



## **People and Communities Select Committee** **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 September 2020 at 10am** **on Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)**

### **Present:**

Cllr Shelagh Gurney (Chairman)

Cllr David Bills  
Cllr Penny Carpenter  
Cllr Ed Connolly  
Cllr David Harrison

Cllr Brenda Jones  
Cllr Chrissie Rumsby  
Cllr Thomas Smith  
Cllr Mike Smith-Clare  
Cllr S Young

### **Substitute Members Present:**

Cllr Steffan Aquarone for Cllr Tim Adams  
Cllr Ron Hanton for Cllr Fabian Eagle  
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris for Cllr Fran Whymark

### **Also Present**

Debbie Bartlett	Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, Adult Social Services
Philip Beck	Head of Community and Partnerships (East and North Norfolk), Children's Services
James Bullion	Executive Director of Adult Social Services
Chris Butwright	Head of Public Health Performance & Delivery, Public Health
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council Independent Member for Yarmouth North and Central
Craig Chalmers	Director of Community Social Work, Adult Social Services
Laura Clear	Director of Community Health and Social Care Operations, Adult Social Services
Nick Clinch	Assistant Director Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning, Adult Social Services
John Crowley	Assistant Director, Learning and Achievement, Children's Services
Leon Ringer	Senior Programme Accountant
Chris Snudden	Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services
Sara Tough	Executive Director of Children's Services
James Wilson	Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services

## **1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Tim Adams (Cllr Steffan Aquarone substituting), Cllr Fabian Eagle (Cllr Ron Hanton Substituting) and Cllr Fran Whymark (Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris substituting).

## **2. Election of vice chairman**

- 2.1 The Chairman proposed Cllr Ed Connolly. Cllr Ed Connolly was duly elected as Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 3.2 The Chairman confirmed that the information on the music service and adventure centres which had been previously requested would be added to the forward plan; the Chairman had a meeting organised with officers to look at forward planning.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 Cllr Thomas Smith declared an interest as he had grandparents in receipt of care packages from Norfolk County Council.

### **5. Items received as urgent business**

- 5.1 There was no urgent business discussed.

### **6. Public Questions**

- 6.1 No public questions were received.

### **7. Member Questions and Issues**

- 7.1 One Member question was received from Cllr Emma Corlett; the answer was published [online](#) and circulated by email to Cllr Corlett.
- 7.2 Cllr Corlett emailed a supplementary question which was read out in the meeting: "The EDP reported the story on 10 September. Please can you confirm when you as Chair received each of the briefings that you refer to."
- 7.3 The Chairman clarified that she had not attended any meetings of the board for some time. She did not have the dates to hand to answer Cllr Corlett's question and agreed to send a written response.

### **8. Adult Social Care Winter Resilience Planning**

- 8.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out development of the Adult Social Services winter plan which included intentions for service delivery and design during the 2020/21 winter period to prepare the organisation to maintain high quality and safe service provision during winter and support system partners to deliver effective flow between providers.
- 8.1.2 The Assistant Director of Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning introduced the report to Members:
- There would be greater challenges for Adult Social Services this winter, 2020-21, due to strain from the Covid-19 pandemic on top of the usual winter flu pressures
  - The framework document set out in the report detailed schemes which were already underway and planning to be completed in the coming months
  - Specific challenges had been identified: supporting the care market with the impact of Covid-19; supporting the workforce; and new discharge arrangements

- Key themes to take forward with partners were: supporting the needs of residents; supporting the care provider market; supporting the pressure on the NHS; and supporting resilience of the workforce
- Officers were looking into whether the care unit set up to provide additional capacity during the first wave of the pandemic would be needed during winter 2020-21

## 8.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was queried whether support for the Norfolk care market included those cared for at home by relatives; the Assistant Director of Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning confirmed work was in place to support reablement at home and wraparound care and to ensure the advanced care service included care at home
- It was clarified that the most recent guidance around hospital discharge had been released 3-4 weeks prior and officers were still working with providers around how this could be implemented.
- Information was requested on how many care and voluntary providers were at risk of closure. Work to look at the resilience of the care market was underway, and the outcome of this work was **requested** by the Committee. Officers had been working with the voluntary sector to support them where possible.
- The shortage of registered nurses in the NHS and the impact of Brexit on European staff leaving the care sector was noted. The Assistant Director of Strategy & Transformation reported that discussions with staff to understand pressures and strong relationships with the care sector had helped the Council to support them with infection control and access to PPE. Learning from the first wave of the pandemic would help support staff resilience in the event of a second wave.
- A Care Market Programme Steering Group was in place to provide support to the care market over the winter.
- The training programme working with care partners was well established and officers were looking at expanding this to ensure training was in place for winter
- Cllr Young raised a concern about home carers with some agencies not being regularly tested; the Director of Community Social Work asked to speak to Cllr Young outside of the meeting about the particular case she was referring to.
- The work of unpaid carers was recognised; a new service for unpaid carers had started in Norfolk which was looking at how support for carers could be expanded
- Mechanisms in place to hear feedback from frontline staff on lessons learned from the first wave was queried. The Assistant Director of Strategy & Transformation confirmed that to hear feedback from teams, two meetings were held each week with managers, team manager and practice consultant virtual meetings were held, and calls were made to managers by the Change and Engagement Team. Daily meetings were held with operational teams in the NHS to discuss issues.
- In preparation for the first wave of the pandemic, community response teams of redeployed staff were set up; officers felt that this response would be important moving forward to help swift discharges from hospital. Some occupational therapists were coming out of hospitals from the 28 October 2020 to support the discharge response, home first principal and wraparound of care.
- The beds with care model in Great Yarmouth was queried; the Assistant Director of Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning confirmed that this model of service was a short-term option for people needing temporary care on discharge from hospital. Discussions were underway between the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group about expanding this for the winter period.
- The Assistant Director of Social Care & Health Partnership Commissioning was not aware of any cases of care homes being put under pressure by high numbers of patients discharged from hospital with Covid-19. Officers were working on

the discharge processes to ensure they were robust in preparation for winter 2020-21 and looking into setting up isolation spaces for care settings

- Concerns were raised about staff in private care homes being paid low wages and the impact of this on personal finances and ability to take time off work when ill; the Director of Community Social Work reported that through work carried out with care homes it was known that all care staff in Norfolk were on at least minimum wage, and Adult Social Care had supported providers to meet pressures so staff could self-isolate if needed. The Council was working with care and NHS colleagues to ensure staff were tested when necessary however work was needed to decide on testing priorities. There was a community response in place for people who would struggle to self-isolate including support packages
- Test and Trace figures for Norfolk were **requested**. The Head of Public Health Performance & Delivery replied that the figures were reported regularly on the Office for National Statistics and Public Health England websites by district and ward level and **agreed** to circulate website details to Members after the meeting.
- Members wanted to know how carers would be supported to stay well; the carers' service would provide support for carers and look at what further could be done. The specification would look at support which could be provided for carers in the case of a second wave of Covid-19 and during the winter. Most unpaid carers needed quick advice and support, so this was the foundation of the support service. The community cell working with early help hubs and volunteers were also providing support to service users and carers
- Work being done to reduce deaths caused by Covid-19 in care homes was queried; officers reported that infection control work with the Norfolk Care Association had helped and money had been given to care providers by the Council to support them with this. Through regular contact with care providers and work with the Norfolk Care Association the sector was preparing as rapidly as possible for the coming winter.

8.3 The Committee **READ** and **COMMENTED** on the emerging winter planning arrangements in the report and Appendix 1 of the report.

## 9. Carers Charter Working Group

9.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out a proposal to update the Terms of Reference for the Carers Charter Working Group to make it a formal working group of the People and Communities Select Committee that will oversee the pledges made within the charter and promote the principles of the charter

9.1.2 The Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, Adult Social Services, introduced the report to the Committee

- The next meeting of the working group would look at next steps for the group. So far, they had looked at raising the profile of carers and co-production of services
- The number of carers on the group had recently been increased

9.2.1 The Chairman noted that the group was proposed to be set up as a sub committee of the People and Communities Committee and noted the good work of the group.

9.2.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- Cllr Aquarone **proposed** that a commitment was built into outcomes the next wave of work of the working group that guarantees against the eventuality of removal of opportunity for people to have carers by being forced into poverty caused by living

with a disability; the Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, agreed to take this forward and suggested that the Carers Rights day could be an ideal situation to take this forward.

