

MINUTES OF BROOKE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2017

PRESENT:

Members of the Committee: Councillors Claire Edwards (Chair), Mrs A'Barrow, Mrs Bragg, Cranham, Keeling and Mrs New

Officers: Adam Norburn (Executive Director), Raj Chand (Head of Communities and Homes), Mannie Ketley (Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer), John Hier (Housing and Regeneration Manager) and Veronika Beckova (Democratic Services Officer)

In attendance: Councillor Roodhouse (Chair of Homelessness Scrutiny Sub-Group), Andrea Green (Chief Officer for NHS Warwickshire North and NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Groups), Dr Adrian Canale-Parole (Chairman of Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group) and Nick Andrews (Rugby Youth Council)

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 6 April 2017 and 18 May 2017 were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Pacey-Day and Srivastava.

6. RUGBY YOUTH COUNCIL

The committee received a verbal report from Nick Andrews updating the committee on the work of the Rugby Youth Council (RYC), MYP and VOX. The main points were as follow:

- Funding has been secured for the county wide mental health conference which is anticipated to take place in March 2018. No date has yet been set as the venue is to be confirmed. The committee was informed that more funding might be required.
- The main aim of the conference is to get all groups talking to each other and to share ideas and experiences.
- RYC are in discussions with local councillors on the possibility of appropriate venues. Benn Hall is being considered.
- Invitations will be extended to all secondary schools in Warwickshire, NHS's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council members, portfolio holders and relevant Heads of Service.
- The annual debating competition will take place in October 2017 with invitations being extended to all councillors.

- The main discussion topic will be hate crime. Other topics will include the common issues faced by young people around education, social aspects, etc.
- To this date, the following secondary schools have expressed an interest in participating in the competition: Lawrence Sheriff School, The Avon Valley School and Performing Arts College, Harris Church of England Academy, Bilton School.
- The cross country wide LGBTQ+ campaign has started. The main focus is raising awareness of the issues being faced by the LGBTQ+ community and raising awareness of the importance of education and knowledge of LGBTQ+ community.

RESOLVED THAT – Nick Andrews be thanked for his update and attendance.

7. IMPROVING STROKE SERVICES IN COVENTRY AND WARWICKSHIRE

The committee considered the engagement document on Improving Stroke Services in Coventry and Warwickshire (Part 1 – Agenda Item 4).

Andrea Green, Chief Officer for NHS Warwickshire North and NHS Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Groups and Dr Adrian Canale-Parole, Chairman of Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group attended the meeting to present the document and answer questions.

Members were informed that the engagement period will be extended until 28 July 2017. Outcomes of the engagement period will be considered in August/September 2017. Implementation of the new service is anticipated next year.

The document was discussed in detail at the meeting and the following additional points were made:

- The consultation has been publicised on various websites, across social media, shared with patient groups, voluntary sector organisations and organisations such as Healthwatch. A full list of consultees will be circulated to the committee via email.
- The six beds at St Cross Hospital are not included in the proposal. For safety reasons, a minimum of 10 beds is required. The stroke service is also facing national challenges in terms of the specialist consultant and nursing workforce.
- The vast majority of strokes, especially in older people, are caused by a clot in an artery. In young people, bleeds are increasingly the cause. It is important to know which has caused the stroke in the first place for the right medication and treatment to be prescribed.
- The early supported rehab and the community rehab have very clear national specifications. The volume of home care packages and what the care will include requires clarification.
- The new service will reduce demand on social care and at the same time transform and save lives.

RESOLVED THAT – Andrea Green and Dr Adrian Canale-Parola be thanked for their attendance.

8. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2016/17 – YEAR-END

The committee had previously been requested to bring copies of the relevant Cabinet report from 26 June 2017 to the meeting.

The Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer attended the meeting to answer questions. The item was briefly introduced as per the Cabinet report and key points on the Council's year-end position were highlighted.

During the discussion, the following additional points were made:

- The green waste service charge had a very positive impact on the Council's finances.
- The original budget for 2017/18 was set at £400,000 worth of income with the take-up for Year 1 set at 20%. The actual take-up is now in excess of 50% and the income in excess of £800,000. Year 3 target has already been exceeded (set at £700,000).
- The £100,000 spend on the route optimisation software will also add to savings in the future.
- The £40 price point was based on a variety of factors and enables the Council to hold the price for a number of years without having the need to put the price up in Year 2 and/or 3.

During the discussion, the following questions were raised:

With regards to disabled adaptations, does the Council work with the Clinical Commissioning Group?

The figure in the report reflects the Council's properties and as some of the work is carried out in-house, the cost is lower than budgeted for. The Council works with the Better Care Fund Board with regards to the wider community and private sector customers. The Better Care Fund is a central government driven initiative with a much larger budget.

The Heart Project administers the disabled facilities grant and brings all of the districts and boroughs together. Through the Better Care Fund, the districts and boroughs are working with Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health and Warwickshire County Council. The organisations pool all of their budgets to provide aids and adaptations through one agency and get better value for money. The waiting times for aids and adaptations are a lot shorter. One of the main things that the group is looking at is hospital discharge in order to fit aids and adaptations faster so that people can be discharged earlier.

What happens to the grants underspend?

If any of the grants have been allocated and just not yet paid, they get carried forward into the next year. If the grants haven't been allocated, the money flows back into the Council's General Fund.

RESOLVED THAT – the Head of Corporate Resources and Chief Financial Officer be thanked for her attendance.

