

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday 10 March 2020 commencing at 10.00 am at the Cabinet Suite - Shire Hall, Gloucester.

PRESENT

Cllr Phil Awford	Cllr Stephen Hirst (Chair)
Cllr Iain Dobie (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Shaun Parsons
Cllr Andrew Gravells	Cllr Brian Robinson
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Steve Robinson
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	

Substitutes:

In attendance: Margaret Willcox, Director of Adult Social Care
Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health
Mark Astle, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Emma Savage, Associate Director Self Care, Prevention and Diabetes, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning
Cllr Tim Harman, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities
Cllr Kathy Williams, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Delivery

Apologies:

19. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies at the meeting.

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Shaun Parsons declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Barnwood Trust.

22. WORK PLAN

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

- 22.1 The Committee was advised that a work planning session had been arranged for 1 June 2020 at 2pm.
- 22.2 One member proposed that an item on support for carers should be considered by the Committee, potentially at the meeting in July.
- 22.3 The Committee noted the current work plan for 2020.

23. DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE REPORT

- 23.1 Margaret Willcox, Executive Director of Adult Social Care, presented the Director of Adult Social Care Report.
- 23.2 In an update regarding Enhanced Independence, members were advised that the Gloucestershire Health and Care Trust (GHC) was putting together an implementation plan to demonstrate how they would mobilise the community based 'Home First' Service, manage the staffing cohort, and link with adult social care and supply therapy.
- 23.3 Additionally, members were updated on the project to recommission the model of Advanced Mental Health Professionals (AMHP) delivery, which had been divided into three phases. Phases 1 and 2 were complete, and GCC was currently working with GHC on the final phase. Members noted that the new model of working for the Mental Health Social Work Service, whereby the work of mental health social workers would be focussed on mental health.
- 23.4 One member requested that examples of successful employment stories achieved through GCC employment projects be shared with the Committee. It was requested that an update on progress towards the specialisation of mental health social workers be brought back to the Committee as well.
- 23.5 There was also a query relating to the response times to the online Adult Social Care Safeguarding Adults Referral Form. It was noted that a response was usually provided within 24 hours.

24. DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

- 24.1 Sarah Scott, Director of Public Health, presented an update on the novel Coronavirus, Covid-19. It was noted that a fifth person had died in the UK from the virus the previous night; however the UK was still in the containment phase of the Government's 3 stage plan to address the outbreak.
- 24.2 It was noted that GCC had undertaken a number of actions to deal with the virus in the County, including liaising closely with Public Health England and NHS England; ensuring GCC's plans for a pandemic event were up to date and ready to be activated; holding weekly meetings of the Strategic Coordination Group involving Local Resilience Forum Stakeholders, chaired by the Director for Public Health; establishing strategic and tactical working groups to oversee GCC's response to the situation, and briefing Group Leaders.

- 24.3 It was recognised that communication with GCC staff and members was important, and Committee members were asked for feedback on the communication they had received so far, to ensure they were fully informed going forward. It was also recognised that members had a critical role to play regarding community resilience and communicating key messages. Work was currently underway with the Head of Communications on communicating these messages to members.
- 24.4 One member queried how county and parish councillors could provide advice in their communities; the economic impact of the Government's delay phase; and the role of councillors in ensuring compliance with government guidelines.
- 24.5 In response, the importance of councillors at all levels providing consistent messages was highlighted. The difficulty of balancing the economic impact and the health benefits of measures to prevent the spread of the virus was also acknowledged. Additionally, it was noted that current regulations allowed for enforced self-isolation.
- 24.6 Another member queried the role of councillors in tackling fake news about the virus and sought reassurance that the GCC Communications team were scanning for and combatting fake news. In response, the Committee was informed that queries on misinformation were being responded to; up to date information was being provided to schools; and key, consistent messages were being provided to members and staff.
- 24.7 One member commented on the different approaches being undertaken by organisations in response to the outbreak, noting that whilst some community meetings were being cancelled, events such as the Cheltenham Races were continuing.
- 24.8 In response to a query as to whether the virus could be spread through the post and parcel deliveries, it was explained that whilst this was unlikely, it was good practice to wash your hands as soon as possible after touching a parcel or mail.
- 24.9 It was queried whether contingency plans were in place for residents who receive meals on wheels and for children who receive free school meals, should schools close. The Director for Public Health explained that only a small number of people received meals on wheels in the County, and that older people could ask for help from neighbours, or order their deliveries online if they were more technologically able. She noted that the contingency plan for children receiving free school meals would need to be considered.
- 24.10 One member asked for clarification on the forecasted spread of the virus going forward, particularly in Gloucestershire. In response, it was explained that the Chief Medical Officer had acknowledged that nationally the virus would not be able to be contained, but exactly when the number of cases would peak was difficult to predict. Currently there were a few cases within the County, but the Committee was advised that there would be more, and that the virus would spread throughout the United Kingdom.

