

# COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE

10 JANUARY 2019

## PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Baker (Chairman), Mrs Evans (Vice-Chair), Miss Shepherd (Vice-Chair), Ball, Bamborough, Mrs Boyle, Eadie, Houlton, O'Hagan and Ray.

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillor A Yeates attended the meeting).

Councillor Mrs Eagland attended as County Council representative.

## 22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Humphreys and Mrs Constable

## 23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor O'Hagan declared a personal interest as he is employed by Midland Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor Ball declared a non disclosable pecuniary interest as he is a member of Fusion and pays a fee to hire a room at the premises as referred to in the Jigsaw Review report.

## 24 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meetings held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019 as circulated were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

It was noted that at the meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2019, it was confirmed that there would not be a reduction in operating hours of the Minor Injury Units.

It was also confirmed that there were concerns that there could be problems with patients meeting appointment times as there are limited public transport options for early appointments and no bus passes before 9.30am.

## 25 STANDING ITEMS

### (a) Lichfield District Health Provision

There was no new information for the Committee to note.

### (b) Staffordshire Health Select Committee

County Councillor Mrs Eagland noted that provision of Autism care is divided and performance not as good as hoped. It was asked if, regarding the STP, information on Ward profiles was available yet and County Councillor Mrs Eagland notified the Committee that she would instruct the clerk to forward the information when available. She also stated that she had not heard if there would be a further consultation.

## 26 HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER HOUSING PATHWAY PROPOSALS AND POTENTIAL USE OF S106 COMMUTED SUMS

The Committee received a report outlining some initiatives that were being developed to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the District. The report also gave an update on the tender exercise for using the commuted sum monies to deliver new affordable homes with the proposal of an alternative option for using the money to purchase properties to reduce the incidence of homelessness and rough sleeping.

It was reported that one of the initiatives was to enhance the existing service to provide tenancy sustainment and training for the most vulnerable customers and it was also proposed to work with Cannock Chase District Council to procure a provider to deliver a housing pathway for rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness with multiple and complex needs. When asked, it was reported that the specification for tender documents for this Pathway element were currently being drawn up.

The Committee discussed the work undertaken to create a night shelter in the Lichfield City Centre area and congratulated Officers and volunteers for their work. It was reported that it would be operational from beginning of February to March in 5 churches across Lichfield City. It was also reported that £5k funding had been secured from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's (MHCLG) Cold Weather Fund and Lichfield District Council had agreed to match fund this with up to £5,000 from its Flexible Homelessness Support Grant. Volunteers from Churches Together were progressing the scheme with guidance from staff at other night shelters in Burton, Derby and Tamworth and Lichfield District Council Members noted that there would be provision for up to 8 rough sleepers per night.

It was asked if there was a rent deposit scheme and it was confirmed that there was and also the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme had been changed recently to be more accessible.

Tenant Ready Training was discussed and felt to be very important. It was asked if Bromford Housing were on board with this and accepting of the scheme and it was reported that they were and an event had been held to discuss this; further discussions would be happening as their needs would also have to met.

It was reported that dialogue with private landlords was underway and options being developed to encourage more of them to work with the Council. It was recognised that this was difficult as private rented accommodation was in demand and rents were generally high however there would be a discussion at the Private Landlords Forum on 23 January 2019 and Officers will feed back their comments to the Committee.

The Committee then discussed in more detail the proposal to use the council's commuted sums to purchase properties to use for supported housing as part of the Housing First model to help create a seamless pathway into accommodation. It was asked if there would be any legal implications and whether the Council would become a social landlord and it was reported that there would not be. It was also asked if rental income was known yet and it was reported that that it wasn't known and Officers were currently being cautious over possible returns that may be generated. It was reported that advice had been sought from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and there was not a need to open a Housing Revenue Account as there would be less than 200 homes. It was suggested that the approved property investment company included a focus on buy to rent properties to further meet the needs of homelessness and rough sleeping and the Cabinet Member agreed to take this proposal to Cabinet for further discussion.

Members noted that homeless individuals and rough sleepers often preferred to remain in a specific area even if accommodation had been offered elsewhere for many reasons including to be close to a support network and it was agreed that the proposed Tenancy Sustainment

Officer could help this situation to try and secure properties in the vicinity of Lichfield City which is often a very popular area to live for rough sleepers.