9. FIRE SAFETY IN OUR PROPERTIES

A report on fire safety in Council's properties was presented to Cabinet on 26 June 2017 following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, London. The Head of Communities and Homes attended the meeting to present the report and answer questions.

The following points were made:

- The Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) has completed their audit for all high-rise blocks of flats in Warwickshire and provided the Council with a report for each of its own high-rise blocks. No major issues have been identified in the audit. The Council has carried out its own internal inspections.
- The result of the external and internal audits is an action plan with two elements: safety of the buildings and tenant communication. Some actions have already been completed. Both portfolio holders (Communities and Homes and Corporate Resources) are being kept informed.
- An internal project team will be set up to go through the action plan leading up to the Council's own assessment but also the WFRS assessment in autumn. Officers are anticipating for most actions, if not all, to be completed by the next assessment.
- Concerns have been raised with regards to lighting in some of the communal areas which has also been highlighted in the audits and being dealt with as a priority.
- Concerns have been raised with regards to polystyrene being used as packing material in very small areas which has now been removed and replaced.
- One of the main areas of focus is keeping communal areas clean and working with tenants on where they can store items if needed. Limited space is an issue in high-rise blocks but options for storage facilities are being considered.
- No recommendation has been made about installation of sprinkler systems on stairways. WFRS recommended more frequent inspections of existing sprinkler systems.
- The WFRS also confirmed that all of the Council's high-rise flats are accessible by a ladder.
- Members were informed that cladding is not an issue.

During the discussion, the Chair highlighted the importance of procedures in place and educating tenants on what those procedures are.

During the discussion, the following questions were raised:

Has the Council ever carried out a fire drill in a high-rise block of flats?

A fire drill in a high-rise block of flats has not been carried out for a number of years. It's something that could be considered and consulted on with tenants but there would be a high risk of an injury to individual. A safer way would be to test the resilience of the emergency planning procedure. In sheltered housing flats, alarms are tested more frequently. The wardens also hold coffee mornings and talk to tenants about fire safety.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the Head of Communities and Homes be thanked for her attendance;
- (2) a member conversation to inform councillors on the progress of the action plan be arranged; and
- (3) a link to The Tenant Times be emailed out to all members.

10. REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS

The Chair of the Homelessness Scrutiny Sub-Group, Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, presented the draft report for the review of homelessness (Part 1 – Agenda Item 7).

The aim of the review was to explore how the Council can help to make an impact in the alleviation of homelessness.

The Housing and Regeneration Manager was present at the meeting to answer questions.

The ***Preventing Homelessness and Improving Lives (PHIL)*** cross county project launched on 13 July. Rugby is leading on the project with a manager and three coordinators based at the Town Hall. The team is focusing on the following top three reasons why people lose their tenancies: loss of private sector tenancies; violent relationship breakdown and parents no longer being able to house children in their accommodation. Updates on the progress of the project will be provided via member conversations.

Rugby is a pilot area for the Universal Credit full service. All concerns and issues are fed through the Benefits Manager directly to Central Government. The Member of Parliament for Rugby is also kept informed.

Members were informed that the Council now has 26 properties in the Private Sector Leasing Scheme and at present, only two people in B&B accommodation.

During the discussion, the following questions were raised:

Are we actively promoting the Private Sector Leasing Scheme?

A Private Sector Accommodation Officer is working with private landlords. There is also a Landlord Forum.

With regards to vulnerable people, how can we work together with the GPs to ensure that people are protected?

Officers share information with GPs and other health organisations. As part of the Trailblazer project, officers are working with the Warwickshire County Council's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and the Priority Families Programme in terms of sharing information.

Because of the specific services that deal with young people (16 to 24 years of age), how does it work with transition of the services once they pass the age threshold?

In terms of the Housing Related Support Service, floating support services are in place for young people and adults. There is a transitional period. All of the relevant organisations use one form and communicate with each other.

Is there any news on the property in New Bilton that the Council was going to purchase some time ago?

Bell House was purchased following a thorough survey. There were some concerns with regards to structural soundness of the building. Officers are drawing up options to present to members for the best use of the property.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the Chair of the sub-group and the Housing and Regeneration Manager be thanked for their attendance;
- (2) the review report be approved; and
- (3) the recommendations be submitted to Cabinet on 4 September 2017.

11. REVIEW OF THE WORLD RUGBY HALL OF FAME

The committee received a report (Part 1 – Agenda Item 8) concerning the revised one page strategy for the review of The World Rugby Hall of Fame.

RESOLVED THAT – the revised one-page strategy be agreed.

12. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The committee received a report (Part 1 – Agenda Item 9) concerning the progress of scrutiny reviews within its remit and the overview and scrutiny forward work programme for 2017/18.

The committee was informed that following the chairs' meeting earlier this week, several changes have been made to the work programme. An amended version will be annexed to the minutes.

Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings

The Chair highlighted the importance of submitting questions in advance of the two joint overview and scrutiny meetings.

The meeting with portfolio holders, currently scheduled for 17 October 2017, will be rescheduled due to a portfolio holder being unable to attend. A new date will be confirmed via email in due course.

A joint meeting with the Leader of the Council and the Executive Director is scheduled for 29 January 2018.

Democratic Services will email members of both scrutiny committees seeking questions in advance of each meeting.

Scrutiny Training – early 2018

A training session will be arranged for members of both scrutiny committees and lead officers prior to the Work Programme Workshop scheduled for March 2018.

The training session will cover a range of topics and tighten protocols between members and officers.

CHAIR