

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee held at Shire Hall, Gloucester, on Tuesday 9 November 2021.

Present: Cllr Stephen Hirst (Chair) Cllr Lisa Spivey (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Cate Cody Cllr Terry Hale
Cllr Mark Mackenzie- Cllr Steve Robinson
Charrington Cllr Susan Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for the meeting were received from Cllr Pam Tracey, (substituted by Cllr Susan Williams), and Cllr Suzanne Williams, (no substitution).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were confirmed and agreed as a correct record of that meeting.

4. PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION IN COLLABORATION WITH THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

Following a brief introduction by Sarah Scott, (Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health), Di Billingham, (Lead Commissioner - Adult Early Intervention), and Louise Holder, (Strategic Lead - Adult Social Care Transformation), updated members on the council's prevention and early intervention work in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

Key messages noted at the meeting included: -

- a) The importance and value of the voluntary and community sector to Gloucestershire's care and support market;
- b) The benefits of establishing strong relationships, creating trust and developing mutual understanding on the success of the council's prevention work;
- c) The links between people choosing to live independently in their own homes and the need to provide vibrant and varied community offers;

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- d) Recognition of community and placed based activities as essential components to the delivery of the Adult Single Programme and enabling people to live independent lives;
- e) The value and importance of collaborative working as a means of strengthening the councils connections and investing in areas where gaps exist or when experiencing increased demand;
- f) How working with the voluntary and community sector meets the requirements of the council's Care Act duties.

An underlying message throughout the presentation was the ever increasing demands being placed on adult care services, combined with limited resources in terms of available funding from which to provide the best possible care to those people at most need.

In recent years, new and innovative approaches in delivering Adult Social Care, (forming part of the Adult Single Programme), has enabled the delivery of services by the GCC Adult Social Care Team, (in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector), to flourish. The benefits of collaborative working became increasingly evident during the COVID-19 Pandemic, where new and more digitalised ways of working enabled the delivery of services to be maintained in spite of significant challenges to the system.

Members were informed that a Digital Innovation Fund introduced in 2020 had been instrumental in providing funding to a variety of community organisations, allowing them to adapt to more digitalised ways of working and in breaking down barriers to ensure a more independent way of living through the use of technology. It was reported that, in 2021, the fund had focussed on supporting schemes aimed at improving digital literacy, working with BAME, (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), communities and supporting people with disabilities and sensory impairments. Despite the advances, there remained some barriers to digital working.

Responding to questions on how the Gloucestershire 'Three Tier Conversation' model of social care functioned, it was explained that Tier 1 of the model was fundamental in the development of people's strengths, (and those of their families and local communities), and in helping people to remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible.

Tier 1 represented the basis for providing information, advice and guidance to those most in need of support. It was explained that the voluntary and community sector was uniquely positioned to support this approach, allowing it to develop a wider understanding of a persons' needs and consider taking appropriate preventative action before the needs escalated or reached crisis point.

During 2018, a series of workshops had been held throughout the county, highlighting the challenges to the social care system and introducing the Three Tier Conversation Model as the new approach to delivering social care services in

Gloucestershire. Feedback from the workshops and a community wellbeing survey undertaken at the same time identified the need to:-

- a) Establish a cross sector network allowing practitioners, VCS and community groups to better understand one another, share intelligence and work together to address gaps and barriers;
- b) Create an information portal from which to provide updated health and care and community information, (for use by practitioners, the VCS, families and individuals);
- c) Seek small grants from which to invest in local activities/address gaps or meet increased demand.

When asked whether it would be useful to arrange further workshops, (in response to ongoing changes to delivering social care), it was explained that, although the workshops had provided a kick-start on how to develop a better understanding of peoples' needs, to continue this approach was not something likely to be repeated. It was, however, something that would be built upon and developed in the future.

Members acknowledged some of the successful activities that had been introduced in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. They were informed that, during this time, essential work had been undertaken by the County Council, District Councils and NHS Health Services, working alongside local voluntary and community groups.

One such activity had been the invaluable work undertaken via the 'Know Your Patch (KYP) Networks', set up in 2018. Conveniently located in all 6 districts, KYP Networks had been key to the county's response to the pandemic. Feedback and communication generated by the network system had allowed the social care team to gain more understanding of the needs that existed within local communities and to put in place the necessary processes from which to provide food, prescriptions and social contact to those in most need.

