



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 17th OCTOBER 2023

PRESENT: Councillor C Bain (Chair), Councillors R Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, S Daniels, C Dean, D Maycock, J Oates and L Smith

CABINET Councillor Samuel Smith
Councillor Martin Summers

The following officers were present: Jackie Hodgkinson (Partnerships and Vulnerability Officer), Lisa Hall (Safer Communities and Homes Manager), Leanne Costello (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer) and Laura Sandland (Democratic and Executive Support Officer)

Guest: Anthony Walter (Beat The Cold)

38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from County Councillor T Jay and Councillor J Jones.

Apologies were received from Councillor S Daniels and Councillor L Smith attended as a substitute.

Apologies were received from Councillor D Cook who advised the Committee that he would need to leave at 6:40pm.

The Chair welcomed newly the elected Councillor for the Amington ward, Lewis Smith to the Committee and to the Council. who was attending as a substitute.

39 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st September were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor R Claymore and seconded by Councillor C Dean)

40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

41 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR

There were no updates from the Chair.

42 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were none.

43 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL

There were none.

44 UPDATE ON HEALTH RELATED MATTERS CONSIDERED BY STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Chair confirmed that apologies had been received from County Councillor T Jay and that a written update had been requested but that they had confirmed that there was no update at this point.

45 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF ABUSE REPORT HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17.10.2023

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Community Partnerships, Councillor Summers introduced the safeguarding children and adults at risk of abuse report to provide a biannual safeguarding update to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, before introducing the Partnerships and Vulnerability Officer who highlighted the following items from the report:

- There had been an increase in referrals in quarter two, which is not unusual as we moved into the summer and the school holidays.
- Safeguarding training is offered to all staff and Members annually and the Staffordshire Connects Website offers links to all services including for referrals for support that do not reach the safeguarding threshold. Prevent training is also offered.
- The Council no longer deliver safeguarding training for Taxi Drivers this is now delivered by a commissioned service.
- The Council are still active members of the adult safeguarding board.
- The Council is required to have a Modern Day Slavery Statement which is available on the website.
- The Council have held several community safety events over the last six months which have been well attended.
- The Council are still active members of MACE and there is now an Anti-Social Behaviour Practitioner in place through Staffordshire County Council.

- The Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership and Anti-social behaviour coordination groups meet weekly to share updates.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. Who is responsible for Policing Modern Day Slavery in particular around local car wash businesses?

The Officer confirmed that as a business they would be required to have a licence. Any concerns would be reported into the Modern Day Slavery Tactical Group within the police and the Head of Service attends County meetings to feed in information on behalf of Tamworth. The Council work in partnership with the Police around any concerns which can lead in safeguarding referrals.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there is a Modern Slavery Hotline where anyone can report concerns and the number is 0800 0121700, this can also be done via their website.

2. Concerns around the number of children who missed out on their last two/three years of socialisation at school due to covid and are now entering the wider world who may be more vulnerable than previous cohorts. Is there any work going on to monitor young adults 17 to 24 who aren't monitored through being in the care system?

The Officer confirmed that the Council do not hold any data but there may be data through Staffordshire Observatory around education attainment which could be requested via a Freedom of Information request. The Council were still receiving referrals during this period but there was nothing to suggest that there was anymore risk.

The Committee also highlighted that there had been an increase in that generation engaging with mental health issues and it have also been reported that for babies born in 2020, development was stunted due to lack of socialisation.

The Committee highlighted that whilst the report comes to Committee six monthly it is essential that safeguarding is always a top priority for the Council to protect vulnerable residents.

Resolved That the Committee:

1. Reviewed the report and raised questions in relation to the content with the Assistant Director Partnerships, and thereafter endorsed the report.

(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor R Claymore)

The Chair thanks the Portfolio Holder and Officer for attending and invited them to leave the meeting.

47 BEAT THE COLD

The Chair welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Councillor Smith and the Safer Communities and Homes Manager to introduce the report of the Assistant Director, Partnerships to update the Committee on actions within the Tamworth Borough Council Housing Strategy to 30 September 2023 which directly impact on health and wellbeing of Tamworth communities, along with Anthony Walters from Beat The Cold who was going to give a presentation around work that the Charity do.

The Development Manager for Beat the Cold presented the following information to the Committee:

An update on the work that Beat the Cold do including –

- Beat the Cold is a unique Staffordshire based fuel poverty charity
- Work with people on how to be more efficient with your energy, how to use energy for health
- Looking at tariffs, metre and billing. Helping people get the right tariff without overpaying. Helping people understand metres and deal with problems with metres and checking that bills are fair and correct
- Signposting for help with benefits
- Dealing with energy debt, to understand it; to manage it and where it is part of a larger debt issue work with CAB.
- Key factor is to get people to stop worrying about the debt and avoid switching off services by managing the debt, for example getting debt 'put behind' the meter so this can be managed sensibly so people can still keep using their heating
- Work around understanding and setting controls.
- Dealing with relatives for the older and more vulnerable
- Help people with eco/energy efficient methods.
- Verification/checking on behalf of Councils people who apply for eco/home energy schemes.
- Access to the Priority Services register.
- The services have helped over 1400 since April 2021. 70% of which have declared health issues. The Charity records any reports of an improvement in wellbeing as a result of the service during a visit and this is currently at about 50%.
- Services has a high social return, per £16 per person enquiry they are getting a social return of £470.
- Enquiries come from a broad range of ages and tenures, since the cost of living crisis has seen an increase in enquiries from younger people
- Enquiries from Council tenants has doubles since last year.
- Three examples were shared from the district where help was provided around the Priority services register, benefits, liaising with providers and housing team around boilers, liaising with social prescribers to keep them up to date and working with private sector landlords around insulation and damp and mould.

