

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 2 July 2020.

PRESENT: Councillors J Thompson (Chair), M Storey (Vice-Chair), C Cooke, D P Coupe, L Garvey, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, C McIntyre and J McTigue.

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel:-
Councillors M Saunders (substitute for Cllr Hill), B A Hubbard and D Rooney

Members of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel:-
Councillors J Platt (Chair), J A Walker, C Wright (substitute for Cllr Uddin) and G Wilson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mayor - Andy Preston
Councillor D Davison - Executive Member Adult Social Care and Public Health
Mark Graham - Director of Communications - South Tees NHS Foundation Trust
Katherine Warnock - South Tees Integration Programme Manager - NHS Tees Valley CCG

OFFICERS: M Adams, C Benjamin, S Bonner, C Breheny, G Cooper, R Horniman, C Lunn, S Reynolds, E Scollay and T Parkinson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Hill, Councillor Mawston and Councillor Z Uddin.

1 **MINUTES - OSB - 21 MAY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21 May were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 **MINUTES - OSB - 11 JUNE 2020**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11 June were submitted and approved as a correct record.

3 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which identified the forthcoming issues to be considered by the Executive as outlined in Appendix A to the report. The report provided the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the opportunity to consider whether any item contained within the Executive Forward Work Programme should be considered by the Board or referred to a Scrutiny Panel. The Democratic Services Officer advised the Board of the nature of the Forward Work Programme and that it was a standing item on OSB's agenda.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.

4 **MAYOR'S UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed the Mayor to the Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Board was advised that the Mayor had been invited to attend to provide an update in respect of the impact of Covid-19 on Middlesbrough, together with other pertinent issues.

The Mayor advised that he would respond to questions raised and the following issues were discussed.

- A Member of the Board queried what representations the Mayor was making to government and ministers to lobby for more funding for Middlesbrough? The Mayor advised that numerous representations had been made to government and to ministers in respect of securing additional funding for Middlesbrough and these efforts continued. However, despite these efforts it was not anticipated that Middlesbrough would receive any form of special treatment, as any allocation of resources from

- government would be made on a range of factors, as well as take into account the needs of all local authorities across the country.
- It was queried whether the Mayor was confident that the Council would receive the additional funding it required in light of the loss of income from the impact of Covid-19? The Mayor advised that discussions were continuing but there was no escaping the fact that COVID-19 had caused huge financial challenges for Local Authorities across the country. Conversations in terms of securing additional funding were ongoing. However, it was anticipated that next year would be extraordinarily challenging financially. The Chief Executive advised that the Council had received £9m from the government for directly related COVID costs, a figure which would more than likely cover the Council's direct costs. The other areas of significant concern however had been around lost income, inability to deliver savings and a lower Council Tax base / collection rate. The government had that day announced a range of financial packages to support local authorities including an extension to the time period over which any under collected Council Tax could be recovered, from a period of 1 year to a period of 3 years. In terms of lost income the government would refund Councils 72 per cent of the income they had lost through the COVID-19 period. The project budget shortfall was being revisited in light of these announcements and would be less than first anticipated.
 - In response to a query the Mayor advised that the MTFP had been discussed, as had the 2021/22 budget but at the moment there was more and more information being released by the government on a weekly basis. Issues were being considered all the time but sadly it was not possible to have a definitive position for next year at this moment.
 - Reference was made to the vacant Sainsbury's site at Middlehaven and whether the intention was for the site to be used as a COVID-19 testing station? The Mayor confirmed that the site was to be used as a COVID-19 testing station for the Tees Valley. Reassurances were offered that if anyone in Middlesbrough needed or wanted a test and were unable to get to the Sainsbury's site the Council would ensure they were able to get there. It was stated that lack of transport was not a barrier to being safe and healthy in Middlesbrough.
 - A member of the Board made reference to the possibility of developing testing facilities in local communities in places such as libraries and shopping centres. The Mayor acknowledged this point and advised that work was currently taking place to ensure that such facilities would be available in the near future. The point was also made that if individuals required a test and were unable to travel they could request a home testing kit.
 - A query was raised in relation to the anticipated timescale associated with the new local plan and clarification was sought in respect of the reasons for delay. The Mayor advised that the Council was scheduled to deliver a year behind the initial plan. However the view had been expressed by many residents that the previous plan had been developed against their interests and regardless of the interests of nature. It was emphasised that the existing plan from 2014 contained sufficient land to secure enough house building for the foreseeable future. The Council was on target to submit the revised local plan in October 2021, with a view to it being adopted in early 2022. The Mayor advised that there were no significant additional costs incurred by the delay.
 - Confirmation was also sought on the number of homes the Council was planning on delivering over the next 10 years. The Mayor stated that there was no target for that period of time and the current run rate was 550 homes per year. This was scheduled to continue for the next 2-3 years but beyond that it was not known at this stage.
 - A number of questions were raised in respect of Children's services, including the costs associated with out-of-area placements, as well as the efforts being made to secure permanency for looked after children. The Mayor acknowledged the significant amount of work undertaken by Children's Services and the endorsement recently received from the Department for Education's appointed Commissioner in respect of the Council's improvement journey to date. It was advised that Children's Services staff were working particularly hard to reduce the number of children looked after out of area. The number had been ballooning at £12 million, 68 children were costing £9million per year. There would be some new in-house provision becoming available in the next few months but the demand was not going to go away anytime soon.

