

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 9 July 2020 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.45 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Mike Fox-Davies
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor Liz Leffman
Councillor Jeannette Matelot
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Glynis Phillips
Councillor Judy Roberts
Councillor Michael Waine

Officers:

Whole of meeting Robin Rogers, Head of Strategy; Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	Mark Haynes, Director Customer Experience and Cultural Services
5, 8	Stephen Chandler, Corporate Director for Adults & Housing Services
7	Hannah Doney, Head of Corporate Finance; Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes; Steven Fairhurst Jones, Senior Policy Officer
8	Rachel Pirie, Deputy Director Commissioning
9	Hayley Good, Deputy Director Education; Chris Hilliard, Interim Deputy Director Education

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

21/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

There were no apologies.

22/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - GUIDANCE NOTE ON BACK PAGE OF THE AGENDA
(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Jenny Hannaby declared an interest in relation to Agenda Item 8 Homecare Budgets and Future Commissioning Arrangements in that she is the Chairman of the Trustees of Wantage Community Hospital and Chairman of Wantage Hospital League of Friends.

23/20 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020 were approved and signed.

On Item 16/20, Councillor Nick Carter asked about issues of overspend and underperformance mentioned in the third paragraph under "Other issues" which were noted to be addressed at the next meeting. The Chairman advised that the issues could be raised under Agenda Item 7, Business Monitoring and Management Report.

24/20 COVID-19: OPERATION SHIELD - CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE UPDATE
(Agenda No. 5)

Mark Haynes, new Director Customer and Culture, introduced himself and the report. He had joined the Council on 17 March at the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis. The Council responded quickly to assist those who needed shielding (identified by the NHS as clinically extremely vulnerable). A helpline was set up within a couple of days.

The original estimate was that 13 to 14,000 people would possibly be shielding but the number quickly escalated to around 20,000. Those with particular needs such as delivery of food, medicine or social care requirement, were identified.

Working with the City and District Councils a seven-days-a-week service was set up to ensure that nobody slipped through the net. Library and customer care staff supported the service. Up to 400 or 500 new customers who had registered online following receipt of the NHS letter were being sent by the NHS on the daily file.

The whole process greatly strengthened the link between health and social care. The voluntary sector played a vital role. It should also be noted that all of this had to be done remotely.

The next steps are to be prepared for a second wave, to deal with test and trace and to adapt to changes in shielding guidance due by the end of the month.

Councillor Glynis Phillips asked if information has been made available in different languages and for those with disabilities. She noted that there was concern that the lack of information in different languages may have been a contributory factor in Covid-19 hitting minority ethnic communities worst.

Mark Haynes responded that most of the information was coming from the NHS. The Council had translation services available but they were not needed in this period by the shielding service.

Robin Rogers added that the council website linked to information in different languages and formats. The Council made sure that everyone on the shielding list was engaged, even to the extent of getting wardens to call on them.

Councillor Mike Fox-Davies asked what they would be doing differently in a second wave based on learning from the last few months.

Mark Haynes responded that the Health Protection Board will be primarily responsible going forwards with District Community Hubs also involved. He was unsure that the extended hours of service were sustainable in the long term. Robin Rogers added that systems such as phone-trees were being put in place to respond quickly.

Councillor Judy Roberts asked about the big difference between the numbers of people who initially received letters on shielding and the final numbers identified. Mark Haynes noted that the NHS was keeping the lists. There was a lot of data manipulation required to identify duplicate records and match inconsistent formats. The total numbers had reduced from the peak of 20,000 as people could de-register when they developed their own support systems.

Councillor Nick Carter asked if a second wave would primarily be handled at a local level and who will have the primary authority in terms of imposing a local lockdown. Mark Haynes confirmed that the Health Protection Board will provide a county-wide response. The County Council will focus on social care while the districts will deal with food and medical issues. He said that he would have to come back after the meeting with a response to the point on a local lockdown.

Stephen Chandler, Director for Adult Services, added that the response to any second wave will be much quicker. The numbers of people vulnerable will fluctuate. A positive result of the crisis is that it has strengthened relationships between health and social care.

Councillors thanked the officers and praised the magnificent efforts of staff during the crisis and also the way in which private businesses stepped up, for example restaurants providing meals.

25/20 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020 (Agenda No. 6)

Robin Rogers introduced the report and invited questions.

Members asked about the relationship and possible overlaps between the scrutiny committees. There was concern expressed that some areas were not getting enough scrutiny with the reduced number of scrutiny committees: adult social care and minerals & waste were specifically mentioned.

