

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 September 2021

Present: Councillor Y Nolan (Chair)

Councillors I Camphor M Jordan
K Cannon S Mountney
T Cottier C O'Hagan
S Frost Jason Walsh
P Gilchrist

39 APOLOGIES

The Chair opened the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast and a copy is retained on the Council's website.

Apologies were received from Councillor Moira McLaughlin.

40 MEMBER DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Mary Jordan declared a personal interest as she worked for the NHS, her son worked for the NHS and she was a Trustee of Incubabies.

Councillor Damian Walsh declared a personal interest as he had a family member who worked for NHS.

Councillor Clare O'Hagan declared a personal interest as she worked for the NHS.

41 MINUTES

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Public Health Committee held on 8 September 2021 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Two questions had been received in relation to item 9 on the agenda (review of day care services contract for people with a learning disability delivered by Wirral Evolutions).

**Question 1 – Christine Rothwell
[Read by Cllr Yvonne Nolan]**

We are aware that independent review was undertaken, can the Committee confirm it is the recommendation of this that a further review will be undertaken. Although this report recommends a further review, there is no detail as to who will undertake the review, when it will be, or that key stakeholders will be consulted. It makes no reference to the most important people in this: those that use the service. Can the Committee give the assurance that their views will be taken into account?

Answer: [Cllr Yvonne Nolan] I most certainly can give that assurance.

Question 2 – Steve McGreal (for Susan Smailes)

Parent carers from the Council convened family engagement group applaud the recent decision of the Adult Social Care and Public Health workshop, to provide Wirral Evolutions with an opportunity to develop the detail of their transformation model. Our goal is to see the best possible service provided to the disabled citizens of Wirral, regardless of provider, but we and the general public need to see that any decision is made objectively [and] in the light of all relevant information. We note that Graham Hodgkinson has been - or may be - tasked with producing a report which undertakes a value for money review as to whether Wirral Evolutions offers sufficient added value to the Council, and that the delivery of the contract for day services for people with learning difficulties to justify the additional costs of running an arm's length company. My question is can we have your assurance that parent carers will be involved in the production of this report, and that any other delivery model, including any in-house provision, will be fully costed and its services specified to allow full consideration, transparency and fairness in decision making?

Answer: [Cllr Yvonne Nolan] I'm actually going to ask Graham to confirm, but certainly from this Committee's perspective, yes you can have an assurance of the involvement of all of the stakeholders in the report that Graham's going to complete for us. We do take decisions with transparency, they are open, they are taken in this open public Committee and our reports are published. So I hope that will assure you but I will pass onto Graham.

[Graham Hodgkinson] I would certainly confirm my commitment to involving the carers group in the terms of reference for the report and including your views in relation to value. There's more to value than just the financial elements of the service and clearly the scope there in terms of value added as well, in relation to the model. So I'm very happy to talk to you about that and make sure your views are taken into account as part of that process.

Supplementary Question

The original justification for Wirral Evolutions was that personalisation was driving councils to be commissioners rather than providers of services, and it would be a great opportunity for improving outcomes. Does this Council still believe that personalisation and improved outcomes for people that use the service, and commissioning rather than providing, are still as valid and important now as they were seven years ago?

Answer: [Cllr Yvonne Nolan] I am certainly happy to say that as far as we're concerned, the outcome for the people that use the services are the key thing that matters to this Committee; that the best possible outcomes are achieved, whether that is through whatever route [or] whoever provides the service, the question is always about are the outcomes for people the best they can possibly be, and that's what we're exploring and that is why this Committee has spent as long as it has looking and considering all the aspects around the delivery of the service, and we will continue to do so until we are absolutely satisfied that what we're providing is giving the best possible outcomes, but I am happy for the director to add to that if he wishes?

[Graham Hodgkinson] I would simply echo the Chair's comments there. I think that clearly outcomes for individuals is the key issue here. You'll hear in the report there are still ongoing concerns about proposed changes, and elected members have really expressed those concerns really because of the impact on people. Irrespective of how the service is delivered, the focus has to be on the outcomes for the people that use the service, as opposed to the management structure or whether that service is commissioned or delivered. In essence we were charged with that as officers as part of the review process to look at all models of delivery and not simply commissioned models.

Statement – George Lamb

On behalf of the Save Highcroft Day Centre Campaign I'd like to thank the Committee for letting me speak today. By now the Committee should have received and had chance to read the copy of our survey report outlining the results of our survey. Its purpose was to give the wider community a say on the potential closure of Highcroft Day Centre, as well as provide further views from parents, primary carers, staff amongst others, regarding the impact of the potential closures. Our survey also saw recommendations from participants as to ways in which Highcroft Day Centre could be saved. After eight weeks of being open 254 people took part in the survey, of which 211 were from the community. 15 parents, guardians and primary carers also took part in the survey, as did 5 staff members. Other participants included family members, volunteers and community organisers. The final details of our survey and how it was conducted can be found in our Survey Report which we've made available to the public. For the purposes of today's meeting, however, I would just like to summarise for the Committee and the public the most important findings of our survey:

Of the 254 participants that took part in the survey, 98% said they felt the service provided at Highcroft Day Centre is very important, and that Highcroft Day Centre plays a very important role in providing that service. 98% also said they felt Highcroft Day Centre, and the services provided there, were very or fairly important to the wider community. Finally 96% said they felt very angry or angry about the potential closure of Highcroft Day Centre.

Of the 14 parents and primary carers who completed the parents and primary carers section of our survey, 100% said the service provided at Highcroft was very important. 93% said they felt the closure would have a very negative impact on the wellbeing of the service user they care for, and 100% of the parents and primary carers said they felt the closure would have a very or fairly negative impact on their and their family's wellbeing. Participants also said having the service provided at Highcroft, gave them the opportunity for things such as respite, to go to work, do household chores, go shopping, care for other family members, and to socialise.

When participants were asked for suggestions on how to save Highcroft Day Centre, suggestions from them included: opening the day centre for use by the wider community for private events and use by the community groups in the area outside its hours of operation; calling on Wirral Borough Council to do more to help save the day centres; calling on Wirral Evolutions to advertise their services better and to explore alternative revenue streams such as fundraising events and fundraising initiatives.

We call upon Wirral Borough Council and Wirral Evolutions to take the views and feelings of the participants of the survey into account when making any final decisions on the closures of day centres, and on the future of the service, whatever that may be. But most of all we call upon the Committee, the Council and Wirral Evolutions to continue placing the interests and wellbeing of service users at the heart of all their decisions in the process. Thank you for listening.

43 **REVIEW OF DAY SERVICES CONTRACT FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY DELIVERED BY WIRRAL EVOLUTIONS LIMITED**

Graham Hodkinson, Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning, presented his report which had followed on from a Members' workshop exploring in detail all available options for future provision of Day Services for people with a learning disability, including the potential for bringing services back 'in-house' to address the financial challenges currently facing the service. The service had been provided by Wirral Evolutions, which had been created with the aim of having a Local Authority Company that could develop a more sustainable day support model; to potentially increase its income opportunities expand business; and to expand its customer base outside of the Wirral Council Day Services Contract.

Members questioned aspects of the review and the potential options, and were reassured that there were no existing plans to close any centres or reduce staff numbers.

Resolved – That

- (1) the decision of the Shareholder Board to hold a workshop with Wirral Evolutions to address governance issues be supported;**
- (2) the value of the contract with Wirral Evolutions be extended in the sum of up to £500,000 for the year 2021/22 in order to enable further time to consider and assess the company's proposals to modernise the current operating model and reduce the operating costs to ensure delivery of the service within the existing budget/contract value;**
- (3) the request made by Wirral Evolutions to defer payment of the pension strain costs and the costs of support services bought from the Council relating to 2020/21 to support the cashflow of Wirral Evolutions Limited be agreed, such deferment to continue until the end of the current financial year or such longer period as may be determined by the Director of Resources in consultation with the Director of Care and Health;**
- (4) at this stage the proposals submitted by Wirral Evolutions should not be further implemented pending the Governance Workshop between the Shareholder Board and the company and a further report being brought back to this Committee; and**
- (5) the Director of Care and Health bring a further report back to this Committee following the Director undertaking a value for money review as to whether Wirral Evolutions offers sufficient added value to the Council in the delivery of the contract for day services for people with learning disabilities to justify the additional costs of running an arms-length company.**

44 SHARED LIVES COMMISSION

Jayne Marshall, Lead Commissioner, Community Care Market presented the report of the Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning which provided a summary of the outcome of the review of the Shared Lives Model on Wirral and requested a review of the current fee model. The report included an officer recommendation for future service delivery. The service was ambitious to grow over the following 18 months to include day care and increase short breaks for carers, on the basis of an in-house team co-ordinating external providers. Any new service would have a regulation framework and be Care Quality Committee (CQC) registered.

Members asked questions which established:

- That there was an aim to grow day care services to older people and those with dementia.
- The aim was to double staff numbers over the 18 months.
- Shared Lives carers were to have access to Council organisational development facilities and services as if they were employees.

