

HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Board held on Thursday, 25 March 2021 at 2.00 pm in Remote Meeting

Present: Councillors J Baker, J Britton, A J Burford, S Dillon, D Evans, I T W Fletcher, K Middleton (Chair), L Noakes, Nicky O'Connor, A Olver, B Parnaby, J Rowe, K T Tomlinson and P Watling

In Attendance:

Apologies: Councillors J Povey and S A W Reynolds

HWB1 Declarations of Interest

None.

HWB2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held 3 December 2020 be approved

HWB3 Public Speaking

None.

HWB4 Outbreak Control Plan

The Board received the report of the Director: Public Health and the Service Delivery Manager: Health Protection, Health, Wellbeing and Commissioning. The presentation included the latest infection rates and hospital admission rates. The Board heard that the Borough had just over 10,000 infections over the course of the pandemic, the fifth-lowest rate within the region.

The Board was reminded that it had approved the Local Outbreak Plan in July 2020 and heard that the Department of Health & Social Care had asked that it be refreshed to continue to be able to respond to future outbreaks and be prepared to move forward through the next stage of the pandemic with a focus on improving immunisation uptake and reducing inequalities. The Board was informed that the Plan had been submitted to the regional team and feedback had indicated that it was a strong plan with good outbreak control structures, good knowledge within the team and demonstrated a good understanding of our communities.

The Board was informed that the review required a look back at the Council's best practice when responding to outbreaks and that the Department of Health & Social Care had set out a number of expectations of the updated Local Outbreak Plan, some of which were current expectations and some which had been added since the Plan was first adopted.

Members commented that this presented an opportunity to reflect on the Covid journey to date and to express thanks for the hard work from Council officers but also that of other agencies and the Council's third sector partners in the community and voluntary sector. This was testament to the fact that Telford worked on difficult issues together.

Members made reference to the aspect of the Plan which referred to funding and the limited nature of this. A question was asked of the Director of Public Health regarding what indications the government had given that further funding would become available particularly with the possibility of a third wave that the country is being told may arrive. The Director of Public Health explained that there was a sustainable financial plan in place to continue with the core funding of the Council's Health Protection Hub at the moment but that it was not possible to say how the pandemic would develop and progress move forward and, if there were significant surges or a significant third wave, then it was difficult to say how much funding would be required to respond to these. However, currently, the Director of Public Health was comfortable with the current resources available to support the ongoing work of the Health Protection Hub and other work relating to the pandemic.

Members commented that they were happy to see the Council and partners taking a joint approach to communications in relation to both precautionary testing and vaccination as it was important to reinforce those messages to ensure that the uptake of both was as high as possible and, therefore, helping to reduce inequalities caused by the pandemic.

RESOLVED – that the refreshed Telford & Wrekin Local Outbreak Management Plan March 2021 be approved.

HWB5 Independent Living Centre

Members received a presentation from the Service Delivery Manager: Prevention and Enablement on the Independent Living Centre which was due to be launched in Telford Town Centre and was the outcome of a joint venture between the Council and the Council for Voluntary Services in Telford. As part of the digital offer, the Board also learnt about the virtual house that would be available for customers to interact with to aid understanding of the devices and equipment to enable people to live well and independently in their own homes.

Members of the Board asked how a person without family support would be able to access the Independent Living Centre and the virtual house. They heard that, prior to discharge from hospital, the professionals working with an individual would be able to undertake a virtual tour of the house with that individual and would also book an appointment for the individual to attend the Independent Living Centre should they need it with support from Locality Workers.

The Board was also given a demonstration of how the virtual house operates which was set out in collaboration with Anwyl Homes. The house demonstrates the various pieces of equipment including bath aids, tactile bands and bed sensors to support those with a wide variety of conditions such as limited sight or hearing, memory loss and sensory impairment.

Members of the Board considered the work would be of significant benefit to residents and their carers and commended all involved on the quality of the product.

HWB6 Housing Allocation Policy

The Board received a report from the Service Delivery Manager: Housing Solutions on the Council's Housing Allocation Policy. It was explained that, a good quality home impacted upon health, wellbeing and good outcomes across all aspects of a person's life. The Policy sets out how the Council would nominate residents to Housing Association properties and what would be taken into account by Housing Associations. Some individual housing partners would operate their own banding system; some would be taking nominations from the Council or advertising on a wider platform. The document was about to be opened up for consultation for an 8 week period.