- The charity is also working on a project around installing Solar Panels at the Rebert Peel, the income from which will support patient interventions within Tamworth.

Councillor Cook left the meeting at 6:32pm.

The Officer introduced the report which included figures for quarter one and partial figures for quarter two and highlighted the following:

- Priority 1: The teams has just received its first, First homes application on a site at Dosthill, Two Gates
- Priority 2: Two wards have been identified to focus on, Belgrave and Glascote.
Fuel Poverty – Beat the Cold have been commissioned by the Council to work under the title ‘Heat’
Houses of multiple occupancy – there are currently 89 within Tamworth, 66 with licences and 23 that do not require licences but are required to operate within legislation and there is a proactive inspection scheme in place. The inspection team are safeguarding training and can refer in to safeguarding and other streams such as modern slavery if there are concerns.
Damp and Mould – Council have picked up on proactive inspections and peaked in May with 23 Inspections.
Disrepair figure for quarter two does only reflect July and August and is showing an increase.
One category one hazard has been identified, and a prohibition notice is going to be served.
- Priority 3: ECO4 Flex - referrals can come in via the NHS and those do not have to meet standard criteria under these circumstances.
- Priority 4: New Homelessness Hub is due to start imminently.
- Priority 5: Disabled facilities grants are aimed at Private sector tenant’s arounds adapting a property so they can remain. There are currently 172 open cases.
Disabled Facilities Adaptation are aimed at Tamworth Borough Council Tenants and there are currently 127 open cases.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. The Committee highlighted that the current system in place by Government for DFG funding allows for some boroughs to be allocated more funding than they need which they are not spending, whilst others, such as Tamworth are not receiving enough funding to cover the needs of their residents, and whether now was the time to challenge other authorities and Government around this?
The Officer agreed to take the question away to the Assistant Director and provide feedback to the Committee on the funding.
The Committee moved a recommendation on this item.

2. More information around the process where a property is adapted for a person who may pass away but the family who no longer need the adaption remains within the property. An example was highlighted.
The Officer confirmed that there is provision within the housing act to move a family on where there are adaptations, and these are no longer required as well as provision for moving to something smaller and that they could discuss any individual cases after the meeting.
3. Clarification on what form HMO inspections take? It was highlighted that often there can be larger numbers living in them that is evidenced by the number of vehicles and how Beat the Cold deal with HMO's.
Officers confirmed that appointments are made, sometimes at short notice and the inspection is based on who is in the property at the time. They have access to information that should give them an idea of who should be at the property. If any concerns are raised, then return visits will be made. If there are any concerns over numbers within a household then these can be addressed to the private sector email address and this will prompt a visit to the property.
The Development Director confirmed that work was done in conjunction with the housing team and the Development Manager praised Tamworth Council for being one of the best Councils he worked with within the Council.
4. Whether there was any data around the outcomes for energy efficiency schemes such as Eco4Flex referrals?
The Officer confirmed that they don't get to see outcomes, they refer through the system as required, the property is then assessed and passed through an assessor. Anthomy Walters confirmed there is historical data on Staffordshire warmer homes scheme that could be accessed which would shows the measures installed.
The Officer agreed to include some outputs in the next report.
5. Clarification around data within the report.
On page 20 around HUG funding, it states that there is a budget of £550.000 for an expected 31 properties whereas it stated later that there are 96 properties identified.
The Officer confirmed that HUG 2 funding is just one area of funding and that there are other funding sources that could be used.
Page 61 Appendix 3b whether the figure relating to Amington is an anomaly.
The Officer confirmed that they would need to get some more information from the homeless team and feedback to the Committee.
6. The Committee acknowledged that they were not all aware of the Beat the Cold services and asked how members could make referrals.
The Development Manager confirmed that referrals can be made via the Beat the Cold website but that they could also share some flyers. There are also some events scheduled over the winter, which are targeted to areas where they can have the most impact the details of which could again be shared. The first of which is on the 24th November at Dosthill Boys Club at 2pm.
7. How Belgrave and Glascote have been highlighted as areas in Priority 2 but the data does not seem to support this?

The Officer confirmed that these areas are identified as areas of higher unemployment and poverty within the district.

Resolved That the Committee

1. Considered and endorsed the report
(Moved by Councillor T Clements and seconded by Councillor C Dean)

An additional recommendation was moved by the Committee to:

2. Recommend to Cabinet to continue to Lobby Government to have funding for DFG to be allocated on the need of the district rather than the current calculation

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor T Clements)

48 FORWARD PLAN

There were no items identified from the Forward Plan.

49 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

There were no working group updates.

50 HEALTH & WELLBEING SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

The chair highlighted the items on the agenda for the next meeting and the Committee endorsed the workplan.

Chair