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# COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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**Tuesday, 3rd December, 2024**

**Present:** Councillor Heather Anderson (in the Chair),  
Councillors Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Clare McKenna, Ethan Rawcliffe  
and Judith Addison

**Apologies:** Jackie Rawstron, Tina Walker, Clare Yates and Jean Battle

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**243 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Jean Battle, Jackie Rawstron (Co-optees) and Councillors Clare Yates and Tina Walker.

Councillor Judith Addison acted as substitute representative for Councillor Tina Walker.

**244 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no interests or dispensations declared at the meeting.

**245 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

**Resolved** **- That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.**

**246 Chair's Update**

The Vice-Chair of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Heather Anderson, took the Chair for the meeting.

Councillor Anderson informed the Committee that item 5 – Lancashire Mind and item 7 – the Over 50's Forum would be deferred to a future meeting due to Jean Battle and a representative of Lancashire Mind not be in attendance.

The Chair provided an update from the last meeting. She explained that Citizens Advice had previously given a presentation on the work they do and had referred to the importance of working with other organisations and data sharing. They had informed the Committee that they had no formal data sharing agreement with the Council but indicated that one would be beneficial. The Committee had discussed the benefits of having a formal agreement in place, requesting Officers to look into this possibility. In relation to this, the Chair advised that Officers had been consulted and would be happy to review the situation should Citizens Advice agree. Citizens Advice had been informed and a response was being awaited.

**247 Lancashire Mind - Suicide Prevention**

Item deferred to a future meeting.

**248 Inspire East Lancashire**

Paul Hitchin, District Manager of Inspire East Lancashire, gave a presentation on the work they do and their impact on the community. He reported that they:

- provided support to adults and their loved ones who want to change their behaviours and habits around drugs (including alcohol).
- were a Charitable organisation (funded by the Lottery and Councils) with services all throughout the country.
- had 3 Hubs in East Lancashire: Hyndburn, Burnley and Pendle
- had specialist staff who worked jointly with other organisations such as the Criminal Justice service and the Courts.
- worked on issues such as drug and alcohol misuse and addiction and provided support services including one to one support, groupwork, healthcare, medical support (including prescriptions) and worked with the NHS to refer people on detox and Rehab. Lancashire County Council assessed the suitability for places.
- had a dedicated team of nurses and healthcare workers and their approach was to offer holistic therapy to users and work with lots of other agencies.
- provided treatment confidentially.
- Had a service that went into prisons to start work with prisoners before they returned to society.

The Committee requested information on the following:

- How long had Inspire been operating in Hyndburn.
- Were referrals increasing?
- Was it harder to for a person to find drugs than previously?
- How long did it take to see someone once you had referred yourself?
- Did Inspire treat teenagers?
- How do you qualify for a place in rehabilitation or for residential detox?
- Could you ask your GP for a substitute for a drug?
- Which drugs are the most popular at the moment and which trends are likely to happen in the future?
- Can people become addicted to prescribed drugs?

Inspire had started to operate in Hyndburn, since approximately 2010 and the number of referrals had steadily increased. He explained that referrals could be made by the person, family, friends, GPs etc. and could be done over the phone, online or in person. Referrals were quick and the person would be seen within a day or two.

He informed the Committee that drugs were widely available and an increased use of services like Inspire, could be due to services becoming better known, to times changing and drug use being less of a taboo issue and that drug and alcohol use was now much more acceptable than it had been. He explained that there was a correlation between societal issues and drug use and gave examples of the reasons why, including: poverty and unemployment, changes in the political landscape, Border Police being less effective and letting more drugs into the country and because drugs were more accessible today than previously.

The popularity of drugs dictated trends. Ketamine and Cocaine were currently the most popular drugs but drug preference often changed with many people moving toward

pharmaceuticals and seeking them out online. With little regulation, a lack of political will and little police enforcement, there was little to prevent this. He expressed concern about a new problematic trend, Fentanyl, starting in America. They were currently upskilling their workers to prepare for this.

He explained that a person could become addicted to prescribed drugs and was a behavioural pattern which would be noted by their GP and referred to Inspire.

In respect of alcohol, he informed the Committee that this caused the greatest harm with the highest referrals being shown during the Covid period and that the older generations was more likely to drink than younger generations.

Young people with drug or alcohol issues would be seen by 'We Are With You', which was previously known as Early Break.

The Chair thanked Paul Hutchin, District Manager of Inspire, for his presentation and on behalf of the Committee, she referred to the importance of the work that they did and how the presentation would be beneficial for other Councillors. The Committee agreed that training for other Members of the Council should be looked into and made available.

**Resolved**

- (1) **That all Members of the Council be made aware of the work of Inspire through the offer of training courses; and**
- (3) **That the Committee commend Inspire, East Lancashire, for the work they do and for the informative presentation.**

**249 Over 50's Forum**

Item deferred to a future meeting.

**250 Appointment of Co-optees**

**Exclusion of the Public**

**The Chair proposed, that in accordance with Section 100A(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item, when it was likely, in view of the nature of the proceedings that there would otherwise be disclosure of exempt information within Paragraph 1, at Schedule 12A of the Act.**

**Resolved – That, the public be excluded from the following item.**

The Committee were requested to consider the vacancy for the remaining co-optee position from the three nominees, as set out in the report. Committee was also reminded that they had previously agreed for one vacant post to be reserved for a young person (aged 18 – 25 years) and this would be reported to Full Council for approval.

After discussion and consideration of the supporting statements for each of the 3 nominees, the Committee determined that Sandie Dent should be recommended to Full Council for the remaining co-optee position. It was felt that she would be of great value to the Committee. The Committee also noted the quality of the other nominees.

**Resolved** - **That Sandie Dent be recommended to Full Council as co-optee onto the Communities and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee for the remaining municipal year 2024/25 and 2025/2026.**

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
At which the minutes were confirmed