The Council provides advice and assistance to those who are homeless or are facing homelessness. The Council has a website which includes details of all registered housing providers operating within the Borough and how many vacant properties they have.

The Allocation Policy prioritised residents who fall into specified categories such as those with disabilities or armed forces personnel.

In response to questions from the Board, the SDM explained that there were multiple platforms by which residents could access properties. The SDM also provided assurance that Council officers would be providing assistance to residents by signposting them to the appropriate information to assist in accessing housing.

Some Members expressed concern regarding universal credit and the system of how housing benefit is paid and whether or not people can request housing benefit to be paid directly to the landlord or to the tenant. The SDM explained that this was operated by the Department of Work and Pensions but that tenants could choose for the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit to be paid to the tenant and there were some limited circumstances in which the Landlord could insist that it is paid to them.

HWB7 COVID-19 Community Support Response

The Board received the report of the Housing, Nuplace Service Delivery Manager and the Senior Public Health Commissioner. The Council created a Community Support helpline at the outset of the pandemic, mobilised a team of Council staff to redeploy into roles to provide direct support and also had a

team of volunteers and partners working hard to provide practical crucial support to some of our most vulnerable residents – access to food, prescriptions and a social network through safe and well visits and keeping in touch calls. Now, with the anticipated easing of restrictions, it was timely to think about next steps.

The next steps have evolved through the work the Council has undertaken with partners. Loneliness and isolation will remain even when lockdown restrictions ease and the Council had been working with the voluntary sector to continue to provide support to these residents. The Council had also worked with residents to ask what would help them to feel support and what activities they would engage in to help reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

In response to some Members commenting that there had been a delay at the outset of the pandemic, the SDM explained that there was a complex national picture with uncertainty around what each agency was going to be providing such as the NHS Responder, national volunteering and similar.

Other Members of the Board recognised that, nationally, there had been a delay in mobilising resources but that the Council's response had been speedy and prompt – now that the infrastructure for coordinating volunteers, then the Council would be able to step up even more quickly than previously. The quick action of the Council led to 50,000 free school meals being delivered during the period when the national system had failed to provide for children who needed it most.

HWB8 Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Sustainability and Transformation Partnership Update

Members received an update from the STP Programme Director covering the Integrated Care System, Winter Planning including Covid-19 and the vaccination programme. The Board heard that, by April 2021, Integrated Care Systems would cover the whole country evolving and growing from the current network of Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships with the regulatory framework contained within the NHS Long Term Plan (2019). The purpose of the ICS is to provide better, and more joined-up, care for patients with different organisations working together ultimately helping people to live healthier lives for longer and reduce health inequalities. The update included reference to the White Paper published in February 2011 which set out proposals for health and care integration. Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin had submitted a delivery plan to NHS England and Improvement with the purpose of becoming a shadow ICS from April 2021. This delivery plan contained 10 pledges which have been co-produced by partners.

Members recognised that the ICS would present an opportunity to address the wider determinants of health outcomes and, working together, there would be an opportunity to take a holistic approach in doing that relying upon expertise from all partners. Members were keen to learn more about how the Board with sit within the wider ICS.

HWB9 Integration of Health and Social Care - Telford's 'Place' Approach

Members received the report of the Integrated Place Partnership Manager who explained to the Board that Telford and Wrekin Place Partnership (TWIPP) covered all place-based developments to ensure better prevention, community focus and a proactive and collaborative approach. The TWIPP links to the STP working on the NHS Long Term Plan to improve benefits for the community and improve financial sustainability. The report set out the updated priorities of the TWIPP for the next 2 years and also updated on the governance arrangements for the TWIPP.

Members felt the report provided a good summary of the importance of the TWIPP and that it was important to recognise the work that it had achieved, including avoiding admissions to hospital. The Board was encouraged by how effective the TWIPP had been in ensuring that hospital discharges had been carried out effectively.

Members recognised that the TWIPP provided opportunity to build strong foundations with the third sector and that it was important not to hamper the effectiveness of the TWIPP by taking a “top heavy” approach to matters.

Before the meeting closed, Members of the Board thanked the Accountable Officer, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin CCGs for his hard work over the last 9 years and his commitment to the Health and Wellbeing Board during that time.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 17 June 2021