

## NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the **Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee** on Thursday, 2 November 2022 at 1.00 p.m. at County Hall, Morpeth.

#### PRESENT

Councillor V. Jones  
(Chair, in the Chair)

#### MEMBERS

Bowman, L.  
Dodd, R.R.  
Hardy, C.

Hill, G.  
Wilczek, R.

#### ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Angus, C.  
Castles, L.  
Curry, A.  
Todd, A.

Scrutiny Officer  
National Management Graduate Trainee  
Senior Manager - Commissioning  
Democratic Services Officer

#### 39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E. Chicken, C. Humphrey, I. Hunter and K. Nisbet.

#### 40. MINUTES

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2022, as circulated, be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

#### 41. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee were advised that a copy of the Forward Plan was to be circulated following the meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan be noted.

#### 42. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Board held on 8 September 2022 be noted.

#### **43. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES**

##### **Adult Social Care Market Statement Position Statement**

The report sought to review the Adult Social Care Market Position Statement for 2022. The report was due to be considered by Cabinet on 17 November 2022. (A copy of the report has been filed with the signed minutes).

A. Curry, Senior Manager - Commissioning introduced the report and stated that the Council had a statutory duty to shape the care market in their area for both the local authority commissioned and the private market. The Market Position Statement helped local authorities to fulfil this duty.

Members were advised that the Market Position Statement was to provide market intelligence to existing and potential providers. It contained information on current demand and supply, the key issues in the market and what business opportunities may be available. The Market Position Statement was last published in 2019, prior to the Covid Pandemic, and therefore needed to be updated to reflect the current situation. The social care sector was significantly impacted by the pandemic, and this was reflected in the updated document.

It was advised that the key messages to the market were highlighted in the document and included:

- There was currently no evidenced demand for any additional residential care home capacity for either older people or people with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health conditions. This was being monitored due to the pressures on some health and social care services which made it difficult to confidently predict future demand.
- There had been an increase in the number of Homecare packages, which care providers were having difficulty in fulfilling due to workforce shortages.
- Adult Social Care would continue to focus on developing more housing schemes which could support people to remain as independent as possible, particularly older people, and reduce the number of people needing care home accommodation.
- The difficulty of recruiting and retaining social care staff was impacting the Council's ability to be able to support older and vulnerable residents. Cabinet at its meeting on 11 October 2022 received proposals for additional measures to assist with some of these issues.
- Adult Social Care, in partnership with care providers, want to explore the use of digital technologies that could play an active role in frontline care delivery.

Members made a number of comments and responses were provided, including:

- Members discussed a recent press article where it was reported that Care North East, which represented some care home providers in Northumberland, warned that the industry was on the brink of collapse. Members were deeply concerned about this report and suggested that a representative attend a future meeting to explain their concerns to councillors.
- Members were advised that there was no evidence or indicators to support Care North East claim but the Council had arranged to meet them to discuss.
- The Market Position Statement highlighted the priorities and gave a sense of direction for care and support in Northumberland, and highlighted potential business opportunities during a time of uncertainty and significant change.
- It was reported that the area of most concern to the Council was Home Care.
- The Council had responded to workforce issues in Homecare by increasing fee levels to enable providers to pay care staff the Real Living Wage rather than the National Wage.
- The Council wanted to continue to attract providers to Northumberland and help work in partnership to develop the market.
- Research by Laing Buisson had shown demand for care homes had been declining at the same time as the population of over 65 years had increased. However, the demand for supported independent living for older people had increased.
- Job fairs to attract people into the caring profession had been planned with one scheduled at County Hall in January.
- The Market Sustainability Fund will be used to help the workforce with fuel costs.
- Confirmation of the evidence and data used regarding demand and predicted future demand of services.
- The need to promote the care market offer to residents before they needed to access services.
- The expectations about what service users wanted from services were changing.
- The complexity of delivering services in both rural and urban areas of the county.
- The models of care needed to be explained fully to the public for them to understand the services available.
- Confirmation that through various partnership work vulnerable people were identified and help and support provided accordingly.
- It was welcomed that unpaid carers positive contribution as an integral part of the health and social care system was recognised within the position statement.
- Day Services were a vital service not only for residents but also carers. However, the older population increasingly wanted activities that engaged their mind and had a purpose and outcome, not just something

to do to pass the time. It was hoped that the market would respond and ensure clients were given maximum opportunities, ensure clients were engaged and learn new skills and had measured outcomes linked to the adult social care day service.

- The Council wanted to ensure the provision of better housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups, whatever their requirements, including homes that were adaptable to needs over their lifetime and set within accessible 'lifetime neighbourhoods' that were well-designed places suitable for all people regardless of their age or disability.
- There was not enough supported housing available in Northumberland to meet the needs of an aging population. The cost of developing specialist supported housing for older people was higher than developing in general needs, which could make the ongoing rental unaffordable for many people. In most developments public subsidy in the form of Homes England Grant was needed to reduce rent levels to ensure affordability for a wider range of older people.
- The Council would continue to work with market providers to bring about innovation solutions to develop and bring forward new models of care and support.
- The need for services to be flexible in order to evolve and meet future needs. One way of carrying out this was to explore the use of digitisation and technology in delivering services.
- The availability of domiciliary care in rural areas of the county was discussed.
- There had been an increased request for Direct Payments to employ Personal Assistants. The Council was in dialogue with another authority to explore possible other initiatives in this area.
- If any provider was experiencing any difficulties, there were mechanisms in place to help in some circumstances. It was hoped that all providers felt that there was help, support and guidance available from the Council.
- The Council adopted the current Extra Care and Supported Housing Strategy in 2018 setting out the aim to increase the level of supported accommodation available. Since then, the Council had been working with partners to bring forward developments to offer independent supported living to adults with a care and support need. A number of schemes were in various stages of development. Regarding the Berwick scheme it was hoped to find a new provider to help kick start the development following the news that the previous provider had withdrawn their plans.
- The need to be innovative and future thinking to ensure the adult social care market in Northumberland continued to be fit for purpose.
- Northumberland was an attractive county to retire, and it was hoped providers would continue to want to invest here.

Officers thanked A. Curry for attending the meeting and providing detailed responses to Member questions.

**RESOLVED** to recommend that Cabinet agree to publish the Market Position Statement.

**44. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY OFFICER**

**Health and Wellbeing OSC Work Programme**

The Committee reviewed its work programme for the 2022/23 council year. (A copy of the work programme has been filed with the signed minutes).

Members requested than an invitation be extended to Care North East to attend a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing OSC to talk about their concerns about the care sector.

**RESOLVED** that the work programme and comments made be noted.

**45. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that:

- (a) the next meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, 6 December 2022 at 1.00 p.m.
- (b) the January 2023 meeting be rescheduled to accommodate the Christmas break.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_