



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Adults and Children's Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the **Adults and Children's Services Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on **Tuesday 20 October 2020**.

Members Present: Councillors Iain Bott (Chairman), Margot Bright, Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Maggie Carman, Angela Harvey, Eoghain Murphy, Tim Roca and Selina Short

Co-opted Members: Alix Ascough, Marina Coleman, Mark Hewitt, Ryan Nicol and Nick Soar

Also Present: Councillor Tim Barnes (Cabinet Member for Children's Services) and Councillor Tim Mitchell (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health)

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Sam Green (Co-opted Member)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

3.1 That the Minutes of the Adults and Children's Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 September 2020 be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES – UPDATE

4.1 Councillor Tim Barnes (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), provided a briefing on key issues within his portfolio. The Committee also heard from Sarah Newman (Executive Director of Children's Services) and Nicky Crouch (Director of Family Services).

4.2 The Committee received the update and held detailed discussions on the following topics:

- Schools Reopening – The Committee was updated on school attendance during the Covid-19 pandemic and was advised that the current rates were slightly below the national average but above the London average. This was in line with expectations due to concerns centring on such issues as using public transport. Members noted the hard work undertaken by teaching staff to put in appropriate measures to ensure pupils felt schools were a safe learning environment.

The Committee held a detailed discussion on support provided to schools and pupils during the pandemic. An update was requested on what the take-up of Catch-Up funding had been from local schools. Members were also interested to learn that an additional order of 750 laptops had been placed which would be loaned out to those children identified for assistance. The Committee requested that the criteria used for allocating laptops be circulated for information.

- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support Offer – It was recognised that the Covid-19 pandemic was having a detrimental impact on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of many children and young people. Information on the support and training provided to school staff was provided and the Committee was interested to learn how it focused on the resilience and wellbeing needs of children coming back to school after lockdown. The impact on school staff was also acknowledged and subsequently a variety of staff focused support was also being commissioned.
- Outbreak Activities – Eleven schools in Westminster had experienced outbreaks of Covid-19 however none had resulted in any of the schools being closed for any prolonged period of time. The Committee was informed that schools now had the ability to order tests and where an outbreak in a school was confirmed, a mobile testing unit could be dispatched to test others who may have been in contact with the person who had tested positive. Testing would first focus on the person's class, followed by their year group, then the whole school if necessary, in line with routine public health outbreak control practice.

- Family Navigators – Details on the new role of the Family Navigator were provided and how they had been central both in terms of the integration of services that made up the Family Hub and in terms of supporting a family’s early access to services. The Committee was pleased to note that Westminster was elected for a virtual visit by Vicky Ford MP, the Minister for Children, having been identified as a beacon of excellence for family service provision.
- Libraries – It was explained that whilst libraries had already offered a strong digital resource collection before lockdown work had been undertaken to enhance the online offer further to provide a seamless integrated offer. In addition to an extensive collection of ebooks and magazines for loan, Members were informed that digital resources such as reference materials, learning resources and business information were also available. In addition, an app had been created which allowed users to view the catalogue and reserve items.

4.3 The Committee also discussed the development of a substance misuse strategy, the work of the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit, free school meals and home schooling. Finally, Members offered their congratulations to Max Haimendorf, Principal of King Solomon Academy, who had been made an OBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours 2020 for his services to education.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH – UPDATE

5.1 Councillor Tim Mitchell provided a written update on key issues within his portfolio including: a Covid-19 update, a flu update, information on Beachcroft House, the development of Carlton Dene and Westmead, support to care homes and winter planning. The Committee was requested to submit any questions on the update in writing.

6 THE FUTURE OF THE GORDON HOSPITAL

6.1 Ela Pathak-Sen, Jo Emmanuel and Ade Odunlade, representing the CNWL NHS Foundation Trust, introduced the report which provided an update on the current status of closed inpatient wards at the Gordon Hospital and CNWL’s plans and approach for the future of the site.

