

Minutes of the Health Select Committee

**Monday 8th January, 2024 at 6.00 pm
In Committee Room 2 at the Council House,
Priory Road, Dudley**

Present:

Councillor J Clinton (Chair)
Councillor R Collins (Vice-Chair)
Councillors A Aston, B Challenor, M Dudley, M Evans, J Foster, M Hanif, D Harley, W Little and K Westwood.

Dudley MBC Officers:

Dr M Abu Affan (Director of Public Health and Wellbeing) and H Mills (Senior Democratic Services)

Also in attendance:

Councillor I Bevan (Cabinet Member for Public Health)
N Bucktin – Black Country Integrated Care Board

37 Apology for absence

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of J Griffiths – Dudley HealthWatch (Co-opted Member).

38 Appointment of Substitute Member

No substitute members were appointed for this meeting of the Committee.

39 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor A Aston declared a non-pecuniary interest due to his employment with West Midlands Ambulance Service.

Councillors I Bevan declared a non-pecuniary interest due to his employment with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor R Collins declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Patient Participation Group at Russells Hall Hospital.

Councillor M Hanif in relation to agenda item no. 8 declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Life in Lye core group.

Councillor K Westwood declared a non-pecuniary interest due to her employment with Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

40 **Minutes**

In referring to Minute No. 28 – Substance Misuse Commissioning and Delivery in Dudley, in particular paragraph (p), Councillor M Evans advised that he had contacted Change Grow Live following the meeting in relation to a specific case as instructed, though to no avail. The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing was of the view that this was due to patient confidentiality although would pursue the matter following the meeting.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November, 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

41 **Public Forum**

No issues were raised under this agenda item.

42 **Director of Public Health and Wellbeing Annual Report**

Members considered the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing's Annual Report for 2022, which was a statutory requirement to demonstrate the state of health in communities within the Borough.

It was reported that the key focus for the 2022 annual report was on the challenges of the global pandemic, its impact and how Dudley had responded. The report consisted of four chapters namely Chapter 1 - Dudley's pandemic timeline, Chapter 2 – Dudley's response to the pandemic, Chapter 3 - The wider impact of COVID-19 and Chapter 4 - Looking back, moving forward, which included lessons learned and twelve recommendations that had been identified as to how public health could improve health and wellbeing of residents for the future.

Following the presentation of the report, Members made comments, asked questions, and responses were provided where appropriate as follows:-

- (a) Councillor A Aston referred to the Council and Partner response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review that was undertaken by the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee during 2020, which was received and endorsed by Full Council on 30th November, 2020 and questioned why this had not been referenced in the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing Annual Report and whether it had been used to compile the report. Clarification was also requested as to whether the recommendations included in the 2020 report had helped with Dudley's response to the pandemic in 2021 and 2022.

In responding, the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing confirmed that whilst it was not directly referred to in the report, the Scrutiny Review report and all its data had been used to support and formulate the Director's Annual Report. The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing endeavoured to review the Scrutiny Review report and respond to Members directly with regards to the recommendations.

- (b) In also referring to the omission of the Council and Partner response to the Covid-19 Pandemic Scrutiny Review, in particular the recommendations, Councillor J Foster questioned the integrity of the Director's Annual Report, as such a major piece of work had been excluded. The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing concurred with the comments in terms of the omission of the recommendations, however commented that the background to both the Scrutiny Review Report and the Director's Annual Report related to the same outbreak management plan. It was further reported that at the time of the outbreak, it had been predicted that there would be a national investigation and inquiry at some point, therefore public health ensured that all information in relation to the Covid outbreak was documented in preparation, which formed part of the Scrutiny Review report and the Annual Report.
- (c) Councillor M Hanif commented on the length and format of the report, which in his view appeared to be an account of what had happened in the past and unclear as to what was being done moving forward. It was considered that it would be clearer and more concise had the report been split into two parts.
- (d) In referring to the contribution of elected members, Councillor M Hanif commented that whilst he had attended weekly Member webinars, he had no recollection of being asked to go out into the community or to be part of the 'on the street' initiatives, although acknowledged that other community groups had been heavily involved.

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing confirmed that all elected Members were invited to the weekly webinars. Some Members attended a system wide outbreak management group and the local Ward Councillors for those areas with the highest infection rates and low vaccination uptake were actively involved in a working group and helped shape the implementation plan and engagement with the community to promote the Covid vaccine, therefore the report was considered to be a reflection of universal involvement.

- (e) Councillor R Collins commented positively on the balanced report that had been produced and wished to acknowledge the support that had been provided by the former Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care, namely, N Barlow. It was recognised that it was an unprecedented situation which no Cabinet Member, Councillor or local Public Health Directorate had any previous experience of dealing with and it was considered that overall the situation had been dealt with as well as could have been expected under the circumstances. It was acknowledged however that the pandemic had emphasised gaps with regards to the wider determinants of health within the Borough, which the recommendations and innovation tasks in terms of the Brockmoor and Pensnett Project and the Life in Lye were now addressing. It was hoped that these innovation tasks would then be conveyed to improve other areas within the Borough.
- (f) Councillor M Dudley referred to the recommendations included in the Annual Report and asked for clarification as to how these recommendations would be taken forward; how they would be monitored and achieved, and due to the current financial position were there any financial implications that would impact upon achieving positive outcomes.

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing in responding advised that some of the initiatives that formed part of the recommendations had already commenced. The recommendation with regards to immunisation and promoting flu vaccinations formed part of the public health business plan and was used by the Integrated Care Board as an example of good practise. It was advised that the Public Health Grant was ring fenced so the team was able to manage progress within existing resources.

