

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL**

A meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel was held on Wednesday, 13 October 2021.

**PRESENT:** Councillors J Platt (Chair), G Wilson (Vice-Chair), D Coupe, D Davison, D Jones, G Purvis, D Rooney and J Walker.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor T Higgins;  
J Booth - Programme Manager, Ageing Better Middlesbrough; and  
E Howitt - Chief Executive Officer, Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind.

**OFFICERS:** L Grabham, C Lunn and J McNally.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**MINUTES - ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - 1 SEPTEMBER 2021**

The minutes of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 1 September 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**INTEGRATION OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - VERBAL UPDATE**

Item deferred.

**AGEING BETTER MIDDLESBROUGH (ABM) - UPDATE AND FUTURE/LEGACY PLANNING**

Ageing Better Middlesbrough's Programme Manager and Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind's Chief Executive Officer delivered a presentation to the panel, which covered the following topics:

- Ageing Better Middlesbrough – Recap; a review of the (initially 6-year) £6m National Lottery Community Funded programme that had operated since 2015 and which, owing to the pandemic, had been extended until March 2022. The programme, which worked to reduce loneliness and isolation for people aged 50+ in Middlesbrough, was a partnership of organisations led by Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind and managed by a Core Partnership, including older people and stakeholders. It was indicated that a lot of positive work had been carried-out to date, with key learning achieved. Members heard of the activities being undertaken, including a more focused approach towards 1:1 services in response to the pandemic; mental health therapy; digital inclusion; intergenerational activity; and falls partnership work.
- Festival of Ageing Better – over 130 individuals had attended the event between 20 September 2021 and 20 October 2021; the first in-person event since the start of the pandemic.
- Age Friendly: Capacity Building – this was the primary project currently being worked on to assist with Ageing Better Middlesbrough's legacy planning. In partnership with Middlesbrough Council, Public Health, the NHS and the Voluntary and Community Sector, Ageing Better had developed a 'Get Ready for Age Friendly Middlesbrough' training programme, together with a suite of awareness training in respect of matters such as sensory, dementia, falls and digital inclusion.
- Age Friendly Middlesbrough Consultation – to assist with the development of the programme, both a digital and paper consultation document / survey had been created; over 250 responses had been received to date. It was indicated that a link to the digital survey would be circulated to Councillors after the meeting.
- Legacy – Age Friendly Middlesbrough – Public Health's vision was "To make Middlesbrough an Age Friendly Town, where people of all ages can live healthy and active lives. Where people can continue to stay in their homes, participate in the activities that they value, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible". To create an age friendly community, it was explained that eight components needed

to work together: Transportation; Housing; Social Participation; Respect and Social Inclusion; Civic Participation and Employment; Communication and Information; Community Support; and Health Service, Outdoor Spaces and Buildings.

- World Health Organisation (WHO) Process – it was explained that to gain status or ‘stamp approval’ by the WHO, an application would need to be submitted prior to the end of the Ageing Better Middlesbrough programme in March 2022. The process, which included co-designing the programme with older people and viewing policies and services through the lens of an older person, as well as gaining political support, was outlined to the panel.
- ‘Centre for Ageing Better’ – a short video was played to Members.
- ‘Please, have a seat’ project – Members heard that this initiative encouraged places and businesses to offer seats to people (not necessarily older people) whilst they were away from home. Window stickers were provided to businesses and there was some funding available for smaller businesses to assist with purchasing comfortable seating. Businesses could sign-up via the Middlesbrough Council website.
- ‘Transport Guide 2021’ – Ageing Better Middlesbrough had launched an age friendly guide to assist individuals in accessing transport, also working with authorities and bus operators to create a transport card.
- Plans for the Future – it was explained to the panel that plans focused on connecting communities and organisations, and upon action at a local level, including Age Friendly Charter and creation of a ‘Toilet Map’. Age Friendly activity was now detailed on the Middlesbrough Council website. It was highlighted that resources were limited, with only one person in Public Health assigned to take work forward post-Ageing Better Middlesbrough. Events to mark the end of the programme would be held on the first and third of March 2022.
- Sustainability Work – it was indicated that although Age Friendly Middlesbrough would be the programme’s largest legacy, work on other sustainability projects to continue good practice for the future was also taking place. Amongst these were projects relating to hoarding (which had become a large issue during the pandemic, and the need to influence awareness to tackle it in the future); and Social Prescribing Steering Group work (i.e. developing this further with GPs which, to date, had been particularly successful). Reference was made to a work project that had commenced in April 2020 with five Members of staff. Following a recent recruitment cycle, this had increased to 17 and was highlighted as a particularly effective piece of work that had grown from the Ageing Better Middlesbrough programme.
- Our Learning – it was highlighted that a number of learning reports were available on Ageing Better Middlesbrough’s website, including those pertaining to Chronic Loneliness; Digital Inclusion; Engaging Marginalised Communities; Intergenerational Learning; and Working with Middlesbrough Men. Reference was made to evaluation work undertaken by Teesside University following an internal secondment in 2021/22, and to a final report provisionally entitled ‘Recommendations for an Age Friendly Middlesbrough: Systems, Structures, Partnerships’, which would be published in March 2022.
- Impact of the end of Ageing Better Middlesbrough – the panel heard that the end of the programme would have significant impact, including: Slower recovery from Covid for the older population; Increased social exclusion and increased levels of loneliness and isolation; Further widening health inequalities; Increasing demands on services and further increased waiting times; Disparities in health and social care; and Inequity of access for increasing ageing population.

