

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee held at County Hall, Lewes on 10 March 2016.

PRESENT Councillors Peter Pragnell (Chair) Councillors Trevor Webb (Vice Chair), Charles Clark, Angharad Davies, Jim Sheppard and John Ungar

ALSO PRESENT Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Barry Atkins, Head of Strategic Commissioning – Older People and Carers
Andrew Little, Senior Contracts Manager (Catering)
Giles Rossington, Senior Democratic Services Adviser

1 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

1.1 The draft minutes of the meeting of 16 December 2015 were agreed.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Cllr Charlton sent his apologies.

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

3.1 There were none.

4 URGENT ITEMS

4.1 There were none.

5 FORWARD PLAN

5.1 Members discussed decisions due to be made at the March and June Adult Social Care Lead Member meetings.

6 MEALS IN THE COMMUNITY: UPDATE

6.1 This item was introduced by Barry Atkins, Head of Service, Strategic Commissioning (Older People and Carers); and by Andrew Little, Senior Contracts Manager (Catering).

- 6.1 Members were told that it was decided to move away from the previous contract with a single provider to a system where customers are able to choose to receive meals from a range of approved providers. This is in line with national trends, with many areas moving away from direct contracting to an approved provider or even just a signposting model.
- 6.2 The previous contract was expensive, and particularly so because in recent years fewer people have opted to receive meals (under the contract the unit cost of a meal rose as the number of meals being ordered fell). There was also some customer dissatisfaction with the quality of meals.
- 6.3 The meals in the community service was subsidised by ESCC at the rate of £4 per meal.
- 6.4 Service users were consulted on the planned changes, and were broadly in favour of moving to an approved provider model, but also in favour of the subsidy being retained. This was the model that Cabinet approved.
- 6.5 Key to the success of an approved provider model in East Sussex was the development of a local market in community meals. There had previously not been a competitive market, with little likelihood of one developing. This has been a struggle, but there are now several local providers operating. The local market for meals in the community in terms of people eligible for ASC support is relatively small, and in the medium term providers will need to successfully market to self-funders also.
- 6.6 A significant part of the former contract was the 'safe and well' check carried out by operatives when food was delivered. This has been embedded in the new arrangements, with all drivers trained to be aware of dementia and other risks.
- 6.7 The shift to new arrangements has been relatively smooth. Although there were some initial issues around delivery times, these have now settled down. Customer satisfaction has been high throughout.
- 6.8 All the approved providers deliver across East Sussex. Customers have a choice of hot, chilled or frozen food (or a combination). Some providers can also do additional shopping for customers. All providers can deliver meals at very short notice – e.g. at the urgent request of social workers.
- 6.9 Prior to the contract model changing, the needs of all current customers were audited. This has been very useful as it has identified a number of people who valued the meals in the community service more for the human contact it provided than for the meals themselves. There is an opportunity here to signpost these clients to a service better tailored to combating social isolation and to reduce unnecessary expenditure on community meals.
- 6.10 Despite the retention of the subsidy there have been some savings to date. These have largely been achieved through a reduced take-up of services – for example by supporting clients to opt for a weekly delivery of frozen meals rather than daily hot meals.
- 6.11 The first six months of provision by Apetito (01/04/15 – transfer) cost a net £292,747 compared with the second six months (transfer -- 31/03/16) provision through the Approved Provider List of £142,210. A net reduction in costs of £150,537.
- 6.12 In addition to providing meals to individual customers, there was provision in the previous contract to provide meals to lunch clubs or care homes. This has been continued in the new arrangements and represents an area of potential future growth.
- 6.13 The Committee RESOLVED that they should receive an update on this issue in 12 months' time.

7 RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES FOR 2016/17 AND BEYOND

7.1 Members discussed this year's round of RPPR meetings for Adult Social Care and Community Safety.

7.2 It was noted that, as RPPR scrutiny meetings are informal Scrutiny Board meetings rather than formal council committee meetings, there is limited guidance on how meetings should be conducted. The requirement to make continuing significant year-on-year efficiencies is likely to lead to more challenging decisions being debated at future RPPR meetings. It may therefore make sense to consider whether further guidance for the conduct of future RPPR Scrutiny Board meetings is needed, particularly in terms of voting on member motions.

7.3 Cllr Ungar told members that the current RPPR process could be improved by presenting members with a variety of options for savings, rather than presenting only one savings plan.

7.4 Councillor Bentley suggested that RPPR Scrutiny Boards might have a useful role to play in conducting a comparative assessment of the administration's budget plans and of alternative budget plans put forward by opposition groups. However, this would require the opposition groups to publish their alternative budget plans earlier than they had done this year.

8 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 Cllr Ungar proposed that the committee should consider relevant items on the council's strategic risk register. These are: Ordinary Residence (risk register ref 2), and Care Act Implementation (risk register ref 3).

8.2 Cllr Ungar additionally proposed that the committee should look at the issue of the long term employability of people with Learning Disabilities.

8.3 The Committee RESOLVED:

- 1) that these suggestions should be added to the committee work programme; and
- 2) that Sergeant Matt West should be invited back to the next committee meeting to complete his hate crime training.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.

COUNCILLOR PETER PRAGNELL
Chair