- it was queried whether the remit of the group could be looked at to take into account the impact of Covid-19 on carers; The Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, Adult Social Services **agreed** that this could be included under work to include engagement from the health sector in the working group
- The committee noted the good work done by the Committee

9.3 The Committee **AGREED** the Carers Charter Task and Finish Group be made a working group of the People and Communities Select Committee for the purpose of overseeing the pledges made within the Charter and promoting the principles of the charter across Norfolk, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

## 10. Educational Achievement of Boys

10.1.1 The Committee considered the report setting out how successes in raising outcomes in Early Years would be built on so that more boys enter school with the language skills they need to learn effectively. It describes how a refreshed approach to school improvement, enabled by a new Norfolk Commissioning Hub and a realignment of teaching and learning advisers, will better support improvement in the school system.

10.1.2 The Director of Learning and Inclusion introduced the report:

- The responsibility for school improvement lay with schools and school trust boards; the Local Authority's responsibility was to challenge and hold them to account
- Schools were designing bespoke programmes for children to help them catch up after the period of not being at school during the pandemic
- The education service had been reconfigured to better respond to priorities in Norfolk. Support for learning in schools sat with the achievement and learning service
- Through the Covid-19 crisis there had been high levels of engagement with schools in design of the recovery curriculum around English and maths
- performance in maths had improved in recent years; performance in English was below the national average, and this affected performance of boys. The attainment gap between boys and girls in Norfolk was no worse than nationally, however, it was recognised that the gap was still significant.
- The difference in sustaining destinations between boys and girls was driven by a lower performance in English by boys further down in the education system
- The focus for improving outcomes for boys was working with colleagues in health and the families' services to strengthen language development and reading in primary school; there was good engagement with secondary academies with an aim to steer English development at secondary and primary schools

10.2 The following points were discussed and noted:

- It was noted that support for parents was an important aspect of improving outcomes for children; officers reported that during the pandemic there had been good engagement with the library service and summer reading programme and the learning curriculum team had engaged with parents by social media, for example, bounce and rhyme sessions were now available online. There had been work with the early childhood development service around promoting home learning including distributing learning physical and online resource packs for children aged 0-5. Officers had also worked with early years settings on promoting

a language rich environment and continued to engage with families who needed targeted support through home visits.

- A Member discussed findings from a study by the University of Cambridge on raising boys' achievement which found that intervention strategies, while effective in raising boys' achievement, also raised the achievement of girls, maintaining the achievement gap. The Member noted that other factors were involved in the achievement gap and suggested data should be split into smaller areas so these factors could be targeted. The Assistant Director, Learning and Achievement, Children's Services, confirmed that officers looked at financial and social disadvantage in different areas of the County
- It was queried how deep-rooted barriers to further education could be tackled, such as reduced vocational subjects in college caused by funding issues, and areas of the County where young people relied on seasonal employment which ended in October. Officers noted that education up to the age of 16 had a large influence after this age. It was also important to ensure provision existed for students to take up. The 14-19 strategy group met regularly with partners in the education and voluntary sector to look at provision in place for students post 16.
- It was noted that some young people in some areas of the County needed to earn money in seasonal employment to support their family. Officers had worked with East Norfolk 6<sup>th</sup> Form and East Norfolk College over the last months to ensure that bursaries and grants were available for students.
- A Member discussed how educational achievement related to poverty and felt support was needed in areas of deprivation and poverty to drive up aspiration
- It was discussed that splitting children into groups of boys and girls could improve attainment in some areas, such as for girls in maths, but had not shown the same improvement in attainment for boys; research showed that a mixed group had positive impact on attainment for all
- Councillors wished to be updated on the impact of the catch up programme over the coming year however the Government were looking at a sampling approach which would be difficult to report on; the Council would directly monitor Local Authority maintained schools by engaging with them but due to the sampling approach there would be no benchmarkable data.
- There was a discussion around books available in schools which appealed to boys. The Committee **requested** data on school library lending trends of boys compared to girls at different ages. the Director of Learning and Inclusion clarified that schools were encouraged to ensure 50% of books in their libraries were non-fiction. Some literature in the curriculum was chosen to encourage children to look at how characters responded emotionally, and this did not engage all boys in the same ways as it did with most girls.
- Cllr Castle, who was one of the Councillors who had requested this report, spoke to the Committee and officers. He discussed how, in the 1980s and 1990s, teaching methods and focus between coursework and exams was changed to encourage girls' learning. Cllr Castle noted that schools had few male role models with 15% of teachers in primary and 38% of teachers in secondary being male. There were now 300,000 more women than men in higher education and 14% more women in higher education. Cllr Castle welcomed the steps being taken in Norfolk and hoped feedback would be given on how this was bringing improvements, but also hoped that this would be raised nationally by MPs.

