



## **People and Communities Select Committee Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 July 2020 at 10am on Microsoft Teams (virtual meeting)**

### **Present:**

Cllr Shelagh Gurney (Chairman)

Cllr Fabian Eagle (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Tim Adams

Cllr David Bills

Cllr Penny Carpenter

Cllr Ed Connolly

Cllr David Harrison

Cllr Chrissie Rumsby

Cllr Thomas Smith

Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Cllr Colleen Walker

Cllr Fran Whymark

Cllr S Young

### **Officers Present**

Debbie Bartlett

Craig Chalmers

Laura Clear

Gary Heathcote

Sarah Jones

Assistant Director - Strategy & Transformation, Adult Social Services

Director of Community Social Work

Director of Community Health and Social Care Operations

Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services

Director of Commissioning, Partnerships and Resources, Children's Services

Suzanne Meredith

Chris Snudden

James Wilson

Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services)

Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services

Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Brenda Jones (Cllr Colleen Walker substituting).

### **2. Minutes of last meeting**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.
- 2.2 Cllr Mike Smith-Clare asked about the point he raised at paragraph 13.3 of the above minutes, requesting a report on adventure centres and music provision to be put on the forward plan. The Chairman would ensure a report was brought to committee on this along with the request received from Cllr Mick Castle under item 6, Member Questions.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

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

- 4.1 There was no urgent business discussed.

## **5. Public Questions**

- 5.1 One question and supplementary question were received from Ms Sandy Lysaght. The responses to these questions were published online before the meeting and emailed to Members and Ms Lysaght: [Public and Member Questions and responses](#)

## **6. Member Questions and Issues**

One Member question was received from Cllr Mick Castle. The response was published online before the meeting and emailed to Members and Cllr Castle: [Public and Member Questions and responses](#)

## **7. People and Communities Response to COVID-19**

- 7.1.1 The Committee received the report giving a summary of how County Council services reporting to the committee had responded to the COVID-19 crisis. The report summarised the work that Norfolk County Council was undertaking in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 7.1.2 Cllr Colleen Walker thanked staff and officers of County, Parish and District Councils who had worked hard to provide support to the community and the shielded population. The Chairman echoed these sentiments.

- 7.2.1 The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) gave a presentation to the Committee on the public health response to the pandemic; [see appendix A](#)
- In the case of a local outbreak there would be bespoke communications messages released
  - A robust member led governance structure had been put in place to deliver the Covid-19 outbreak plan. Delivery groups were in place looking at settings or groups which may experience an outbreak; food processing was highlighted as an area of risk for outbreak
  - Local and national resources would be linked to respond quickly to outbreaks
  - An outbreak centre with a dedicated team would be set up for the ensuing 12 months

- 7.2.2 The following points were discussed and noted
- Cllr Tim Adams discussed the outbreak group which he set up, the Cromer Care Group, which was adopted by the local District Council. The group distributed food, prescriptions and carried out a befriending role to people who were shielding. He wished to thank councils, organisations, social workers and providers for their good partnership working.
  - Officers were asked to consider the lessons learned from the outbreak and the response so far.
  - Officers were asked if the effectiveness of the public message had been measured and how messages would be adapted to overcome normalisation of Covid-19. The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) agreed to raise this query working with the NCC communications department.
  - The local lockdown process, regarding people travelling into locked down areas, was queried; the local lockdown process was not formally agreed and the Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) agreed to provide clarification on the process with the Director of Public Health
  - Access to PPE (personal protective equipment) for frontline staff in Norfolk was

queried. The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) confirmed that Norfolk County Council (NCC) ensured organisations had access to PPE by being a point of procurement; no negative feedback on PPE supply had been received for the past month. The Chairman praised the swift speed of supply of PPE to organisations in Hellesdon.

