



**People and Communities Select Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 18 March 2022 at 10am
in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Norwich**

Present:

Cllr Fabian Eagle (Chair)

Cllr Tim Adams

Cllr Michael Dalby

Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris

Cllr Julian Kirk

Cllr Mike Smith-Clare

Cllr Eric Vardy

Substitute Members Present:

Cllr Ben Price for Cllr Paul Neale

Cllr Chrissie Rumsby for Cllr Brenda Jones

Cllr Tony White for Cllr Ed Connolly

Also Present

Michael Bateman

Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness

James Bullion

Executive Director of Adult Social Services

James Wilson

Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Claire Bowes, Cllr Ed Connolly (Cllr Tony White substituting) Cllr Brenda Jones (Cllr Chrissie Rumsby substituting), Cllr Paul Neale (Cllr Ben Price substituting), Cllr Alison Thomas and Cllr Fran Whymark.

1b Election of a Vice-Chair

- 1b.1 Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris was duly elected to be Vice-Chair for the meeting.

2. Minutes of last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

- 3.1 No interests were declared.

4. Items received as urgent business

- 4.1 The Executive Director of Adult Social Services gave an update to the Committee on the current situation regarding Covid-19 in the health and social care system:
- There had been a significant rise in Covid-19 cases in Norfolk with 850 cases

per 100,000 in the community, which was a significant rise from the previous month from 350 per 100,000.

- In adult social care, outbreaks in care homes had been declining however there were now 150 care homes out of 350 with an outbreak, which was almost 40% of care homes. An outbreak was defined as two or more people in a care home with Covid-19. This impacted on admissions to as well as visits to care homes.
- Requirements to isolate, test and wear masks remained in place in the health and social care sector. Outbreaks in the community were affecting staffing levels in the care homes and other areas of the health and care sector.
- There were 450 people in the county's four acute hospitals who needed support with discharge; around 100 of these people needed help from social care and the rest would require help from the health care sector.
- People could help slow the spread of Covid-19 by wearing masks in crowded places and isolating if they tested positive, especially around vulnerable people.

4.2 The Executive Director of Adult Social Services was asked if the government rolling back on Covid-19 restrictions was undermining the sector's ability to perform; he replied that the strategy of living with Covid had consequences for the health and social care sector.

4.3 A Committee member asked what Councillors could do to support in this area; the Executive Director of Adult Social Services replied that it would be helpful to promote the message that the pandemic continued in health and social care and advising mask wearing in crowded places.

4.4 A Committee member raised the pay issues in nursing and queried whether hospitals continued to be penalised for having people in beds for longer than the target. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services replied that at the National Day of Remembrance and Reflection for social care in London, a film was shown portraying the impact of covid and the skills of working in social care. He noted the national wage problem in nursing and confirmed that delayed transfers of care fines had been removed.

5. Public Questions

5.1 One public question was received; see Appendix A.

6. Member Questions and Issues

6.1 No Member questions were received.

7. Special Educational Needs (SEND): Performance Framework

7.1.1 The Select Committee received the regular report providing a range of performance data regarding services and provision for Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) being reported over a 2-year period (which began in November 2020) following recommendations by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in 2020 following their published investigation report.