6.2 The Committee was informed that in March 2020, the inpatient wards at the Gordon Hospital were rapidly closed as a key part of CNWL’s Covid-19 response. It was chosen as the place to close temporarily for reasons relating to the quality of care provision. Firstly, there were concerns over infection prevention and control. Secondly, the Gordon Hospital was a standalone site

which raised associated risks of not being able to access rapid physical health support for inpatients, which was particularly important given the risk of Covid-19. The Committee was informed that national guidelines permitting, it was planned to consult on the future of the Gordon Hospital next calendar year exploring the option to not reopen the site. It was proposed to keep the wards closed to enable staffing flexibility for possible future Covid-19 spikes, in light of the identified infection, prevention and control risks, and to support the move towards a long-term shift in care to the community to support providing care closer to people's homes.

- 6.3 The Committee raised concerns over how the closure of the inpatient wards would impact on local residents, especially if they would now have to receive treatment outside of Westminster. It was noted that since the closure 70% of patients had been placed in St Charles Hospital with 30% placed outside of the borough. Members were informed that some patients would receive treatment outside of the local area but in such instances, families would be provided with targeted supported depending on their location which catered for their individual needs. During the discussion reservations were expressed by Members about the reduction in hospital beds in Westminster and specifically what impact the closure would have on the service provision to support mental health care during the pandemic. The Committee requested a written briefing be provided with further information on patient pathways including details regarding the shift to providing care closer to people's homes.
- 6.4 A detailed discussion was held on the facilities available at both the Gordon Hospital and the St Charles Hospital following which the Committee requested that a site visit be undertaken to both hospitals to gain further understanding on how the potential closure would affect residents. The Committee welcomed the formal consultation due to commence in 2021 on the closure as it was currently very concerned with the proposals and how they could impact on the mental health needs of Westminster residents.

7 WESTMINSTER OUT OF HOSPITAL RECOVERY PLAN

- 7.1 Ayesha Janjua, representing the Central London CCG, provided an update on the plan produced which set out what had changed in the local area during the Covid-19 pandemic and how it was planned to recover, ensuring any learning was embedded as well as continuing to deliver effective health services in the future. The Committee also heard from Senel Arkut, Director of Health Partnerships.
- 7.2 The Committee was informed that the Westminster plan had been co-produced as a partnership by the local Mental Health Provider Trust (CNWL), the Community Trust (CLCH), Primary Care Network leaders, Westminster City Council and the Central London Clinical Commissioning Group. The plan was

currently in draft format and engagement with the public and patients via the CCG Patient Reference Group and Healthwatch would be undertaken to help further improve it.

- 7.3 The Committee welcomed the report and was encouraged that it promoted partnership working between the Council and the NHS which was especially important during the challenges faced by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was noted that the plan would develop as more was learnt about the virus, but improvements had already been identified in terms of improving discharge support and developing pathways to support patients. In terms of the Hospital Recovery Plan the Committee was interested to learn more in regard to integrated working between partners. It was explained that work would be carried out between all partners to build on initiatives recently undertaken regarding out of hospital services, which would include the relationships between hospitals and care homes, and further details on how this would develop would be circulated to the Committee.
- 7.4 Members discussed how Covid-19 had continued to have a disproportionate health impact on some groups and it was explained that tackling the variations in health care and the wider determinants of health which underlaid these trends would need to be key elements of implementing the borough plan. The Committee was pleased to note that there would be a more intensive focus on the most vulnerable populations with the greatest needs to help to mitigate the disproportionate impact of Covid-19. Following the discussion further details were requested on how any escalations would be managed for those groups identified as vulnerable.
- 7.5 Senel Arkut, Director of Health Partnerships, described how the plan was ambitious and positive. However, it was recognized that the proposed changes to the CCG, (where 8 CCGs would become amalgamated into one in North West London) would see a reduction in the Central London CCG funding allocation and therefore this had the potential to impact on the delivery of the plan.
- 7.5 The Committee welcomed the update on the draft plan and expressed its thanks to those involved in producing it in such challenging circumstances.

8 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

- 9.1 Lizzie Barrett, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, presented the Committee's 2020/21 Work Programme and Action Tracker.
- 9.2 The Committee reviewed the draft list of items and suggested a potential future topic including adults and young people's oral health be included on the work programme.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Work Programme be noted; and
- 2) That the recommendation tracker be noted.

10 REPORTS OF ANY URGENT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

10.1 The Chairman advised there was nothing to report.

The Meeting ended at 9:10pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE: _____