### 10.3 The Committee:

1. **NOTED** how education outcomes for boys and girls vary in Norfolk and nationally and the impact this has on their futures
2. **CONSIDERED** the strategies proposed to support improvement in teaching and

learning across Norfolk, and their alignment in raising outcomes for boys

10.4 The committee took a break from 12.01 until 12:10

## **11. Norfolk County Council budget planning 2020-21**

11.1 The Committee received the report setting out the process of preparing the 2021-22 Budget and providing a key opportunity for the Select Committee to provide views on the approach to developing budget proposals.

11.2.1 The Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services introduced the key points related to Children's Services:

- Projects due to be delivered had been paused because of the pandemic and the delay had been built into the costs shown
- A surge in demand was anticipated due to hidden needs becoming apparent but the impact of this on costs was not yet known
- The transformation strategy centred around 5 themes: inclusion and bids to help more young people be educated in mainstream education; early intervention, prevention and early help, effective practice; edge of care and alternatives to care solutions; and managing and transforming the care market.
- The "no wrong door" initiative, working with the Department for Education and North Yorkshire Council, would be a main piece of work delivering savings in Children's Services in the next year 2021-22
- The pandemic had unlocked new opportunities for modernisation and efficiencies around use of technologies and buildings, reduced mileage and flexibility around ways of working.

11.2.2 The Assistant Director of Strategy & Transformation introduced the key points related to Adult Social Services:

- Increased volumes of people coming through Adult Social Care, higher prices for care and increased use of more costly short-term beds had meant it had not been able to progress the transformation programme as hoped.
- There was a commitment to continue with the strategy of promoting independence, focussing on prevention, early help, reablement and market shaping as well as use of technology for staff and service users
- The theme for the out of hospital short term offer was being developed; the focus on the home first approach was an opportunity to look at the mix available and work with partners in the NHS to have the right support for people in the community
- The department had been working with community partners through the Community Capacity Cell to explore further community-based opportunities
- Digital opportunities had been realised moving forward and the pandemic had also realised benefits around staff mileage; officers would look at whether further benefits could be realised

11.3 The following points were discussed and noted

- At the start of the pandemic there was a reduction in demand in Children's Services due to the lockdown; this had increased to normal levels and a further increase in demand over autumn was expected now that children had returned to school.
- The number of children in care had been falling monthly in the run up to and remained level during the pandemic. This continued to be monitored
- The Children's Services savings portfolio was a mix of efficiency drives, prevention

and transformation.

- The Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, Adult Social Services, explained that the department continued to maintain statutory responsibilities and had stronger structures in place for holding discussions with the NHS.
- Cllr Brenda Jones **proposed** that the select committee recommend to Cabinet that they apply a precept to social care if the opportunity is offered by Government.

The Committee

- **CONSIDERED** and **COMMENTED** on the key issues for 2021-22 budget setting and the broad areas proposed for savings development in relation to the services within the Select Committee's remit, in order to provide input to the October Cabinet meeting and inform saving proposals put forward.
- **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that they apply a precept to social care if the opportunity is offered by Government

### Forward plan

The Committee received and considered the forward plan for the Select Committee.

The following points were discussed and noted:

- The Chairman confirmed that the working group to look at quality of care raised by Cllr Tim Adams was being taken forward.
- A meeting was being arranged to agree how to take forward the requested report on outdoor learning, activity centres and music centres; the Chairman hoped that this could be brought to the November meeting
- A discussion was held about changes to home to school transport and requirements for this to be on crouching buses to meet disability access requirements. The Director of Learning and Inclusion **agreed** to meet with Cllr Kiddle-Morris to discuss local issues.
- It was **suggested** that the report that the ombudsman requested to be presented to Committee with updates on performance and Key Performance Indicators for 2 financial years was added to the forward plan
- A report on statistics related to library book borrowing by boys and girls at different ages was **requested**

The Meeting Closed at 12:47

**Cllr S Gurney, Chairman,  
People and Communities Select Committee**