

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL  
19 JANUARY 2016  
7.30 - 8.48 PM**



**Present:**

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

**Executive Member:**

Councillor D Birch

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Peacey

**In Attendance:**

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)  
Mira Haynes, Chief Officer: Older People & Long Term Conditions  
Neil Haddock, Head of Performance and Resources  
Simon Hendey, Chief Officer: Housing  
Zoë Johnstone, Chief Officer: Adults & Joint Commissioning  
John Nawrockyi, Interim Director of Adult Social Care, Health & Housing

**21. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members**

Councillor Brossard substituted for Councillor Peacey

**22. Minutes and Matters Arising**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Housing Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on 15 September 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to checking the date shown as 2001 in paragraph 4 of minute 16 (Quarterly Service Report) which appeared to be incorrect.

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

There were no declarations of interest relating to any items on the agenda, nor any indication that Members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

**24. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**25. Public Participation**

There were no submissions from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

## 26. **2016/17 Draft Budget Proposals**

The Panel considered key themes and priorities for Adult Social Care and Housing as outlined in the Council's Draft Budget Proposals for 2016/17.

The Executive had agreed the Council's draft budget proposals for 2016/17 at its meeting on 15 December 2015 as the basis for consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Commission, Overview and Scrutiny Panels and other interested parties. The consultation period would run until 31 January 2016, after which the Executive would consider the representations made at its meeting on 9 February 2016, before recommending the budget to Council.

Attached to the report were extracts from the 2016/17 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. The extracts comprised the Revenue Budget Report, Commitment Budget, Draft Revenue Budget Pressures, Draft Revenue Budget Savings Proposals, Proposed Fees and Charges, Capital Programme Report and Summary and Proposed Capital Schemes.

Particular attention was drawn to the budget pressures for 2016/17, which were common to most local authorities:

- An estimated £256k would be needed to cover the additional costs now falling on the Council for recipients of care who were previously in receipt of payments from the Independent Living Fund (now closed).
- An estimated £358k would be needed to fund known numbers of young people moving into Adult Social Care during the year, many of whom would require high cost care packages.
- An estimated £94k was needed to fund residential placements owing to a combination of limited capacity in the local market and increasing costs for home care providers.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were made:

- The Council did not place people in red-flagged care homes.
- The new charging policy for adult social care services would end the financial assessment for couples; all financial assessments would be carried out as they were for single people. A saving estimated at £100k was expected as a result of an increased level of recipient contributions. There were 50 couples affected in Bracknell Forest and letters and/or home visits were proposed to explain the new arrangements.
- A saving estimated at £340k was expected to be achieved through the review of high cost care packages to ensure services did not exceed the assessed need. Reviews were carried out at least annually and it was common for people's needs to change over time.
- There may be a slight variation in the anticipated saving of £15k associated with the Local Housing Company.

## 27. **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 second quarter of 2015/16 (July to September 2015) relating to Adult Social Care and Housing.

The Panel received a presentation looking forward over Quarter 4 of the current year, covering the main activities of the Department. Arising from questions and discussion, the Panel noted:

- Winter pressure plans had been kept under review and it was very pleasing to note a zero report on delayed transfers from hospital attributable to Adult Social Care in the period leading up to Christmas.
- Following the success of Self-Care Week in November 2015, a second “Choose Well” campaign would be launched to encourage people to self-care and to choose appropriate services, only attending Accident and Emergency departments when necessary, to reduce unplanned admissions to hospital. Panel Members requested further details of the date and promotion of this event.
- A new draft Housing Strategy will be produced by the end of the quarter and then subjected to consultation..
- The emergency personal care service provided by Forest Care was being developed, which would require it to be registered with the Care Quality Commission. Forest Care already provided around 400 customers a year with an emergency personal care service.

## 28. **National Living Wage - Potential Impact on Social Care Sector**

The Panel considered a report with an assessment of the potential cost impact on Adult Social Care budgets 2016-2020 of the National Living Wage (NLW).

From April 2016, the National Minimum Wage (NMW), currently £6.50 per hour, would be replaced by the NLW to be set initially at £7.20 per hour and rising in increments to £9.00 per hour in 2020. Care providers and others had stated that they expected this policy change would have a very significant impact on the cost of social care. The Local Government Association (LGA) had estimated the additional cost at initially £330m, rising to £1bn by 2020.

Using a model produced to assist local authorities (which relied on a number of assumptions which may not all prove to be correct) some estimates of the additional costs for Bracknell Forest had been calculated on the basis of 75% of staff employed being on the minimum wage. This showed a potential cost increase of £1,545k in 2016/17 rising to £5,520k in 2020/21.

The Panel received answers to a number of questions about the arrangements and costs for the Council of the placements made in local care homes, which were seeking to increase fees to cover rising costs irrespective of the new NLW policy. The Panel noted that the LGA were pressing the Treasury to recognise this new burden falling on local authorities.

## 29. **Bracknell Forest Sensory Needs Strategy 2015-20**

The Panel considered a report presenting the 2015 – 2020 Sensory Needs Strategy for Bracknell Forest, due to be reported to the Executive for approval. The next step for the Strategy was the development of an Action Plan by the Sensory Needs Partnership Board, to be built around the Priorities set out in the Strategy. This would be prepared in consultation with the Clinical Commissioning Group, and reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board for approval.

The Panel noted from Priority 8 – Prevention, the importance of looking after the health of one’s eyes and ears, and responses to the consultation about the Strategy had indicated that there needed to be more information about this available through the local community. The Executive Member drew the attention of the Panel to the emphasis being placed on self care, which was no less important in terms of sensory needs than other physical conditions. Reference was made to facilities such as the

Bridgewell Centre, which provided valuable short term care to assist people to improve their self help skills, including sensory impairments.

### 30. **Advocacy Joint Commissioning Strategy**

The Panel considered a report on the proposed approach to ensuring good quality advocacy services in Bracknell Forest, which had led to the recent completion of a new draft Advocacy Joint Commissioning Strategy.

Various changes in legislation over the last 2-3 years had altered the responsibilities for commissioning and provision of advocacy services. The Council was now responsible for commissioning the following range of specialist services:

- Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy – supporting people who did not have the capacity to make decisions for themselves in relation to accommodation, care and treatment.
- Independent Mental Health Advocacy – help for people detained under the Mental Health Act to get their opinions heard and to make sure that they knew their rights.
- NHS Complaints Advocacy – supporting people who want to make a complaint about the NHS.
- Independent Advocacy – to be available to specific groups of people, for example, those planning their care and support or having an assessment of their care needs carried out.

The consultation, focussing on people who had used advocacy services or who were eligible to do so, about what to include in the Strategy had ended on 7 January 2016. A good rate of response had been received, mostly of a very positive nature, and comments had been incorporated in the draft Strategy.

The process for tendering and contracting for services was under way. Services would be commissioned in four 'lots' with providers being able to tender for one or more of the services.

The Panel noted the report.

### 31. **Heathlands Residential Home - Consultation**

The Panel received an update on the consultation (due to close on 20 January 2016) on the future of Heathlands Residential Care Home and Day Centre for people with Dementia. The following groups had been especially invited to respond:

- People who lived at Heathlands (or their representatives)
- People and professionals who supported residents of Heathlands
- Bracknell Forest residents
- People with an interest in future options for care and support in Bracknell Forest

Three options had been put forward for consideration: do nothing; refurbish or redevelop Heathlands; and sell or lease Heathlands to another provider.

To date, 82 responses to the consultation questionnaire had been made, of which 70 were from current Heathlands residents (only 10 now remained in occupation), their family and friends. 76% of replies had expressed the view that the Council should continue to provide a service at Heathlands.

The Panel noted a full report on the consultation would be made to the Executive at its meeting on 9 February 2016. In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the current empty beds at Heathlands were available for short term respite care or for assisting in avoiding delayed transfers from hospital under winter pressure arrangements. A progress report to the next meeting of the Panel was requested.

**32. Working Group Update Report**

The Panel received a report on the progress of the Working Group reviewing the Council's draft Homelessness Strategy. The Working Group had held a number of meetings, met the Homelessness Forum Board, visited some of the homelessness accommodation used by the Council and met representatives of organisations involved in supporting people with housing and homelessness issues. The Working Group had completed its work by considering and contributing to the draft Homelessness Strategy which had now been agreed by the Executive.

Members received answers to questions about bedspaces offered by the Churches to homeless people in Bracknell Forest and the opening of the night shelter for rough sleepers during prolonged spells of cold weather.

The Panel thanked members of the Working Group and noted the suggestion of homelessness for further review (see next item below).

**33. Work Programme 2016/17**

The Panel considered a report suggesting topics for inclusion in the 2016/17 work programme:

- 1) Forestcare – a review of the lifeline alarms and other services provided under Forestcare.
- 2) Housing Supply – to review the response by the Council and its partners to increasing pressure in the housing market, particularly in regard to assisting home ownership and the provision of affordable housing.

The Panel considered the Housing Supply review would be a suitable follow on from the Homelessness review and the same Working Group Members expressed an interest in continuing. The starting point for such a review would take account of new housebuilding underway and in the pipeline, with statistical data from the Planning Department. Careful consideration would need to be given to scoping the review.

The Panel confirmed that Housing Supply should be the next review carried out, with the Working Group to comprise the same members of the Panel and any other Overview and Scrutiny member interested in serving.

**34. Overview & Scrutiny Progress Report**

The Panel received the Overview and Scrutiny bi-annual progress report setting out the activity and developments over the period June to November 2015.

**35. 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.

**CHAIRMAN**

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