- 7.1.2 The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, introduced the report to Committee:
- The report focused on the required dataset from the local government ombudsman as there was no new information to add regarding the area SEND strategy.
 - The outcome of the Government's SEND review was expected at the end of March 2022.
 - The revisit from the Care Quality Commission to Norfolk County Council's Children's Services was likely to be in June or July 2022, therefore more information would likely be available in the May Committee report on progress towards the points in the written statement of action.
- 7.2 The following points were discussed and noted
- A Committee member noted that the time to final Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) performance had fluctuated through the year. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, replied that this figure had been at 54% at the end of 2021 and was at 59% in February 2022. It would be difficult to reach 60% with the current dynamics in place. Moving forward it would be important to look into whether referral rates were correct, whether the staffing resource was correct and whether some of the referrals could be supported at a lower level such as at an early years' setting or school. Information on this would be **included** in the next report as results of the audit had recently been received.
 - Information was requested on whether SEND tribunals were increasing or decreasing; the Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, **agreed** to include information on this in the May 2022 report to the Committee but confirmed the trend was upwards.
 - The number of children out of education who were home schooled for 3 months or more was queried. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, replied that this was outside of his remit so he **agreed** that a written response would be provided.
 - The Chair **asked** for a report on home schooling to be added to the forward programme. The Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services **agreed** that a report on this topic could be brought to the Committee. He added that outcomes were good in this area, noting that the education home team had recently won an award, but recognised the importance of being vigilant to ensure no children "fell through the gaps".
 - A Committee member asked what was driving the doubling of referrals. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness replied that the change from statements to EHCP in 2014 drove an increase in referrals due to it bringing in an increase in age range and a wider definition of social emotional and mental health difficulties and also impacted by an increase in children with more complex needs due to medical developments.
 - The cost of sending children to SEND schools was queried. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, replied that Government set out that "notionally" there was £6000 per child in mainstream schools through the formula funding for SEN, and along with the additional funding for children in schools, this took the cost per child in a mainstream school with SEND up to £10,000. A place for excluded children in specialist provision cost around £17,000 and a place for a child in state funded SEND schools cost £25,000. The independent specialist school sector cost around £48,000 per child, not including the cost of boarding and other similar provision.

- A Committee member queried whether it was an aim for as many SEND children as possible to be educated in mainstream schools due to this being cheaper for the council. The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, clarified that this was not the council's policy. It was key to ensure that schools and early years' settings were as inclusive as possible so that they could accommodate children with SEND where this was parental choice, however it was also important to ensure there was enough specialist SEND provision available for children for whom this was the best choice. The Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services added that there was a cohort of children who could be supported in a mainstream school with the right support, giving them an increased chance of achieving recognised qualifications and increased economic outcomes.
- The Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, confirmed there was no risk to schools of reduction or closure as there was a growing level of complex needs.
- The high needs block had been reported regarding its in-year overspend and officers were in discussion with the Department for Education regarding this and how it could be balanced.
- A Committee member felt that the funding formula was no longer fit for purpose and asked for more information on this; the Assistant Director, SEND Strategic Improvement and Early Effectiveness, hoped that the national SEND review would provide more information on this. Norfolk was currently reviewing use of the top-up funding.

7.3 The Select Committee **AGREED:**

1. To note the ongoing content of the SEND performance framework and agree ongoing reporting at all subsequent meetings through to Summer 2022; complying with the outcome of the LGSCO report.
2. To agree that the range of performance measures will directly assist with decision making regarding any policy changes needed over time as part of the range of SEND improvement programmes.

8 Health and Adult Social Care Reforms

- 8.1.1 The Select Committee received the report outlining information and providing a presentation on the Bill, Policy and White Papers that contain details of the proposed Health and Social Care reforms for information. The presentation included as an appendix to the report was initially presented as a briefing to members on 15 March 2022, and was presented to Committee as an opportunity to have further reflection and discussion.
- 8.1.2 The Executive Director of Adult Social Services introduced the report and gave a presentation to the Committee; the presentation is included at pages 26-58 of the agenda:
 - There would a period of 2 years to allow the health and social care system to recover from Covid-19.
 - It had been agreed that the Chair of Health and Wellbeing Board would be the Chair of the integrated care partnership.
 - The Integrated Care Board and Integrated Care Partnership would commence from July 2022.
 - Work in practice at local area level would change, with 5 health boards and 7 Health and Wellbeing Partnerships.

- The aims were: ensuring citizens could get the best out of health and care, investing in the workforce, and changes to the means test.
- Information on the social care charging reform was available in the Disability Rights Handbook.

