

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee held at online on Wednesday, 20th January, 2021.

PRESENT: Mrs P T Cole (Chairman), Miss D Morton (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, MBE, Mr M J Angell, Mr M A C Balfour, Mrs P M Beresford, Mr J Burden, Ms S Hamilton, Mrs L Hurst, Mr S J G Koowaree and Ida Linfield

ALSO PRESENT: Clair Bell, Eric Hotson and Peter Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Zena Cooke (Corporate Director of Finance), Julie Davidson (Head of Strategic Safeguarding, Practice and Quality Assurance), Chris McKenzie (Director of Adult Social Care and Health North and West Kent), Carl Griffiths (Adult Social Care Recovery Leader and SRO), Clare Maynard (Head of Commissioning Portfolio - Outcome 2 and 3), Simon Mitchell (Senior Commissioner), Dave Shipton (Head of Finance Policy, Planning and Strategy), Theresa Grayell (Democratic Services Officer) and Stephanie Broom (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

243. Apologies and Substitutes
(Item. 2)

244. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda
(Item. 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

245. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020
(Item. 4)

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 are correctly recorded and that a paper copy be signed by the Chairman when this can be done safely. There were no matters arising.

246. Verbal Updates by Cabinet Member and Corporate Director
(Item. 5)

1. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mrs C Bell, gave a verbal update on the following issues:

Symptom-free Testing sites – nineteen sites were already open, with five more opening shortly, spread across the county, with the target of having two testing sites in every district of the county being reached by the end of January, giving capacity for 20,000 tests a day across Kent. Appointments could be booked on the County Council website, and anyone without covid-19 symptoms could book and attend. Anyone with symptoms should book a test via the NHS. It was

recommended that symptom-free testing be repeated every two weeks, as it was known that 1 in 3 people carried the virus without showing any symptoms. As at 15 January, 93,862 tests had been completed, with 956 showing a positive result. Results would be texted to people very shortly after tests, and those testing positive would be advised to self-isolate for seven days to avoid spreading the virus to others. Mrs Bell thanked colleagues in Public Health, Property and Amey for their work in establishing and running testing sites. The County Council was appealing for people to assist at testing sites.

NHS Vaccination programme – vaccinations were being given to eligible frontline County Council social care employees, who would be told how to book an appointment. Vaccinations were being organised by the NHS and they and the Council's social care teams worked closely together.

Guidance on visiting care homes – this had been updated on 12 January 2021 and could be found on the Gov.UK website. Each home had set its own policy about visiting, based on a risk assessment of its residents and taking account of the Government guidance. The aim was to enable outdoor and screened visits, including visits to people receiving end-of-life care.

Community Wellbeing services – the first three contracts had been awarded, covering East and West Kent, starting on 1 April 2021. These contracts would cover services for people aged 55+ and for people with a sensory impairment. In East Kent, services would be delivered by Social Enterprise Kent, in West Kent services by Involve Kent and the countywide sensory service would be delivered by Kent Association for the Blind.

2. Mrs Bell and Mr Smith responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:-

- a) asked how many care homes were not allowing visits at all, Mr Smith undertook to find out and provide information outside the meeting. He assured Members that homes understood the distress of residents and families who were unable to enjoy visits and emphasised that care homes would consider each case individually, applying the Government guidance. He emphasised that there had been very few hospital admissions from care homes due to covid-19 and homes were generally managing the restrictions well; and
- b) asked how community wellbeing services would be transferred from existing to new providers, how the difference in price would be funded and how the changeover would be communicated to service users, Mrs Bell and Ms Maynard advised that the organisations mentioned previously were only the lead providers, who would sub-contract service delivery to a number of smaller organisations. Concern was expressed that some current service providers did not feel positively engaged by the new arrangements and that their experience and expertise of service delivery may be lost as a result. Ms Maynard assured Members that new providers would be fully informed of current service users' care needs to ensure that all needs would be covered, and undertook to advise the speaker of the arrangements for service transfer outside the meeting.

3. The Corporate Director of Social Care, Mr R Smith, then gave a verbal update on the following issues:

Winter Planning – the hospital discharge plan was constantly being reviewed, most recently in the wake of media coverage of a new strain of the covid-19 virus which had appeared in Kent. Infection and death rates in Kent from the previously-existing virus had seen significant, and statistics were received daily. He assured the committee that he was always very aware of the individuals and families behind the statistics and emphasised the importance of acknowledging the human impact of the virus and people’s need for end-of-life and bereavement support. Managing hospital discharges, in partnership with community hospitals, had been challenging due to the rising number of people needing specialist services, for example, for dementia. Increased discharges from hospital placed more pressure on community settings, and work was going on to establish bespoke services. The designated bed system was working well, with 44 beds currently occupied. Eligibility criteria for these was any adult over 18.

The care market was fragile, and staff shortages were a national problem. Some people had proved difficult to place but this was not unusual for the time of year.

Covid-19 cases in care homes – 87 providers so far had reported cases of covid-19 but the referral rate to hospital was low. Central Government had allocated £4.7m of Infection Control Funding to Kent, which the County Council was required to allocate within 10 days of receiving it. It was planned that some of this funding be allocated to care homes to enable more testing.

