

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
27 MARCH 2018  
7.30 - 9.30 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Harrison (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Finch, Finnie, Mrs McKenzie, Ms Merry, Peacey and Mrs Temperton

**Executive Members:**

Councillor D Birch

**In Attendance:**

Mira Haynes, Chief Officer: Adult Social Care  
Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing  
Gill Vickers, Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing  
Melanie O'Rourke, Head of Adult Community Team

**86. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 16 January 2018 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

Arising from minute 79 relating to the Safe Places Scheme, the meeting was advised that no further information was available from the investigation into why premises had not signed up for the scheme but that this would be followed up after the meeting.

**87. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**88. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest, nor any indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

**89. Public Participation**

In accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny Mr Pickersgill of Wildridings & Central Ward submitted two questions to be considered by the meeting:

- *What is being done to change the former care model which is now financially unsustainable especially with many of the care homes in financial crisis themselves (including Four Seasons)?*
- *Is Bracknell having to use its reserves?*

The Chairman thanked Mr Pickersgill for his well informed questions and the Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, Gill Vickers responded that for the previous year the directorate had been implementing a transformation programme intended to

improve customer experience and reduce the risks in the market. The programme was aimed at supporting people in their homes and communities through initiatives such as:

- Early intervention (without assessing for eligibility) when individuals contact us for the first time
- Taking a 'strength based approach' helping individuals to problem solve and identifying support networks in the community and voluntary sector
- A new approach to ensuring the voluntary sector organisations are sustainable (providing a digital platform to enable them to market their services, for individual's with Personal Budgets to buy their services online, removing the need for expensive and time consuming individual invoicing. Also identifying unmet needs and posting information on this for the voluntary and private organisations for development opportunities
- The Director explained that integrated intermediate care was available seven days a week until 8pm in the evening. The Council was working with health providers in nursing and residential homes to support people and prevent them going into hospital and providing care when they are discharged.
- It was explained that the Council was also using technology to support people such as sensors for people getting out of bed.
- Following the Care Act the Council's early intervention work considered how to problem solve the issues such as signposting towards organisations or provision of money to support people (up to £500). A map of community groups had been built upon those that would welcome people referred to them. The Council was working with the voluntary sector to support groups to be sustainable even with reduced grants. People had individual budgets and used prepaid cards to pay for participation. The community hub and community connectors can help residents find the community groups, organisations and services available in Bracknell Forest..
- The meeting was advised that if in hospital a patient was assessed on their way out which was termed 'support discharge to assess' in order to take the time to see what the individual needed. It was recognised that people do not function well in hospital . This could be provided over a period of up to six weeks to help determine whether they should return home or required residential care.
- The Director moved onto the second part of Mr Pickersgill's question by confirming that the council was using reserves but in a planned way. £2.5m of reserves had been identified to support the 18/19 budget but this was in line with the council's medium term financial plan which was approved in 2016, therefore it is not a last minute reaction to balance.

In response to questions by the members of the Panel:

- The meeting was advised that there were currently 20 Bracknell Forest residents in Astbury Manor, the Council had a contract with the residential home
- If a resident was unhappy about the level of care being provided they could complain via the PALS service if this was whilst in hospital or the Council's complaint number and someone would discuss their concerns

In conclusion the Chairman thanked Mr Pickersgill for his topical question and noted that the Council was addressing the issues he had raised through its transformation programme to ensure that the Council has a sustainable service.

## 90. **Quarterly Service Report (QSR)**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of

departmental performance as reported in the QSR for the third quarter of 2017/18 (October to December 2017) relating to Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

The Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing made a presentation highlighting recent and current activity:

- Forestcare have won two external monitoring contracts with a total annual contract value of nearly £100,000.
- Self Care week had been successful with a range of different activities including the biggest walking group session organised so far with 42 people taking part.
- The Council was sponsoring Dogs for Good project which had enabled two dogs to work with up to three people per day. One of the residents who had benefited from the scheme had attended the main arena at Crufts to help demonstrate the project. Despite the event being very busy he was relatively calm and was well supported throughout.
- The percentage of people receiving social care who receive direct payments has risen to 43.5% against a target of 31.4%, which is very good performance.
- In relation to performance measure L178 regarding Household nights in bed and breakfast this had increased to 908. It was clarified that this related to single people due to issues such as arrears or convictions which meant that they spent up to a week in a bed and breakfast accommodation. Previously these figures did not relate to families but as of the night before the meeting a family was being accommodated in bed and breakfast but the team were working to help them move on.

