

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Adult Social Care Cabinet Committee held Online on Wednesday, 25th November, 2020.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Clair Bell and Paulina Stockell

IN ATTENDANCE: Richard Smith (Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health), Chris McKenzie (Director of Adult Social Care and Health North and West Kent), Clare Maynard (Head of Commissioning Portfolio - Outcome 2 and 3), Simon Mitchell (Senior Commissioner), Matt Chatfield (Operational Analytics and Systems Manager), Lisa Clinton (Stakeholder Engagement Manager), Debra Davidson (Customer Care and Complaints Manager), Toni Easdown (Stakeholder Engagement Officer, Adult Social Care Business Delivery Unit), Paula Watson (Senior Commissioner), Theresa Grayell (Democratic Services Officer) and Ann Hunter (Principal Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

229. Apologies and Substitutes

(Item. 2)

There were no apologies or substitutes.

230. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the agenda

(Item. 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

231. Minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2020

(Item. 4)

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 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.

232. Verbal update by the 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:-

'Knock and Check' campaign – this encouraged people to knock regularly at the door of an elderly or vulnerable neighbour, to have a brief chat and offer help with daily tasks such as shopping. This excellent initiative tied in with the work of the Select Committee on Loneliness and Social Isolation and other projects to

encourage community spirit during lockdown. Members were asked to share and spread this campaign in their local areas.

Domestic Abuse – this was being addressed by a campaign in which the County Council collaborated with district colleagues, the police and fire services, to form the Kent Domestic Abuse Support team. This offered contact, sanctuary, emergency assistance and therapeutic support and was being managed by a commissioning officer with allocated funding of £1.7m. So far it had supported 1,800 people. An online conference entitled ‘Domestic Abuse – It’s Everyone’s Business’, starting on 25 November, would run until 10 December. Mrs Bell had pre-recorded a message to be included in the content of the conference.

KARA Service – Mrs Bell showed two slides which illustrated the KARA service, which aimed to help and support people with very little knowledge of the online world to use it effectively to maintain contact with their family, friends and care professionals during lockdown and covid-19 restrictions. The service was working well, had many referrals and had activated 40 devices a week since the start of the second national lockdown, to help ease isolation. Mrs Bell said how proud she was of the team running it. *The slides showing the KARA service would be circulated to all Members of the committee after the meeting.*

2. The Corporate Director for Adult Social Care and Health, Mr R Smith, gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

Infection Control Grant – this was being delivered through much work by commissioners and providers. 90% of the grant was discretionary and had been used to support the voluntary sector, working with the Care Alliance, to protect vulnerable people.

Feedback from Adult Social Care and Health Directorate Management Team Live Event – this had offered an opportunity to link with staff teams and support wellbeing and equality. Looking after staff was vital, to ensure they could look after Kent’s vulnerable people.

Update on Day Services – these remained closed but reviews conducted by telephone checked people’s needs and how these might be met in some other way, as part of the Making a Difference Every Day (MADE) programme. A review was being undertaken of how the most vulnerable families could be supported to look after elderly and vulnerable relatives at home while day services remained closed. Local authorities were working through very difficult and unprecedented times and faced a number of challenges, for example, managing discharges from hospital.

3. Asked about shortages of PPE which seemed to be identified in the winter plan, Mr Smith advised that he had not been made aware by service providers of any supply problems but undertook to look into this and provide information to Members outside the meeting.

4. The verbal updates were noted, with thanks.

233. 20/00098 (20/00109) - Contract Award for Community-Based Wellbeing Services - Phase 1

(Item. 6)

1. The Chairman asked committee Members if, in discussing this item, they wished to refer to the information contained in the exempt appendix to the report. Members confirmed that they did indeed wish to refer to it and consideration of the item was moved to the end of the meeting so the exempt information could be discussed in closed session. *A summary of the discussion of the exempt material is in minute 242, below.*
2. The Chairman advised that, due to an administrative error when publishing, the decision number listed at the top of the report should read 20/00109 instead of 20/00098.
3. Before discussion of the exempt content, Mr Mitchell introduced the unrestricted report and there were no questions on its content.

