

ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 18 January 2024
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor David Sedgwick (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Gary Lawson (Vice-Chair); Councillors Geoff Abell, Angie Clark, Dickie Davies, Dominic Hardwick, Dallas Jones, Catherine Stuart and Karl Wardlaw.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 23 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. TECHNOLOGY ENABLED CARE

The Director of Adult Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the work being undertaken to increase the use of Technology Enabled Care in Stockport and an opportunity to share a demonstration of the Virtual House which was due to be launched in the coming months.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care (Councillor Keith Holloway) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Members recognised the benefits of technology enabled care and welcomed the opportunity to view the demonstration of the Virtual House.
- It was commented that information relating to the technology enabled care options including the Virtual House would be accessible for residents within hubs across the borough such as libraries.
- It was queried if there was any feedback relating to other local authorities that were using the Virtual House and whether any changes had been made as a result.
- In response, it was commented that whilst the house looked the same, there was an option within the software to add the equipment that was available so as the technology developed the site would be updated. In addition, the developers were actively improving the accessibility of the site.

- The importance of receiving feedback from residents in order to ensure further accessibility and working with partner organisations was noted so that technology enabled care was a seamless offer for residents across the borough.
- It was commented that technology enabled care would be a good option for residents who were reluctant to have carers or other people they were unfamiliar with entering their homes.
- It was queried whether the equipment available via the Virtual House was currently offered to residents.
- In response, it was stated that whilst some of the equipment was fairly standard, it had the capability to have a significant impact in the lives of residents.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. CABINET RESPONSE: RESPONDING TO MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing further detail on the budget change proposals, taking into consideration the feedback received to date. This followed on from the report presented at the Cabinet meeting on 19 September 2023 and Scrutiny Committees during October and November 2023.

The appendix to the report outlined the budget proposals being considered by Cabinet to address financial and rising demand challenges, enable longer term transformation, and ensure the delivery of shared strategic partnership ambitions.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care (Councillor Keith Holloway) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- It was noted that a large proportion of the efficiencies and savings centred around continuing to care for people in their own homes and whilst this was conducive with the preference of the majority of residents, it was commented that a small minority of older people would prefer the company and support that residential care offered.
- In relation to patient choice, it was queried whether residential care was an option for residents where this was their preference.
- In response, it was commented that for these residents there may be fears in relation to returning to their own homes around risk of falls and isolation, there would be an offer of intermediate care, step-down from hospital into a facility that would support them with their confidence to maximise their independence. It was stated that work was ongoing to offer a wider range of services at a neighbourhood level. It was noted that the Care Act required the service to look at individuals based on their individual need, there was a national criteria for health, care and support and a decision would be made with the individual based on meeting their needs in the best way for them.
- Additional information was requested in relation to the benchmarking information reference in the report that Stockport had high fee rates compared to other Local Authorities.
- In response, it was stated that this would feature as part of the Annual Residential/ Nursing Care, Home Care and other Care Management Fee Setting report was due to

be considered at the February meeting of the Committee. It was noted that Stockport's fee rates comparatively with the North West were quite high related to the range and number of provision, land value and level of residents who were self-funders and able to pay higher rates for care. It was noted that it was important to offer different types of provision and ways to support people to stay independent in their own homes because of the cost such as extra care housing.

- It was queried whether any of the saving proposals included adopting shared services with other Local Authorities or agencies.
- In response, it was commented that whilst there was nothing actively planned in terms of specific opportunities, a small number of proposals had been considered in the last year including a complex needs facility led by Tameside, however relating to the costs associated and appetite from other Local Authorities it was decided that the proposal would be reconsidered at a future date. It was noted that there were limitations in relation to shared facilities relating to the preference of individuals within their localities being closer to home, however there was potential for efficiencies around sharing back office costs and different models of commissioning.
- It was noted that the local government financial settlement had been disappointing and there was unity across the council chamber in the response to Government around the inadequate resources that were available to the council.
- In relation to the Equality Impact Assessment and the impact of the proposals, it was noted that the changes were likely to disproportionately affect residents who required council resources the most including older people, younger people, people with a disability, low income, people living in deprived areas, people experiencing homelessness, veterans, asylum seekers and refugees.
- In response, it was commented that financial position of local government constrained the council's ability to deliver services, however the council were doing as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable residents in Stockport which included an emphasis on preventative services and neighbourhood working across health services.
- Members commented on the importance of multi-year settlements for local government and noted that most people's interactions with government was with local government.
- In relation to managing the external care markets and bringing third party top ups in house, it was queried whether there would be a policy and resource to manage this.
- In response, it was commented that the service had been working to create the capacity and space for this work through the social care charging team by utilising some of the modules within the client finance more effectively and modest resource.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. SUPPORTED HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Adult Services submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an overview of the objectives of the Support Housing Improvement Programme and an update on the current progress.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care (Councillor Keith Holloway) attended the meeting to respond to questions from the Scrutiny Committee.

The following comments were made/issues raised:-

- Members welcomed the report and news that the council was awarded funding from the Department of Levelling up to support a three-year Supported Housing Improvement Programme.
- It was queried why Stockport had a disproportionate amount of supported accommodation that was funded through individual service funds.
- In response, it was stated that individual service funds were part of personal budgets lodged by a third party on behalf of an individual to manage the more bureaucratic parts of the process. It was commented that this created additional burdens on the service area relating to oversight to ensure that the funds were being lodged appropriately and utilised as they should be.
- It was queried whether Stockport had a disproportionate number of properties in poor housing conditions.
- In response, it was commented that there were housing condition concerns on a range of properties and part of the work included ensuring that the service had the capacity and infrastructure to undertake housing standard inspections which would help determine whether Stockport had a disproportionate number of properties in poor housing conditions. It was noted that the death of a young child in Rochdale as a result of poor housing conditions had prompted housing associations to look in more detail at the conditions of their properties and strengthen their monitoring arrangements to reduce the risk of this happening again in the future.
- Members raised concerns in relation to the reference that vulnerable adults who had not had any assessments of their needs were in unsatisfactory or poor housing conditions and queried why this work was only taking place now.
- In response, it was stated that an assessment was undertaken for any individual known to social care and if a housing need or issue was identified, the service would do their best to respond. However, it was acknowledged that there was a shortage in good quality accommodation and work was underway with housing associations to respond to this issue.
- Members requested an update in relation to the proposed supported housing development in the Bredbury Green & Romiley ward.
- In response to a query around whether there would be periodic reviews of the data held relating to inspections, it was confirmed that data in respect of all inspections of accommodation and actions required and taken would be reviewed as part of a rolling programme.
- It was noted that the Supported Housing Improvement Programme would support the duty of councils to look at services commissioned by other councils within their area as part of the new CQC regulations.
- Members noted the strong link between good quality housing and health outcomes.
- In relation to the reference that in late 2022 there were 108 properties providing 481 placements across Stockport where exempt rent levels were being claimed for accommodation to support individuals who had a learning disability or mental health need, it was queried how demand was going to be met.
- In response, it was commented that as part of the Supported Housing Strategy, a needs assessment, analysis and modelling would be undertaken to understand demand and noted that as more young people transitioned to adulthood there would be an increase in demand. Therefore, it was important to ensure that robust relationships and processes were in place to make certain that there was an available supply of appropriate standard and suitable properties.

- It was stated that there had been some modelling undertaken across Greater Manchester to understand the collective development requirement which would be used to develop the local supported and specialist housing strategy and signal to the housing market the demand over the next five to ten years.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Assistant Director - Legal & Democratic Governance (Monitoring Officer) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and any Forward Plan items.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm