

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Pensioners' Forum

Thursday, 12 November 2015 at 2:00 pm until not later than 4:00 pm
The Jeffrey Room, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE.

Agenda

1. Welcomes, introductions and apologies

Present: Cllr Oldham (Chair, CO), Roger Rumsey (Co Chair, RR), Ann Timson (AT), Veronica Male (Northants Dementia AA, VM), Cllr Patel (NCC), Nicola Hobbs- Brake (NCC, NHB), J Forrest-Smith (Independent, JFS), Matthew Toreson (Voluntary Impact Northampton, MT), Brian Nichols (BN), Tony Mallard (NFRA Veteran ERA, TM), John Rawlings (Quakers, JR), DJ Hewitt (DH), Gill Shadbolt, (Care & Repair , GS), Alice Morgan (NBC, AM), Nisha Mejer (NBC, NM)*

*Took minutes

Apologies

No apologies

Welcomes, introductions and apologies

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

RR and AM invited Caroline Kus to attend the meeting. However, she is on holiday and has sent Nicola Hobbs-Brake (Assistant Director, Adult Social Care), in her place. Cllr Patel was also invited as Cabinet member for Adult Social Care.

Highways - BN

BN read out an email and letter in the last meeting regarding maintenance of highways. Since then a report has been published in the Chronicle & Echo. However, there are still streets with potholes. Andrew Leighton attended the last meeting but there has been no response by NBC. Some potholes have been improved; however it was felt that the repairs are still inadequate. BN asked why cul de sacs in Links View have been resurfaced by NCC when they didn't need repair. BN implied that there may be "corruption" as matters seem to be decided which are outside the norm. BN asked the Forum what the next steps should be. The options were:

1. Ask County Council for a proper answer
2. Approach NCC and a councillor
3. Approach Michael Ellis MP
4. Approach the Press

RR suggested that a letter should be written from the Forum to the County Council asking for a formal notification of procedure to repairing potholes. Cllr Oldham highlighted that this is a serious issue for pensioners as streets lights are being switched off and the streets are dark. Cllr Patel suggested that the Forum should contact Michael Clarke. DH supported this and re iterated that the problem is in the contracts and contractors. This can be expensive and questioned who policies this. The drains are blocked and with more extreme forms of weather this situation will get worse. There is a man hole in Kingsthorpe which becomes a dangerous hazard when it rains. DH asked how many defaults there are on the contract, and stressed the need to know this information to find if we are getting good value for money.

ACTION: Write letter to Michael Clarke inviting him to attend the Forum meeting. NHB suggested that the forum invite Tony Ciaburro to attend meeting to help answer this. RR would like to devote meetings to one topic.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

TM enquired about the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. AM was invited by Peter Lynch from County Council to attend a meeting regarding this. The strategy is still in its very early stages so there is nothing to report yet. AM stated the Peter Lynch is aware of this Forum's interest but there is no document yet.

Other

JR raised concerns that there is a poor turn out at the Forum, and felt that if we are inviting people, more people need to attend the Forum.

AM and NM are approaching organisations to attend. A leaflet is being designed and the Forums will be marketed. The minutes and agenda are circulated to all members of the Forum so that people are aware of who is attending.

3. Adult Social Care - Cllr Patel and Nicola Hobbs-Brake

Cllr Patel began by giving an overview of Adult Social Care and the current issues facing the sector.

NHB presented on Northamptonshire Adult Social Care and talked about the following:

1. What the organisation does
2. Structures
3. Spending
4. Summary of Activity Levels
5. Overall Picture in Northamptonshire
6. New Target Operating Model (TOM)
7. New opportunities for OP Accommodation
8. New approach to Home Care
9. Market Management

ACTION: Presentation to be circulated with minutes

Cllr Oldham thanked NHB for the presentation. Northamptonshire County Council has a £1 billion budget. Half of this budget has been ring fenced on education. Therefore £428 million is the net budget. Cllr Oldham asked where it is forecast for this money to be spent.

Cllr Patel will be having a meeting with the Leader to look at this for the next financial year. NHB is also exploring ideas but there are not set in stone.

NHB said that people are coming out of hospital but still need care. Eg houses need adapting.

DH discussed that there is an aging population and the demand for services is increasing. DH talked about private care providers and the need to look at the standard of care. Care providers are closing down. However, his friend is spending £600 per week on his care. DH commented that the County Council is bankrupt and the problem is that there is no funding - we cannot make do with less.

TM added that not all elderly people are on benefits. People have paid National Insurance since 1947. This is a worrying situation and people are struggling. TM also raised that Queens Park Nursing home is closed as some residents had to share a room. They did not object to this but because this broke the rules and regulations, the home had to be closed down.

