

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday 2 November 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Davison, D Rooney and R Sands.

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillor D Coupe.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** E Craigie (Teesside Live).

**OFFICERS:** C Lunn and E Scollay.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors T Higgins, D Jones, G Purvis and J Walker.

22/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

22/20 **MINUTES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 5 OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 5 October 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**\*\* SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**ORDERED** that, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 5, the panel agreed to vary the order of business to consider the remaining agenda items as follows: 6, 5, 4, 7 and 8.

22/21 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE**

The Chair provided a verbal update on the matters that were considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 25 October 2022. Amongst those was an update from Councillor Coupe, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion. As the respective Executive Member for this Scrutiny Panel, the Chair had invited Councillor Coupe to this meeting to provide details of what had been discussed, and to provide any further details and/or answer any questions that Members may have.

Councillor Coupe tabled a copy of the presentation slides that were provided at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting and, during discussion, provided the following information with input from the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration:

- Regarding current key issues and the provision of warm spaces, Members heard that a number of organisations had identified space and work was being undertaken to increase this list. There were various threads of work taking place both across the Council (e.g. with Libraries and Community Hubs) and with external organisations (such as the NHS and Health and Wellbeing Board) in respect of this work. It was indicated that finding appropriate space in particular areas of the town could pose some issues. In terms of raising awareness of available space, a Member commented that it would be useful if a list could be assembled once all places had been identified, which would also help smaller organisations already offering a space to publicise this. Consideration was given to the existing support being provided to individuals, with some agencies already providing space (though not necessarily referred to as a 'warm space'). Coordination work, including further discussion around housing and other related issues, currently continued.
- A pilot project was currently taking place with GP practices and supporting GPs in relation to identifying cases of domestic abuse. Members discussed changes to services and the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS).

- In relation to COVID-19 and flu vaccinations, the booster programme continued. Reference was made to the difficult flu season experienced in Australia, which was often seen as a barometer for the UK. Consequently, there were concerns for the NHS as the winter season approached. In terms of statistical COVID-19 information, reference was made to the ONS resource and the information available via that.

The Chair thanked Councillor Coupe for his attendance; Councillor Coupe left the meeting at this point.

## NOTED

22/22

### **DRAFT FINAL REPORT - THE ROLE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) IN SUPPORTING ADULT SOCIAL CARE (WITH A FOCUS ON COVID-19 AND RECOVERY)**

The Democratic Services Officer submitted a draft final report and recommendations for the panel's consideration.

During discussion, a number of matters were explored, as follows:

- The use of rooms in Council buildings, VCS premises and businesses within the town. Consideration was given to:
  - The availability of rooms;
  - Health and safety issues;
  - The Council's move to Fountain Court and the size and design of that building;
  - Questions as to which organisations would potentially share space; and
  - The number of VCS organisations within Middlesbrough and consequential management of expectations vs. delivery.
- Relationship management with the VCS. Consideration was given to:
  - A previous Link Officer role within Culture and Communities;
  - The role of Link Officer (i.e. what this involved, the level this was offered at and how support could potentially cross directorates within the authority);
  - The link to the VCS through MVDA and the relationship with them;
  - The creation of wider relationships with the VCS;
  - The Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the bringing together of the whole community;
  - A reduction in Council resources and therefore other potential ways to link in with organisations, such as through the use of technology (e.g. links to the Council website or a related portal);
  - Pre-existing links with community organisations and how these were maintained through first contact in Community Hubs and Libraries; how relationships could be managed through directorates; sign posting and call handling;
  - Volunteer programmes operated by MVDA; and
  - Work that was currently taking place in respect of transforming local communities and the establishment of a network to provide support (reference was made to the work of Ageing Better Middlesbrough and the intended retention of its principles following the programme's conclusion).
- Establishing a link between the VCS and the Council's Emergency Planning team to assist with policy / practice statement development. Examples of the recent lockdown periods, and other possible events such as a fire breaking out, were provided to demonstrate the importance of having stringent processes in place to ensure that support services could continue. Reference was made to potential incorporation into existing plans and submission of these to the Emergency Planning Committee.
- Support in accessing online resources. Members discussed:
  - Existing teaching programmes to assist people;
  - The diminishing number of people that did not have internet access;
  - The Council's digital programme to help improve access – and a potential way of targeting support;

- Programmes delivered by the Staying Put Agency and the challenges associated with encouraging individuals to learn and to keep using provided equipment;
  - The importance of social contact and learning from friends / local support network;
  - The use of personal budgets to fund equipment and then link into social network activity (which was very useful during the pandemic); and
  - The wide variety of needs covered by the circa. 600 VCS organisations within Middlesbrough.
- The large amount of work involved in establishing and maintaining contact directories, which had previously been undertaken with varying degrees of success. It was felt that, on the assumption that internet access was in place, it had never been easier to locate and contact local resources / providers.
  - Resources and funding issues, particularly in the current economic climate. It was felt that many organisations were struggling at present and there was competition for funding. Grant funding came with conditions but little advice around how best to utilise the monies, and it was usually an insufficient amount. There was a view that a mechanism was needed in order for bids to be scrutinised and conditions put in. Relationships needed to be both collaborative and professional.
  - Social media channels and how the Council could use these to support the VCS.
  - Corporate volunteers. Members discussed:
    - Staff training and development;
    - The impact on resources and potential compounding of existing recruitment issues;
    - Reliance upon the VCS to approach the Council and offer opportunities;
    - Additional costs to the authority; and
    - Promotion / demonstration of the work of the Council.
  - A Member requested that an additional note be added to the report to indicate how vibrant and diverse the VCS in Middlesbrough was, and how it enhanced the service provided to residents. The panel agreed that this would be added to the conclusions section of the report.
  - A Member made reference to the Welfare Rights service and indicated that it was the only service in Middlesbrough that would support individuals with appeals. It was requested that further information pertaining to this (i.e. key statistics) be sought and added to the report. The panel agreed to this.

Following discussion, the following recommendations were agreed for inclusion in the final report:

- a) ***That exploratory work be undertaken to identify opportunities for more collaborative working between the Council and the VCS, particularly in relation to the availability of meeting space. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.***
- b) ***That the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration works with LMT to explore the most effective form of relationship management between the Council and the VCS. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.***
- c) ***That a link between the VCS and the Council's Emergency Planning Team be established to assist with policy/practice statement development. To be undertaken by Spring/Summer 2023.***

**AGREED** that, subject to the inclusion of the additional information and agreed recommendations, the final report on 'The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (With a Focus on COVID-19 and Recovery)' be approved and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised that there had been no substantive developments made since the last panel meeting, though reiterated to Members

that the higher level of the Integrated Care System (ICS) was now in place.

**NOTED**

22/24

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 30 NOVEMBER 2022**

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for Wednesday, 30 November 2022 at 10.30 a.m.

Members were advised that the Independent Chair of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB) would be in attendance to provide updates regarding the Board's Annual Report for 2021/22 and Strategic Plan for 2022-25.

**NOTED**

22/25

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

Update – Charging Reforms and Fair Cost of Care

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised that submissions on Fair Cost of Care had been made to the Government on 14 October 2022. A response was currently awaited.

Performance Reports

A quarterly performance report in respect of increases in demand for Adult Social Care services would be provided to the panel from early next year. IT Services were currently building the dashboard that would deliver the reports and it was anticipated that the system would go live in December 2022.

**NOTED**