- Officers were asked how many people were in the shielded category in Norfolk and what Government support was provided to them in addition to the food delivery scheme. Cllr Colleen Walker felt that information from Government on support available was not adequate. The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) reported there had been a Norfolk response led by Ceri Sumner, the Director of Community, Information and Learning, working with District Councils and voluntary groups to provide telephone support to shielded individuals and online resources.
- The number of new cases in Norfolk was queried. A daily update reviewed the number of cases in Norfolk; there had been less than 20 new cases in the previous 14 days which was low and amongst the lowest in the country. Emergency responses would be activated if any areas of concern were seen
- Norfolk County Council staff had been given access to equipment to enable them to work from home and measures put in place for managers to provide mental health support for their staff.
- Care providers were expected to source their own PPE, but no shortages were being reported at that time
- The Vice-Chairman suggested that local Councillors could provide bespoke video messages to support local lockdown plans.
- Some Members discussed concerns that some members of the public had become complacent over the risk of Covid-19 and noted the need to remain vigilant to the risk of the disease and adhere to social distancing regulations.
- The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) clarified that numbers of people affected by Covid-19 in Norfolk were too low to identify patterns of the communities that were most affected, however it was known that people in deprived areas were more likely to be affected.
- Thanks were noted to people in the county who had made face masks.
- Local containment measures would be carried out in consultation with public health and would ensure minimal action to contain the infection
- The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) clarified that data about test and trace contacts related to recent cases rested with the national test and trace system; the data had been requested so that this could be followed up locally, however there were issues related to patient confidentiality. Officers had asked for assurance around how many contacts had and hadn't been traced.
- A Member thanked the County Council team for the detailed weekly information updates which he had found useful for keeping his Parish Council up to date.
- Specific messages had been targeted towards young people on social media platforms, but Officers would also look into more localised messaging
- Cllr Sheila Young declared an interest as her husband's carer and as her husband was receiving care
- It was suggested that all carers including home based carers should have the opportunity to be screened regularly for Covid-19
- The impact of shielding on routine medical treatments was queried. Essential services had been maintained through GP services although sometimes through different forums such as online, digital appointments. The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) agreed to ask the Clinical Commissioning Group for more detailed information on this.

- There was evidence that people had been drinking more alcohol, and anecdotal evidence of an increase in smoking, drug use and obesity, Officers were asked what measures Public Health were taking to address this. The Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) confirmed that Covid-19 was their top priority at that time, but other commissioned services supported this including prevention work and work was going on to address some of these aspects.
- The Chairman noted that statistics showed a number of people had given up smoking due to concerns related to Covid-19 and due to the cease in sale of menthol cigarettes.

7.3.1 The Director of Community Social Work, the Director of Commissioning, Adult Social Services and the Director of Community Health and Social Care Operations gave a presentation to the Committee on the Adult Social Care response to the pandemic; [see appendix B](#)

- Around 43,000 in Norfolk were shielded during the pandemic
- 55-65% of people in hospital beds were supported to move home or to care homes to free up beds at the start of the pandemic
- Work was undertaken to support staff to understand Government advice as it was released and changed over time
- There were around 10,000 care beds in Norfolk,
- The decrease in people visiting care homes and vulnerable people had caused a challenge for Adult's Safeguarding and had resulted in a reduce in safeguarding reporting
- Officers had looked to ensure there was a 7 day model of support in place and worked with 8200 people before lockdown to ensure emergency plans were in place
- Remote working had been a success story but it was also recognised that not all staff enjoyed this and that it could be difficult for some staff
- An area of learning was the use of PPE during mental health assessments for people in mental health crisis
- Norfolk Care Association had given positive feedback to NCC on the communication provided to the Norfolk care market throughout the pandemic
- The department was planning for winter by looking at the risks posed by both flu and covid-19

7.3.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- The Director of Community Health and Social Care Operations confirmed that the home first to assess principle would remain in place moving forward
- It was suggested that NCC Adult and Children's Services were promoted through social media platforms to help signpost people to the support they needed
- The impact on day-care services and people with learning disabilities was noted as one of the worst hit groups of the community. the Director of Community Social Work confirmed that day-care services were now starting to re-open carefully with measures in place, officers were working with providers to investigate alternatives to buildings based day-care that could be offered, and respite care would soon start to become available again gradually.
- A Member requested that the Winter Plan be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- The Director of Community Social Work confirmed in response to a query that there had been a reduction in safeguarding referrals during the lockdown and pandemic. This was mostly due to a reduction in professionals, family members and others going into care home and other residential settings and reporting

concerns.

- Some carers had found having a regular opportunity to speak to someone from NCC helpful to discuss behaviour and safeguarding concerns, and giving the opportunity for earlier intervention
- the Deputy Director of Public Health (Healthcare Services) confirmed that there were plans in place for a flu vaccination campaign, including reviewing who would be relevant for the jab
- Officers wanted to keep phone calls to shielded individuals going where needed

#### 7.4 The Committee

- a) **FORMALLY THANKED** all staff involved in the significant effort to keep people safe and protected
- b) **ACKNOWLEDGED** the work that has been carried out by NCC and partners during the COVID-19 pandemic
- c) **IDENTIFIED** priority areas for review to consider changes or additions to policies and strategies to ensure they continue to be shaped effectively in these areas and add these to the Committee's Forward Work Programme

- 7.5 \* Sarah Jones, Director of Commissioning, Partnerships and Resources, Children's Services highlighted that there was due to be a presentation on the Children's Services response to the Covid-19 pandemic; the Chairman asked Sarah to send a briefing note to the Committee on the Children's Services response.

### 8. **Special Educational Needs (SEND): Post Ofsted/CQC Inspection Improvement Planning**

- 8.1.1 The Committee received the report setting out the focus by NCC on improvements for Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) provision and services over the past 18 months via the SEND and alternative provision Transformation Programme, with the council's £120million investment for new provision, and the Council's Area SEND Strategy co-produced with our partners/stakeholders.

- 8.1.2 The Committee saw a presentation by the Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services ([see appendix C](#))

#### 8.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- The Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services confirmed that there had been constructive discussions with representatives from parent/carer groups
- It was queried how many agencies would be involved with one child on average; the Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services replied that it varied from child to child, but most young people with SEND were involved with a number of agencies from education and health care; most young people with SEND could have their support managed by their school.
- The target date for clearing the backlog of SEND cases was queried. It was confirmed that prior to Covid-19 there was a trajectory of when this would be cleared. The Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services proposed bringing a report to a future meeting on the revised trajectory
- The Director of Learning and Inclusion, Children's Services clarified the term "appropriate endeavours" used in the report. Section 42 of the Children and Families Act was modified as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak from 1 May to 25 September 2020, referring to timescales and provision for children with SEND. The modifications stated that where it was not reasonable or practical for the local

authority or health commissioning body to discharge its normal duty, they must ensure best endeavours were undertaken to do so

- Routes for families to get involved with parent/carers forums were promoted to families of children with SEND
- Officers were due to hold workshops to work on milestones to address weaknesses highlighted at the inspection, and more detail on this would be brought when the plan was brought back to Committee.
- A workstream was in place looking at transition for children going back into school informed by the national schools' trauma organisation

### 8.3 The Committee

1. **NOTED** the progress made during June, since the CQC/Ofsted report was published, ahead of the September deadline for the co-produced Written Statement of Action
2. **AGREED** to receive a further report, in the autumn, on feedback from Ofsted and the Department for Education regarding Norfolk's Written Statement of Action
3. **AGREED** to receive subsequent reports, starting in the autumn, on a range of performance measures to assist with decision making regarding any policy changes needed over time as part of the SEND Transformation Programme

### 8.4 The Chairman planned to explore how the working group proposed by Cllr Tim Adams at the meeting of the 13 March 2020 would be taken forward using virtual meetings.

The Meeting Closed at 12:48

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



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