In terms of financial support, it was noted that, for the current financial year, the Adult Single Programme had made a direct contribution of over £800k to support the work of the voluntary and community sector. Acknowledging some of the benefits generated from working alongside volunteers and local communities during the pandemic, it was confirmed that the Council intended to build on this success by proposing that the Council's Care Act Budget remain at the same level for the 2022-23 financial year.

During the past year, the council had been actively involved in work with the NHS One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System Partnership, successfully securing an additional £200k from NHS Gloucestershire CCG to invest in the rollout of a pilot for the creation of 'digital buddy hubs' located in each district. Co-ordinated by the community sector, the hubs would be essential to reaching out to wider parts of the county, in particular, to those living in remote locations who might find it hard to connect with the council's prevention services.

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Members commended the council's ongoing work with the NHS One Gloucestershire Integrated Care System Partnership, including efforts to create links and combine resources pending further changes to the Care Act. It was confirmed that the intention was to consider how best to further the council's support to the VCS; how to sustain the good work already underway and how to consider ways of developing new and innovative approaches to delivering social care and allowing more people lead independent lives.

The committee requested information on funding opportunities that might provide longer-term funding to support the work of the VCS, plus details of the criteria on which the award of funding and community grants are based. It was agreed to circulate the information via email, with a further update to the committee in the New Year. **Action by – Lead Commissioner (Adult Early Intervention)**

Members commended the update and noted the report.

5. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT

The committee received an in-depth overview of matters relating to the delivery of services within the portfolio of services covered by the Chief Fire Officer, (Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service), and within the remit of the Gloucestershire County Council Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee, (Trading Standards, Civil Protection and Coroners Services).

Highlighting key messages from the report, the Chief Fire Officer informed the committee that the demand on services was continuing to increase in comparison with demand for the same period in 2021/22.

Reporting on the work of the Trading Standards Team, it was confirmed that the team had recently returned to carrying out intelligence led activities, (as undertaken prior to the pandemic), with officers resuming physical inspections.

One key area of concern identified at the meeting was the increased number of unsafe products being placed on the market by Gloucestershire businesses. Market surveillance and enforcement work in response to product safety concerns and intelligence from the Office of Product Safety and Standards was ongoing. The service was also experiencing a notable increase in the need for complex and demanding investigations into the work of rogue builders.

Although there was no evidence to support a surge in scam activities affecting the county, it was confirmed that there had been a notable increase in the number of bogus telephone calls during the pandemic. Members requested details of packages offered by some phone providers in an attempt to control and prevent the number of bogus calls.

It was suggested that the Civil Protection Team (CPT) present a briefing to the GCC Restoring Our Rivers Scrutiny Task Group on the county's flood planning arrangements. The CPT provide emergency management support to 5 district

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councils, including offering advice on any flood plan revisions that might be necessary to comply with revised DEFRA standards.

Members supported the suggestion that the Trading Standards Team provide a briefing to the committee on detailed aspects of its work. It was agreed that the suggestion be added to the committee work plan.

The report was noted.

6. PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

The committee received an update from the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health, (Gloucestershire County Council), on matters relating to public health, including an update on the response to the COVID-19 Emergency. Included in the update was an overview of the most recent Covid-19 intelligence summary update circulated prior to the meeting.

Referencing ongoing investigations into recent false negative test results affecting some parts of the country, including Gloucestershire, members were advised that the issue related to the laboratory test processing arrangements rather than to the test kits themselves. There was no evidence to suggest faults with lateral flow or PCR test kits and the public should remain confident in the services being provided.

Acknowledging concerns about the accuracy of COVID-19 data, members were reassured that the information reflected a true representation. Noting the recent increase in the number of cases reported across the county, members were asked to reinforce the benefits of the booster vaccination within their divisions.

Responding to questions on activities taken to address anti-vaccine protests at local schools, members were informed that a clear message was being sent to all age groups, advising them to make informed choices based on reputable sources of information rather than making perceptions from information circulated via social media. Schools were working closely with the police and doing a remarkable job of addressing any issues.

Seeking information on the number of people not vaccinated due to a fear of needles and communication issues with non-English speaking residents, it was agreed to invite the Vaccine Equity Group to brief the committee on the support provided to these groups of people and the work of the group at the next meeting.

