

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Tuesday 25 October 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors M Saunders (Chair), T Mawston (Vice-Chair), C Cooke, D Davison, C Hobson, D Jones, D McCabe, C McIntyre, J Platt and J Thompson

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillors D Coupe

**OFFICERS:** C Breheny, E Scollay, C Benjamin and M Adams

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors B Hubbard and M Storey

20/123 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

20/124 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 19 JULY 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 19 July 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/125 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 21 SEPTEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21 September 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/126 **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.

A Member of the Board queried whether the items on the Forward Work Programme allocated to the department of Children's Services would progress as indicated given the forthcoming departure of the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Director of Children's Care. In response the Monitoring Officer advised that confirmation on this would sought and written confirmation provided to the Board following the meeting.

**NOTED**

20/127 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER UPDATE**

The Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion, Cllr David Coupe, was in attendance to update the Board on his aims and aspirations, progress made to date and to highlight any emerging issues relating to his portfolio.

The Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration, the Director of Public Health (South Tees) and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services were also in attendance. The Executive Member opened by thanking the Board for the invite and advised that he would highlight some of the key areas he had been working on, as well as some of the emerging issues relating to his portfolio. During the presentation the following key points were made:-

- In terms of the broader context it was advised that it was becoming an increasingly challenging local environment for staff within these service areas, as they were dealing with increasingly complex "chaotic" users of services, the impact of the

increasing cost of living and the on-going impact of COVID-19. They were managing these challenges in the context of the current financial restrictions for both the Council and for partner organisations. There was also uncertainty around the impact and resourcing of central government's reforms of Adult Social Care (charging reforms and changes to the ways in which care providers are funded – would they go ahead and how would they be funded?).

- It was advised that plans were in place for the commencement of CQC inspections of Adult Social Care from 2023 and the Council was connecting into the emerging Integrated Care Board (ICB) work programme in order to support the delivery of shared aspirations to reduce health inequalities and improve population health. In addition the delivery of the national drugs strategy "From harm to hope: A 10-year drugs plan to cut crime and save lives" was also high on the agenda.
- The Executive Member highlighted the on-going work and key current issues in which he was involved and all of the issues were detailed in his PowerPoint presentation, which had been shared with Members and was available via the modern.gov system.

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

- In response to a query regarding the monies received by the Council during the pandemic for the provision of workforce support in Care Homes it was advised that the Council had developed a mechanism to disperse the funding, which had been monitored through the contracting and commissioning teams. The Member was advised that if the question could be submitted in writing a detailed response in respect of the figures could be provided.
- In terms of the way in which the Council and its partners were responding to the cost of living crisis it was advised that a multi-agency response was in place and the cold weather plan would also soon come into effect. The Council was working with the NHS to identify those at particular risk of being unable to heat their homes and community warm spaces across the town had been identified. Efforts were also being made to understand the offer from the Revenue and Benefits Team and where any professional went into a cold home personalised advice would be provided. The Live Well Centre in central Middlesbrough would ensure that people were also supported to connect into other opportunities. It was about looking at what else could be done to support the individual – addressing loneliness for example. The Sport England programme funding was being used to support the initiative to ensure that warm spaces were not simply a place to go to be warm but that would lead to ongoing connections.
- In response to a query it was confirmed that the substance misuse service had been brought back in-house.
- Reference was made to the ending of the Heroin Assisted Treatment (HAT) programme in Middlesbrough and Members of the Board expressed the view that the decision by the Police and Crime Commissioner to withdraw his funding had been really disappointing. The Executive Member advised that he was extremely supportive of the programme and still backed it 100 per cent. Unfortunately the Police and Crime Commissioner had struggled to make the case to fund it, stating that it was a health issue, and although the Council had funded it for a short period it was unable to sustain the funding. It was advised that the current patients, of which there were approximately 10, would continue to be supported and safely transitioned onto another form of treatment.
- The Board expressed dismay that a great service had been lost at a time when there was an increase in the number of drug related deaths due to overdose. The Executive Member advised that he would love to find another way to source the programme and was happy to push as hard as he could for it to be funded. Reference was made to the funding contributed by Middlesbrough Council to Cleveland Police to increase the number of Police Officers and whether the PCC's office could therefore be asked to contribute to the scheme by the Board.
- A Member of the Board advised that the Health Scrutiny had had a similar discussion at its recent meeting and had determined that it wished to write to the PCC, along with the Health Secretary and the Home Affairs Select Committee. Representatives from the Home Affairs Select Committee had recently visited the HAT scheme in Middlesbrough and had appeared on national television on 11 October 2022 praising the effectiveness of the scheme in terms of the savings generated in court time and Police time. The Executive Member advised that he would certainly be supportive of

such action and having previously been Vice-Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel during its undertaking of a review on Opioid Dependency all of the evidence he heard had persuaded him that it was an excellent scheme and he would be very keen to see it continue.

