

PUBLIC

**MINUTES** of a meeting of **IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - PEOPLE** held on Thursday, 26 May 2022 at County Hall, Matlock, DE4 3AG.

**PRESENT**

Councillor T Kemp (in the Chair)

Councillors S Burfoot, C Dale, R George, P Rose, D Taylor, J Wharmby, N Hoy and D Muller.

Also in attendance was Councillor .

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor J Woolley and A Griffiths.

**14/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2

There were no declarations of interest.

**15/2 MINUTES**

2

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**16/2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS (30 MINUTE MAXIMUM IN TOTAL)**

2

There were no public questions.

**17/2 LEARNING DISABILITIES DAY OPPORTUNITIES SERVICE REDESIGN**

2

On 10 March 2022, Cabinet approved the programme of formal public consultation for a period of 12 weeks on the two options concerning the future delivery of day opportunities for people with a learning disability and/or who were autistic. The Committee was asked to consider the current public consultation, including with the current Learning Disability Day service users.

Linda Elba-Porter, Service Director – Transformation and Partnership, attended the meeting and provided the Committee with background to the Cabinet report and details of the two options for consultation on the future delivery of the service.

The aim was to support Derbyshire people with a learning disability and/or who were autistic to live the lives they wanted to live – safe, fulfilled lives in their communities. The proposed new approach was based on

feedback from people who had been supported and informed the Council that they wanted to live as independently as possible in their communities with equal access to opportunities and services such as social and leisure, housing, jobs, health and transport. The proposals were also informed by the recent White Paper 'People at the heart of care' which set out a vision for adult social care that had people and families at its heart.

The public consultation began on 28 March 2022 and would last for 12 weeks ending on 19 June 2022. During the consultation, there would be 12 meetings held virtually throughout the County and where preferred, service users could have a face-to-face meeting to enable them to speak in confidence.

Members were afforded the opportunity to comment on the proposals and ask questions relating to the consultation process. The following issues were raised by members of the committee:

- There was a general concern that the mental well-being of service users might have suffered as a result of having to remain largely at home during the pandemic and all councillors wished this to be kept in mind. However, RG also stated that she had been told of people wishing to return to Alderbrook (Chinley, High Peak) but unable to do so because of on-going Covid-19 restrictions and also that there was a waiting list of people wanting to use Dinting allotments which might indicate there was still a demand for these facilities.

- Certain members also expressed concern that some service users might have a problem getting a point across or feel frightened to speak out against the service. Linda Elba-Porter responded by re-iterating that the face-to-face meetings had been deliberately included in an effort to hopefully allow users to express their feelings more openly.

- It was also suggested, anecdotally, that there was a feeling across the county that many people were unaware of the consultation, so perhaps the publicity hadn't been adequate? In response, it was stated that meetings held thus far had been very well attended (particularly in the High Peak) which demonstrated otherwise.

- It was asked if staff and carers could respond to the consultation? The response was that it was a full public consultation and if Members were aware of anyone wishing to contribute if they could direct them to the consultation process and that would be helpful.

- There was a general recognition that the council needed to support our carers and ensure their voice was heard.

- Some members asked that 'due to the lack of publicity and apparent low response', could the consultation be extended past 19 June to allow

more people and service users to have their say? Councillor Hoy responded that her staff had done excellent work they had carried out in setting up the consultation process and was confident that the consultation was being handled correctly. General observation suggested that there was very adequate engagement and in the absence of empirical evidence to the contrary there was no reason for further delay.

- It was also suggested by some that the transport provision was inadequate.

- Certain members also requested to attend the day centres to try and understand the depth of feeling of the users and raised the possibility of sitting in on any face-to-face meetings with users. The general feeling, and the advice from officers was that this would be inappropriate; it could have a negative impact on service users' willingness to open up and speak freely. However, details of the 12 'open' meetings would be circulated to Members.

Councillor Hoy responded to all the points raised, stating that the intention was to achieve a transformation of the service and hopefully the consultation would help to provide some answers to many points raised in the committee and elsewhere. It was not necessarily the case that the service would be predominantly 'building-based' in the future. While this would most appropriately continue to be the case for some users, many others wanted greater independence and choice, with the opportunity to pursue a wider choice of hobbies and activities.

The Chairman summed up by stating that the proposals should be seen as what they were, a positive opportunity for the service to be moved forward and provide better facilities and support for all Derbyshire residents. He thanked Linda Elba-Porter, Helen Jones and Councillor Natalie Hoy for their attendance and presentation and for willingly answering member questions on this important subject.

**RESOLVED** that the Committee notes:

- a) that public consultation began on 28 March 2022;
- b) that the public consultation will last for 12 weeks ending on 19 June 2022; and
- c) that a further report will be available once the results from the consultation have been collated, and prior to final recommendations going to Cabinet.