Following the presentation, Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member made reference to the number of participants / beneficiaries over the course of the Ageing Better Middlesbrough programme – 4,350 over six years – and queried the number of 250 for the final seventh year. In response, it was explained that the programme had changed significantly due to the pandemic and was much smaller in terms of delivery this year. Support was being provided on a 1:1 basis, with work being focused on the ‘hardest to reach’ individuals.

In response to an enquiry regarding volunteers, the panel heard that there had been fewer active volunteers this year due to reduced scale of activities (approximately eight). Engagement work had been taking place with other organisations to ensure that individuals could continue to receive support once the Ageing Better Middlesbrough programme had come to an end. Reference was made to the recent ‘Festival of Ageing Better’ event where

over 20 organisations had been in attendance.

A Member made reference to social prescribing work and queried the number of GP surgeries that had been reached in Middlesbrough. In response, it was explained that work had been undertaken with all GP surgeries across three Primary Care Networks (PCNs). Proactivity levels did vary, but referrals were being received from each of them. GP champions had been identified in order to assist; GPs had recognised the wider support and the need for it. In relation to digital work, it was explained that Ageing Better Middlesbrough had its own digital initiative and was working with both the Hope Foundation and GPs. Support with digital matters could be provided to individuals that had been referred by GPs.

A Member queried how the recent 'Festival of Ageing Better' event had been advertised. In response, it was explained that the event had been primarily focused on Ageing Better Middlesbrough's beneficiaries, as opposed to a wider base. Invitations were shared through networks and partnerships and also posted directly to previous members (with a copy of the consultation survey). All tickets were sold out.

A Member made reference to the recent Bilsdale transmitter fire and the impact that this had had. It was queried whether Ageing Better Middlesbrough were able to support older people without a television service at the moment. In response, it was agreed that the damage to the mast had caused significant issues. Reference was made to work being undertaken with BBC Tees to provide digital radios and support individuals to access online services to listen to the radio. There was no direct support being provided at the moment as this was not in the available resource, but this would be reviewed.

In response to an enquiry regarding beneficiaries, Members were informed that the ratio of 70% female to 30% male had received support, mainly in the 60-79 age range, with 10% being in the outlying ages. It was indicated that some individuals on the programme were aged 100. 50% of the 4,350 individuals accessing services had come from the most deprived wards. A variety of different activities had been undertaken to support individuals, which ranged from addressing broad issues to focusing on more intense, in-depth work. A myriad of health and other social issues had been identified beyond matters of loneliness and social isolation. Brief consideration was given to the amount of funding available to organisations at the present time and the importance of partnership working. Reference was made to social prescribing work and the utilisation of resources to provide support to those individuals who required it the most. Consideration was given to statutory funded psychological therapies services, and the importance of sharing experiences to ensure that they could be continued in future.

With regards to mental health therapies, Members heard that these services were not time limited and had therefore been able to extend further than statutory services. The needs of those individuals aged 50+ could be different and it was important that this was recognised by support providers. Cost analysis work in respect of some services where priorities could potentially lie in the future was currently being carried-out.

A Member made reference to the components required to create an age friendly community and commented on the availability of suitable housing for older people. It was felt that current housing developments did not provide sufficient space - the example of available accommodation for live-in carers was provided. The Chief Executive Officer of Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind indicated the intention of Ageing Better Middlesbrough's legacy to be 'Age Friendly Middlesbrough', indicating the dependence on Councillors, the wider community and stakeholders to help take this forward and support the work. It was hoped that the age friendly agenda would help to influence future housing, and the approaches taken. The Ageing Better Middlesbrough Programme Manager explained that an age friendly steering group had been established and there was intention to develop this further through the creation of sub-groups. It was pointed out that housing was certainly on the agenda, but it was important that all stakeholders engaged with those forums. Members commented on the systems operated by social housing providers in allocating properties; the requirement for Councillors and others to lobby for change where they felt it was required; and on the role of the planning and development process.

The panel commended the work of all those involved in the Ageing Better Middlesbrough programme and conveyed both their thanks and congratulations for all of the progress achieved.

The Chair thanked Ageing Better Middlesbrough's Programme Manager and Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind's Chief Executive Officer for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

**AGREED:**

- 1.) That the presentation slides and link to the Ageing Better survey would be forwarded to Councillors; and
- 2.) That the information, as presented, be noted.

**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 8 September 2021.

**NOTED**

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

The next meeting of the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel had been scheduled for 10 November 2021.

A Member made reference to verbal reports that had been provided at several different Committee meetings recently and requested that, where possible, written reports be provided in future.

**NOTED**

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

None.

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The resolution to exclude the press and the public was agreed.

**UPDATE: ASTER CARE HOME**

The Head of Strategic Commissioning and Procurement provided an update in respect of Aster Care Home.

**NOTED**