
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 8th July, 2021

Present: Councillor Jenny Molineux (in the Chair),
Councillors June Harrison, Kate Walsh, Dominik Allen,
Carole Haythornthwaite and Dave Parkins

In Attendance: Marie Demaine, Senior Public Health Practitioner
Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and Human Resources

Apologies: Councillor Bernadette Parkinson

55 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Bernadette Parkinson.

Councillor Dave Parkins acted as substitute representative for Councillor Bernadette Parkinson.

56 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations declared at the Committee.

57 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 8th July 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

58 Confirmation of Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report requesting that the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to and commented on the draft work programme for 2021/22. He informed the Committee that it was their role to approve the work programme but also pointed out that there were gaps in the work programme to accommodate additional items being added and brought forward for scrutiny during the year. He pointed out that items for consideration should be forwarded to himself to be considered in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

Councillor Walsh requested that consideration was given to adding the item 'Air Pollution' to the Work Programme and referred to the effects of air pollution on residents and the importance of scrutinising air pollution and providing more support in tackling it. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer suggested that this item was added to the Work Programme later in the year, possibly December/March time.

Resolved - **That the work programme for the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2021/22 be agreed.**

59 Nomination of Co-optees

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report to inform Members of the nominated Co-optees for the 2021-22 Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He explained that up to four member of the public could be appointed to the Committee and that it was the intention of such Co-optees to be non-political.

The Chair informed the Committee that they had received three nominations for the role of Co-optee; Bernard Dawson, Jean Battle and Paul Barton (all former Councillors with relevant experience of Scrutiny Committees). He requested that the Committee gave consideration to the three proposed nominations.

Councillor Walsh requested that the Committee gave consideration to Kimberley Whitehead as a nomination as Co-optee to the Committee. She explained that Kimberley was on the Board of CBS and part the Hyndburn Hub and would bring considerable experience and value to the Committee. The Committee considered the additional nomination to the Committee.

Resolved - **That the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the following proposed nominations as Co-optees of the Committee for 2021/22: Bernard Dawson, Jean Battle, Paul Barton and Kimberley Whitehead, for proposal of formal approval at Full Council.**

60 Cabinet Response to Report of Overview & Scrutiny Panel - Report on AEDs

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report to inform the Committee of the findings of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Scrutiny Panel established by the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25th November 2020 and the responses of Cabinet to the recommendations of the Panel. He reported that:

- Cabinet had been requested to delegate responsibility to the Chief Executive to make suitable arrangements for the ongoing management of Council AEDs having regard to the recommendations in the attached Scrutiny report; and
- agreed to allocate a budget of £12,000 annually for the management of AEDs and that there would be a growth bid for budget provision for subsequent years.

The Chair requested a note of thanks to former Cllr Glen Harrison for his contribution to the Panel that had been established to look at the management of AEDs in the borough.

Councillor Parkins thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for his help in getting defibrillators located in Huncoat.

Resolved - **That the Committee noted the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel and the responses of Cabinet.**

61 Suicide Prevention

Marie Demaine, Senior PH Practitioner attended the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and gave a presentation on suicide prevention and awareness.

Marie Demaine provided the following facts on suicide:

- There was a greater number of men than women committing suicide although there was an increase in the number of women.
- It was not always clear why a person had committed suicide.
- Data on the number of suicide cases was unpredictable.
- There was investment to look at how to address suicide prevention with real time surveillance.
- Focus was on partnership working.
- High risk locations for suicide had been identified and preventative measures put in place and cluster identification.
- Top five areas for suicide had been identified with Hyndburn included in the top 5.
- Drug related deaths and substance misuse were being reviewed. There was a high level of suicide.
- There was a focus on intervention and prevention of suicide.
- The Orange Button scheme to encourage conversation and language.

She reported that training was available for elected Members' participation and that there would be a white ribbon campaign to create awareness and encourage conversations. It was their aim to improve mental health and this included looking at how the media reported on incidents of suicide and ways to prevent the sensationalising of deaths.

Members submitted the following comments and questions:

- Members could participate by placing posters on local notice boards.
- Were the booklets mentioned in the presentation available both in leaflet form and online?
- Was there any national scientific study taking place to identify key issues of suicide?
- Had the average age of suicide deaths had gone down?
- Could the employee assistance scheme open up to Members?

Marie Demaine explained that nationally the focus was on the suicidal deaths of middle aged men but they also had heat maps to show areas of concern as well as a number of key known contributory factors to suicide, which she outlined, but acknowledged that more work was needed to provide more information in preventing deaths.

The Head of Policy and Human Resources, Kirsten Burnett, reported that they had done a lot of work on mental health within the Council and referred to the how they had provided training sessions and courses on stress/anxiety/depression and suicide prevention. She informed the Committee that there was a confidential helpline for staff to use if necessary as well as free Counselling sessions. Families would also be able to access this assistance. Other aides included Friendly Faces in the Council, sign posting people to help and an emotional wellbeing handbook to staff. Wellbeing activities were offered to staff and Mental Health Wellbeing week offered support. She provided details of a number of additional ways of Hyndburn Council supported its staff. She encouraged new ideas. A number of questions were submitted to the Senior Public Health Practitioner in advance of the Committee and responses were provided at the meeting:

- The level of support provided to people with addiction issues would depend on the level of risk and the type of support required.
- NHS and local authority provision differed for people waiting for counselling. Marie Demaine indicated that she would forward further information onto the Committee

about this matter and the number of people waiting for counselling and being prescribed drugs on GP waiting lists.

- Pilot schemes were taking place with Mental Health Teams to support local authorities in providing mental health provision to children through schools.
- It was the intention of the NHS to put provision in place for access to mental health services for pregnant women, before, during and after pregnancy.
- Information had been sent to the Chief Executive with regards to questions that had been submitted.
- She reported that the Acute Therapy Service (ATS) had been very successful but would report back with greater details to the Committee.
- Kirsten Burnett had already provided details of how staff of Hyndburn Council were supported by the Council in relation to their mental health.
- The question relating to the increase in demand for mental health services post Covid and its funding was forwarded to the Chief Executive - Hyndburn Leisure, for response as was the question relating to the role for Leisure Services in Suicide Prevention.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer proposed that a Scrutiny Panel was established to discuss how the Council could develop and improve its mental health awareness, provision and partnerships. He suggested that this consisted of Councillors (Cllrs June Harrison, Kate Walsh, Jenny Molineux, Dominik Allen and Dave Parkins).

Resolved

(1) That the presentation be noted; and

(2) That a Scrutiny Panel be established to consider the Council's role in suicide prevention and mental health.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed