

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 25 January 2022

PRESENT

Cllr Stephen Hirst (Chair)	Cllr Pam Tracey MBE
Cllr Alastair Chambers	Cllr Suzanne Williams
Cllr Cate Cody	Cllr Terry Hale
Cllr Mark Mackenzie- Charrington	Cllr Steve Robinson
Cllr Lisa Spivey (Vice- Chair)	

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 were confirmed and agreed as an accurate record of that meeting.

4. PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

Professor Sarah Scott, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Communities and Public Health for Gloucestershire County Council presented the Director of Public Health Annual Report for 2021/22. The title of this year's report was 'Sources of Strength: Securing Gloucestershire's Health and Wellbeing through an Anchor Institutions Approach'.

To view the full report please visit the link [here](#)

Introducing some of the Public Health team responsible for producing the report, the Executive Director reinforced the importance of the joint team effort that had contributed to developing the document and in addressing health inequalities for Gloucestershire.

Reflecting on the value of the contributions made by local communities during the pandemic, the committee also noted the input from large locally based

organisations and the role they played in strengthening the economic and social aspects of the local community. It was acknowledged that this vital role had become even more apparent during the response to COVID-19, where acts of support and participation had demonstrated how important the combined efforts of local communities and organisations can be when working together to support those who need it the most.

Large organisations who provide support to their local communities are known as “anchor institutions”. Often large employers, anchor institutions are unlikely to relocate their business location and have a significant stake in their local area. The organisations have sizeable assets that can be used to support their local community’s health and wellbeing. Traditionally, anchor institutions have been represented by public sector organisations, such as health care services, local authorities and universities. However, it has become increasingly apparent that support can also be provided by other types of organisation, including business anchor institutions and community anchor institutions. With a foothold in the county, anchor institutions have the ability to improve people’s health and wellbeing through a variety of activities, including influencing the health of the wider community as well as that of their own employees.

The theme of this year’s annual report focussed on the role of anchor institutions in supporting the health and wellbeing of Gloucestershire residents and in addressing some of the longstanding inequalities within its local communities, whilst at the same time, helping to drive the economic improvement process in the county’s recovery from COVID-19.

The report was structured into five key areas: -

- 1) Employment – looking at the role of anchor institutions in the recruitment and retention of local staff, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds;
- 2) Procurement and commissioning – considering how goods and services are procured to encourage local organisations to better understand how to provide such services to local communities;
- 3) Buildings and capital – ensuring anchor institutions make their spaces available for community use, including supporting access to affordable housing for staff;
- 4) Environment – how anchor institutions can help Gloucestershire meet its carbon neutral targets, as well as supporting improvements in air quality and other aspects of making improvements to the local environment;
- 5) Place – focusing on the needs of the local community and working in partnership with other organisations across Gloucestershire.

The committee’s attention was drawn to the seven recommendations outlined in the report: -

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- 1) The Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities Hub at Gloucestershire County Council to organise an anchor institutions event. The aim of this proposal was to bring together key partners from across Gloucestershire to discuss the five areas set out in the report and to identify additional opportunities for action.
- 2) Anchor institutions to reassess career access and development pathways to strengthen opportunities for people from underrepresented groups and young people. Consideration should be given to recruitment practices and supporting retention and workforce health and inclusion through fair pay and conditions.
- 3) Anchor institutions should consider and develop their social value policy in line with the Social Value Act. These should be aligned across the county to further strengthen the contribution to social, economic and environmental impacts.
- 4) Initial focus should be on strengthening the role of core (public sector) anchor institutions by:
 - a) Identifying a strategic lead per organisation to help set the direction and priorities based on the five areas set out in the report.
 - b) Identifying an operational lead per organisation who can ensure that actions and recommendations are implemented at an organisational level.
 - c) Building the five areas set out in the report into corporate plans and wider policies and practices.
 - d) Developing locally agreed matrices to monitor and evaluate the contributions of core (public sector) anchor institutions.
 - e) Ensuring that contracting and monitoring requirements are proportionate to the size of the contract, to promote inclusivity for a range of organisation types.
 - f) Supporting more flexible commissioning and the co-production of services which places power and trust in communities and recognises the value of local expertise and lived experience.
 - g) Committing to using public buildings and spaces as community assets and ensuring that lease agreements can make this viable.
5. Working in association with GFirst LEP, (Gloucestershire Local Enterprise Partnership), develop a clearer identity and roles for business anchor institutions. Ensure anchor institutions are included in the refreshed Local Industrial Strategy (LIS).
6. Develop a Gloucestershire Anchor Institutions Collaborative to ensure a coherent, system-wide approach for anchor institutions to develop across the five areas. This should report to the Health and Wellbeing Board annually.

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7. Publish the principles as an 'Anchor Institutions Charter' to which organisations can pledge and demonstrate their commitment to this approach.

The committee noted the report, including the seven recommendations outlined above. Commending the proposals, members were encouraged by the opportunities they provided and agreed this was a good starting point from which to consider health inequalities and in recovering from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Seeking clarification on several key topics, including issues relating to mental health and environmental matters, the committee looked forward to receiving regular updates on how the actions would be taken forward. Reassured the document would be shared with District Councils, it was agreed to note the report with an update at the July committee meeting. **Action by – Executive Director of ASC and Public Health**

5. DOMICILIARY CARE

Professor Sarah Scott, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health gave a detailed presentation on the pressures on the independent adult social care market and the work being undertaken by the County Council to support the market, (the County Council has a statutory duty to manage the adult social care market for Gloucestershire). It was noted that older people currently form over a quarter of Gloucestershire's current population, with the 65 plus age group anticipated to increase to extraordinary levels over the next 20 years.

To view the report presented at the meeting, please open the link [here](#)

Key messages provided during the presentation included the significant pressures being placed on local care provision and the risk of the county council not being able to fulfil its duties under the Care Act and the county's responsibilities with regard to the safe and effective hospital discharge of patients into safe environments. In addition to the challenges brought about by an aging population, another significant challenge has been the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the medium to long term consequences on the care market. Other challenges include the high level of demand for Domiciliary Care and a reduced supply of care workers.

Actions taken to address recruitment and retention issues in the care sector are represented in two specific plans, the Market Support Plan and the Domiciliary Care Plan. Key incentives incorporated in the plans include the 'Proud to Care' recruitment programme and the work of the Integrated Brokerage Team, (the team who procure the domiciliary care packages and residential and nursing beds on behalf of the Council).

Outlining some of the funding streams secured by the council in the response to the pandemic, it was reported that some of the funding would be allocated towards the recruitment and retention of staff and in supporting families to care for family members who require a low level of care following discharge from hospital.

Responding to questions on pay and remuneration, it was agreed to report back to the committee the outcomes of a 'cost of care' exercise to be undertaken in 2022, (a requirement of the recent Adult Social Care White Paper). The exercise will determine sustainable rates for the local care sector in relation to current rates of pay by the County Council. Further briefings to be provided to the committee following publication of government guidance in May 2022. **Action by – Executive Director of ASC and Public Health**

The report was noted.

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION

The committee received an update from the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health on the investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) into a complaint against the County Council, as reported to the committee at its meeting on 9 November 2022.

It was confirmed that a report had been presented to Cabinet by the Council's Monitoring Officer and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Public Health at the cabinet meeting on 10 November 2021. The purpose of the report was 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 had resolved 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 to all County Councillors.

At the committee meeting on 9 November 2021, it was suggested that a key function of the committee would be to monitor the delivery of the agreed actions by the Adult Social Care Team.

To view the detailed report on the circumstances relating to the complaint and the outcomes of the cabinet decision, please refer to the link [here](#)

Members noted the report, including the update on the progress of the actions set out in the Adult Social Care Operations Action Plan. It was confirmed that as of 5 January 2022, 6 of the 14 actions had been completed, with the remaining 8 underway/in progress. The latest timeframes for completion of the actions was March 2022.

It was announced that a 'Make the Difference' review workshop, involving ASC Operation Service Managers, Principle Social Worker and Head of Operations would be held the day after the meeting, on 10 January 2022.

Responding to questions, Keith Vardy, Head of Adult Social Care Operations for the County Council and Moira Wood, Principal Social Worker, accepted that, in retrospect, the working practices by some members of the team should have been better. In addressing the challenges to the team at the time, it was with regret that senior officers had lost sight of the actions taken by an individual member of the team and this was not acceptable.

Thanking officers for their honesty, members were reassured that robust measures had been put in place to ensure the close supervision of employees and that the rigorous testing of current systems provided the necessary assurances to avoid a similar lapse in good practice occurring in the future.