Arising from questions and discussion, the Panel noted:

- Early stage plans were in place to look at council sites for shared accommodation in the borough to support people on probation and another plan was to work with Probation to look at a large housing association to address this issue of accommodation
- Revenue budget was forecasting an overspend but that was no longer the case in quarter four. A £1.1million saving was proposed and £1.8million had been achieved due to improving services rather than cutting them and was a credit to the staff team who had embraced the changes.
- Direct payment RAG rating was red in quarter three but had since been updated to green.
- 4.4.14 Additional build on Healthlands was the joint EMI project whose RAG rating was red as the delivery had slipped by three months. It was due to open in December 2020 but this was now March 2021 due to working with multiple partners.
- 7.1.20 the transitions model is now working effectively so RAG rating altered to Amber
- 7.1.25 New intermediate care service model operational was showing in quarter three as red but was currently green as the project was back on track.
- Suggestion to consider Hope into Action project in which churches bought properties in shared ownership, one individual looked after 4/5 people in the heart of the community to support people past the vulnerable stage. The Director welcomed all suggestions and agreed to look into this.
- Two people were working full time as Community Connectors to link individuals with care providers. Concerns regarding these roles potentially taking funding away from the voluntary sector were noted. The pilot was working to demonstrate that the principle works with the intention that this would be delivered by the voluntary sector in the long term but the service was currently not mature enough to be run by others. It was agreed that

supporting 15 people was low but this was due to increase. There had been a soft launch of the digital platform to be tested and refine in response to comments received before it was promoted to encourage self referral to the service.

- My BFC Benefits length of time to process claim was initially high due to the introduction of the scheme but as of 19 March this was down to 5.74 days so were now below target. It was easier, more flexible and ability to message caseworker. It was noted that not everyone was using the scheme yet.
- If individuals fail to tell the Council about a change in their circumstances that leads to an overpayment then the Council recovers this by reducing future payments or invoicing individuals. If these methods are not successful then the Council uses a debt collection company to collect on our behalf. However the 300 families approach means that the Council considers write off debt that will cause homelessness for example as this is more cost effective for the local authority. Only when all options have been exhausted does the Borough Treasurer agree to debts being written off.
- 7.1.25 Noted that the wording and performance was the same as per quarter 2 and it was explained that some Bridgewell staff were intermediary, some went to work in other local homes and some staff choose to retire.
- It was agreed that the initial impact of the Lexicon's opening on care company recruitment had been underestimated but this had settled. It was reported that a recent recruitment had received 15 applications.
- The delay to development at Heathlands was due to the CCG changing the specification and the requirement to demonstrate delivery of appropriate returns. This was due to be considered by the Executive. It was clarified that the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead were very interested but wanted to invest capital, it may be possible to sell surplus beds or voids to them.
- In relation to single young homeless people – there was no specific age banding but currently they were all in their early twenties.

The Chairman concluded that it was excellent to see these projects getting back on course.

#### 91. **Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions**

The Panel received and noted the scheduled Key and Non-Key Executive Decisions relating to Adult Social Care and Housing.

#### 92. **Conversations approach**

Head of Adult Community Team, Melanie O'Rourke provided the meeting with a conversation awareness session explaining the case for change, how the conversations approach worked, how this was being implanted in Bracknell and the difference it was making, Using case studies she demonstrated how this was changing the Council's relationship with the people it supports.

The session challenged members present to consider two questions e.g. what it would take to contact social services and a risk that they would take that would cause concern to a Social Worker visiting them. These questions were discussed in small groups and then fed back to the meeting to consider how the new approach responded to these concerns.

Arising from questions raised during the discussion:

- Positive feedback from the new approach would be circulated to members
- The Council monitored and checked the needs of residents to make sure that they were safe. Personal Assistants were recruited through direct payments or residents could choose someone they know. Advice was provided to explain how they could protect themselves such as requesting DBS as well as using a prepaid card with the Personal Assistant having a separate card. There are also multiple methods of flagging concerns but it was recognised that this was a difficult conversation so this was addressed early on with residents so they were prepared.
- Carers assessment were done separately to the person being cared for but the focus was on what they were struggling with and what support they needed. It was clarified that it was an ongoing process and that if a resident's reassessment impacted upon their carer then the carer could request to be reassessed themselves to help them continue to provide support.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Adult Community Team for providing the briefing and concluded this was a positive approach to treat residents like adults, with both dignity and respect. It was noted that early intervention was key and the Council was working with the voluntary sector to help identify people requiring support.

Councillor Mrs Temperton suggested including information this approach in community newsletters such as Great Hollands Matters. Officers offered to also visit groups of residents to talk about this new approach if requested. It was also suggested that motivational questioning, the technique behind the conversations approach, could be offered to all members as part of the member development programme to support their work with residents.

**CHAIRMAN**