Action by – Vaccine Equity Group

Responding to information included in the Public Health Report, the committee requested an update on the Council's Child Measurement Programme, including actions taken to address the below national average weight management targets of Year 6 pupils in Gloucestershire and examples of work included in the recently extended Drug/Alcohol Contract. **Action by – Public Health Team**

The report was noted.

7. ADULT SOCIAL CARE REPORT

The committee received an update from the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health on matters relating to Adult Social Care for the county.

In a verbal update to the committee, members noted information on the investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) into a complaint against the County Council. It was confirmed that a report would be presented to Cabinet by the Council's Monitoring Officer and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health at the cabinet meeting the following day, (10 November 2021). The purpose of the report would be to advise Cabinet of a finding of maladministration and injustice by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and to recommend appropriate actions to take in response.

In considering the report, Cabinet would be recommended to:

- 1) Accept in full the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) recommendations, as set out in sections 13 and 14 of the report;
- 2) Support and endorse the actions identified by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health, as set out in paragraphs 15 to 23 of the report, and
- 3) Meet the LGSCO's requirement of sending a copy of the cabinet report and the minutes of the cabinet meeting at which the investigation was discussed to all County Councillors.

A report on the progress of the cabinet decision would be brought to the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting on 25 January 2022, where there would be an opportunity for members to engage in a detailed discussion on the delivery of actions proposed by the Local Ombudsman.

A key role of the committee would be to monitor delivery of the actions by the Adult Social Care Team.

The committee received an update on the progress of the council's social care reform work. It was reported that, in September 2021, the Government had released the 'Build Back Better Plan for Health and Social Care' policy document, setting out the government's plan for adult social care in England, including a section on the Health and Social Care Levy. The Government to work with local government leaders, the NHS, service users and carers to develop and publish a White Paper for reforming adult social care. The committee to receive regular updates on this important piece of work. **Action by - Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health**

Responding to questions on the escalation of costs in relation to the park home project and seeking assurances in response to concerns about the recruitment of care home staff, it was agreed to respond to the following questions relating to park

home costs after the meeting and to provide an update on recruitment issues at the next meeting. **Action by – Housing with Care Team**

Questions from Cllr Cate Cody (Park Homes)

The Gloucestershire Strategic Housing Partnership has continued to enhance the Warm and Well Programme, enabling greater collaboration between the County Council, District Councils and the NHS and resulting in considerable additional funding to support projects in the county.

Two grants of approximately £1m were awarded to the county as part of the Local Authority Delivery phase 1a and 1b of the Green Homes Grant Scheme in 2020-21. This will enable the insulation of an additional 200 park homes and also offer air source heat pumps to residents in rural areas who have no gas supply. This, not only improves the energy efficiency of homes to make them warmer, but also significantly reduces carbon emissions.”

- 1) How many park homes in rural areas where there is no gas supply will be offered air source heat pumps? (I've purposely specified park homes rather than residents in park homes because if it's a couple this would be two residents, but just one residence.)*
- 2) There were two grants of approximately £1m in 2020 /21, presumably therefore, the insulation of the 200 park homes are the ones we've seen in a previous report rather than additional?*
- 3) Have the air source heat pumps already gone in? If not, what is the likely impact in terms of materials and labour doubling in cost?*

The report was noted.

8. QUARTER 2 (2021/22) PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members considered an analysis of performance relating to the delivery of services within the remit of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee. Prepared by the Performance & Improvement Team, the analysis provided strategic overview of the council's performance for Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

In noting the report, the following actions were agreed: -

- 1) The committee to receive a 'Learning with Disabilities' presentation from the Learning with Disabilities Team.
- 2) Responding to concerns about drug and alcohol services during the pandemic, it was suggested the committee receive a 'Change Grow Live' (CGL) presentation on lessons learned/recovery planning from the pandemic. Representatives from the GCC Commissioning Team to contribute to the presentation.

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- 3) Seeking alternative approaches to how the committee considered performance reports, it was suggested officers from various commissioning teams be invited to future meetings to provide updates on specific aspects of performance

The report was noted.

9. WORK PLAN

The committee work plan (attached) was noted (with a request to reinvigorate the council's road safety work).

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 12.35pm