8.2 The following points were discussed and noted

- Clarification was requested on payment banding specifically regarding how assessments would take into account if a person chose a more expensive care provision. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services replied that if someone decided to buy care in excess of their need or that was more expensive than deemed fair for cost of care, the council were allowed to accrue the cap at what was deemed a fair cost.
- A Committee member asked about the extra money for unpaid carers and how this would work alongside SIB; the Executive Director of Adult Social Services confirmed that more work was needed to look into what the impact would be on carers.
- The Executive Director of Adult Social Services confirmed that subject to further regulations the intention was for the Secretary of State to have further power of intervention when a judgement was made about the quality of an area, likely to be when an area was judged to be inadequate and not showing a track record of improvement.
- The NHS had an elective programme backlog which the Executive Director of Adult Social Services did not believe would be dealt with by the £12m funding, and he therefore felt it would be necessary for councils and social care to lobby for additional resources.
- A Committee member asked if unions, carers groups and service user groups would be represented on the integrated boards. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services confirmed that Healthwatch would be a member of the Integrated Care Board. The Integrated Care Partnership intended to include service users, Healthwatch and the voluntary sector at meeting. He had not heard that unions would be involved in these meetings.
- The Executive Director of Adult Social Services **agreed** to bring a report to the Committee on how the transformation would be carried out and plans for engagement with people. There would be national resources provided with the changes to charging reforms which were currently being consulted on.
- The Chairman noted that integrating systems was based on a population of 250-300,000 and asked how Norfolk fit into this model with its population of 1 million. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services explained that the model worked on a "place" level, with each place having a population of 250-300,000. Below this level there were neighbourhoods which had a population of around 30,000.
- The Chairman asked whether the funding would be population or needs based; the Executive Director of Adult Social Services explained that it would be based on relative need which took into account the number of recipients of attendance allowance and people with certain demographic features.
- The Chairman queried whether people's assets would be reviewed annually in the lead up to the cap. The Executive Director of Adult Social Services was unsure how this process would work however believed there would be an annual review of assets.

8.3 The Select Committee discussed and considered the implications of the two White Papers for Norfolk adult social care

10. Forward Work Programme

- 10.1 The Committee received and considered the forward work plan for the committee.
- 10.2 A report on the Progress of reducing numbers of looked after children was requested but the Director of Quality and Transformation, Children's Services reported that this fell under the remit of the performance panel rather than the committee
- 10.3 The Committee considered and **AGREED** the forward work programme with addition of the following items:
- An update report on the Adult Social Care white paper including information on engagement with communities and how they see change
 - Reports agreed to be added at the meeting of 21 January which were: a report looking at outdoor provision, a report on the music service, a report looking into access to technology for young people, a report on the response to mental health and bereavement and a report on the Change Grow Live inadequate inspection
 - A review of progress of the current position in the Norfolk social work sector following national social work week
 - A report on and including a presentation from Newton Europe
 - A report looking at the restructuring project of Cabinet which may affect services under the remit of People and Communities
 - An update on the Integrated Care Partnership and how it will work and be held to account
 - Task and finish group to consider how a code of conduct can be agreed to govern discussion of sensitive issues
 - A report looking into pressures related to accommodating Ukrainian refugees and how their social care needs can be met.
 - A report on the Outcomes East Programme 2022
 - An update on Carers Matter and social impact bonds
 - A report looking into the fair cost of care and work being carried out around this
 - A report on the Stronger Families Network impact bond
 - A report on why mind have withdrawn from their contract and an update on this
 - A report on unfilled care hours and how these are being monitored
 - An update on social care recovery
 - A report on the national review of children's social care

The Meeting Closed at 11:43

**Cllr Fabian Eagle, Chair,
People and Communities Select Committee**

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Item 5; Public Questions

Question from Stewert Trotter:

Since the game of chess has had a massive rise in popularity over the past couple of years due to lockdowns and "The Queen's Gambit" on Netflix, I would ask if it's possible to have an outdoor chess park based somewhere like The Walks in the summer time.

I think this would be great for the local community, young people, and people who wish to socialise and enjoy the game of chess!

Since lockdown in 2020 chess has become a big part of my life, and I think would be beneficial for the community, and for your mental health and improving cognition.

Response from the Chairman

Public parks and open spaces usually fall under the remit of district council's recreation and leisure functions. The Walks in King's Lynn is maintained by the Borough Council which, in conjunction with the volunteer organisation the Friends of the Walks, has recently invested in the restoration of the park. Norfolk County Council recommends contacting these organisations to discuss additional facilities in the Walks, and other local parks.