

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 3 DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN

Thursday, 21 September 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Cathrine Russell (Chair), Councillor Sally Beardsworth (Deputy Chair), Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Mohammed Aziz, Janice Duffy, Dennis Meredith and Brian Sargeant

CO-OPTED MEMBER: Gwyn Roberts

Witnesses Anna King, Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety
Stephen Hibbert, Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing
Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing
Vicki Rockall, Partnerships and Communities Manager

Officers Louise Musson, Call Care Manager
Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2017 as a true and accurate record.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

The Scrutiny Panel received written responses from the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, the Head of Housing and Wellbeing and the Partnerships and Communities Manager highlighting the salient points.

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement would be meeting with Officers and the Cabinet Member regarding the dementia care village.

- The Memory Day held in the Grosvenor Centre on 21 September 2017 had been very well received and supported.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard of the work that NMHT do with young people that have dementia.
- The Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing referred to dementia cafes in schools and how well that they work. Young people can play a very active role. The Scrutiny Panel supported this initiative and felt it could be introduced in schools in Northampton.
- Research has concluded that keeping the brain active is key to possibly preventing the onset of dementia. The Scrutiny Panel heard that funding had been provided for an education centre to run three times a week in Northampton library; the purpose of which is to stimulate and support people that have dementia. Similar projects are run in Holland and have been highly successful.
- In response to a query identifying the signs of dementia; the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing commenting that diagnosis can often be difficult and referred to a case of a six year old child who had been diagnosed with dementia. Dementia in under 65 year olds is rare and for people below this age, tests for dementia are often the final test and diagnosis. It is an emotional journey. Medical science is now very advanced and people are diagnosed earlier and living longer.
- For Northampton to become a Dementia Friendly Town gives the ideal opportunity to help people make a real difference in other people's lives.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that Housing and Wellbeing staff will raise awareness regarding recognising dementia, will identify the suitability of existing homes and of temporary housing for homeless people. Priority transfers to more suitable housing/more suitable locations are looked at also. NPH manages 12,000 properties. Housing and Wellbeing has Officers who have undertaken the training and are now Dementia Friendly Champions.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that Call Care provides assisted technology, for example, door sensors. This equipment means that some people can remain in their own homes. An example of where a previous tenant had access to such equipment and which had proved a real help to her.
- In response to a query regarding recognising signs of dementia when people present at the Hope Centre and the Night Shelter Phil Harris advised that he and his staff have access to 24/7 services and are able to refer if someone displays signs that they are not thinking rationally.
- Becoming a Dementia Friendly Town will help to raise awareness to family and carers and the public in general in recognising the signs of dementia.
- It was noticed that often referrals are received after Christmas or Easter, for example, where the family haven't perhaps had regular or recent contact with the family member for some months and notice changes that concern them.

The need for a Dementia Friendly Town logo was referred to. Medical (ID) bracelets would be useful for people with dementia. The Scrutiny Panel suggested that it would be useful for bus passes to contain useful information, on the back, such as “my usual stop is x” “please don’t start moving until I am seated”, for example. Hospitals often use butterflies logos so that non clinical staff are aware of people with dementia.

The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Community Safety and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Wellbeing, the Head of Housing and Wellbeing and Community Partnerships and Communities Manager were thanked for their informative addresses.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

6. SITE VISITS

The Scrutiny Panel agreed that it would undertake a site visit to Lutterworth which is a Dementia Friendly Town. The Scrutiny Officer would liaise with the Co Optee regarding the site visit and what the Scrutiny Panel should be looking for during the site visit.

The Scrutiny Panel would also carry out a site visit to see the types of equipment, such as door sensors, that are available.

7. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The Scrutiny Panel received a briefing note containing a precis of relevant legislation; the information would inform the evidence base of this Scrutiny Panel.

The meeting closed at 7:05pm, following which the Scrutiny Panel watched a very informative short video regarding the prevention of Alzheimer’s disease.