

HEALTH, WELLBEING & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 1st March, 2021
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors:	Julie Cooper	Barry Panter	Mark Holland
	John Cooper	Ruth Wright	Bert Proctor
	Allison Gardner	Sue Moffat	
	Tony Kearon	Silvia Burgess	

Officers:	Andrew Bird	Head of Recycling, Waste and Fleet Services
	Catherine Fox	Partnerships Vulnerability Officer
	Denise French	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Sarah Moore	Partnerships Manager

Also in attendance: Councillor Helena Maxfield, Portfolio Holder, Community Safety and Wellbeing
Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire Commissioner, Police, Fire and Rescue, Crime
Helen Jarvie, Office of the Staffordshire Commissioner
Becky Murphy, Staffordshire County Council

23. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Jill Waring, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

25. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December be confirmed as a correct record.

26. UPDATE FROM CABINET

There was nothing to report from Cabinet.

27. DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE

The Committee considered a report on Domestic Abuse. The report outlined the demand for services and summarised the services available for those affected by domestic abuse in the Borough. Catherine Fox, Partnerships Vulnerability Officer, presented the report with contributions from Sarah Moore, Partnerships Manager, Becky Murphy of Staffordshire County Council, Helen Jarvie from the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire Commissioner for Police, Fire and Rescue and Crime.

The Committee was advised that the work referred to the situation during 2020 based on data from the year. The MARAC (multi agency domestic abuse conference) had continued its work which had been a pilot project in Newcastle-under-Lyme but had now continued and had been introduced across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Work with vulnerable people had increased and investment in Domestic Abuse services had been increased including through funding pots from the Ministry of Justice. The situation with levels of Domestic Abuse during Covid had been unclear to start with but data now showed that cases had increased. At the start of the pandemic, many people had sought help via the National Helplines and were then referred to local services. This had seen a slight increase in calls for support until around October 2020 when a sustained increase had been seen to the range of support services available. There had been communications around where support was available and there was around a 25% increase in calls for support. Providers had responded well to increased demand and adapted services with online support available but some face to face support such as in school settings was offered.

Members raised a number of queries and issues on the report:

- Were there many cases of child to adult violence? Members were informed that there were around 15 cases per quarter that were referred to commissioners that were child on parent abuse. This figure had not increased during the pandemic. In April 2021 a dedicated support offer to individuals affected was to be made called 'Who's in Charge'.
- What were waiting times for services once an initial approach had been made? This depended on type of service and level of risk; if it was a high risk situation then assessment and triage would be immediate; if lower risk, after initial support and guidance there may be a wait time of a few weeks for further support.
- Was the Children and Young Person's Glow domestic abuse service finishing at the end of March and what would happen after that? The Committee was advised that the contract was due to end on 31st March but a contingency plan was in place to ensure there would be no gaps in service and there would be an extension to the service using the Locality Deal Funding passported to the Borough Council on behalf of the Newcastle Partnership from the Commissioner's Office.
- A question was asked about Domestic Homicide Reviews. It was explained that any recommendations from DHRs would be shared with relevant agencies who would take any learnings or development requirements into account.
- Members referred to specific agencies Mankind, Broken Rainbow and Karma Nirvana and their role. Members were advised that Mankind was to support male victims of domestic abuse; in relation to other agencies the information would be shared outside of the meeting as information was not to hand. The Partnership Manager explained that the responsibility for DHRs was with district councils with the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, Cllr Maxfield. There had been 2 Panels which had held scoping reviews and submitted returns to the Government; all partners were invited to the scoping

review and participated. A project with Karma Nirvana had taken place around 4 years ago at Newcastle college to raise awareness of honour based violence. The local refuge would also access their services if needed. There was also an initiative in 2019 when the New Vic Theatre had hosted a roadshow by Karma Nirvana to raise awareness about so called honour based violence through a drama production which many students had accessed.

- Were cases increasing and was Newcastle Borough similar to other areas? Members were advised that the situation in the Borough was similar to the rest of the UK with an increase of around 25%.
- Could Members be reassured that the new statutory obligations for safe accommodation that come into force on 1 April 2021 could be met without any gap in provision? Members were advised that the statutory requirement was to set up a partnership group to lead on this and in Staffordshire there were already partnership arrangements through Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Development Board with a broad range of partners. One of the sub groups was focusing on safe accommodation and funding had now been confirmed from MCHLG and this would enable existing services to be maintained while a broader needs assessment was undertaken.
- Was data available for case numbers on a smaller basis than 24 months? Members were informed that statistics were available on a quarterly basis as follows– January – March 2020 saw 122 enquiries and referrals; April – June was 121 ; July to September was 150; and October to December saw 189 referrals. This represented an increase in demand of over 50%.
- What happened to those who received referrals but were then not supported? The Committee was informed that enquiries and referrals covered a broad spectrum from a family member making an enquiry to a referral from the police. It could be that a person chose not to engage.
- The Borough had the third highest number of recorded incidents and was the funding reflected in this? Funding provided from the Commissioner's office was for service across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and was a baseline pot and was not proportioned out.
- What was the policy regarding 'consent to contact'? Members were informed that in cases of Police involvement the Police would make the victim aware that they would be referred to a service and given an offer of support. The policy was that the victim would be made aware that there were services available and they would be made contact with.
- Had any face to face support been maintained if needed? Members were informed that the New Era service had operated from its 2 premises which were Covid secure; if a victim needed to meet a support worker these offices could be used. For CYP New Era staff could access children in a school environment if needed. There was PPE available and lateral flow testing was being considered. Members were also informed about the Ask Annie initiative to enable people to access support via pharmacies; this was an initiative developed by the Commissioner's Office and police colleagues in Staffordshire and had been launched nationally by the Home Office. Members were also advised that the CYP with GLOW service had put in measures to ensure they could support children and young people in a face to face way where necessary.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and noted and those involved be thanked for the detailed report.