- 24.11 The Chair of the Committee, as the County Councillor for Tetbury, provided the Committee with an update on the first recorded cases of Covid-19 in the County, which had been in Tetbury. It was noted that the patients had self-isolated; those who had been in contact with them had been traced and given advice should they start experiencing any symptoms; and the school, where one of the patients worked, had been closed for a few days for deep cleaning. The local doctors' surgery and pharmacy had also been deep cleaned.
- 24.12 It was noted that a meeting had been held at the affected school, attended by the Director for Public Health and the Director of Education at GCC, and the County Councillor for Tetbury to reassure parents and answer any questions. The Chair paid tribute to the Director of Public Health and colleagues at Public Health England for their efficient and effective response to the situation.
- 24.13 Following a query relating to the information on coronavirus being provided to parishes, the Director for Public Health agreed to consider how best to communicate messages to parish clerks.
- 24.14 The Committee thanked the Director for Public Health, and colleagues both within GCC and in other organisations for their efficient response to the outbreak of Covid-19 within the County so far.
- 24.15 The Committee considered the other items included in the Director of Public Health's report. It was agreed that an item on the Marmot Review would be included on the work plan for consideration by the Committee in the Summer. It was requested that data on life expectancy within the County, divided by district, including where it had gone up or down, be provided as part of that item.

25. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT

- 25.1 Mark Astle, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the Chief Fire Officer Report to the Committee, highlighting, in particular, that a revisit by HMICFRS would take place in September 2020 to look at fire safety, and to see how well GFRS was progressing against its action plan, in addition to a full HMICFRS inspection which would take place in June 2021. Members were also advised on the implementation of the new structure, which was almost complete.
- 25.2 Members were informed that during the recent poor weather conditions, daily Tactical Coordinating Group meetings had taken place to coordinate the response to incidents of flooding. It was noted that the reaction from the public to the response of GFRS had been positive, and that GFRS continued to monitor the situation and take appropriate action with partners. The work of the Civil Protection Team in response to the flooding was also recognised.
- 25.3 One member queried whether GFRS had an appropriate budget to respond to incidents of flooding. Several members also thanked and praised GFRS and partners for their effective coordinated response to flooding in the County.

- 25.4 The Committee was advised that GFRS was reviewing its business continuity plans, particularly in relation to the Covid-19 outbreak, which would focus on ensuring greater support for the Civil Protection Team, and planning for and identifying key workers.
- 25.5 The impact of Brexit on Trading Standards was also highlighted to the Committee, in particular that Trading Standards could receive increased requests for advice from local businesses relating to imports and exports. In response to a query, it was understood that there were no plans for additional funding from the Government for Trading Standards.
- 25.6 One member highlighted their concern about the potential impact of Brexit on the capacity of Trading Standards. In response, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer explained that they were finding it difficult to fill vacancies in Trading Standards, and that reviews of medium term financial plans were being carried out to ensure services could be delivered. It was noted that there was still a lot of ambiguity regarding the impact of Brexit. Following a request, it was agreed that a report would be brought back on Trading Standards to the Committee in the Summer.
- 25.7 In response to a query regarding the regulation of fire safety in buildings, it was explained that GFRS was looking at partnership working with neighbouring counties to share resources on building fire safety, and that the National Fire Chiefs Council was considering the development of building fire safety going forward. There was also a member query regarding the role of the fire service as a statutory consultee in planning.
- 25.8 Additionally, questions were asked regarding national conversations around firefighters carrying out cardiac responses, and the use of fire estates by local communities.

26. PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 2019/20

- 26.1 Margaret Willcox, Sarah Scott and Mark Astle presented the performance data for Quarter 3 2019/20 for each of their service areas to the Committee.
- 26.2 Within Adult Social Care, the figures for the proportion of people with a Disability (or work limiting health condition) supported by GCC Forward Services in Employment for more than 52 weeks was highlighted as performing above target, as was the number of permanent admissions to residential and nursing care homes, which had reduced.
- 26.3 The only area performing below target was the percentage of service users who had received a review/re-assessment of their needs within the last 12 months. Margaret Willcox explained that a deliberate decision had been made against carrying out routine re-assessments, instead prioritising reviews, such as for those with learning disabilities. One member suggested extending the time frame for the completion of re-assessments, however in response it was explained that the targets were set nationally.

