

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 14 December 2022

PRESENT – Councillors Newall (Chair), Heslop, Layton, McEwan, Mills, Mrs H Scott, Sowerby and Wright

ABSENT – Councillors Dr. Chou and Preston

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Jill Foggin (County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust), James Graham (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust), Allison Cook (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust), John Elliston (700 Club) and Shaun Mayo (Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Penny Spring (Director of Public Health), Anthony Sandys (Assistant Director - Housing and Revenues) and Lisa Soderman (Head of Leisure)

HH28 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

RESOLVED – That Councillor Newall be appointed Chair of this Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

HH29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

HH30 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2022

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 November, 2022.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 November, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

HH31 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES DARLINGTON

The General Manager – Durham and Tees Valley Community CAMHS submitted a presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on the Children and Young People's Services in Darlington.

It was reported that work in the Children and Young People's Services in Darlington was being progressed under three key areas, patient experience, workforce and service delivery; and the main developments in each area were outlined.

Reference was made to the recent CQC report published in September 2022 following the inspection in July 2022; Members were informed of the improvement in the 'Safe' rating for the service, the evidence of positive changes were outlined and it was acknowledged that further improvements were still required.

Details were provided of the wait times to assessment and treatment for non-neuro referrals; wait time for specialist neuro assessment; and the next steps were outlined.

Members raised concern regarding services for children with autism; the General Manager Durham and Tees Valley Community CAMHS informed Members of the range of services commissioned for children with autism; and discussion ensued regarding plans for reducing wait times.

Following a question regarding lived experience, Members were advised that a young person with lived experience had been employed to lead on co-creation with young people and worked closely with the parent/carer forum in Darlington; and Members were informed of the intention to employ peer support workers.

Discussion also ensued regarding capacity and demand for services and the Keeping In Touch (KIT) process.

RESOLVED – (a) That the General Manager – Durham and Tees Valley Community CAMHS be thanked for his informative presentation.

(b) That Members receive a further update on Services in Darlington, including KIT.

HH32 COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION NHS ENGLAND: TEES VALLEY

The Service Manager, AMH Darlington and Specialist Services gave a presentation (previously circulated) updating Members on the work being undertaken to review the mental health system as part of the Community Transformation NHS England: Tees Valley.

The presentation outlined the core aims of the community transformation; details were provided of the principals and vision of the transformation which included local community support, community hub and treatment and intervention services, all of which would be supported by care navigators.

Members were advised of the work being undertaken in Darlington; a working group was established in January 2022 and information governance agreed; a physical location for the community hub had been identified in Darlington, this would be a resilience centre staffed by trained third sector staff; and was due to be finalised in the new year.

Details were provided of reconfigured teams in Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust and the remit of each team was outlined; go live expected dates and expected outcomes and outputs were outlined. Members also noted the Recognition of work to date.

Discussion ensued regarding the location of patient assessments and safeguarding arrangements; Members were informed that an accessible clinic was operating from the Dolphin Centre to undertake new assessments and in relation to decision making, Members were assured that governance arrangements were in place and a multi-disciplinary team established with oversight of decisions made for patients.

Following a suggestion to link in with community groups, Members were informed that a

directory of services available via the community hub would be made available; and work was being undertaken to provide one stop shops in the wider community using established local hubs and groups.

RESOLVED – (a) That the presentation be noted.

(b) That an update on the community hub be provided at a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

HH33 HOUSING SERVICES LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP POLICY

The Assistant Director Housing and Revenue submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to the draft Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy (also previously circulated) prior to its consideration by Cabinet on 7 March 2023.

The submitted report stated that Housing Services were committed to building sustainable communities and offering low-cost homes both to rent and buy; the Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy outlines the range of home ownership options available for Council properties; and the policy covers Right to Buy, Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership options for residents who would like to own their own home but are unable to afford to purchase a property outright from the open market.

It was reported that one of the 7 key expectations for social housing tenants in the Government's Social Housing White Paper, "Charter for Social Housing Residents" was "to be supported to take your first step to ownership"; the charter introduced a new Right to Shared Ownership and aimed to ensure that 50 per cent of new homes delivered by the Affordable Homes Programme, and supported by grants through Homes England, would be for affordable home ownership. Members noted that 20 of the 150 new homes on the Neasham Road new build development would be offered as rent to buy.