28. TACKLING FAITH AND RACE HATE - PROJECT

Councillor Moffat presented on a New Vic Theatre project to tackle faith and race hate. She was presenting in her role as Director of New Vic Borderlines.

Councillor Moffat explained that the Government had made £1.8m available through the Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grant scheme; the funding was available for established community groups and organisations for projects that champion building a diverse and tolerant society for all faiths and races.

Borderlines project was called 'It's Not as Simple as Black and White' and had received £222,931. It would be launched on 20th March. The project used the idea of football to tackle faith and race hate; looking at how tactics could tackle faith and race hate with solutions not sides. The project was supported by Port Vale Football Club. Since November the project had worked with over 2000 people with workshops and strategies about how faith and race hate could be tackled. The project was being extended and it was hoped could be taken into schools and at the New Vic. The UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was 21 March with a poster/banner competition being launched on 20 March; banners would be chosen for display at Port Vale's ground and there would be an online display.

Members commended the work by the Borderlines project. Reference was made to a football match a number of years ago organised by Cyril Regis that raised awareness of race. The Committee was told that the project would continue up to the start of the European football championships. The Partnership Manager referred to work at Keele University by the Students Union on hate crime plus work by Staffordshire County Council working in partnership to address hate crime and develop community cohesion. Councillor Moffat advised that there was a Steering Group which would welcome representation from the Council; it was also hoped that the project would be the start of future development work along the themes outlined.

Resolved: that the presentation be received.

29. **PARKS AND OPEN SPACES SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Councillor Moffat updated on the Parks and Open Spaces Scrutiny Review. The Group had met and considered an interim report. Following discussion at the meeting a further meeting had been arranged to discuss the key points raised including:

- The importance of open space to physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Ensuring this is recognised and given priority in the annual budget process
- Identify and make use of any digital opportunities through the One Council programme
- Look at pilot work in some key spaces to develop website content, location maps, QR codes and suggestions were to trial this in Lyme Valley and Bathpool Parks
- Review 'Report It' functions on the website to ensure greater use
- Consider a tree planting project taking into account the Environmental Sustainability Strategy and look at incorporating the potential for sponsoring a tree; consider a project to plant 850 trees to celebrate 850 Anniversary in 2023
- Identify external funding and partnership opportunities.

A further meeting was taking place on 15th April after which a report and recommendations would be submitted to the Health, Wellbeing and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: that the update be received.

30. MINUTES OF THE HEALTHY STAFFORDSHIRE SELECT COMMITTEE - 1 FEBRUARY 2021

The Committee considered the digest from Staffordshire County Council outlining the work of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee at the recent meeting on 1st February 2021.

Resolved: that the update be received.

31. MEETING WITH THE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

The Head of Recycling and Fleet updated on a meeting on 26th February between the Chair and Vice Chair with Tracey Shewan, Director of Communications from the Clinical Commissioning Group.

The main focus of the meeting had been the response to Covid-19. There had been a large reduction in inpatient numbers with the latest figures being 140 in the Royal Stoke Hospital and 10 in the County Hospital. Of these there were 38 patients in Critical Care. Members had asked about the age group and were advised that there was an increase in younger patients with the youngest in patient being 18 years of age. Rates of infection had decreased particularly in North Staffordshire. There was great progress with the vaccination programme; 98% of those over 80 years of age had received their first vaccine and 100% of people aged 70 -79 had been vaccinated. The picture regarding Care Home residents showed good progress with vaccinations. The vaccination by Ward had been circulated by email earlier and showed total numbers although not percentages. There had been an increase in people coming forward for testing based on symptoms although they did not necessarily have the virus; it was positive that people were aware of symptoms and the need to be tested. There was a wealth of volunteer support for the vaccination programme which was welcomed. The main message was to continue communications around good hygiene and social distancing. The key message was that the virus did not move; it was moved by people.

Members referred to issues around family groups continuing to visit shops which made social distancing more difficult. Members noted from their own experience the efficient manner of delivering the vaccine. There were also examples of great communications from GP practices. Members noted lower figures for certain areas such as Chesterton, Knutton and Madeley and asked whether this was low take up or lower population. The Head of Recycling and Fleet explained that there were no particular issues highlighted at the meeting but for the future it would be helpful to receive analytical data that enabled greater scrutiny and clarity.

Members referred to helpful messages from the Council Communications' team that were shared by Members to ensure the key issues continued to be reinforced.

Resolved: that the update be received.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Work Programme. The item on Anti-Social Behaviour had originally been scheduled for this meeting but had been agreed with the Chair and Vice Chair to defer it to June in order not to overload officers and Members and give sufficient time to consider important topics. The June meeting would also consider the final report from the Scrutiny Review of Parks and Open Spaces. The September meeting would hear a report from the Newcastle Housing Advice Service following it being brought in-house from April. Members would also receive the regular update from the CCG meetings with Tracey Shewan and the work that the Borough was undertaking such as use of Covid Marshals in the high streets.

Resolved: that the Work Programme as outlined be approved.

33. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Members of the Public present.

34. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

35. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 7 JUNE 2021

Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.50 pm