

HEALTH, WELLBEING & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 14th September, 2020
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors: Julie Cooper Ruth Wright Kenneth Owen
Allison Gardner Sue Moffat Mark Holland

Officers: Andrew Bird Head of Recycling, Waste and
Fleet Services
Denise French Democratic Services Team
Leader
Martin Hamilton Chief Executive
Roger Tait Head of Operations
Gillian Taylor Housing Team Leader

Also in attendance: Councillor H Maxfield,
Portfolio Holder for
Community Safety and
Wellbeing

6. APOLOGIES

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

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest stated.

8. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

9. UPDATE FROM CABINET

There were no items to update from Cabinet.

10. UPDATE - TOWN CENTRE REOPENING POST LOCKDOWN, HOMELESSNESS LESSONS LEARNED AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES POST LOCKDOWN

Councillor Helena Maxfield, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, presented an update report on a number of services within the Committee's remit that had been impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic:

- Work undertaken to ensure town centre visitors feel safe with the reopening post lockdown – the report outlined the various measures undertaken to provide Covid secure town centres including signage, markings to encourage

social distancing and provision of hand sanitiser. There had been a number of measures introduced for the market including minimum spacing between stalls and contactless collection of rents. There had been thorough cleansing of the street environments in the main centres and floral displays in place. Partnership working had taken place with the Newcastle Business Improvement District and other agencies including Staffordshire County Council.

- Homelessness, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation, lessons learned – the report outlined how services had adapted to provide for homelessness and rough sleepers. Work was continuing to develop provision for those needing temporary accommodation and to find an alternative way to provide furniture and white goods for those moving into permanent accommodation following the closure of Furniture Mine. The focus of the service was now towards preparing for colder weather and sub-zero temperatures.
- Domestic violence post lockdown – Councillor Maxfield outlined that Police had reported no increase in cases since lockdown. The weekly Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) dealt with more serious cases and had four cases at the time of writing the report with a further four to be considered the following week. The GLOW service was for children and young people and had seen an increase in all areas of its service provision.

Members raised a number of queries and issues as follows:

- Some shops did not have signage relating to Covid secure measures and there was concern that some shoppers did not wear face coverings. Roger Tait advised that signage had been displayed in town centres and Environmental Health Officers had visited some premises to give advice. The Chief Executive pointed out that the Council could not mandate how shops and businesses operated. Members noted that signage could be displayed but it was not the role of shopkeepers to enforce and there was a risk of verbal abuse.
- There was concern about young people gathering in the town centre and it was reported that students had been told that if they did not have a lecture then they were not to be on site. It was recognised that many young people would be from outside the area and may have some anxiety about being in a new town and at a new setting. Members referred to a meeting with the County Council which was going to address these type of issues direct with the college.
- Were specific figures around homelessness available and could they be included in future reports? Councillor Maxfield advised that this was possible and that the current figures were 18 families in accommodation detailed as follows - 1 family in temporary accommodation awaiting to go into private rented accommodation; 1 family in B&B accommodation awaiting transfer to temporary accommodation; 7 families in Copeland; 9 families in lower level supported accommodation and there were 4 rough sleepers who were known to the services.
- Was the situation around Domestic Abuse monitored which Councillor Maxfield confirmed it was.

Resolved: That Cabinet be asked for an update to the next meeting on the following areas:

- (a) Work undertaken to ensure town centre visitors feel safe with the reopening post lockdown – update;

(b) Homelessness, rough sleeping and temporary accommodation – post lockdown, current position, how the service is managing during winter months and dealing with sub-zero temperatures; and

(c) Domestic violence services- post lockdown, strategies to reduce Domestic violence, review of the new service, measures to promote sources of help and support (e.g. Members referred to a booklet that they distributed in local places), impact and support for young people affected by Domestic Abuse.

11. PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

The Head of Operations referred to the meeting of the Committee on 2nd March 2020 when it had been agreed to set up a Task and Finish Group to look at the topic of encouraging greater use of parks and green spaces to promote physical and mental health and wellbeing. A group of Members had been set up but had not yet been able to meet. He referred to how beneficial parks and green spaces had been during lockdown. He asked the Committee whether it wanted to continue to progress this work through a Task and Finish Group or whether he could prepare a report to the next meeting outlining the important role of parks and green spaces.

Members agreed that parks and open spaces were important and the value of the Scrutiny Review and agreed to progress the topic through the Task and Finish Group.

Resolved: that the Scrutiny Review of encouraging greater use of parks and green spaces continue through the Task and Finish Group set up on 2nd March 2020.

12. MINUTES OF THE HEALTHY STAFFORDSHIRE SELECT COMMITTEE -

The Committee considered the digests from Staffordshire County Council outlining the work of their Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee at the recent meeting on 10th August 2020.

Resolved: that the update be received.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the current Work Programme. Councillor Gardner referred to previous meetings and consideration of Domestic Abuse services. Members had received an update in December 2019 on service provision and noted that the current service had only been in place for 12 months at that time. Members had asked for an update in 14 months. Members also discussed the impact of Domestic Abuse on young people. It was noted that Members had previously distributed booklets on Domestic Abuse support services to various outlets in their Wards and this had been seen as very useful and perhaps could be repeated.

Members discussed Mental Health as an important topic. Councillor Moffat advised that she was the Chair of North Staffs MIND and suggested a presentation on their work be made to a future meeting.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be updated with items for the December meeting of the Committee as follows:

- Update on the Scrutiny Review of Parks and Open Spaces;
- An Update on the areas requested from Cabinet raised as part of the Covid update report – safe opening of town centres, homelessness and Domestic Abuse services taking into account the issues raised above; and

- A presentation on Mental Health Services from North Staffs MIND.

14. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no Members of the Public present.

15. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 7 DECEMBER 2020

Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.10 pm