

ACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 25th February, 2014

Present:- Councillor Reginald Bailey – in the Chair

Councillors Councillor Reginald Bailey, Councillor Miss Julie Cooper, Councillor Mrs Dylis Cornes, Councillor Mrs Gillian Heesom, Councillor Miss Sophie Olszewski, Councillor Glyn Plant, Councillor Amelia Rout, Councillor Miss June Walklate and Councillor Mrs Joan Winfield

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Cairns.

The Committee sent their best wishes to Cllr Cairns.

3. MINUTES FORM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2013 be agreed as a correct record

4. PUBLIC SECTOR COMMISSIONING IN PARTNERSHIP, BRIEFING PAPER

The Chair welcomed Sue Nicholls from the CAB, Simon Harris from and Peter Bullock from Age UK to the meeting.

The main features of the Debt, Benefit and Consumer Advice and Information Services were highlighted. The new county wide service would include:

- A comprehensive telephone service
- A face to face service
- A specialist service for clients with diagnosed mental health issues
- A GP surgery service
- A district service in Newcastle under Lyme

The telephone service would be delivered through a contact centre at 3 venues across the county:

- Staffs South West CAB
- East Staffs CAB
- Staffs North and Stoke on Trent CAB

The telephone service would operate five days a week 9.00am until 5.00pm plus an evening service based on a rota across the sites. There would be nine full time

equivalent advisors responsible for the delivery of the telephone service offering gateway and generalist advice. These advisors would be supported by volunteers, recruited and trained to deliver telephone advice.

Face to face services would be delivered from eight district bureaux through referral from the contact centre. Referrals could also be made to this service from outreached and other bureau service provisions.

The generalist advice arm of the Newcastle District Service would be sub contracted to Staffordshire North and Stoke on Trent CAB and would be delivered from bureau premises and outreaches in Newcastle and Kidsgrove. The older persons service would be sub contracted to Age UK North Staffs. Both arms of the service would provide both face to face and telephone services to clients specifically in the Newcastle and Kidsgrove area.

The tailored service to be provided by Age UK North Staffordshire under the contract maintained many of the key characteristics of the service provided by the charity in Newcastle under Lyme currently.

Unfortunately public health money which could have specified where services could be delivered had not done this and as such there had been a significant shift in resources from North Staffordshire to the rest of the Country and up to 800 who had been receiving care from GP surgeries would no longer be able to receive this and would instead receive support through the telephone service. It was however expected that the phone service would significantly enhance access to available support.

Members queried how the calls would be monitored and whether the drop out rate would be monitored. It was confirmed that the calls and drop out rates would be closely monitored and that the aim was to respond to 95% of calls, current data showed that there was a very low abandonment rate. It was thought that an adequate number of trained staff and volunteers had been recruited to support the system.

Members requested that an update on the services be provided to a future meeting.

Resolved:

- a) That Sue, Simon and Peter be thanked for their time and for the information provided.
- b) That an update on the service be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

5. ALLOTMENTS REVIEW WORKING GROUP

A report was submitted to report the outcome of the work of the Allotments Review Task and Finish Group and to present the draft Allotments Policy to the Committee.

A verbal update in relation to the allotments in Silverdale Parish was provided by the Executive Director for Operational Services. Work was now underway to move the sites from the Borough Council to the Parish Council by way of a phased transfer. Work was also being done in relation to the setting up of allotment associations or

committees to help manage and support plot holders and it was hoped that Silverdale would be one of the first to have such an association set up.

Members thanked the working group and officers for all the hard work that had been put into the draft policy.

Resolved:

- a) That the report is received.
- b) That the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorse the findings of the Allotments Review Task and Finish Group and officer recommendations and that the draft Allotments Policy be approved for consultation.
- c) That a report be brought to a future meeting of Cabinet, recommending that the findings of the Active and Cohesive Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are accepted and that the draft Allotments Policy is approved for consultation.

6. SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS UPDATE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

An update report and action plan was submitted to the Committee for approval in relation to the safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Members discussed the action plan and requested that an update be brought back to the committee in 6 months time so that progress could be closely monitored. Members also queried how and if the Council was audited in relation to the policy, the Executive Director for Operational Services stated that he would look into this and report back to a future meeting.

Resolved:

- a) That a further update on the action plan be brought back to the Committee in 6 months
- b) That clarity regarding the auditing of the policy be investigated.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME

Cllr Elizabeth Shenton introduced herself as the new portfolio holder with responsibility for the majority of the areas covered in the Committees remit.

Cllr Shenton highlighted that she was keen to keep the community centre review high on the agenda and would be meeting with officers to move this forward.

Cllr Shenton also provided the Committee with a breakdown of events planned to date that would be held to commemorate the Great War over a three year rolling programme. Events included exhibits at the museum, photography competitions, a project by the Sentinel to publish letter written at the time of the war, a piece of work by the Civic Society in relation to the men who had stayed to work in the mines and various events at Keele University.

8. **WORK PLAN**

Resolved: That the work plan be noted and agreed

9. **URGENT BUSINESS**

Chair