Robin Rogers responded that the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had statutory responsibilities and undoubtedly had an impact. There could be some fluidity between committees, for example both Performance Scrutiny and Education Scrutiny had examined Education, Health and Care Plans. The Chairmen of the committees liaised regularly. He acknowledged that there may be a need to reset the work programmes following a lot of recent staffing changes.

Councillor Michael Waine, Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee, noted the desire for more input on policy development and stressed that this required discussion being scheduled before decisions were made.

The Chairman noted that joint groups could be set up between scrutiny committees as was done with Delayed Transfers of Care. She believed that this Committee was on top of the issues on adult social care. She would report the issues raised in this discussion when the report was delivered to Full Council and other Members could add their own comments at that time too.

26/20 BUSINESS MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT REPORT (Agenda No. 7)

Louise Tustian summarised the report. It covered the February/March period and was the most recent report seen by Cabinet. The impact of Covid-19 was beginning to be seen. Annex D outlines the estimated costs of the pandemic so far.

Members raised a number of issues and officers responded as follows:

- The gap between the Council's needs related to Covid-19 and government funding, outlined in Annex D, has reduced since. The situation is very fluid. Cabinet on 21 July will receive a further update. The Council is awaiting guidance from central government on Home to School Transport.
- A second lockdown could actually have a positive financial impact in that it would reduce spending. The finances are in a relatively good place – the balances will not be a problem in the 2020/21 financial year.
- The risk rating on financial resilience would be lower now as the situation is a bit clearer.
- Officers are aware that the performance measures under walking and cycling are not sufficient but they are the best currently available. It is hoped that the next report will be better.
- The installation of LED lights is on schedule as per the contract. The Council is always looking to speed it up if possible.
- The Fix My Streets system receives a lot of reports on issues that are not its responsibility. Officers will look at providing greater clarity on this on the website.
- It is hoped to include district council monitoring in future reports.

Councillor Mike Fox-Davies noted that everybody was working very flexibly day to day on short-term pressures but asked if some thought could be given to how the lessons of the crisis can be carried forward in the long term.

Councillor Nick Carter asked that market towns be included in the air quality monitoring.

Councillor Charles Mathew asked that the explanation of leadership risks in paragraph 21 of the Cabinet report be made clearer in future reports. He also expressed concern that traffic re-routing to reduce air pollution in Chipping Norton would simply replace it with another problem in the Little Rollright area.

27/20 HOMECARE BUDGETS AND FUTURE COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS

(Agenda No. 8)

Rachel Pirie introduced the report which explains the workforce pressures which contribute to the Council being a high payer for home care. The Covid-19 crisis saw some of the highest levels of home care requirements and the Council is grateful to the providers for their increased service during this period.

We expect that we will continue with the current providers into the future so it is important to bring them in and discuss to understand their cost pressures and ensure that they understand the pressures on the Council. They have a lot of valuable expertise in the area and know the care recipients very well.

A procurement exercise will start in the autumn as part of the normal cycle. A third party has been engaged to conduct a fair cost of care exercise in advance of that.

Members asked questions on the report and the officers responded as follows:

- There has been successful recruitment recently and work is in progress on a recruitment campaign that will be led locally but linked in to a national campaign.
- New contracts will require providers to be transparent on the payments to their workers to ensure fair remuneration.
- Twenty percent of the Infection Control Fund will be allocated to home care providers on a per-head basis to assist in extra costs such as providing PPE.
- Members were urged to lobby nationally for more sustainable funding for social care that will recognise workforce benefits both financially and professionally.
- The same fair cost of care exercise will be carried out in relation to care homes.
- Officers believe that care may be over-prescribed in Oxfordshire. There should be a broader range of options which would reduce reliance on higher level support. Following the problems in care homes with Covid-19, it is anticipated that more people will opt for home care. But the Covid-19 crisis also introduced some new options not available before such as live-in support.
- The county is not performing well on reablement and officers are working with the sector to understand why.
- The care providers' representative organisations are supportive of the fair cost of care process as they believe it will clearly demonstrate the real costs of providing care in Oxfordshire.
- The Council is working with the care providers who have been rated as 'requires improvement' to help them achieve the necessary standard.
- Officers agreed that local links and continuity of service are important factors in providing quality service and that is why they are focussing a lot of attention on retention of staff.

- Communities, volunteers and technology all have a part to play. Extra-care housing also provides fantastic support. There is a need to think outside of existing services, for example there could be a role for micro-providers, individuals who can provide a small number of hours per week.
- There is a focus on apprenticeship in the team and they have a lead person for apprenticeships who is working with colleges and training providers.

The Chairman suggested encouraging providers in the social care sector to avail of the government scheme to employ young people. She added that she was aware that the Growth Board is looking at provision of extra-care housing and some had been provided already in West Oxfordshire.

Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC)

Stephen Chandler updated the Committee on this issue as it evolved over the Covid-19 crisis. He stated that the Council ensured that the government guidance issued on the 19 March 2020 was followed and they went beyond those requirements and continued to provide full assessments. Nobody was forced to discharge. It was all decided on a medical basis.

On 15 April 2020 the government guidance required a Covid-19 test before discharge. Of 188 discharges over the five-week period up to that, 112 transferred home and 76 went to permanent placements or hub beds that the Council purchased in care homes. Of the 188, eleven people have died since – 4 attributed to Covid-19.

The number of DToCs reduced from 90 in January to half a dozen in April and May. If there is any suggestion that this was achieved by forcing people into care homes then this is not borne out by the data. The number of transfers to care homes was actually lower than for the same period last year.

More home care became available and was commissioned. The hours rose from under 21,000 at the end of March to 22,500 in June.

There is still a lot of analysis to be done but some contributory factors in the spread of infection have been identified nationally including the size of care homes and the use of agency staff moving between care homes. The majority of care homes in Oxfordshire have over 50 beds and over a quarter have more than 100.

The Chairman asked how the learning from Covid-19 can help ensure that the high levels of DToC are never seen again.

Stephen Chandler responded that the first aspect being worked on is admission avoidance which is NHS led. Secondly reablement is currently not effective so the current contract will not be renewed and work is ongoing to improve it in the next contract.

Councillor Jenny Hannaby asked if care homes had asked for tests in the period before the guidance made them compulsory. Stephen Chandler answered that he could not recall any requests but that he would ask staff about that. Rachel Pirie added that most of their work with care homes was on PPE and infection control. All

care homes can register for testing and it is hoped to be able to provide it more regularly going forward.

Councillor Glynis Phillips asked how many of the 188 people discharged tested positive for Covid. Stephen Chandler responded that they would have to go through the care homes and Public Health England to get that information but it may be possible to find it.

The Chairman thanked officers for the updates and thanked all staff for going way beyond the call of duty during the crisis.

28/20 EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

(Agenda No. 9)

Hayley Good introduced herself as the new Deputy Director for Education. Chris Hilliard presented the report on behalf of Jayne Howarth who sent her apologies. The short report was drafted in response to questions from the Chairs of the Performance Scrutiny and Education Scrutiny Committees on EHCPs. It is intended to present a full report in the autumn and the purpose of this report is to check if the correct issues have been identified. Decisions will also need to be made as to whether reports should be taken separately at both committees or at joint meetings.

Councillor Michael Waine, Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee, stated that there was a need for the two Chairs to feed into the full report. Then perhaps a group with members from both committees could look into the issues more deeply. What needs to be examined is the growth in pressure for EHCPs across the county which he believes may indicate that some schools might not be as inclusive as they could be. Cllr Waine is keen that the report explores any underlays including patterns of EHCPs, Elective Home Education, part time education etcetera.

The Chairman added that there were broader issues to be brought in including the costs of EHCPs and whether the Family Safeguarding model is likely to have an impact. She also noted that many students will experience heightened anxiety from the Covid crisis while others may have actually preferred the alternative delivery of education that they received during the lockdown – a point that was reiterated by Councillor Judy Roberts, noting that remote teaching had been better for some students with EHCPs.

Councillor Nick Carter expressed concern that the growing size of some schools could be a contributing factor. He also asked that information be provided on the number of EHCPs that are placing students in independent schools and any costs associated with that. Catherine Clark agreed to circulate that information to Members.

Chris Hilliard stated that officers have regular meetings with the Department for Education and can discuss issues such as the increasing size of schools. Councillor Waine undertook to raise that issue as well as the size of academy trusts.

It was agreed that the report be considered at the Education Scrutiny meeting on 23 September 2020 and not additionally at the Performance Scrutiny Committee

meeting on 10 September 2020. The Performance Scrutiny Committee may need to look at later date at some of the wider children's mental health issues that have probably been exacerbated by the lockdown.

The Chairman thanked officers for the report and for all the work they had done supporting schools through the Covid-19 crisis.

29/20 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 10)

It was agreed to have an extra meeting, preferably on 30 July 2020, to discuss the Active Travel Fund and the financial implications of the rejected bid.

Availability for the policing items on the programme for the September meeting still needs to be confirmed.

The Chairman agreed to work with officers to schedule the item on the Growth Board and clarify the scope of the item.

Councillor Charles Mathew asked that the Minerals and Waste Local Plan be scheduled for discussion at this Committee. The Chairman agreed to request an update from officers.

..... in the Chair
Date of signing 2020