Resolved: That

- (1) approval to develop In House Shared Lives Model with a complimentary framework of external providers to support growth in the in-house service be authorised;**
- (2) a further, future report to Committee be approved, to provide detail on the developed option with a request for a decision to proceed with the new service model during financial year 2022/2023;**
- (3) the review of the current banded fee model to an alternative model as part of the annual rates and fees negotiations be supported.**

45 **COMMISSIONING ACTIVITY Q3 AND Q4**

Jayne Marshall, Lead Commissioner, Community Care Market presented the report of the Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning which updated Members on Quarter 3 commissioning activity for Adult Social Care in relation to the procurement of short break beds for carers support. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 15 commissioned short break beds. During the pandemic, people preferred to stay at home, but as recovery was undertaken there had been an increase, particularly for older people. Officers thought 11 beds would be sufficient but they wished to have a short term contract to allow flexibility and review.

Resolved - That

- (1) authority be delegated to the Director of Health and Care to undertake for a tendering exercise to procure short break beds to support carers; and**
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director of Care and Health to grant tender to the successful bidders following a tender process for the Short Break Beds service, for a contract length of 1 year, plus a 1 year extension option, and at a maximum cost of £641,576.**

46 **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Jayne Marshall, Lead Commissioner, Community Care Market presented the performance report of the Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning which had been designed based on discussions with Members through working group activity in 2020 and 2021.

Jayne reported that there was a continued reduction in the numbers of people in placement with a 19.9 % vacancy rate. Seven care homes had closed due to covid infections.

Members questioned details in the report and established:

- That although half of care homes had been rated less than good, residents remained safe and that the service worked closely to intervene and put action plans in place to improve results.
- That the 66 alters to CQC, 44 are abuse or serious injury, were safeguarding referrals and would have been investigated.

Resolved: - That the content of the report be noted.

47 **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

Graham Hodgkinson, Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning, presented his report which provided an overview of budget performance for this area of activity, including the projected year-end revenue position, as reported at quarter 1 (Apr-Jun) 2021/22.

The forecast had a positive variance of 0.61m, but the pandemic had not ended and Winter pressures on health and social care services were yet to begin.

Members expressed concern at the capital programme process but it was clarified that there were many elements out of control of officers, and alternate models for extra care housing were being investigated.

Resolved - That

- (1) Note the projected year-end revenue forecast position of £0.61m favourable, as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted**
- (2) progress on the achievement of approved savings and the projected year end forecast position at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted**
- (3) the reserves allocated to the Committee for future one-off commitments be noted**
- (4) the projected year-end capital forecast position of £3.2m favourable, as reported at quarter 1 (Apr – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted**
- (5) the current activity profiles from 2018 to quarter 1 (April – Jun) of 2021/22 be noted.**

48 **COMMUNITY REABLEMENT REVIEW**

Jayne Marshall, Lead Commissioner, Community Care Market presented the report of the Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning

which provided the outcome of a review of reablement provision on Wirral, including analysis of potential alternative models. A project had been undertaken comparing existing provision with other local authorities. It became clear that the current operating model was relatively sufficient and cost effective, and that other models appeared to have additional costs. The existing contract was for five years and included reviews. Other areas appeared to have different criteria so it had been difficult to make direct comparison and more research could help with this.

Members were aware of the psychological damage that resulted when people came off intensive care which highlighted the need for the reablement services.

Councillor Jason Walsh proposed that officers moved toward a more Council led model.

This was seconded by Councillor Cannon.

It was clarified by officers that this would be done within the period of the existing contract.

Resolved – That consideration be given to a developing an alternative future model for delivery of reablement services in Wirral which was more Council led.

49 **COVID-19 RESPONSE UPDATE**

Graham Hodgkinson Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning, presented his report which provided an update on surveillance data and key areas of development in relation to Wirral's COVID-19 response and delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan. It was noted that 94% of care staff have had their first Covid-19 vaccination which was higher than anywhere else in the Liverpool City Region.

Resolved – That the contents of the report and the progress made to date be noted and the ongoing COVID-19 response be supported.

50 **ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH WORK PROGRAMME**

Vicki Shaw, Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Adults' Care & Health & Strategic Commissioning which provided the committee with an opportunity to plan and review its work across the municipal year.

Members made suggestions for additional items.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted, subject to the addition of:

- 1. Extra Care Housing growth obstacles and ideas;**
- 2. A review of the opening of urgent care facilities in Arrowe Par Hospital.**