- 26.4 Following a member query, the data provided for carer quality of life would be checked, given that the figure had remained constant since 2015.
- 26.5 Within the Prevention, Wellbeing and Communities service area, the performance data for the percentage of eligible patients offered a NHS Health Check was highlighted as below target. In response to a query, Sarah Scott explained that the NHS Health Check was a Government mandated preventative health programme aimed at those aged between 40 and 70 years old, who did not already have a cardiovascular disease. The target was for 5 percent of this eligible population to receive a health check on a quarterly basis. It was noted that although payments had been increased to practices, the NHS Health Check was not a profitable service for them to offer, and a number of GPs did not find them useful. It was also noted that many people did not want to take time off work to attend their health check, and that men in particular were reluctant to attend.
- 26.6 The Committee was informed that the percentage of pregnant smokers achieving a quit after four weeks was above target. Following a query, it was agreed that the next Director of Public Health Report would include annual smoking statistics for the Committee to consider.
- 26.7 Members were also informed that the suicide rate per 100,000 population remained below target. It was explained that additional money had been received in the Council budget to tackle suicide rates in the County, which would enable initiatives to continue to be developed.
- 26.8 The Assistant Chief Fire Officer drew the Committee's attention to key performance data within his service area. In particular, it was noted that the number of Safe and Well visits undertaken was below target. It was explained that this was due to Service operational crews dedicating more time to core operational training, however the Prevention department had employed dedicated staff to assist with the more complex Safe and Well visits with the aim to increase the numbers undertaken.
- 26.9 The Committee was also informed that the number of killed and seriously injured people and children had increased, however this could be as a result of more accurate data being supplied by Gloucestershire Constabulary. It was explained, following a query, that under the new crash recording system, incidents that had previously not been considered serious had been reassessed.
- 26.10 There was a member query on the information being provided to families on road safety. It was explained that GCC and GFRS had funded a joint post to deliver road safety, and that a number of projects were run for schools. One member requested the details of road safety programmes offered for schools, so that they could be shared with local headteachers. In response to a further query as to how elderly people were being educated on road safety, it was explained that this was being addressed through the Safe and Well visits, and could be an area for consideration by the Road Safety Cabinet Panel, which was being chaired by Cllr Dave Norman, Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Parking and Libraries.

- 26.11 There was a query regarding the correlation between bad weather and the number of road incidents. In response, it was explained that there was often an increase in incidents in sunny weather due to its impact on driver attitudes, however this would be looked into.

27. LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

- 27.1 Emma Savage, Associate Director Self Care, Prevention and Diabetes, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, gave a presentation to the Committee on the work being undertaken within the County to tackle loneliness and social isolation.
- 27.2 Members were informed that 1 in 5 people would experience social isolation at some point in their lives, and that social isolation and loneliness was one of the seven priorities of the Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Members were also informed that the issue was a national priority, and that the UK had appointed the world's first Minister for Loneliness in 2018.
- 27.3 Members were provided with an overview of the importance of relationships; the causes of social isolation and loneliness, and how these could be prevented; and the approach in Gloucestershire to tackle the issue. The Gloucestershire approach included raising awareness of the issue and strengthening communities; providing interventional support during times of transition, such as through mentors at schools; and planning for the future, such as considering places where people could meet in new housing developments.
- 27.4 One member expressed their disappointment that the impact of transport on loneliness was not addressed within the presentation. The member explained that those without a car, especially the elderly, were more likely to consider themselves lonely than those with a car, and suggested that practical approaches to community transport should be considered by the Council.
- 27.5 Another member highlighted that even people with families close by could experience loneliness, and that some people would not admit to feeling lonely due to their pride. A member also commented on how it was difficult to reach people who were lonely due to their low self esteem and worth, and therefore it was often better to focus on trying to help these people to become proactive and feel like they had a role in society.
- 27.6 One member highlighted the importance of identifying individuals in communities who could bring people together. It was suggested that an item on the role of community connectors be included on the work plan for the Committee's consideration at a future meeting.

28. CARE HOME STRATEGY AND PROVISION

- 28.1 Margaret Willcox presented a brief report on the Care Home Strategy and care home provision to the Committee.

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- 28.2 In particular, the Committee was advised that the strategy aimed to take a 'place-based' approach, and therefore it was intended that District Plans would follow with a more detailed analysis of the need and provision of care homes for older people in each district of Gloucestershire. It was also noted that there was an opportunity to align the Integrated Locality Partnership Plans, which were in the early stages of development, with a new place base Market Position Statement, so that an integrated approach was taken across the entire Health and Social Care market.
- 28.3 In response to a member query regarding the Market Position Statement for Adult Social Care, it was explained that the statement would be refreshed every 2 to 3 years.
- 28.4 There was a further member query about the challenge of recruiting and retaining care workers in the future due to the impact of Brexit. It was explained that campaigns were being run to promote caring as a career, particularly within schools and colleges. The NHS was also running a national recruitment campaign. The impact of coronavirus on the care workforce was also highlighted to the Committee, notably that at any one time, 20 percent of the workforce could be affected. It was noted that the arrangements for beds during the outbreak were currently being considered.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 1.00 pm