It was agreed that a further review of the action plan would be presented to the committee later in the year. **Action by – Executive Director of ASC and Public Health**

7. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT

The committee received a detailed 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).

To view the full report, please open the link [here](#)

Trading Standards

Key messages highlighted by the report included an update on the performance of the Trading Standards Team, where it was confirmed that: -

- 1) The Trading Standards budget remained on course. The previously predicted underspend on legal services, a direct consequence of suspended activity throughout the pandemic had been diverted to increase temporary staffing levels and overall operational capacity.
- 2) In addition to the work in delivering statutory functions in relation to food standards, a second officer had been engaged on a temporary basis to carry out inspection work in relation to product safety focussing on items sold through second hand and antique stores.
- 3) Inspection figures for high-risk food premises remained below quarterly targets.
- 4) The measurement of scam and doorstep crime victims expressing they felt able to withstand future attempts was lower than the target figure of 53% - a decline against previous quarters. Further analysis was ongoing to consider

the number of referrals relating to active scam victims and the number of individuals already engaged and responding to mass mail scams.

- 5) The Trading Standards was at an early stage of engagement with Gloucestershire Police, Victim Support and other voluntary sector organisations with a view to establishing a multi-agency approach to victim support which will enhance capability of all agencies to support individuals.

Referring to some of the more irregular and out of hours tasks presented to Trading Standards, one member questioned whether it might be an option to review and extend the operational hours of the team to include evenings and this was noted.

Another member enquired if a visit by the Trading Standards Officer to the Forest of Dean might be arranged to assess the conditions of free roaming sheep in parts of the District. It was agreed a visit would be arranged later in the year. **Action by – Jo Moore**

Civil Protection Team (CPT)

Reporting on the performance of the CPT it was confirmed that the team continued to support the countywide response to Covid-19.

The CPT had agreed a 2 year project plan (in October 2020) to strengthen the business continuity framework across the organisation (GCC). Work was ongoing with all the service areas across the County Council to develop 'fit for purpose' business continuity plans to support the continued delivery of critical service areas in the event of possible disruptions to services including, power outages, loss of fuel, loss of building, loss of IT, loss of staff.

Coroner's Service

It was explained that the principle objective for the Coroner Service Team in 2022 will be to assist the Senior Coroner address the backlog of cases resulting from the Covid-19 Pandemic. Following an updated risk assessment completed in collaboration with AMPS colleagues, the Coroner Court was now fully open for the hearing of Coronial inquests and the service recently conducted their first jury inquest following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.

The principle risk to the service remains the availability of pathologists to complete post mortem examinations. Timely examination of the deceased is an essential initial step in the Coronial investigation process and remains an issue at both local and national level.

Responding to questions, it was noted that legislation in relation to the frequency and use of fireworks was a complex issue and maybe not within the remit of the committee to scrutinise. It was suggested members might want to lobby local MP's on the matter and for members of the Civil Protection and Trading Standard Teams to be invited to committee meetings in May and July to give a more detailed insight into some of their work. **Action by – Chief Fire Officer.**

The report was noted.

8. 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. To view the full report, please refer to the link [here](#)

Gloucestershire Vaccine Equity Programme

A key aspect of the public health report was a detailed presentation from Katie Hopgood Public Health Consultant and Oonagh Wilson from NHS Gloucestershire Health Care on the Gloucestershire Vaccine Equity Programme. The slides from the power-point presentation are attached to the published minutes of the meeting. The committee welcomed the in-depth presentation and commended the success of the Gloucestershire Vaccine Equity Programme.

The Public Health report included updates on key public health services delivered by the Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities team, including: -

Sexual Health Services – members noted information on the impact of the pandemic on sexual reproductive health in Gloucestershire, including the 38% decrease in the diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections during 2019/20. This decrease is comparable with the 32% decrease in England for the same period. It was suggested that the decrease may have been due to changes in behaviour during the lockdown period and a reduction of people accessing or being tested.

Drugs and Alcohol Services – the committee to receive a more in-depth report on adult community drug and alcohol services and the new drug strategy later in the year.

