

Meeting date: 6th October 2022

Report to: Cabinet

Report title: Carers' Strategy 2022-2027

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is to seek Cabinet approval for the new Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-2027.
- 1.2 This will be a new place-based strategy for the Solihull area, to be jointly approved by Solihull Council and the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board. It will not be considered an approved strategy until both organisations have formally approved it.
- 1.3 The new strategy has been developed with carers of all ages, alongside health and voluntary sector partners.
- 1.4 It aims to set out clearly and concisely the current position of carers in Solihull, the valuable contribution they make to care and support in the borough, and the priorities for development of support services for them over the next 5 years.
- 1.5 An outline delivery plan is included, to be developed into a detailed delivery plan for each year after approval of the strategy. This will include specific outcomes and delivery timelines as well as lead officers for each action. The delivery plan will need to remain a live document to take account of new requirements, such as the impact of

pending reforms for adult social care and health, and emerging data from the 2021 census and ongoing surveys.

2. Decision(s) Recommended

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Solihull Carers' Strategy 2022-27.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees to delegate responsibility to the Director for Adult Social Care and Director for Children's Services to work with relevant health partners to implement action plan refreshes as necessary in order to deliver the ambitions of the strategy.

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1. Matters for Consideration

Who Carers Are

- 1.1 Carers provide vital support to the everyday lives of many Solihull residents.
- 1.2 The last available published Census in 2011 identified 24,100 people living in Solihull who identified themselves as carers. Carers UK defines a carer as:
- “someone of any age who provides support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. This could be caring for a relative, a partner, or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or substance misuse problems”*
- 1.3 Carers provide significant levels of unpaid support to the people that they care for: spouse, partner, parent, child, other relative or friend. Without that support the person may not be able to remain in their own home or in the community. Many carers do not identify themselves as carers but refer to themselves as simply doing what a parent/ daughter/husband/sibling/good neighbour would do. They support both people whose needs and circumstances mean they are not eligible for council support, and those who do receive social care arranged by the Council. Carers provide a wealth of emotional as well as practical support to those that they care for, and support people of all ages, with, for example, physical support needs, mental ill health, learning disabilities, and dementia. Carers may be children and young people helping to care for family members, young people juggling education or work with caring, adults caring for children and older generations, and people in later years themselves caring for an aged partner.
- 1.4 Adult carers have a right to an assessment of their needs under the Care Act 2014. In Solihull these assessments are either conducted by one of the Council's social work teams or by the Carers Trust Solihull, a service commissioned and funded by the Council with support from the Integrated Care Board. Both the Council and the Trust use the same assessment process. Where assessments are conducted by the Council's social work teams, there is the opportunity to do a joint assessment with the person who is being cared for where this is appropriate. This assessment will advise what support is available for a carer and if they are eligible for funding from the Council for services such as respite care or a one-off wellbeing payment.
- 1.5 Child carers and parent carers have a right to assessment of need under the Children and Families Act 2014, and young carers of adults also have rights under the Care Act 2014. Assessments will advise parent carers and young carers what support they are able to access, including short breaks for the child of a parent carer and school liaison support for a young carer.

Our Progress

- 1.6 The Carers Trust Solihull is commissioned to deliver information advice and support for carers of all ages in the Borough. The current contract for that support started in 2019, and over that time the number of carers being supported by the Trust has

increased from just under 3000 to over 4000.

- 1.7 On 24th June 2021, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health approved a one-year Carers Delivery Plan which set some clear goals and actions to support carers as we learnt to live with COVID-19. That plan was extended until the strategy is launched to provide continuous improvement.

Scope of the Strategy

- 1.8 The new strategy is for carers of all ages in Solihull, who care for individuals of any age. It therefore includes the concerns and interests of parent carers, young carers, and adult carers. It aims to consider the interest of carers in the context of their family situation, and to reflect the different impacts that caring can have on each person in the family.
- 1.9 The strategy has been developed with partners to agree a strategy that is for all of Solihull's health and care system, ensuring an integrated approach to understand and address the experiences and concerns of carers.

Strategy Development – Engagement

- 1.10 The Carers' Strategy was developed through a range of engagement activities:
- (a) Discussions at Carers Partnership Board to identify and agree priorities and themes for particular attention. This Board is a mix of expert carers and health and social care professionals.
 - (b) Workshops to understand current carer needs. This has been in 3 groups in which participants were asked how they managed during the lockdowns, the support and advice they received, their access to respite and breaks, and what support they would like to see in the future:
 - Current carers (all age)
 - Council staff who are carers themselves
 - Social Care Carers Champions (these are social workers who have a leading role in their teams to promote and support work with carers)
 - (c) Review by commissioners, social work managers and the Carers Trust of the strategy development work completed before the pandemic, combined with the above feedback, to pull out the key themes.
 - (d) Meetings with parent carer groups have taken place during September 2022 as part of the ongoing engagement programme and development of the delivery plan for the strategy.
 - (e) Joint Scrutiny has considered the strategy and provided helpful feedback incorporated into the latest draft.

- 1.11 The feedback received has been valuable in terms of understanding how the pandemic changed the pressures facing carers, and the remaining challenges, which have been incorporated into the new strategy.

