

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY BOARD – CHILDREN AND ADULTS - 22 September 2022

MINUTES

Present: Councillors: M Brain, A Burrow, B Donnelly, S Gethen, D Gibbin (Chairman), B Groom, J Hamilton, R Holt, R Long, A Mackenzie, M McCarthy and J Tildesley, Co-opted Member S Freeman and Parent Governor S Golby.

Councillors L McCarthy, A Rebeiro and A Wilson and Diocesan Representative Mr B Hall joined the meeting remotely.

Officers: Nick Page – Chief Executive
Jenny Wood – Director for Adult Care and Support
Karen Murphy – Assistant Director, Commissioning
Caroline Potter – Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning
Julie Hackett – Head of Children and Young People Commissioning
Sarah Chesters – Senior Community Transformation Manager, BSOL ICS

1. APOLOGIES

Councillors Y Clements, R Sexton and Mrs G Sleigh submitted their apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS

There were no questions or deputations.

4. FAMILY HUB OFFER UPDATE

The Chairman advised Members that the scheduled item on Family Hubs had been postponed whilst ongoing discussions to model in the impacts of inflation on outline proposals were being finalised nationally. It was confirmed that work on Family Hubs was proceeding and a report would be shared with the Scrutiny Boards in due course.

A Member highlighted how the Local Authority had been awarded funding to create the network of Family Hubs and queried what arrangements would be in place beyond this.

The Chief Executive confirmed the Council had received a settlement from the Department for Education (DfE) to support the development of the Hubs. He detailed how there was ongoing engagement with partners and the DfE to help ensure a sustainable funding model.

5. ADULT SOCIAL CARE CARERS STRATEGY UPDATE

Members were invited to consider the draft Carers Strategy for 2022-2027.

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Members raised a number of questions and observation which, in summary, included the following:

- A Member, in reviewing the Strategy, questioned the reference in the covering report to living with Covid-19. The Member queried whether service standards would be identified for the Strategy, such as the response time to carers seeking help. Members also questioned, in particular, the support for carers who may be facing crisis and could no longer provide care.
- The Assistant Director for Commissioning explained how, at that stage, it was a co-produced Strategy, with Carers, with a focus on the priorities that mattered most to them. She emphasised how Covid-19 was still a significant concern to many Carers, which was why it was referenced in the covering report and Strategy. It was explained how this Strategy set out the vision and priorities for Carers and work was also being undertaken to identify and monitor the outcomes stemming from the Strategy. It was also confirmed the Strategy didn't replace the existing service standards for Adult Social Care services or Children's Services.
- The Director for Adult Care and Support explained how Adult Social Care monitored progress across a range of national and local adult social care performance measures, including on responsiveness, which were reported to the Cabinet Member. She also detailed how they monitored performance and outcomes against the findings of the national Carers' Survey, as well feedback from local carers.
- The Senior Community Transformation Manager detailed the urgent community response programme and the support in place in cases of carer breakdown. She detailed how this programme linked to the Carers Strategy.
- A Member queried the performance of the Council on the delivery of carer support services compared to other Metropolitan Authorities.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning confirmed Solihull was in line with other Metropolitan Authorities, including in regards to carer satisfaction. It was emphasised it could be challenging comparing the experiences of carers as it was also dependent on the availability of wider services in different localities. It was confirmed further information on benchmarking and the Council's performance compared to other Local Authorities could be shared with Members.
- The Chief Executive detailed the new Care Quality Commission (CQC) framework that was being introduced shortly, which would identify a further set of national standards – he emphasised the volume of work being undertaken in Adult Social Care in preparation for this. He also highlighted the recent announcement from Central Government in regards to additional funding for Adult Social Care and explained how this would be accompanied by a range of performance criteria.
- A Member emphasised how they believed Covid-19 had had a major impact on both children and adults across the Borough and requested Officer comment on this.
- The Chief Executive agreed Covid-19 had had a major impact on residents across the Borough and continued to have an on-going effect. He outlined these impacts, including on children and young people, education, increased cases of family breakdown, as well an increase in

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complex referrals to Children's and Adult Social Services. It was noted that, as part of the Covid-19 Public Inquiry, there would be focus upon the long-term impacts of the pandemic.