A Social Enterprise initiative idea was then discussed and it was felt it was a good idea and it was noted that Officers had already been in contact but it was agreed that the Cabinet Member would also make contact to discuss this further.

An additional recommendation was put to the Committee to allow for further properties to be purchased using additional housing reserves. There was some concern that additional money could be spent without further scrutiny; after discussion it was agreed that further purchases should only occur if the initial properties and project proved to be successful and more capacity required.

- RESOLVED:**(1) That the comments made on the homelessness and rough sleeper housing pathway proposals be noted;
- (2) That the proposals and alternative use for the commuted sum monies held in reserves to purchase properties to provide accommodation as part of the proposed housing pathway model be recommended to Cabinet;
- (3) That the delegation of next steps to the Head of Service and Cabinet Member particularly a change in the Constitution to delegate property acquisitions up to £400,000 with oversight of the s151 Officer and monitoring officer be recommended to Cabinet; and
- (4) That Members recommend to Cabinet to delegate to the Head of Service and Cabinet Member to spend additional housing reserves on further property acquisitions if the initial purchases and project proves successful and more capacity is required.

## **27 COMMUNITY SAFETY DELIVERY PLAN - MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT**

The Committee received a report on the mid-year progress against the Community safety Partnership delivery plan for 2018/19. The Committee was also invited to give suggestions for actions to help delivery of the 2019/20 Community Safety priorities. Milestones would also be added to the plan. Concerns about the progress on some elements of the Plan were raised and Officers confirmed that action has been/ is being taken to enable delivery.

It was noted that it was the Lichfield District Safer Community Partnership was a statutory partnership with a duty to produce a community safety plan. It was reported that anti social behaviour (ASB) was one of the three priorities along with domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation. Alcohol and mental health and public reassurance have also been identified as cross cutting themes. The Committee considered the progress for these priorities in turn.

It was noted that diversionary activity for young people to reduce ASB had a positive impact and in the past year the community safety team had adopted a more rigorous approach to determining whether it could help with reports of non-criminal cases of ASB. This had meant that some civil matters for example, neighbour disputes, had been passed to the most appropriate authority resulting in a freeing up of resources to undertake other community safety work including awareness raising campaigns etc. A mediation service has also been funded so that when the team's efforts to resolve disputes have been exhausted the parties can be referred to mediation. To date this has proved successful in one case and partially successful in another.

Regarding domestic abuse, a campaign was run around the World Cup as it was known that domestic abuse rises on occasions like this and the online campaign went viral with 11 million

views. It was noted that similar campaigns were being planned. The Committee expressed their gratitude to Kathy Coe, the CEO of the Pathway Project and were pleased at the announcement that she has been awarded the Member of the British Empire (MBE)

It was then reported that taxi drivers had been trained in safeguarding, including Child Sexual Exploitation) so as to raise their awareness of the signs to look out and how to pass on any concerns and that drivers had been receptive to this initiative.

It was noted that the "Get in 2 it" project relied on the use of Council assets and it was asked how the council reach young people where they were. It was reported that the contract with Freedom Leisure included an active strategy and they would soon be recruiting an Active Communities Officer who would go out into the community. It was also reported that the Health and Wellbeing team were proactive in engaging with young people, going out to where they are, although the activities may not be able to be performed in that area. It was asked that the project be taken to rural areas where there were facilities for example Fazeley and it was reported that this was already being planned.

In reference to ASB in parks, it was asked whether there was evidence that it had increased when locking the gates, in particular in Burntwood, had ceased or if it was a perception. It was reported that there had been no reports of ASB to Police regarding this issue so it could be a perception. It was noted that it was still a concern of Members. There was some discussion as to whether the Smart Alerts from Police helped raise awareness of what was happening in the area or raised fear and an increase in a perception of crime.

Members felt that there was a gap in running diversionary activities for older children as at times it is them causing ASB (and perception of) by 'hanging about in groups' and encouraging younger children to commit the disorder. It was believed that greater engagement in schools could tackle this along with other areas like hate crime.

Members were also advised that a pilot project had been set up to support people with alcohol and mental health concerns.

Other areas that the Committee wanted to be considered in the 19/20 plan was road safety and an increase in 20mph signs where appropriate. It was agreed to raise this and how better to promote voluntary speed watch at the next Partnership meeting. Another area was mental health in young people as it was felt that it had been neglected.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the progress made against the Community Safety Delivery Plan be noted; and

(2) That the views of the Committee be taken into account when considering actions that may deliver the 2019/20 Community safety priorities.

## **28 REVIEW OF JIGSAW COMMUNITY HUB**

The Committee received a report on the scope of the review required in respect of the funding agreement for Jigsaw which was due to expire at the end of March 2019 (this has been extended to June 2019 to allow time for the review). The focus of the review is to establish the difference that the Jigsaw community hub is making. The full scope of the review was presented in the paper and it's coverage discussed by members who also suggested some additional areas of questioning and evaluation. It was noted that the community hub currently is run by Fusion Credit Union who also have an office base there. Jigsaw exists to provide a Community facility and a signposting service for the District Council with the funding being given to provide this facility. The building is owned by Midland Heart.

It was reported that there would be a consultation with users of the facility along with the owner of the building and Fusion Credit.

Members recognised the good work of Fusion Credit Union and noted that some residents still preferred a face to face service. They also supported the social benefit of the office facility. The review will include looking at records of all visitors to the premises, the purpose and outcome of their visit.

It was however also felt that the Jigsaw community hub was not well advertised and there were concerns about the value of funding a service that was not well used. It was reported by Members that they had been unable to find a website for the facility.

The Committee were mindful that there is a Lichfield City Council asset in the Curborough area and requested that this possible alternative venue / hub be considered during the review.

It was requested that the impact of the hub as it is used now and how this might change if it were to close or be enhanced was included in the scope of the review. It was confirmed that as part of the review the impact of all options would be considered, including any plans for changes or increased use of Jigsaw and the potential for any alternative provision identified.

**RESOLVED:** That the views of the Committee be included in the scope of the Jigsaw review.

COUNCILLOR BALL LEFT THE ROOM DURING THIS ITEM HAVING PREVIOUSLY DECLARING AN INTEREST.

COUNCILLOR MRS EVANS DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS REFERENCE TO CASES WAS MADE.

## **29 COMMUNITY LOTTERY - RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION WITH THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

The Committee received a report giving information from the consultation undertaken with the Community and Voluntary Sector and any other interested parties about the potential formation of a Community Lottery.

Members were reminded of the information given in previous reports to the Committee. It was reported that since then, contact had been made with Aylesbury Council who had pioneered Community Lotteries and have implemented them for other local authorities. It was noted that a discussion with them was planned post this meeting and the result of that would be sent to the Committee and be included in the Cabinet report.

The Committee had concerns that there were only 18 respondents to the consultation.

The Committee had concerns that the delivery of such a scheme would not be as cost effective as estimated and the Officer time needed would have an impact on any income generated. Capacity and the likely costs and overheads involved in running such a scheme, including the selling of tickets, by LDC and potential partners was also queried.

The Committee also felt uncomfortable with the concept per se and were concerned that it could be the people who had the least opportunity to improve their life who would most likely to buy tickets. In turn, it could be that any income from this could replace the community fund, should it be closed, which facilitates the organisations that helps these people in the first instance.

The Committee felt that there were many other competing lotteries on offer in the area.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee do not recommend to Cabinet the establishment of a local lottery scheme.

## 30 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was considered and it was agreed to move the next meeting to later March to allow time to gather information. It was agreed to invite the Burton and Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to the March meeting to give an update of the merger and discuss issues that have emerged including those around D2A beds and other health outcomes affecting Lichfield District residents.

It was noted that the 'Together We're Better' review would include a consultation with the Committee but no timeframes were currently known but it was agreed that this priority would be pursued.

It was agreed that for the next Council cycle, there would be an item to review the acquisition of properties for the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Pathway, the outcome from the Jigsaw Review and the Community Safety Development Plan and its outcomes.

It was also agreed to have briefing papers on updating on the Health & Wellbeing delivery plan and DFG performance in terms of length of time from referral to delivery, sticking points and data around provision and outstanding cases.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be updated.

(The Meeting closed at 8.45 pm)

CHAIRMAN