JR advised that Healthwatch have been talking to staff and residents. The scale and progress of Dementia needs addressing. There is also criticism of County Council – we have the lowest paid carers in the country which is why providers do not take this on. However, it was commented that even if the money was available, we don't have the staff. JR added that there are a number of retired professional workers on Healthwatch. Cllr Patel advised that NCC consult providers, and added that NCC do have challenges this year and next year in order to balance the books. Cllr Patel also advised that he has spoken to ministers in London and demand is increasing nationally.

AT asked how referrals are made. NHB advised that referrals are made through GPs, hospitals, neighbours, friends, family and through self-referrals.

ACTION: An exact breakdown to be given on this.

VM asked about people who are newly discharged from hospital and how there are assessed. The forum shared concerns that there is a time delay between when people leave hospital and when their care package is in place at home. NHB advised that there is a wraparound service and services which are needed are provided for. This includes equipment, nurses, physios etc. There is a virtual team to support people at home. VM also asked about failing care homes with poor standards and what is in place for safeguarding when care homes are failing.

NHB advised that if there is a notification of an increased risk there are more frequent visits. CQC are more stringent on assessing. Two or three homes are on special measures and immediate protection plans are put into place. There is training and monitoring too. NCC has brought two homes to better standards and they are now performing ok. Adult Social Care is aligned with a quality team with safeguarding and we have bi weekly meetings, working to prevent homes to going to special measures in the first place.

JR advised that Healthwatch have trained volunteers - anyone can ring Healthwatch and complain about a service they are concerned about. Many of the homes have made notes of the criticisms and addressed them. These care homes also have whistle blowing policies.

JFS said that a lot of people her age hope that they will die because they have no support. NHB commented that social isolation is an issue, and is something that Adult Social Care is trying to help combat. JFS added that she felt that isolation has increased since the Door to Door service allowance was been cut. AM advised that NBC has a partnership grant pot which funds organisations such as the Door to Door service through an annual competitive bidding process. Door to Door was successful but due to pressures on the funding pot, the grant award was less than what has been awarded in previous years. NBC and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire have offered help and support for future funding. The service is still available.

GS commented that Care and Repair are part of Independent Home Improvement. Funding has been withdrawn without notice. Their handyman service has grown but the organisation only receives 60% of funding that they received 2 years ago. GS is still waiting to hear whether C&R will receive further funding – they currently have 9 staff but there is uncertainty for the future.

ACTION: NHB advised she will look into this for GS after the meeting

RR commented that he is not political. 50 years ago RR attended a meeting with an MP and predicted that this would be happening in 30 years.

4.Action Plan

AM advised that NBC have recruited new members of the Youth Forum. New ideas are being addressed and working on a communications drive.

5.Community News Exchange

JFS advised that the trees have now been trimmed in Leicester Street.

AT raised with the forum that there is bedbug problem in flats in Spring Boroughs. It will take 4 hours to clear but not sure where people can stay for that length of time.

GS shared that Care and Repair are offering a Warm At Home Service. Left leaflets for people to collect.

AM

- Northampton Inter Faith Forum have a Question Time evening for the Holy Sepulchre.
- Northampton Leisure Trust are running a survey for 50+ year olds. AM shared paper copies with attendees.
- Two consultations are currently live – Council Tax reduction scheme and Public Spaces Protection Orders. Details of both will be shared after the meeting.

JR shared that Healthwatch are doing a survey. Please ring 01604 893636 if you would like to make any comments about GPs etc.

6.Suggestions for Items for Future Meetings or Forum Activities

There are reports that the buses are in the incorrect bays. Would like someone to come in to explain this.

VM: Welfare CIC – important that they are aware that they need to meet the needs of old people.

ACTION: Need to follow up on this as this is due to launch to start in December.

TM: Concerned about Homeless. Future meeting – Hope Centre

Next meeting – Invite Cllr Michael Clarke to speak about Highways

7.Any Other Business

8.Date and venues of future Forum Meetings

January 28th 2-4pm, The Jeffrey Room, The Guildhall

Map and directions at: www.northampton.gov.uk/guildhall

For more information about this meeting please contact:
Alice Morgan, Community Development Officer



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Tel: 01604 837795



More information about the Forum generally is at: www.northampton.gov.uk/forums



Facebook page: www.northampton.gov.uk/pensionersforumonfacebook

Please note that this Forum is supported and funded by Northampton Borough Council. The Forum may work in partnership and collaboration with other community groups, councils and local services from time to time. The views expressed and decisions taken by the Forum are not necessarily those of Northampton Borough Council.