Vaccination programme – this had been the subject of many enquiries. There were 9 priority groups in which people would receive vaccinations, with care home residents being first, followed by those aged 80+, 75+ and so on, with the least vulnerable being last. An all-Member briefing on 22 January would provide more detail on the vaccination programme.

4. Asked about the permitted length of stay in a designated bed, and the arrangements for moving on from this provision, Mr Smith and Mr McKenzie advised that, although an average stay was expected to be about two weeks, this time limit was not applied arbitrarily; occupants were assessed clinically on a case-by-case basis. Anyone leaving a designated bed would first need to have a negative covid-19 test.

5. It was RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted, with thanks.

247. 20/00127 - Community Day Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities Framework: Extension to call-off contracts
(Item. 6)

1. Mr Mitchell introduced the report and summarise the key points. There were no questions.

2. It was RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to:

a) extend the call-off contracts with external providers delivering community day opportunities for Kent residents with a disability for 18 months, from 1 April 2021; and

b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take relevant actions, including, but not limited to, finalising the terms of

and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision,

be endorsed.

248. Draft Capital Programme 2021-24 and Revenue Budget 2021-22
(Item. 7)

1. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Mr P J Oakford, introduced the report and advised that, as in previous years, Cabinet Committees were being asked to discuss and comment on the budget before it was considered by the full Council. Mr Shipton then summarised the report and detailed the national and local context in which this year's budget had been set and the measures taken by the County Council to manage the impact of these.

2. Mrs Bell advised that the Making A Difference Every Day (MADE) programme had been developed as a re-design of the Directorate's operating model and would be vital in ensuring that limited resources were used in the most effective way to maintain service delivery to the people of Kent. Mr Smith referred to the latent demand for services which would become clear only when people currently in hospital settings were ready to move on to other provision, but which the County Council needed to predict and be ready to meet. The long-term picture of adult social care funding was complex, with many unknowns, both in terms of the longer-term economic effects of covid-19 and future Government funding.

3. Ms Cooke and Mr Smith then responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:-

- a) disappointment was expressed about the lack of detail in the budget report relating to the savings to be made, and on this basis, the speaker did not feel able to support the recommendation to note the budget. Ms Cooke set out the two-stage process for setting the budget and advised that no change to service provision would be made without detailed proposals being set out and Members being consulted; this would happen after the agreement of the planned budget at February's full Council meeting. The aim in presenting the current report and budget was clarity and transparency on the key areas of focus, such as proposed growth and savings, but avoiding an exhaustive level of detail. Most of the detail historically provided related to changes which the County Council was unable to change, i.e. contractual inflation. Ms Cooke said she was very happy to answer questions of detail from Members outside the meeting; and
- b) the same speaker said he did not feel able to agree the budget in February with the current level of detail about the adult social care savings provided. The speaker felt that if it were not possible to be clear about savings at the start of the financial year, it may prove necessary to make additional savings part-way through the year, which may involve reductions in services. On this basis, he felt unable to explain and justify the budget to his local electorate. To Ms Cooke's assurances about the budget process, Mr Smith added that his duty was to ensure that the County Council met the adult social care needs of Kent's population, and had to ensure that any savings made did not compromise this provision.

To guard against this, service redesign such as the MADE programme had been developed. Mr Smith also confirmed that he was happy to answer questions of detail from Members outside the meeting.

4. With the exception of Mr J Burden and Ida Linfield, who stated that they were unable to support the recommendation, the committee RESOLVED that:-
 - a) the draft capital and revenue budgets, including the responses to the budget consultation, be noted; and
 - b) Members' comments on the draft capital and revenue budget be reported to the Cabinet and full County Council when they consider the draft budget, on 25th January and 11th February 2021, respectively.

249. Making A Difference Every Day (MADE) Programme Update - presentation
(Item. 8)

1. Mr Griffiths presented a series of slides which set out the context, process, timetable and next steps for the development of the MADE programme. He added that the outcomes of the Local Government Association Peer Review of equality and diversity in December 2020 would be built into the programme. The aim of the programme was to set out a clear vision and method for culture change.
2. Mr Griffiths and Mr Smith responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:-
 - a) asked how adults with learning disabilities would be engaged, once the current restrictions ended, to make the most of their enthusiasm and organisation, Mr Griffiths advised that some had found their own activities to replace the clubs they would previously had attended but which had been suspended due to covid-19 restrictions. Mr Smith added that one strength of the MADE programme was co-design with those who would use and benefit from the services provided, and user and carers groups would be fully engaged;
 - b) asked how the programme would be carried forward and reviewed, to maintain its usefulness and relevance, Mr Griffiths advised that part of the culture change would be ongoing learning and improvement. The programme would be reviewed every two years; and
 - c) asked how the programme would support staff to keep up with online safeguarding issues, Mr Griffiths advised that safeguarding was vitally important and the MADE programme would include modelling to review safeguarding practice. Ms Davidson added that the overall aim of the MADE programme was an ongoing strengthening of practice and staff awareness of changing issues, for example, the increased use of online and virtual forums during the pandemic, and the impact of this change on vulnerable service users.
3. It was RESOLVED that the verbal update and the information given in response to comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

250. Work Programme
(Item. 9)

It was RESOLVED that the committee's planned work programme for 2021 be noted.