
HOUSING AND HEALTH COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the The Pippin Room, The Appleyard, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 4DE on Tuesday, 8 November 2022 from 7.00 pm - 8.06 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Alastair Gould, Ann Hampshire, Angela Harrison (Vice-Chair), Ken Ingleton, Elliott Jayes, Ben J Martin (Chair), Ken Pugh, Bill Tatton, Roger Truelove (Substitute for Councillor Ken Rowles), Ghlin Whelan, Mike Whiting and Tony Winckless (Substitute for Councillor Jackson).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Charlotte Hudson and Kellie MacKenzie.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Billy Attaway.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillor Tim Gibson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Carole Jackson, Lee McCall, Pete Neal, Richard Palmer, Ken Rowles and Sarah Stephen.

422 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

423 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

424 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2022 (Minute Nos. 165 – 171) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Vice-Chair in-the-Chair as a correct record.

Part B Minutes for Information

425 **Presentation from Medway NHS Foundation Trust - New Community Diagnostic Centre and health hub roll-out**

The Vice-Chair in-the-Chair welcomed Nikki Teesdale (Director of Delivery, Medway & Swale Health and Care Partnership) to the meeting.

The Director of Delivery introduced the report which set-out plans to develop a community diagnostic hub based at Sheppey Community Hospital and a spoke, based at Rochester Healthy Living Centre. She said it was an exciting project and that they had been very lucky to receive funding to support the project. She said that when applying for funding they had wanted the centres to be placed within areas of deprivation and the Isle of Sheppey was identified because of the health inequalities it faced.

The Director of Delivery confirmed that the hub would offer all diagnostics including MRI, CT and ultrasound. She said that there was a significant backlog for MRI scanning and it had been agreed that a mobile MRI unit would be located at the Sheppey Community Hospital from Spring 2023, whilst the hub was being built. She reported that a feasibility

study had commenced and said that within the design they were keen to target high level health inequalities. On the Isle of Sheppey there was a high number of people showing late presentation of lung cancer and they had agreed with the Cancer Alliance that they would commence a pilot scheme for targeted lung health checks commencing from April 2023. The scheme would offer those at risk through smoking and over a certain age a CT scan to pick-up lung cancer early which would improve outcomes.

The Director of Delivery said that construction of the hub would commence in April 2023, and they were reconfiguring the hospital to use space already available. It was hoped that the hub would be up and running by the end of the summer in 2023 and fully operational by the end of 2023, early 2024. The Director of Delivery said that the hub would be open seven days a week from 8 am until 8 pm. She said that they would work closely with local GPs and pharmacists to modify certain health “pathways” for residents, and it was hoped that by 2025 one-stop clinics would be provided.

Members considered the report and asked questions and raised points which included:

- This was fantastic news, and was there any added value the Council could get from the contract?;
- great news but lack of consultants was a concern;
- congratulated officers;
- would more gynaecological one-stop clinics be provided on the Isle of Sheppey;
- where would the diagnostic hub be situated within the hospital?;
- would endoscopy be included within the hub?;
- was there a time limit on the funding?;
- congratulated Swale Borough Council (SBC) officers for their work with the Health and Care Partnership;
- pleased that the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had agreed to target areas of deprivation for more health support; and
- would parking be increased at the hospital?.

In response to questions, the Director of Delivery acknowledged that workforce was the biggest challenge and risk to the project, but she was confident that through various Government initiatives and recruitment schemes and the reallocation of staff they would be able to recruit. She spoke about apprenticeships and other employment opportunities the scheme could offer. The Director of Delivery explained that the funding received was to support recovery and clear the backlog in particular early cancer diagnosis. Then the Health and Care Partnership could focus on what the local area’s health needs were.

A substitute Member read out some concerns about healthcare at The William Harvey Hospital on behalf of the Member he was substituting for. The Director of Delivery agreed to speak to the Member outside of the meeting in order to forward the concerns to the relevant department.

The Director of Delivery advised that the diagnostic hub would not be located within the redundant ward as that was being developed into a frailty ward. She said that endoscopy would not be included, and that the Government had granted funding for the build of the hub and staff funding for two years had been secured, and from a national perspective no further funding had been guaranteed. The void land at the hospital would be reconfigured for car parking. The Director of Delivery agreed to report any updates to the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Director of Delivery for attending the meeting.

Resolved:

(1) That the report be noted.

426 Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

The Head of Housing and Communities introduced the report which set-out the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-27 for approval, and agreement for the document to be consulted on for 12 weeks.

Members considered the report and raised points which included:

- Concerned that the housing figures in the report would not be correct if those residing in holiday caravan parks were not included;
- what would the effect be in terms of the First Homes scheme following the pausing of the Council's Local Plan?;
- could the Housing and Health Committee be allowed to comment on the draft First Homes policy?;
- what measures had been put in place to protect frontline SBC staff?;
- suggested that training for members on how the housing process worked should be programmed in for after the May elections;
- Members should be referred to the Kent Home Choice website which provided some guidance on the housing process; and
- How did health professionals know what 'Medical Need' was relevant when considering housing needs of residents as part of the Council's processes?

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Communities agreed to ensure that caravan parks and their relationship with homelessness was reflected in the housing figures within the strategy. The Head of Housing and Communities said that the Planning Policy Team was leading on the First Homes policy and she was aware that a consultant had been contracted to draft the policy which would be considered by the Planning and Transportation Policy Working Group. She said that there had been several recruitment drives to fill the No Use Empty post. The Head of Housing and Communities advised that recruitment of local government environmental health officers was difficult, and this was a similar issue across the county.

The Head of Housing and Communities said the Council had a "fantastic" housing team who had worked very hard during the Covid-19 Pandemic to ensure rough sleepers were cared for. She said that she was aware that the housing options team had to deal with the social needs of people as well as the housing needs and the impact that had on their mental health. She spoke about a service which offered support for the psychological impacts on rough sleepers and that staff could also access that service for support on how to cope with issues they encountered in their role. She said that it was a long time since a full stock condition surveys had been undertaken and the Council tended to work on a complaints-based system.

The Head of Housing and Communities welcomed the question in relation to relevant medical need and also carer need when considering suitable housing for people. Medical need already made up a fundamental element of the decision process and therefore more precise and relevant information from health professionals would help inform decisions.

She said that she would liaise with the relevant local medical committee and local GPs about how they could be included.

The Chair moved the recommendations in the report, which were seconded by the Vice-Chair.

Resolved:

(1) That the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2027 be approved for consultation.

(2) That the consultation be undertaken for 12 weeks.

427 **Forward Decisions Plan**

The Chair advised that the draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023/27 would be considered at the meeting on 7 March 2023.

In response to a query from a Member, the Head of Housing and Communities said that the Temporary Accommodations Options was scheduled for 17 January 2023. The Housing Assistance Policy linked in with the Disabled Facilities Grant review, and she explained that she was currently reviewing the Council's grants process. She explained that the Nightly Let Procurement Aware item was now a Kent wide piece of work so there was no tender date yet.

Resolved:

(1) That the report be noted.

Chair

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel