

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21 October 2020

PRESENT – Councillors Bell (Chair), Donoghue, Heslop, Lee, McEwan, Newall, Tostevin and Wright

APOLOGIES – Councillor Layton

ABSENT – Councillor Dr. Chou

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor K Nicholson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Miriam Davidson (Director of Public Health), Christine Shields (Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation), Pauline Mitchell (Assistant Director Housing and Building Services), Janette McMain, Michael Houghton (Director of Commissioning Strategy and Delivery), Sue Jacques (Chief Executive), Jennifer Illingworth (Director of Operations, Durham and Darlington) and Hannah Fay (Democratic Officer)

HH24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bell declared an interest as an employee of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust; Councillor McEwan declared an interest as a Lay Member for Darlington Primary Care Network; and Councillor Tostevin declared an interest as a Member of the Board of Governors for County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.

HH25 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON :-

HH26 2 SEPTEMBER 2020

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of this meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2020.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

HH27 9 SEPTEMBER 2020

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of a Special meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2020.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Special meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

HH28 COMMUNITY EYE CARE SERVICE

The Head of Integrated Strategic Commissioning for County Durham CCG and Durham County Council and Director of Commissioning and Transformation, NHS Tees Valley CCG submitted a briefing note (previously circulated) informing Members

that NHS County Durham CCG and NHS Tees Valley CCG (Darlington locality) had awarded the contract for Community Eye Care Service to Primary Eye Care Services Ltd to deliver post-op cataract care in the community from autumn 2020.

It was reported that County Durham and the former Darlington CCG had been working collaboratively with County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) for a number of years to reduce activity to the overstretched Ophthalmology department.

Details were provided of the changes to the pathway; that the services would be delivered from high street opticians, close to patients' homes; and that this would reduce the reliance on ambulance transport to travel to regional hospitals.

It was also reported that the community eye service would improve the patient pathway for those patients receiving cataract surgery; would relieve pressure on the local hospital eye services, enabling the Ophthalmologist and team to manage those patients with more complex conditions, efficiently and effectively.

RESOLVED – That the community eye care service update be noted.

HH29 LOCAL OUTBREAK CONTROL PLAN

The Director of Public Health provided Members with an update on the Darlington Outbreak Control Plan and in doing so reminded Members that the plan was in place to protect the health of local communities through clear prevention messages; rapid detection of outbreaks; controlling onwards transmission; and building and applying intelligence.

Details were provided of the cumulative cases, which, as of today stood at just over 1600 cases; and the 7 days rate, which as of today was 300 per 100,000 population; the age group with the greatest transmission was 16-29 years; working age adults were showing the greatest increase in cases; whilst the younger age groups appeared to be plateauing.

Reference made to schools, which were well organized and managing disruption through the use of bubbles; work places were seeing the bulk of the increase in cases, with car sharing to work identified as an area of concern; that a multi-agency group and a prevention and compliance group were in place to have oversight of outbreaks associated with work places.

Reference was also made to pandemic fatigue; Members were advised of the importance of their support to the community to reinfuse interest, whilst acknowledging the impact of the pandemic and hardships faced by residents; the need for clear messaging; and the involvement of the community and local groups to help identify safe solutions and ways to reduce local risk. Members were reminded of the key messages in respect of social distancing, the use of face coverings, regular hand washing, and not socializing with other households indoors.

Following questions by Members, the Chief Executive, County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) confirmed that there had been no hospital onset infection at Darlington Memorial in patients admitted over 8 days previously

since September 1st, and 7 patients with hospital onset infection in patients admitted 3-7 days previously; that reviews were undertaken for any cases acquired in hospital; Darlington Memorial had a Covid-19 ward; that CDDFT had plans in place to meet demands should there be an increase in cases; and should all regional beds be exhausted, there was a regional plan to make use of the nightingale hospital.

RESOLVED – That the Director of Public Health be thanked for providing an update on the Darlington Outbreak Control Plan.

HH30 TENANCY POLICY 2020-2025

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the updated version of the Council's Tenancy Policy (also previously circulated).

It was reported that the Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for local authorities to offer flexible tenancies to new tenants; placed a duty on local authorities to publish a Tenancy Policy; and the original Tenancy Policy was agreed in 2012 which introduced flexible tenancies and was reviewed in 2017.

The current Tenancy Policy required updating to ensure that Housing Services made best use of the Council owned stock; to target Council housing for those in most need; and to ensure that properties continued to meet resident's needs.

The report outlined flexible tenancies introduced in 2012; and the proposal for the updated policy which proposed to amend flexible tenancies to apply to properties that have been extensively adapted and properties in areas of regeneration.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received.

(b) That Cabinet be advised that Health and Housing Scrutiny were in agreement with the proposed amendments to the Tenancy Policy.

HH31 PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the progress against the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and updating Members on the homeless service provision during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

Details were provided of the Council's response to the significant increase in demand for Homeless and Housing Options services as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Members were advised that as part of the Council's "Everybody In' agreement, anyone who presented to the Council as homeless, regardless of their need, was placed in emergency temporary accommodation.

It was reported that additional hotel and bed and breakfast accommodation was procured in the early period of lockdown; for the first quarter of 2020/21 147 households were placed in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation; self-contained temporary accommodation increased from 11 to 15 units; and there had been a 525 per cent increase in the number of nights in emergency accommodation

when compared to the same period in the previous year.

The submitted report stated that Darlington's Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2019-2024 was approved by Cabinet on 9 July 2019; that this was a requirement of Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002; the strategy consisted of four main sections, namely a review, strategy, action plan and statement on rough sleeping; and the five key supporting objectives to the Strategy were outlined.

It was reported that progress on the Strategy's action plan was monitored through a multi-agency Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forum; and that of the 28 actions in the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, nine had been completed; 12 were progressing and were on track to meet timescales for delivery; and seven were progressing but were not on track to meet the timescales for delivery.

Following a question by Members it was confirmed that a multi-agency group was in place to manage begging in Darlington which included an outreach service; a planned approach was used for those residents that were leaving hospital or prison; and that contact numbers for the support services in place for the homeless and beggars would be provided to Members.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

HH32 CRISIS SERVICE CHANGES UPDATE

The Director of Operations, Durham and Darlington, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the progress with the Crisis Service changes.

Members were advised that the crisis service provision previously consisted of two separate teams based at Durham and Darlington; this had been streamlined and a combined hub had been in place at Bishop Auckland Hospital since January 2020.

It was reported that Crisis Services had seen a particularly high demand in recent months, with referrals exceeding monthly averages pre-Covid; the service had received a non-recurring investment to develop urgent care services and to provide support for the wider system, including increased capacity for home based treatment; and that the Trust was in the process of recruiting to these posts.

It was also reported that the funding had enabled dedicated Mental Health support to NEAS in the form of a mental health nurse; and from September the Mental Health Support Team were providing 24/7 response via 111.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

HH33 RIGHT CARE RIGHT PLACE UPDATE

The Director of Operations, Durham and Darlington, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the progress with the Right Care Right Place programme.

It was reported that the programme was launched in the summer of 2019; aimed to deliver improved experiences and outcomes for service users, staff and partners by focusing on how the services and partners could work better together; and that following system engagement and a vision development event in 2019, a number of initial priorities were identified, with testing and implementation initiated in early 2020.

It was also reported that whilst the formal priorities and actions had been paused due to COVID-19, work had continued to progress different ways of working; and an updated position against the key priorities was summarized in the submitted report.

RESOLVED – That the update and ongoing work be noted.

HH34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme.

Members were advised of a request from Officers to reschedule the update on Customer Engagement in Housing Services to the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee on 3 March 2021, and were in agreement.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the work programme be noted.

(b) That the work programme be updated to reflect the decision of this Scrutiny Committee.