

# Minutes of previous meeting

## HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL

**THURSDAY 23 AUGUST 2018 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Paton (Chairman), Councillors Carrigan, Coleman (as substitute for Councillor Crawford), Finlayson, Harid, Layden, Mallinson J and Sidgwick S

**ALSO  
PRESENT:** Councillor Glover - Leader

**OFFICERS:** Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services  
Regulatory Services Manager  
Policy and Performance Officer  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

### **HWSP.47/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Crawford.

### **HWSP.48/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Carrigan declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item A.3 – Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) order 2002 – Changes to existing Housing Assistance Policy. The interest related to his daughter who was an Occupational Health Therapist at Cumbria County Council and the lead officer on one of the projects.

### **HWSP.49/18 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** - It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

### **HWSP.50/18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2018 be approved.

### **HWSP.51/18 CALL IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

### **HWSP.52/18 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.20/18 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the most recent Notice of Executive Key Decisions, copies of which had been circulated to all Members, had been published on 20 July 2018. There were no items within the Panel's remit contained in the Notice that had not been included on the agenda.

The report included a table of the progress on resolutions from previous meetings of the Panel and the current Work Programme. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer highlighted a number of items within the work programme which had not been scheduled for a particular date and asked Members to consider when they would like to see the items.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that the Scrutiny Chairs Group, at their meeting on 16 August 2018, had agreed an outline for the proposed Joint Economic Growth and Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Day on Road Safety. The Group recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer finalise the details of the day and submit them to both Panels.

RESOLVED – That the Overview Report and Work Programme (OS.20/18) be noted.

#### **HWSP.53/18 REGULATORY REFORM (HOUSING ASSISTANCE) (ENGLAND AND WALES) ORDER 2002 – CHANGES TO EXISTING HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY**

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services submitted report GD.62/18 which presented a revised Housing Renewal Assistance Policy.

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services reminded the Panel that the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) allowed the Council to provide assistance in improving living conditions within its area. The first Housing Renewal Assistance Policy had been adopted by the Council on 9 September 2003 and it had been amended since to allow actions to be taken by officers relating to the housing sector.

He reported that the main source of funding for the assistance offered by the Council was from the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding. Under the proposed Policy mandatory DFGs would continue to be available and take priority and it was recommended that the City Council used its discretionary powers under the RRO to further broaden the scope of DFGs and allow specific DFG funding to be used for grants to assist the elderly, disabled or other vulnerable groups to live independently and to improve their living conditions and well-being. Specifically, minor works that supported ill health prevention, promote independence and delay transfer into care.

The proposed Housing Renewal Assistance Policy had been attached to the report as appendix 1 and had been drafted in consultation with Cumbria County Council, in particular with the Occupational Therapist Team. The main changes to the Policy had been the creation of two new grants;

##### *The Independent Living Adaptation Grant*

This grant was to create a non-means tested grant for works such as stair lifts and level access showers which provided no financial benefit to the home owner but were essential in keeping the occupiers living independently and safely at home. The amount of assistance available would be a maximum of £7,500.

##### *The Dementia Friendly Grant*

This grant was also a non-means tested grant similar to grants offered by other Cumbria Districts and had been recommended by the Occupational Therapist Team. The grant would be for items such as new floor surfaces and other adaptations which were known to assist people with dementia related conditions move about the home. The grants would assist with keeping people safe at home and helping with hospital discharges. The amount of assistance available would be a maximum of £3,000.

In considering the draft Policy Members raised the following comments and questions:

- What provisions were in place to support mandatory applications if the DFG grant available was exceeded?

The Regulatory Services Manager circulated a chart to Members which showed DFG expenditure against the Government grant between 2012 and 2018.

The Corporate Director responded that following the changes to the level of funding, it was unlikely that the mandatory grants would exceed the grants available. However, in previous years the Council had provided additional finances to DFG applications as there was no option other than to provide the grants. He added that the Council had to put a plan in place to deliver what was required in a reasonable time. This was not ideal for many customers who required support immediately; the amendments to the Policy allowed the authority to act much more quickly and provide support to those who needed it.

- How did the allocation of the grant through Cumbria County Council work?

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that Central Government assigned the grant to each District and it was given to the County Council to allocate to each District through the Better Care Fund.

- The chart which had been circulated showed a steep increase in funding in 2016/17 followed by an increase in expenditure. Had the Council been able to carry out more mandatory grants?

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that the increase in funding in 2016/17 had been the result in central Government acknowledging that the grant allocation was good value for money. The grant was paid through the Better Care Fund and the Council wanted to improve the health of the local community and help reduce the stress on primary care. The grant allocation had been awarded to the Council in April 2016 and therefore there was a delay in the 2016/17 financial year as the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy was developed permitting the discretionary use of the increase in funds. The 2017 Policy adopted in February 2017 allowed the Council to spend the allocation in the best possible way, but this could only occur after the Policy had been approved so extra discretionary expenditure didn't take effect until 2017/18. Although more mandatory grants had been processed the main increase in expenditure was from the discretionary grants available from the 2017 Policy.

The Corporate Director added that the Council would not be able to spend the full allocation in one financial year due to a number of reasons which included external reasons. He clarified that the grant would all be spent in a responsible way in partnership with the County Council and the NHS. An Action Plan over a number of years projected the likely expenditure and the Council would ensure that the fund was properly utilised for the benefit of the Carlisle area.