Members were informed that the Tenants Panel were consulted in November 2022 and overall, the Panel supported the proposed Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy.

Following a question, Members were informed that shared ownership rent payments received by the Council were reinvested into the building of new social housing.

RESOLVED – That Members support the onward submission of the draft Housing Services Low Cost Home Ownership Policy to Cabinet.

HH34 PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Assistant Director Housing and Revenues submitted a report (previously circulated) updating Members on the progress against the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and the homeless services provision during 2022.

It was reported since the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had continued to deal with a significant increase in demand for Homeless and Housing Options services; the lifting of the

ban on section 21 (“no fault”) evictions in June 2021 also created an increase in homeless presentations and requests for housing advice; there had been a 23 per cent increase in presentations to the Housing Options in 2021-22 when compare to the previous year; and that 14 per cent of all presentations in the first two quarters of 2022-23 were as a result of section 21 notices.

It was also reported that in 2021-22, 281 households were placed in temporary accommodation, compared to 230 for the previous year, an increase of 22 per cent; and that demand had continued to increase with 178 households placed in emergency accommodation for the first two quarters in 2022-23.

Details were provided on length of stay in emergency accommodation; in 2021-22 there were 3697 nights spent in emergency accommodation, a 10 per cent decrease when compared to the previous year; however the first two quarters of 2023-23 had seen a sharp increase with 3263 nights spent in emergency accommodation.

Members noted the ongoing challenge in finding accommodation and support for individuals with complex needs; details were provided of the achievements in the past 18 months; that despite the significant challenges, everyone in need of emergency accommodation had been provided somewhere to stay, and most of the people placed in emergency accommodation had now been moved to more permanent housing.

It was reported that Darlington’s Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2019-2024 was approved by Cabinet on 9 July 2019; the strategy consisted of four main sections to satisfy the requirements of Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002; and reference was made to the five key supporting objectives to the Strategy.

The progress on the strategy’s action plan was monitored through the multi-agency Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Forum; and Members noted that of the 28 actions in the strategy, all had either been completed or remained ongoing due to continuing demands on services.

Reference was made to the new “Ending Rough Sleeping for Good” strategy that was published by the Government in September 2022; and it was recommended that the actions contained within the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy be refreshed for 2023-24 in light of the new strategy, the existing pressures on the Homeless and Housing Options services and as the actions were developed pre-covid and had either been successfully completed or delivered on an ongoing basis.

RESOLVED – a) That the contents of the report be noted.

(b) That this Scrutiny Committee agrees to a review and refresh of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan for 2023-24, in accordance with paragraphs 23 to 24 of the main report.

(c) That the refreshed Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy action plan be brought to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

The Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues, Assistant Director – Community Services and Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) providing Members with performance data against key performance indicators for Quarter 2 2022/23.

It was reported that 36 indicators were reported to this Scrutiny Committee, six Housing and Culture indicators and twenty four Public Health indicators.

At Quarter 2, data was available for nine of the twelve Housing and Culture indicators. It was noted that two indicators had targets to be compared against, HBS 013 – Rent arrears of current tenants in the financial year as a % of rent debit (GNPI 34) which was showing performance better than target; and HBS 016 – Rent collected as a proportion of rents owed on HRA dwellings* including arrears which was showing performance not as good as the target; and that, of the nine indicators with data available, four indicators were showing an improved performance compared to the same point in the previous year, which included three culture indicators CUL 030 – Total number of visits to the Dolphin Centre (all areas), CUL 063 – Number of school pupils participating in the sports development programme and CUL 064 – Number of individuals participating in the community sports development programme; whilst five indicators showed a performance not as good as that recorded at the same time in the previous year.

In relation to Public Health indicators it was reported that eight of the twenty-four indicators had new data available at quarter 2 and that two indicators were showing performance better than the previous year whilst six indicators were showing performance not as good as the previous year.

Particular discussion ensued regarding interventions to address smoking prevalence; and a query was raised regarding the monitoring of factors linked to PBH009 – Low birth weight of term babies.

RESOLVED – That the performance data reported for Quarter 2 2022/23 be noted.

HH36 WORK PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director Law and Governance 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 be included in the previously approved work programme.

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.