However, after a number of years of increasing costs there were plans in place to stabilise those costs. In respect of securing permanency for looked after children the Mayor confirmed that a permanence policy was currently being drafted.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for his attendance and contributions to the meeting and advised that a further invite would be extended.

AGREED that the content of the information provided be noted, and the requested actions be undertaken.

5 **MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL COVID-19 - RESPONSE, RECOVERY AND LOCAL OUTBREAK PLANS**

The Chief Executive delivered a presentation to the Board in respect of Covid-19 and the Council's Response, Recovery and Local Outbreak Plan, which had been published on 30 June 2020.

The presentation covered the following topics:

Local Area Outbreak Plans - Members heard that:

- Every upper-tier Local Authority was required to develop a plan during June that put in place systems to manage and contain Covid-19 outbreaks within their geographical area. Eleven Councils had been selected to form a Good Practice Network (GPN) and to act as 'Beacon's' - Middlesbrough was one of them;
- Plans needed to be centred around seven themes: Care homes and schools; High risk places, locations and communities; Local testing capacity; Contract tracing in complex settings; Data integration; Vulnerable people; and Governance and Local Boards;
- The plan was structured around an interconnected Strategic Command Group, a Local Outbreak Engagement Board, and a Health Protection Board;
- The plan needed to be intelligence-led in order to: Plan and prepare for outbreak scenarios; Prevent, minimise and manage outbreaks; Support vulnerable people; Ensure services worked for all communities; Delivered Tier 1b Contact Tracing; and for Deployment of testing; and in order to achieve the best chance of success, the Council required: Sufficient testing capacity to meet projected demand; Quick turnaround of tests; Data at very regular intervals providing the detail of positive tests within the local area; Powers to enable local lockdowns; and the money to implement the plan.
- Although numbers were falling, Middlesbrough remained relatively high in national rankings for rate of infection and deaths;
- The response was going well to date;
- The Business Support Grant process was operating well and a discretionary element had been introduced;
- Shielding hubs continued, but demand had dipped;
- Staff support was being enhanced through provision of equipment, etc ; and
- Finances remained a major concern.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his attendance and contribution to the meeting.

6 **COVID-19 UPDATE: HEALTH, ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

The Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Councillor D Davison, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration, Erik Scollay, and the Director of Public Health South Tees, Mark Adams were in attendance to provide OSB with an update regarding the department's Covid-19 response / recovery plans.

Kathryn Warnock, South Tees Integration Programme Manager for NHS Tees Valley Clinical Commissioning Group, and Mark Graham, Director of Communications for South Tees NHS Foundation Trust, were also in attendance to provide information to the Board.

In terms of Public Health England (PHE) testing data the Committee was advised that up to 6 June 2020, there had been 686 confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in Middlesbrough. The ward level breakdown of these cases was highlighted and it was noted that in Middlesbrough Longlands & Beechwood had the highest number of cases with 114, which was significantly higher than other wards. This was followed by Coulby Newham, Berwick Hills & Pallister and Central wards.

Positive cases as an age standardised rate per 100,000 population for each ward in Middlesbrough showed that Stainton & Thornton had the highest number of cases as a proportion of the ward population, followed by Longlands & Beechwood and Central ward. It was highlighted that when comparing the rate of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 with the percentage of Care Home beds by ward there was a clear link between higher number of beds and higher COVID cases.