234. 20/00108 - Residential Care Home Services Contract for People With Learning Disability, Physical Disability and Mental Health Needs - Opening of the Dynamic Purchasing System

(Item. 7)

1. Ms Watson and Mr McKenzie introduced the report and responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:-
 - a) the 16 homes concerned in the contract were small and specialised in accommodation for people with a learning disability, a physical disability and mental health needs, and accommodated a total of only 109 residents; and
 - b) concern was expressed about the rising number of cases of covid-19 in care homes. Asked about the policy around testing people for covid-19 before admitting them to homes, and the risk of patient transport staff spreading the virus to other homes they visit, and care home staff taking it home with them, Ms Watson advised that the number of cases of covid-19 in the specialist homes concerned was static, but she assured the committee that those homes would not accept new patients unless they had tested negative for covid-19.
2. Mr McKenzie advised the committee that designated care homes would accept patients being discharged from hospital with covid-19 and care for them until such time as they tested negative for the virus and could be placed in a care home or returned to their own home. He reassured the committee that, in line with statutory requirements, any patient being placed in a care home would first be tested for covid-19.
3. It was RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to:
 - a) approve the use of the Dynamic Purchasing System to enable new services to join the Residential Care Home Contract for people with a learning disability, people with a physical disability and people with mental health needs, and:

- b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take other relevant actions, including, but not limited to, entering into and finalising the terms of the contracts or other legal agreement, as necessary, to implement the decision,

be endorsed.

235. Local Account for Adult Social Care (January 2020 to August 2020)

(Item. 8)

1. Ms Clinton introduced the report and highlighted the key points of the new Local Account document, including its concise new format and increased digital focus. The committee was being asked to comment on and endorse the new document before it was published online and as a paper version. She responded to comments and questions from the committee, including the following:-
 - a) the clarity of the format and layout of the new Local Account document was welcomed and the production team congratulated and thanked for their excellent work. The new document was very user-friendly and was sure to be widely used by service providers and the voluntary sector; and
 - b) asked about the information which was not represented, for example, the 25% of care homes which did not score a 'good' rating from the Care Quality Commission, how far short of the standard they were and what work was going on to address this, Ms Clinton undertook to respond to Members outside the meeting.
2. It was RESOLVED that the draft Local Account document – 'Here for you, how did we do?' (January 2020 – August 2020) be endorsed as the final version for publication.

236. Decisions Taken Outside the Cabinet Committee Meeting Cycle

(Item. 9)

The committee NOTED that decision 20/00106 - *Infection Control Fund* had been taken in accordance with the process as set out in Part 2 paragraph 12.35 of the Constitution.

237. Adult Social Care - Winter Pressures Plan 2020/2021

(Item. 10)

1. Mr McKenzie introduced the report and presented a series of slides which set out the key elements of the plan and the unprecedented challenges facing Kent this winter, with the usual increase in respiratory illness being exacerbated by covid-19. The plan itself had been kept short deliberately, to make it as accessible as possible, but was supported by a number of more detailed plans.
 - a) asked if the plans offered sufficient flexibility to accommodate the tier system, and if there was sufficient staff capacity to support the expected take-up of beds, Mr McKenzie advised that the plan was able to respond to tiers but need not be affected by them. The plan was supported by sophisticated modelling and analysis, which would be continually

reviewed so the plan could be adjusted to take account of changes in capacity and demand;

2. Mr Smith added that the plan had been prepared with input from the NHS and service providers and would be used by all of them. He emphasised that Kent was facing not only its usual winter pressures on services and beds but the added pressure of the covid-19 pandemic and preparations to be in the frontline of transition arrangements as Britain finally left the European Union in January 2021. He advised that the social care winter plan was part of a wider business continuity approach supported by twice-weekly cross-Directorate meetings. This and the partnership approach with the NHS and providers was vital in facing an unprecedented winter.