- Reference was made to the food hygiene star system and the recent press coverage in relation to a small number of premises. In response it was advised that there were over 1000 eateries in Middlesbrough and only a very small percent had any problems identified. Whilst undertaking visits Environmental Health staff did on occasion experience situations whereby they would need to close a business. However, Environmental Health staff worked to a legislative framework and depending on what they found appropriate action would be taken. It was advised that if a premises received zero stars it was obvious that improvements had to be made and support would be provided to ensure the premises was brought up to standard. The Director of Adult Social Care advised that he would be happy to arrange an all Member Briefing on the Food Hygiene Star System.
- In response to a query regarding digital roll out it, it was advised that City Fibre had recently attend a local community council meeting and advised that it planned to cover great pockets of the area, although the south of the town was more complicated. It was anticipated that 5G coverage would be ongoing until 2025 and would cover as much of Middlesbrough as possible.
- A query was raised in respect of telephone access to the Registrars Service and the Monitoring Officer advised that this information would be sought and fed back to Members following the meeting.
- In response to a query on the issue of bed blocking it was advised that this was an issue that had occupied the most management time over the last 10 years and one which obscured the complexity of the issue. The sheer volume of people attending A&E and the availability of resources in the community at the point of discharge meant it was a multifaceted issue. The Director of Adult Social Care advised that the Council was working very closely with the Integrated Care System (ICS), as there was a need to ensure that we worked hand in hand with GP's and the ambulance to prevent people ending up in hospital. It was acknowledged that there was a whole discussion to had on this issue.

The Chair thanked the Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Public Protection and Digital Inclusion for his comprehensive presentation and contribution to the meeting.

**AGREED** as follows:-

1. That a letter be written to the Police and Crime Commissioner highlighting the concerns of the Board in relation to the ending of the Heroin Assisted Treatment (HAT) programme in Middlesbrough.
2. That an all Member Briefing on the Food Hygiene Star System be arranged by the Director of Adult Social Care Services.

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## **SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE**

Each Scrutiny Chair provided an update on the work undertaken by their respective panel's as follows:-

### Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel

The last meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on 5 October 2022.

The panel received an update from the Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration in respect of integration work that had taken place between health and social care.

Members then heard from both the Director and the Head of Strategic Commissioning and Procurement in relation to 'The Impact of the Energy and Cost of Living Crises on Caring for Vulnerable Adults'. Following receipt of this information, the panel agreed that rather than continue with this topic as a short term scrutiny review, because issues would be present for the foreseeable future, updates would be provided periodically. The next update would be received on 30 November 2022.

The panel's next meeting will take place on the 2 November 2022, when consideration of the draft final report of 'The Role of the VCS in Supporting Adult Social Care (With a Focus on COVID-19 and Recovery)' would be undertaken.

#### Children & Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel

The Children & Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel's last meeting was held on 10 October 2022.

In respect of the scrutiny panel's 2021 review of Behaviour, Discipline and Bullying in Schools, Caroline Cannon - the Council's Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services and the Head of Inclusion, Assessment and Review had attended to provide:

- an update on the progress made with the implementation of the agreed recommendations / actions; and
- information and data demonstrating the impact of the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach Model.

The information received had demonstrated to the panel that there was emerging data, case study and impact evidence to suggest that the Inclusion and Outreach Model was having a positive impact for children, families and schools.

At the meeting, the scrutiny panel also considered and agreed the Terms of Reference for its review of Youth Offending and Partnership Working with Schools.

#### Children & Young People's Social Care and Scrutiny Panel

The Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had last met on 24 October 2022.

The South Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership Manger had attended the meeting to present the STSCP's Annual Report for 2021/22. The Panel had heard details of the Partnership's work over the previous year, including details of the numbers of serious case reviews and training provided to strategic partners.

The Scrutiny Panel's next meeting was scheduled to be held on 14 November 2022.

#### Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel

The last meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny was held on 20 October 2022 and the panel discussed the Council's strategies for dealing with off road bikes.

The Council's Operational Community Safety Manager was in attendance to provide the update but unfortunately the representative from Cleveland Police had been unable to attend.

The Scrutiny Panel's next meeting was scheduled to be held on 14 November 2022.

#### Economic Development, Environment and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

In the Vice Chair's absence the Democratic Services Officer advised that the last meeting of the EDEI Scrutiny Panel had been held on 12 October 2022. The Panel had discussed the topic of prevention of damage to grass verges with key officers from Environment and Commercial Services. Information had been provided with regard to potential prevention measures including legal powers that were available to the Council. The Chair had suggested that a representative of Thirteen Housing should be invited to the next meeting for further discussion on this topic.

In addition the Panel had received an overview of Nutrient Neutrality – its new scrutiny topic – from the Head of Planning.

At the next meeting, on 9 November 2022, the Panel was scheduled to receive the annual Flood Risk Management Update and also discuss the Work Programme for the rest of this

year.

### Health Scrutiny Panel

The last meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel was held on 11 October 2022. At that meeting the Director at North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Integrated Care Board (ICB) was in attendance to update the panel on a consultation exercise currently being undertaken in respect of proposed changes to the provision of Integrated and Urgent Care in Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland.

The Director at NENC ICB had explained to the panel that having looked at the models of care in place across the five Tees Valley authorities at present Middlesbrough was the only one not to have an integrated / urgent care facility. It was therefore proposed that an integrated urgent care service be provided at James Cook University Hospital. The Panel heard details about how this would be developed and it was advised that if the proposals were approved then the facility would open in August 2023.

In addition to the above a regional health scrutiny update was provided to the panel on the work undertaken by the Tees Valley Health Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 23 September 2023. The scrutiny panel also considered the areas on which it wished to focus for its review on Dental Health and the Impact of Covid-19. Finally, an update was provided on the panel's previous review on Opioid Dependency.