- Longlands & Beechwood and Stainton & Thornton accounted for a third of all care home beds (33% or 594 beds) and had high rates per 100,000.
- The latest R-number range for the UK was 0.7 - 0.9, with a growth range rate for the UK of between -4 per cent to -2 per cent per day.

Following the presentation Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions and the following questions were raised:-

- A member of the Board made reference to the Pillar 2 figures and queried when these would be provided and shared with the Board? The Director of Health (South Tees) advised that the Pillar 2 data referred to the figures from the national scheme, which included the drive through testing centre at the Sainsbury's site, the mobile testing units and home testing kits. Pillar 1 was the NHS lab data. Currently aggregate figures for the whole borough were provided and these were not broken down any further. Data protection agreements had been signed to ensure in the future the Council would receive more granular data, positive COVID-19 cases by postcode etc.
- Reference was also made to information provided at the recent Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel at which it was stated that all testing for Care Homes was currently carried out in Milton Keynes and although once inputted the information was quickly available, there was an issue with couriers locally and this was hampering the speed of testing.
- A member queried the name of the organisation being used to employ the couriers, and how much it was costing the Council. It was advised that a number of different couriers were used and there was no direct cost to the Council. A number of different testing arrangements had been put in place by the CQC and there had been some initial issues, the issue of the speed of the couriers no longer remained an issue.
- With regard to the homelessness slides, it was queried how the figures presented compared with homeless presentations, as distinct from acceptances? If they were similar did the Council normally house all that applied, if they were different what assistance did the Council ordinarily provide to those who presented as homeless but did not qualify for access to housing? The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised that the Homeless Prevention Act 2017 had changed significantly the way in which local authorities dealt with homelessness, with less time being spent on assessing an individual's eligibility and more time spent on prevention, as well as what could be done to support individuals. It was confirmed that throughout the COVID-19 period anyone presenting as homeless had been provided with short-term accommodation.
- The Chair stated that the focus on tackling Covid-19 had resulted in a reduced service to people with other conditions and it was queried what effect this had had on waiting lists and Cancer screening. It was also queried whether there had been an increase in demand for Mental Health services? The Director of Communications at ST NHS FT advised that during April, May, June the Trust carried out more than 3400 surgical procedures, the reason the Trust was able to provide this level of activity was several fold. The estate at JCUH was split into COVID-19 and NON COVID-19 sites. Surgeons worked very closely with cancer physicians and all steps were taken to minimise the risk for cancer patients. Stereotactic Radiotherapy had also been used as an effective alternative to surgery and JCUH was very fortunate to have these

facilities available onsite. Reference was made to endoscopy procedures, which had been postponed throughout the NHS in line with the risks associated of performing endoscopies during the pandemic. It was noted, however, that diagnostic endoscopies had resumed and were now operating a seven day service. The Director of Communications at ST NHS FT advised that as a consequence of all non-urgent and non-emergency services being postponed at the height of the pandemic a catch up programme around those procedures would be required.

- A Member queried whether when a resident who had been in the care of Middlesbrough Council passed away was it general practice for the Social Worker or a member of the team to contact the family and check on their wellbeing and see if there was anything that could be done to assist them at that trying time. The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised that it would be entirely dependent on the circumstances involved in each individual case.
- Reference was made to the fact that BAME Covid hospital admissions in South Tees were at 11% when one national study had put the UK figure at 35%. It was understood that this was at least partly due to the age profile of the BAME community in South Tees. The view was expressed by Members that there was significant concern and worry within the BAME community that they were experiencing negativity from local people and in some cases hate crimes have been observed due to the perception that the BAME community was more susceptible to COVID-19. In light of the circumstances in South Tees it was requested that the facts around local BAME community and Covid be communicated and publicised to give reassurance to local people that ethnicity was less of a factor in South Tees. The Chief Executive advised that this point would be taken on board and the necessary action taken.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration, the Director of Public Health, the South Tees Integration Programme Manager (Tees Valley CCG) and the Director of Communications (ST NHS FT) for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

7

SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE

The Scrutiny Chair's in attendance provided an update in respect of the work undertaken by their respective panels since the last meeting of the Board.

AGREED that the information provided be noted.