Childhood Obesity and Weight Management Services – the committee to receive a detailed update on the Gloucestershire Child Measurement Programme at the joint committee meeting on 8 March 2022. Members of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee will be notified of the presentation and invited to join the meeting via remote access to observe the meeting/listen to the discussion on this item. **Action by – Jo Moore**

Domestic Abuse – under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, all Tier 1 local authorities have a statutory duty to provide support to the victims of domestic abuse, (and their children), residing in refuge and other domestic abuse safe accommodation. Tier 2 local authorities are required to co-operate with Tier 1 authorities to support delivery of the statutory duty. Gloucestershire County Council, (and its partners), have made good progress in delivering their responsibilities, including the establishment of a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (LPB). The County Council will prepare an annual report on the investment required to fulfil the requirements of the new legislation and the impact of the services provided.

Council Motion 890 – Domestic Abuse (please click [here](#) for details of the motion)

At the Council meeting on 8 December 2022, it was resolved that the members of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee consider the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment for Gloucestershire and the Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy.

In particular, the two committees were asked to scrutinise the Council's partnership work on ensuring sufficient accommodation and support is provided for victims seeking safe accommodation, including refuge accommodation.

The committee noted the request, with a suggestion that Ruth Saunders, (Director of Communities at Gloucester City Council and Chair of the County Strategic Housing Group), be invited to attend a meeting of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee, along with the GCC Commissioners responsible for the delivery of the council's domestic abuse services. The officers to respond to questions on how the provision of accommodation for the victims of domestic abuse link with the district council's housing statutory duties.

In addition, it was suggested that, at a future meeting of the committee, a further update be provided to enable the committee to formulate a view in response to the issues raised by Council Motion 890. The members of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee will be invited to attend the (ASCC) meeting for consideration of this item. **Actions by – Executive Director for ASC and Public Health/Jo Moore**

Covid-19 Update

Prior to presentation of the Public Health report, members noted the most recent Covid-19 intelligence summary, (circulated prior to the meeting), and a separate update on the county's response to Covid-19.

Noting the update, members commended the recent response to the Omicron variant and the acceleration of the booster vaccination in Gloucestershire. It was reported that, following the expansion of the vaccination programme, there had been a local call to action to boost capacity at vaccination sites with the use of volunteers across the system and an extension of the existing vaccine inequalities outreach programme. One member requested updates/links to the various vaccination drop in sessions being arranged around the county to enable councillors to cascade the information to district colleagues. The request was noted, supplemented by a recommendation to visit the Covid-19 information and advice webpage on the GCC website for details of vaccination centre locations and other Covid-19 useful information.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19-information-and-advice/>

The Gloucestershire Health and Care NHS Trust continued to deliver Gloucestershire's outreach programme throughout December and during the Christmas holiday period to those communities and individuals unable to access the

vaccination programme via the Primary Care Network. This included home visits, homelessness settings, drugs and alcohol settings, police custody suites and asylum seekers, in addition to people with learning disabilities and mental health issues.

Members noted the government guidance published in December 2021 in relation to self isolation and testing and requested an update on the impact of the easing of restrictions later in the year. **Action by – Public Health Team**

The report, including the update on the county's response to Covid-19 was noted.

9. 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.

Included in the report was a detailed update on the Government publication released in September 2021, relating to the policy document "Build Back Better. Our Plan for Health and Social Care". It was confirmed that the Government had since developed a more detailed White Paper entitled People at the Heart of Care: Adult Social Care Reform, published in December 2021.

The White Paper set out what was described as 'an ambitious 10-year vision for the transformation of support and care in England'. The vision aimed to place local people at the centre of its ambitions and revolved around 3 key objectives: -

- 1) Enabling people to have choice, control and support to live independent lives;
- 2) Enabling people to access outstanding quality and tailored care and support;
- 3) Enabling people to receive fair and accessible adult social care

In addition to an overview on the government's 10-year vision for adult social care, the White Paper included a summary of the opportunities it intends to build on in order to achieve the vision, including specific sections on:-

- 1) Housing, technology and embedding innovation;
- 2) How to empower those who draw on support and care;
- 3) Development of a strategy for the social care workforce;
- 4) How to make sure the proposals in the white paper are effectively delivered

The Government reiterated its commitment to reform how people in England pay for their care by confirming that no one pay more than £86,000 for personal care costs, alongside more generous means-tested support for anyone with less than £100,000 in chargeable assets.

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Full details of all of the issues will be presented to the committee as they become available.

In meantime the White Paper can be accessed on the government website at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/people-at-the-heart-of-care-adult-socialcare-reform-white-paper/people-at-the-heart-of-care-adult-social-care-reform>

The report was noted.

10. WORK PLAN

The committee work plan was noted

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 12.15pm