

Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee of South Norfolk Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on Monday 22 January 2018 at 2.00 pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: F Ellis (Chairman), D Bills (Vice-Chairman), J Hornby, N Legg and J Overton

Apologies: Councillors: S Blundell and A Pond

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Communities and Well-Being (J Sutterby), the Head of Health and Leisure Services (S Goddard), the Healthy Living Manager (S Cayford), the Housing and Benefits Manager (R Dunsire) and the Policy and Partnerships Delivery Manager (T Cooke)

13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Housing, Wellbeing, Leisure and Early Intervention Policy Committee held on 13 November 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

14 DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS – DISTRICT DIRECT HOSPITAL DISCHARGE GRANT AND THE EARLY HELP FLEXIBLE FUND PAYMENTS

The Policy and Partnerships Delivery Manager reminded members that at a previous meeting, the Committee had considered the Housing Support and Regulation Strategy and Associated Policies, which were supplementary documents to the South Norfolk Housing Strategy. These documents included details of discretionary assistance and support provided by the Council, and were subsequently agreed by Cabinet. He explained that, following on from discussions at Cabinet, officers had been asked to consider an additional discretionary grant (the District Direct Hospital Discharge Grant), to assist residents when returning home from

hospital, and had also become aware of an additional grant already in place; the Early Help Flexible Fund. Members noted that Cabinet would be required to approve the inclusion of these grants in the Housing Support and Regulation Strategy.

The Policy and Partnerships Delivery Manager outlined details of both the District Direct Hospital Discharge Grant, and the Early Help Flexible Fund. Members noted that the Discharge Grant sought to speed up hospital discharge times for residents, by ensuring that their homes were fit to return to, for example, through the fitting of temporary wheelchair ramps, the provision of keys safes for carers, or temporary stair climbers. The Early Help Flexible Fund was able to provide emergency provisions for residents, such as food, electric or oil, or help maintain education, training or employment. Officers explained that the eligibility criteria for both grants, matched what was required for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

The Policy and Partnerships Delivery Manager explained that the Discharge Grant was not only beneficial to the patient, but also freed up hospital beds and cut down on NHS costs. He stressed that this grant was intended to complement, and not replace other support and assistance, and he outlined a number of case studies, which demonstrated how the grant would work in practice.

The Healthy Living Manager responded to various questions regarding the District Direct Hospital Discharge Scheme, a scheme set up to speed up hospital discharges. This involved officers from five different district councils, working in hospital wards, ensuring that the right questions were asked of the patients regarding their circumstances at home, at the time of admission. The results of this scheme had been impressive, and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital was hoping to secure funding for it continue for a further two years. The Healthy Living Manager informed members that she had delivered a detailed report regarding the scheme, at a recent Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee meeting, and she agreed to share the report with members of the Committee. She also advised that NHS England had published some “real” case studies, which demonstrated how people had benefitted from the scheme.

In response to queries, officers explained that the Discharge Grant was to be funded from a proportion of the DFG allocation. The grant was intended to provide support short-term, however, should circumstances become more permanent, an application for a DFG would be made, in order to provide a more permanent solution.

Members indicated their support for the proposals, and it was then

RESOLVED **TO RECOMMEND THAT CABINET** approves the District Direct Hospital Discharge Grant and the Early Help Flexible Fund, to be included as an addendum to the South Norfolk Strategy 2016 -2019.

15 FUNDING SUPPORTED HOUSING

Members considered the report of the Housing and Benefits Manager, which summarised government proposals to introduce funding to supported housing, outlined in a Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Policy Statement and Consultation.

The Housing and Benefits Manager outlined the background to his report and explained the consultation proposals. He advised that although it would have been more desirable for funding to have been made available earlier, he was proposing a positive response to the policy statement and consultation. Members noted that the consultation paper had indicated that the new funding regime would be in place by 2020.

Members referred to the removal of Supporting People Funding and how this had impacted upon partner agencies. It was noted that these agencies had been forced to make efficiency savings and to re-think their business structures. The Committee agreed that any increase in funding in this area was to be welcomed.

During discussion, members referred to the support to residents available from South Norfolk Council and it was noted that a restructuring of teams at the Council had resulted in a more seamless and holistic approach to housing and benefits. The Council's Early Help team and FIRST Officers were able to provide additional support; however, it was sometimes necessary to use partner agencies to ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable were met.

In response to queries, officers explained that sheltered housing provided housing with support, whilst still allowing people to live independently. Members noted that many residents of sheltered housing units were still of working age and that a full range of "sheltered living" was required, to assist both younger and older residents.

Members referred to the requirement for a joined-up approach between health organisations, and the Council, and the Director of Communities and Well-Being gave mention to a recently agreed engagement protocol between local planning authorities and public health and health sector organisations. The Policy and Partnerships Delivery Manager explained that discussions were currently taking place as to whether or not those working in the health sector should be given additional status on the housing register, but he stressed that these discussions were at a very early stage.

It was then

RESOLVED To note and support a positive response to the Funding Supported Housing, Policy Statement and Consultation.

16. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Director of Communities and Well-Being updated members with regard to future items on the work programme. Members noted that a meeting may be required at the end of March, and that a date would be circulated shortly.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was

RESOLVED: To exclude the public and press from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended)

18. LEISURE PRICING PROPOSALS FOR FUTURE DELIVERY

Members considered the *exempt* report of the Head of Health and Leisure Services, which proposed a new pricing structure for the Council's leisure facilities.

The Head of Health and Leisure presented his report, explaining that a review of pricing was required, to ensure that it remained relevant, competitive and commercially viable. He outlined in detail those areas that were affected by the review, and how proposed prices compared with current prices of competitors.

Members noted the reasons for the proposals and indicated their support for the recommendations.

It was

RESOLVED **TO RECOMMEND THAT CABINET** agrees to implement the proposed pricing structure for core prices as outlined in paragraph 4.1 of the report.

(The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm)

Chairman