- A Member asked if any funding could be used to make new houses suitable for long term living i.e walk in showers or waist level switches.

The Corporate Director responded that housing developers should consider building houses which enabled someone to live there for their full life. In terms of grants, however, it was felt that this issue was addressed through the Council's Development Plan and Building Regulations. The grants were more useful being given to those who needed immediate support.

The Regulatory Services Manager added that it would be difficult to provide grants to the number of new houses that met with the Council's aspirations and still provide the mandatory and discretionary service that was being offered. He reminded the Panel that the grants were

specific to the applicant and it would be difficult to make adaptations to any property without knowing the potential occupants specific needs.

- A Member asked for clarity with regard to the Land Registry Charge which could be placed on properties subject to a grant.

The Regulatory Services Manager drew the Panel's attention to Section 4.2 of the Policy. He explained that a Land Registry Charge would only be applied to a property if it was considered that the value of the property would increase due to the works being undertaken. If the property was sold within a 10 year period the Council would use its discretion to reclaim the funding from grants over £5,000 but may not require a repayment exceeding £10,000. The report detailed the criteria which the Council considered when applying its discretion. The Regulatory Services Manager explained that the authority had not received money from many Land Registry Charges as the purpose of the grants was to keep people in their home for as long as possible.

- How was the grant allocation for Carlisle determined?

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government applied a formula for the allocation of grants; however, this was under review. Early indications were that Central Government considered the DFG part of the Better Care Funding to be very good value for money.

- The report detailed the new Hospital Discharge Post which would be employed through the City Council; a Member suggested that this post work with the County Council's Reablement Service to ensure that the post was fulfilling its potential as the Reablement Service aimed to help people regain their independence following an illness or injury.

The Regulatory Services Manager hoped that the Hospital Discharge Post could integrate with the Service to provide the best support to those who needed it.

- A Member had some concerns with regard to the removal of the means testing for the new grants.

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that the means testing had been introduced in the 1990s along with the maximum level of grant available. The figures had not been altered or increased since and did not match inflation and the cost of adaptations now. Officers had identified situations where removing the means testing would mean that the work could be carried out quicker and therefore relieve the pressure on the health care service. The grants which would not be means tested were only the smaller grants as set out in the report.

- Would the Property Relocation Grant be applicable to those who may have to move out of the District?

The Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that the case would be considered and if it was the most appropriate option for the individual and their health then the grant could be used to move someone out of the District. The priority was the needs of the individual and on some occasions an adaptation would not be appropriate.

- If the DFGs went over budget how likely was it that the Government would provide more funding?

The Regulatory Services Manager reminded the Panel of the review of the funding adding that the current funding was only guaranteed until 2020. An Action Plan estimates future funding and expenditure and will be revised to account for the revised Policy.

A Member applauded the Regulatory Services Manager's team for the Policy and the introduction of the two new grants. He felt that the Council were being responsible and using the funding to support those who needed it most and to help reduce the impact on the primary care services in the future. The Panel supported the comments and thanked the team for the excellent work that they undertook.

The Corporate Director commented that the Council's primary aim was to help the people of Carlisle; this aim underpinned all of the work that the team carried out. He thanked the Regulatory Services Manager and his team for producing the Policy and putting it into action, the whole team did an excellent job.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 – Changes to existing Housing Assistance Policy (GD.62/18) be welcomed;

2) That an update on the implementation of the Policy including performance, successes and potential areas for improvement be submitted to the Panel in 12 months' time.

## **HWSP.54/18                      QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.13/18 which contained the Quarter 1 2018/19 performance against the current Service Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2015-18 actions as defined in the 'Plan on a page'. Performance against the Panel's 2018/19 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also included.

In considering the Performance report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel asked for an update on the following:

*The overspend on the Harraby Cycle Track project.*

The Policy and Performance Officer agreed to provide the Panel with a written response.

*The Tennis Canopy Project*

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that the original plan had been to start in 2018 but further work had been required. Work was being undertaken on a new timetable and this would be reported to the Panel when it was completed.

*The renewal of the catering contract at the Old Fire Station*

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the contract was due to finish at the end of the year and soft marketing testing was being carried out to establish if there was any interest in the contract as it was. An update would be provided to the Panel at the end of the year.

- A Member asked if it was appropriate to measure all of the outcomes of the Carlisle Plan through SMART Objectives and asked that the report show where it was not appropriate and report how those outcomes were actually measured.

The Policy and Performance Officer agreed that it was appropriate to measure outcomes in a variety of ways and would look to change future reports to reflect this.

- A Member asked that the Housing Quality/Access outcomes be updated to reflect the changes through the updated Housing Assistance Policy. This would allow the Panel to monitor the outcomes of the Policy on a quarterly basis.

The Policy and Performance Officer agreed to discuss how the outcomes from the new Policy could be included in the report with the Regulatory Services Manager.

- A Member asked why enforcement officers who had received extensive training were working in car parks.

The Policy and Performance Officer agreed to provide the Panel with a written response.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Quarter 2 Performance report 2018/19 be welcomed (PC.13/18);

2) That the Policy and Performance Officer review and, where necessary improve the quality, of the SMART targets;

3) That the Policy and Performance Officer provide the Panel with written responses with regard to details of the overspend on the Harraby Cycle Track project and why enforcement officers who had received extensive training were working in car parks.

(The meeting ended at 11.16am)