- Members queried the ongoing engagement with different faith groups, the BAME community, as well as refugees, as part of the development and delivery of the Carers Strategy and Action Plan. They requested further information on the work being undertaken to help people recognise they were undertaking a caring role.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning detailed the consultation undertaken for the Carers Strategy and explained how a major focus of the Strategy was supporting different groups of people to recognise they were performing a caring role. She outlined how they planned to engage with faith groups, the BAME community, as well as refugee support groups, to focus on how best to communicate and link with people on this across the Borough. It was also detailed how the 2021 Census results would be reviewed to identify where communications could be best targeted to reach carers who were not yet accessing support.
- A Member highlighted instances where both the carer and the individual receiving support could have complex needs and require help. It was requested for the delivery of the Strategy to reflect the importance of ensuring tailored support to meet both individual needs and the needs of the whole family, with collaborative work across agencies.
- A Member queried the support in place for an individual once their care duties had ended. They queried, in particular, the support for people in regards to returning to education, training and employment.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning detailed how there was a strong emphasis in the Action Plan upon bereavement support for people who had fulfilled caring responsibilities. There would be focus upon developing support for carers to navigate the tasks needed at end of life and after a bereavement. It was noted this included mental health and emotional wellbeing support, as well as support in accessing education, training and employment opportunities.
- Members queried what evaluative tools would be used to assess the delivery of the Action Plan.
- The Head of Children and Young People Commissioning detailed how they would monitor the volume of young carers and parent carers accessing support via the Carers Trust. They were also looking at establishing mechanisms to gain qualitative feedback from young carers – this included the development of an engagement hub, linked to the delivery of the Joint Additional Needs Strategy. The Council also undertook a Health related behaviour survey of children and young people across the Borough.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning also detailed how they would review the delivery of the Action Plan via a range of measures. This included quantitative measures, such as the volume of carers using respite support, as well as accessing information and advice services. The results of the national Carers Survey were reviewed, as well as engaging focus groups and the Carers Partnership Board, to understand peoples' experiences.

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- A Member requested further information on the work being undertaken to improve the information and advice offer for carers, including those who may not be able to access support digitally.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning explained how they had reviewed the Council's webpages to help make it easier to access information and support, for Carers. She also detailed the support provided via the Carers Trust, as well as the Community Advice Hubs, to residents who may not be able to access information digitally.
- A Member highlighted how the Carers Trust surveyed carers to ask about the condition of the people they cared for, with a significant volume responding on how they supported autistic children and adults. The Member queried whether it was possible to provide a further breakdown of these responses. They also questioned the support in place for these families via schools, as well as for parent carers home educating. They also questioned whether there was a need for further SEND provision.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning confirmed they would query with the Carers Trust whether it was possible to provide further information on the results of the survey. It was confirmed that an increasing volume of autistic adults were accessing Adult Social Care support. The Head of Children and Young People Commissioning detailed how the new free school for autistic children and young people was scheduled to be opened in September. There was focus upon developing SEND places further and the Council had expressed an interest in establishing another Special School with the Department for Education. It was also noted that, as part of the development of the Family Hub offer, there was focus upon establishing strong links with Schools, alongside other agencies, including GP's, Health Visitors and other specialist services.
- Another Member also raised the Carers Trust survey and queried how the information had been presented in the Strategy. They noted the survey had been undertaken in 2018 and queried whether a further survey would be held, to help understand the impact upon carers of issues such as long-Covid.
- The Strategic Commissioner for Strategy and Planning confirmed they were reviewing the presentation of the survey results in the Strategy, to help make clearer the range of conditions people identified. In regards to further surveys, it was emphasised they had to take into account how the national Carers Survey was held as well. It was confirmed the Carers Trust had undertaken extensive engagement with local carers on the impact of pandemic and conditions such as long-Covid had been taken into account as part of the Strategy.
- A Member questioned the engagement the Council undertook with local pensioner groups, as part of the development of its strategies and services.
- The Assistant Director for Commissioning confirmed they were keen to establish strong links these local groups, especially taking into account the volume of carers in the Borough who were over the age of 65. Officers were happy to engage with these groups, both by sharing documents, as well as meeting face-to-face.

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The Chairman thanked Officers for all the work undertaken as part of the development of the Strategy and also thanked Members for the questions raised that evening. He emphasised how support for carers was a vital part of the services the Council and its partners provided and scrutiny by these Boards was a key part of reviewing this Strategy prior to it being introduced. It was noted the new CQC inspection framework for Adult Social Care would provide further opportunities for assessment and benchmarking – the Chairman reminded Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board Members that a briefing on this framework would be provided in due course.

RESOLVED

The Joint Scrutiny Board for Children and Adults:

- (i) Noted the progress on the development of the Strategy.
- (ii) Requested that the key points raised by Members be taken into account as part of the future development and delivery of the strategy and action plan, including on ensuring personalised care for the whole family, with both adult and children's social care working collaboratively.
- (iii) Welcomed the engagement and establishment of links with formal Pensioner Organisations; and
- (iv) Agreed for a future update to be circulated to Board members, outlining the comparative benchmarking work undertaken for carers in the Borough.

End time of meeting: 20:05