

HOUSING & SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing & Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on Friday, 26 October 2018 at 2pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Luke Stubbs (in the Chair)
Jason Fazackarley
Leo Madden
Claire Udy
Steve Wemyss

35. Apologies for Absence. (AI 1)

No apologies had been received.

36. Minutes of the previous meeting. (AI 2)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 March 2018 be noted.

37. A review into models of supported accommodation for people with learning disabilities and whether similar provision can be extended to others with a support need. (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the report be signed off and forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration.

38. Consideration of potential review topics. (AI 4)

Andy Biddle, Acting Deputy Director for Adult Social Care gave an overview of adult social care (the presentation was published with the agenda).

James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Buildings suggested two topics that the panel might like to consider reviewing: a) the hospitals discharge initiative and b) the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The hospitals discharge initiative.

Ellie O'Day, Telecare and Home Safety gave an overview of this initiative:

- It is funded from the Adult Social Care transformation fund for one year from February 2018.
- The telecare and housing safety team work closely with hospital staff. They undertake bedside visits with patients and family and attend twice daily meeting with the Integrated Discharge Service.
- On average 76 beds become free per month
- Patients returning home are eligible for 8 weeks free telecare equipment and support which could include moving furniture downstairs, arranging adaptations etc.
- Between February and August 2018 the service received 295 referrals. 91 of these are currently within the 8 week initial period, 50 had received home safety visits and 57 are continuing to receive the service and have ongoing telecare.

- Feedback from QA hospital shows that so far £51,000 has been saved.
- Work is underway to enhance and improve what can be offered, to offer more home safety visits to Hampshire County Council clients and to raise awareness of the service.

In response to questions, the following points were clarified:

- The council employs five full time home safety officers (one based at QA) and a full time administrative officer.
- The running costs are £15,500 per month.
- The council will evaluate the effectiveness of the hospital discharge initiative and produce a business case to apply for a funding extension.
- It is a good example of housing & Social Care working effectively with wider health staff.

The panel concluded that a review of the hospital discharge initiative would not be appropriate at this time because an update had been considered by the Scrutiny Management Panel last year, the Health Overview & Scrutiny Panel carries out regular monitoring of the delayed discharge of patients and a full review will be carried out shortly as part of the bid to secure a funding extension.

Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA)

Shane Galvin, Senior Housing Options Officer gave an overview of the HRA:

- This was a private members' bill with cross party support and gained royal assent in 2017 and came into force in April 2018.
- Local authorities have an initial duty to help housing applicants who have non-priority needs including those who are threatened with homelessness in the next 56 days (previously it was 28 days). They are entitled to a full assessment of their needs with an agreed plan and steps agreed for both the applicant and the council. A clear timescale is agreed for the actions. This adds some time before the council can make decisions.
- The council has allocated longer time slots for interviews with applicants and employed more staff.
- Now that more time is spent assessing applicants with non-priority needs, more vulnerable people may be identified.
- As the way that LAs send data to the government has changed, the council's housing department has changed its IT systems.
- The impact of the act is difficult to assess as other factors affect homelessness figures.
- From April to October 2018 the council received 740 applications. This compares to 627 last year and 586 the previous year.
- In April 2017 there were 70 people in temporary accommodation that the council was aware of and in April 2018 110. Previously, approximately 21 properties became available every week; it is currently 10.
- The council is working more closely with private landlords to increase the amount of accommodation available.
- Intentionally homeless people account for approximately 10% of applications. They are now entitled to stay longer in temporary accommodation.

- A pilot is being developed to re-purpose PCC owned properties which have little or no demand as temporary accommodation for homeless households instead.

The panel decided that a review of the HRA at this this time would not be appropriate as it is too soon to be able to determine the impact.

Members discussed the merits of carrying out a review of the lessons learnt after decantation of residents from tower blocks.

In response to a question from the panel, James Hill explained that with regard to the two tower blocks currently being decanted, ward councillors, the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Governance, Audit & Standards Committee are receiving regular reports and updated about the progress of rehousing the tenants. Approximately two thirds of residents had been rehoused and it is expected that all of them will be rehoused by Spring. Decants from council owned properties happens from time to time for various reasons. He confirmed in response to a question, that the emergency planning (civil contingency) team would support a situation in which an evacuation was required.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Management Panel be asked to allocate the following review topics to this scrutiny panel's work programme:

- 1. Review of the provision of temporary accommodation.**
- 2. Review of the experiences gathered after decantation of residents from tower blocks.**

The meeting concluded at 3:30pm.

Councillor Luke Stubbs
Chair