Strategy Development – Approach

- 1.12 The strategy has been developed through a team of Childrens, Adult Social Care, Health, and wider council colleagues, with the Carers Trust Solihull. Earlier drafts have been shared with wider stakeholders and carers groups, for example the Carers Partnership Board, at stages throughout its development.
- 1.13 The strategy is intended to ensure that carers are able to identify tangible changes in support, not just from adult or children's social care provision, but from interactions with the wider council and health partners. Through these connections, we would hope also to have Solihull schools, workplaces, and employers in a better position to identify and support carers.
- 1.14 The national Carer's Survey 2021/22 results provide the benchmark of the views of adult carers in Solihull at the commencement of the new strategy and will be used as a baseline against which to see improvements. Work with young carers will be carried out to identify the best measures to demonstrate equivalent improvements in the support they need and receive.
- 1.15 The 2021 Census results will be analysed and used to benchmark the reach of current services. The aim is to ensure equality of access to support for all carers, with flexibility to respond to cultural, faith and language differences. The data will help us to identify where communications are best targeted to reach carers who are not yet presenting to obtain support.

2. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 2.1 Though we are still living with COVID-19, the position is sufficiently stable to put in place a new strategy to ensure that carers services continue to develop in Solihull and that carers feel supported to continue in their caring role for as long as they wish to.
- 2.2 Supporting carers is vital to help close the gap of health inequalities they experience, and to maintain their wellbeing as vital contributors to health and social care in the borough.
- 2.3 The strategy gives a clear set of actions that will take forward carer services that recognise their value and demonstrates a collective local commitment to support for carers.

3. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 3.1 The development of a revised Carers' Strategy for Solihull sets out a clear vision of how carers' experiences will be improved, and the actions to be taken by the Council and its partners to achieve better support for carers.

3.2 It sets out a programme of work and how we will measure that we are delivering improvements.

4. Implications and Considerations

4.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull. 2. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it. 3. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 4. Enable communities to thrive. 	<p>Carers play a vital role in supporting children and adults with disabilities or frailties to live as independently as possible.</p> <p>Supporting carers improves the lives of people disadvantaged by ill health or disability and helps to prevent carers' own development, health and wellbeing being harmed by the extent of their caring responsibilities.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres. 6. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2. 7. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable. 	<p>The strategy aims to support carers to stay in or gain employment where they choose to. It enables young carers to receive support to benefit from education while caring, without damage to their potential and future prospects for employment.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions. 	<p>N/A</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Promote employee wellbeing 	<p>The strategy would aim to support carers to stay in employment where they choose to. The strategy would also support the Council's own Carer Friendly policies to ensure up to date communication to staff.</p>

4.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

4.2.1 The draft strategy has been informed by a range of engagement activity with carers, with social work teams, carer support staff and health professionals including workshops and project meetings.

- 4.2.2 Joint Health and Adult Social Care and Childrens and Families Scrutiny Board considered the draft on 22nd September 2022 and feedback has been incorporated into this updated draft.
- 4.3 Financial implications:
- 4.3.1 Any additional financial implications from the strategy would be subject to a business case process and managed through the financial planning for Children's Services and Skills and Adult Social Care directorates.
- 4.3.2 Any additional financial implications for the Integrated Care Board (ICB) would be subject to a business case process and managed through the financial planning for the ICB.
- 4.4 Legal implications:
- 4.4.1 The Care Act 2014 places legal duties on local authorities to support carers, placing them on an equal footing with the people that they care for. This includes the right to assessments and to support for their eligible needs, even where the person they care for does not meet social care eligibility thresholds.
- 4.4.2 The Children and Families Act 2014 places the rights of young carers and parent carers of under 18s at the same level.
- 4.4.3 This Strategy is a joint strategy with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board and will not be formally adopted until approved by the appropriate governance in each organisation.
- 4.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:
- 4.5.1 Failure to provide good support to carers presents a risk of care arrangements breaking down for those being cared for, or negative health impacts for the carers themselves. Supporting carers to access the information, advice, support and breaks to maintain their caring role supports the overall health and outcomes of the carer and the person that they care for. Support for young carers helps to prevent detrimental impact on their development and able to achieve their potential through education.
- 4.5.2 The current cost of living challenges are likely to place increased pressure on carers. Ensuring they are supported to access all benefits and support to which they are entitled is important to enable them to continue providing care and support.
- 4.6 Equality implications:
- 4.6.1 Carers are more likely to suffer from health inequalities and those who have so far presented are more likely to live in areas of social deprivation. Any actions to improve the lives of carers should reduce inequalities experienced by them.
- 4.6.2 Particular care will be taken to understand the impact on carers of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic origin in the Borough to ensure that there is fair access to support, and to look at how outreach to different community groups can bridge any barriers to access and tackle any inequity.

4.6.3 A Fair Treatment Assessment has been conducted as part of the development of the strategy and has identified positive impacts from implementation of it. This is included in Appendix 2.

4.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

4.7.1 This is a joint strategy with Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care Board for Solihull place in the Integrated Care System.

5. List of appendices referred to

5.1 Appendix 1 – Draft Solihull Carers’ Strategy 2022-2027

5.2 Appendix 2 – Solihull Carers’ Strategy 2022-2027 Fair Treatment Assessment

6. Background papers used to compile this report

6.1 N/A

7. List of Other Relevant Documents

7.1 N/A