- (g) The Chair commented positively on the contribution by Elected Councillors during Covid and the communication received from the Council for Members to use on social media and to inform residents. He referred to the role of the Covid Champions which was considered a key attribute in ensuring vital communication and messages were communicated with local groups and residents and expressed his thanks to all those that were involved.

- (h) Arising from a comment raised by Councillor A Aston with regards to the possibility of providing a digital format or animated summary of the Annual Report in the future, the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing agreed to look into the suggestion should it add value, although recognised that this may have financial implications.
- (i) In responding to questions from Councillors A Aston and J Foster with regards to what happened to the final Annual Report and the timeframe of the report, the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing confirmed that the reports were submitted to the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Association of Directors of Public Health. In terms of the timeframe, it was anticipated that reports would usually be available from midway through the following year, although this would depend on the topic of the report. It was acknowledged that this report was significantly later than usual due to an array of contributing factors.

In concluding, the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing welcomed the comments and feedback provided, and would consider the practicalities of consulting with Members on future reports prior to publication.

Resolved

- (1) That the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2022, be received and noted.
- (2) That the comments and suggestions in terms of style, design, layout, accessibility and dissemination for improvement for future reports, as referred to above, be taken into consideration by the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing.

43 Development of Dudley's Integrated Model of Health and Care

A report of the Dudley Managing Director – Black Country Integrated Care Board (ICB) was submitted to provide an update on the current position in relation to the future delivery of services provided by Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust and the development of integrated care pathways.

The Dudley Managing Director – ICB referred to the outstanding issue with regards to the plans for a number of primary care staff employed by Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust on behalf of the six primary care networks, as previously reported, and advised that those staff would now be employed by Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, together with the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) pharmacist, in order to maintain a single integrated pharmaceutical team. The arrangements in relation to the transfer of services were underway, with an expected completion date of 30th June, 2024, subject to approval by NHS England.

In referring to the work undertaken in relation to integrated care pathways, it was advised that a report would be submitted to the Health and Care Partnership Board on 12th January, 2024, in terms of plans for overseeing pathways moving forward, which would be reported back to this Committee at the next meeting.

Resolved

That the position in relation to the future delivery of services provided by Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust and the development of integrated care pathways, be noted.

44 Update from the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing gave a verbal update on national and local issues, and in doing so advised that there had been an increase in the number of measles cases reported in the West Midlands. No cases had yet been reported in Dudley, though it was considered only a matter of time. It was acknowledged that the majority of cases were amongst those that were unvaccinated.

It was further reported that there was an increase in flu cases, as well as Covid cases, although the majority of symptoms were relatively mild due to the effects of the vaccination and there were no reports of an increase in hospital admissions or Intensive Care Unit (ICU) admissions.

Pensnett and Brockmoor Project

The Cost of Living Hub opened on 28th November, 2023, in that time 400 clients have been seen and £17,000 worth of vouchers to eligible people have been issued.

Dudley HealthWatch were providing support in terms of engagement, asking residents what it was like to live in the area, what was needed more of and what support was needed, with emerging themes being in relation to safety in parks, GP practices and school placements. It was however acknowledged that a number of people that had been spoken with were not local residents and were people from outside of the borough attending events.

An engagement event had been arranged for 26th January, 2024 for stakeholders and members of the public to attend to help shape Dudley's approach and establish how to work with the community to address inequalities. Statistical information would be shared, in particular with regards to childhood obesity and inequalities.

The Public Health team were working with Birmingham University's Obesity Economic Unit to discuss how Dudley could address childhood obesity as a priority.

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing also referred to the Net Zero Neighbourhood Project, which was funded by West Midlands Combined Authority and led by the Housing Directorate. The project had received funding to improve home warmth and would be commencing in the Pensnett and Brockmoor Ward. A company had been appointed to undertake the work on behalf of the project, whom would be invited to the engagement event on 26th January and involved in all future work.

The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing advised that an update on the Life in Lye project would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

Councillor M Hanif referred to the community group Roc Convention in Lye, and advised that the Life In Lye were intending to speak with the Chair of that Group, to ensure that there was no duplication of each other's work. The Director of Public Health and Wellbeing considered that it would be beneficial if both groups could work collaboratively to achieve objectives and aspirations for the area and agreed to discuss further with the project team.

Resolved

- (1) That the verbal update be received and noted.
- (2) That the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing provide an update on the Life in Lye project following the meeting.

45 **Health Select Committee Progress Tracker and Future Business**

In considering the progress tracker and future business report, Councillor J Foster referred to the Your Home, Your Forum agenda item scheduled to be considered on 28th March, 2024, and requested an update in respect of Community Forum Grant funding. Further clarification was also requested with regards to the work of the consultant that had been employed by the Council to contribute to the effectiveness of the meetings and what the report in March would entail.

In responding, the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing advised that the consultant who had undertaken the engagement had been Elected Members, who were currently in the process of finalising their report. In terms of the Community Forum Grant, it was advised that funding was subject to the Council's financial control measures and no applications for funding were currently being authorised in accordance with these measures. Therefore, as part of the corporate approach alternative ways in which to support Community Groups in identifying funding from other areas were being explored and led by the Public Health Community Development Team.

Resolved

That the Health Select Committee progress tracker and future business, be noted.

46 **Questions under Council Procedure Rule 11.8**

There were no questions to the Chair pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 11.8.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

CHAIR