- b) asked about designated homes for patients with covid-19, how many beds were available now and where these were across the county, Ms Maynard advised that the forecast for the number of beds which would be needed at peak demand was between 41 and 50, but 71 beds would be available from 30 November. If more beds were needed, additional funding could be added to provide them. The initial estimate of 100 beds had been made at a time when various scenarios were being explored;
- c) asked why the figures for the percentage of the infection control fund allocated to care homes varied between 75% and 80%, Ms Maynard advised that the County Council had discretion over 20% of the grant and had allocated it to care homes and community providers; the higher of the two figures included those community providers;
- d) asked about the allocation of winter funding, Mr McKenzie advised that the £6.1m allocated covered the usual expected increase in demand for services in winter and included £1.4m committed to existing schemes which were already in place from previous years as part of core service delivery;
- e) asked about engagement with the voluntary sector, to make sure providers could survive to support future service delivery, Ms Maynard advised that the voluntary sector was the bedrock of community services and the County Council worked very closely with them to ensure that its policy was responsive to their needs;
- f) asked if the community placement team was sufficiently funded and able to respond to out-of-hours requests, Mr McKenzie advised that the funding was sufficient but would need to be flexible in the way in which it was spent, to respond to changing needs, and could be added to if required; and
- g) concern was expressed that care home workers mixing with their families over the Christmas period may then take the virus back to the homes where they worked, and a question asked about how the impact of this could be mitigated. Mr McKenzie advised that all sectors of the population needed to be mindful of risk and the importance of adhering to Government guidance. He was not aware of any planned change to policy following the most recent changes in guidance, although the County Council would always be mindful of the possible future need for

change. Mr Smith advised that the Council would be talking to providers and partners about the need to be careful.

3. It was RESOLVED that the information set out in the report and given in response to comments and questions be noted, with thanks.

238. Adult Social Care and Health Annual Complaints Report 2019/20

(Item. 11)

1. Ms Davidson introduced the report and highlighted that much of the increase in complaints in the 2019/20 financial year was due to Government changes to the blue badge scheme. The number of compliments received had increased and the report gave examples of the feedback received.
2. A view was expressed that, although the County Council generally delivered a good quality service, it should listen carefully to all complaints, even those received from frequent complainants, as it was easy to disregard such feedback and risk missing a genuine issue and overlooking a genuine need for help.
3. Mrs Bell acknowledged this. She commended the breadth of the work undertaken by Ms Davidson's team, which included many enquiries for information, which were necessarily time-consuming to deal with.
4. It was RESOLVED that the information set out in the report be noted, with thanks.

239. Adult Social Care Performance Q2 2020/21

(Item. 12)

1. Mr Chatfield introduced the report and, in response to a question about the presentation of information, advised that this would be changed and improved for the next quarter's report.
2. It was RESOLVED that the information set out in the report be noted, with thanks.

240. Work Programme 2021

(Item. 13)

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

241. Motion to Exclude the Press and Public for Exempt Business

(Item. 14)

That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT BUSINESS (open access to minutes)

242. 20/00098 (20/00109) - Contract Award for Community-Based Wellbeing Services - Phase 1

(Item. 6)

1. Mr Mitchell responded to questions of detail from the committee, including:
 - a) the current grant allocations to the provider organisations listed in the report and how these would change after the start of the proposed new contract in April 2021;
 - b) the names of the providers to whom it was proposed that new contracts for Lots 1, 2 and 3 be awarded, and the past experience and performance of those providers in delivering services; and
 - c) how the transfer of responsibility would be managed and how current providers would be engaged as part of the proposed new arrangements.

2. Concern was expressed that existing providers would lose funding under the new arrangements, and Mr Mitchell and Ms Maynard undertook to look into this and report back to the committee. Mr Smith advised that the proposed changes were still at an early stage.

3. With the exception of Ida Linfield, the committee RESOLVED to endorse the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, to:
 - a) award contracts for the provision of Community-Based Wellbeing Services to the successful providers identified through the procurement exercise and detailed in exempt Appendix 1, for a period of three years, with the option to extend for further twelve-month periods, up to two years;
 - b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and the Corporate Director of Finance, to agree the relevant contract extensions as required; and
 - c) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health to take other 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.