

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 17 MARCH, 2015 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Stretton, Mrs. P.Z. (Chairman)
Gamble, B. (Vice-Chairman)

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| Bernard, Mrs. A.F. | Todd, R. |
| Davis, Mrs. M.A. | Whitehouse, Miss. S. |
| Grocott, M.R. | |

By Invitation for Item 4 Social Alarms Service: Tony McGovern, Managing Director and Amanda Wilkinson, Customer Services and Central Control Manager.

31. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. A. Allt.

32. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

| <u>Member</u> | <u>Nature of Interest</u> | <u>Type</u> |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| Grocott, M.R. | Sneydlands Sheltered Housing, Rugeley | Personal |

There were no other declarations of interests in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests.

33. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November, 2014 be approved as correct record.

34. Social Alarms Service

The Chairman welcomed Tony McGovern, Managing Director and Amanda Wilkinson, Customer Services and Centre Control Manager to the meeting.

Tony McGovern reported that the presentation would cover what had been taking place over the past 12 months.

He reported that the update included the service profile for 2013/14, the impact of the Supporting People Grant Reductions and changes to new technology including telecare peripherals.

The service was available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year and 85% of the budget covered staffing 24 hours per day and a person on duty nightly. There were 2,300 clients in social housing using hard wired systems and 770 private clients using the portable alarms technology, together with a tele-care peripherals contract.

The Council's Social Alarms Service profile also covered other Authorities, sheltered housing schemes and lone worker monitoring.

Tony McGovern reported that Staffordshire County Council funded 55% of the costs of the service and the Council funded 45% through a combination of income from private clients and subsidy with an overall expenditure of £318,000. Staffordshire County Council then notified the Council that the full grant would cease on 1 October, 2014 with the removal of funding worth £1m+ from all social alarms services in the County. The service provided by the Council was then threatened as 55% of the budget would be unavailable.

It was reported that no public consultation had taken place and significant concerns were raised by clients. The Council considered a plan in which to continue with the service and 3 possible options were identified by Cabinet. Cabinet made the decision on 10 July, 2014 to continue providing a free service to the most vulnerable clients based on an eligibility criteria, invest £117,234 of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funding per annum and invest HRA Capital to move from hard wired to portable alarms for everybody.

A slide was shown which provided details on the eligibility criteria and clients were contacted in July, 2014. The new portable alarms were procured in August, 2014 and the contract offered to Tunstall Healthcare UK on 1 September, 2014. By 29 September, 2014 implementation of the new alarms had commenced.

Information was supplied on the sites visited and the number of new alarms which had been installed to date and a list of 'jobs' which still needed to be undertaken.

It was reported that 860+ Council tenants now had the new alarm and the service could effectively look after around 1350 clients with the help of the HRA funding.

Members were then invited to ask questions.

Amanda Wilkinson circulated pieces of equipment which included the hard wired device and the new pendant. She discussed the features of the new

equipment which included a speaker the client could access to talk through as well as the use of the pendant which had a radius of approximately 50 metres. She explained that 73% of clients with the equipment were over the age of 70 and the current technology could be linked with fall detectors, epilepsy sensors and other options.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Amanda Wilkinson confirmed that the cost of the service for private tenants was £3.74 per week as of 1 April, 2015. The cost was split between the hire of the equipment £2.00 per week and monitoring costs of £1.74 per week.

A Member was keen to know if any hardwire units left in vacated properties were disconnected. Amanda Wilkinson advised that there were very few clients with the hardwire unit, however units would be left in a vacated property although telephone lines would be disconnected. If there was not a need for the equipment in the property by the new tenant when the property was let, it would then be removed. She explained that with the new equipment, it was transferable from one property to another.

It was reported that the equipment used by the clients had the capability of adding a GPS tracking system to it and setting ranges. If the client wandered too far the Call Centre would be alerted. This was particularly good for users with dementia although this was not currently available for clients within Cannock Chase.

In response to a question raised by a Member, Amanda Wilkinson explained that with regard to marketing of the service, word of mouth tended to be the best avenue although articles were placed in the 'Hometalk' tenants' magazine and referrals came from Social Services.

Members appeared pleased with how the service was progressing and it was reported that the company who installed the equipment would be happy to come to a future meeting to have a discussion with Members. Information on the service could also be made available at future Community Forums following a request from Members.

RESOLVED:

That information concerning the Council's Social Alarms service be made available for Community Forums.

35. Quarter 2 Performance – Health and Wellbeing – 2014/15

Consideration was given to the Quarter 3 Performance – Health and Wellbeing – 2014/15 (Item 3.1 – 3.2).

A Member referred to a BBC Midlands Today report concerning the withdrawal of hearing aids for minor hearing difficulties by North Staffordshire CCG, and only those people with severe hearing difficulties would be fitted with them. The Member was concerned that this decision would also impact on the rest of

Staffordshire and could prove very costly for people.

Members who had previously attended Staffordshire County Council's Accountability Sessions and Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee discussed a number of items that had been raised at past meetings and those Members would investigate to see if this item had been discussed at some point.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Quarter 3 Performance – Health and Wellbeing – 2014/15, be noted.
- (B) That the Work Programme of the Health Scrutiny Committee include an item regarding the withdrawal of hearing aids.
- (C) That the figures regarding young people and mental health issues be placed on a Future Agenda.

CHAIRMAN

(The meeting concluded at 5.10 p.m.).