cabinet on which of the four options set out in the report should be pursued. They also wanted to know about the personnel implications of each of the four options and in particular what (if any) costs might arise from TUPEE and any changes in pension arrangements, as well as for an explanation of the acronyms mentioned in Appendix 1.

By 9 votes to 2 votes and with 2 abstentions it was

#### **Resolved-**

- (a) That the Panel note the information provided in the review report.
- (b) That the Adult Education Service should continue to work together with the Library and Information Service on what they saw as a best way forward.
- (c) To ask for a further report to be brought back to the Panel on the issues mentioned during the meeting, particularly concerning the outcome of the feasibility study into Wensum Lodge, the personnel implications of any options for change, and a more detailed evaluation of the option under which the Council's grants would be transferred to the Norfolk Further Education Colleges.

## **11 Forward Work Programme, Scrutiny**

The annexed report (11) by the Director of Community Services was received.

The Panel received a report which contained the draft Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for the remainder of 2013.

It was noted that following a recent meeting of the Party Spokespersons, the issue of "Carers Conditions of Service" would now be included as an item in the next Member's briefing note, rather than as an item on the agenda for the Panel meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2013. In addition, "discharges from acute hospitals" would now be covered by a wider report on "integration of health and social care", for the agenda of 5 November 2013. A report on "the terms of reference for the All Party Working Group

on quality and home support” would also form part of the agenda for 5 November 2013.

The meeting concluded at 4.50pm

**Chairman**



**If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Tim Shaw on 0344 8008020 or 0344 8008011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.**