

Minutes of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

**20 November, 2017 at 5.30pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor E M Giles (Chair);
Councillor Ahmed (Vice-Chair);
Councillor Rouf (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Downing, Goult, Lloyd and Shaeen.

Apologies: Councillors Crompton, Hevican and S Jones.

19/17 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 18th September, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

20/17 **Air Quality in Sandwell**

The Board received the draft Air Quality Action Plan for the borough for 2018-2023.

In accordance with the Environment Act 1995, the council had declared the borough an air quality management area in 2005, due to the annual mean concentration of Nitrogen Oxide being exceeded at a number of locations. As such the Council was required to have a plan which set out what action it would take to improve air quality in the area. The principle aim of the Plan was to secure reductions in Nitrogen Oxide concentrations and comply with the national air quality objective in the shortest possible timeframe.

The Cabinet had considered the draft Plan and agreed that a public consultation exercise be conducted to receive the views of statutory and non-statutory consultees. The views of the Scrutiny Board were now sought regarding the draft Plan and the proposed consultation process.

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The Board was informed that many of the air pollutants resulted from the process of fuel combustion originating from a combination of domestic, commercial and industrial transport sources. Traffic pollution was now a major threat to health and a contributor to climate impacts. It was associated with adverse health impacts and early deaths and recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. The most vulnerable in society were most at risk, including children and older people with heart and lung conditions. There was often a strong correlation with equalities issues, because areas with poor air quality were also less affluent. The annual health cost to society of the impacts of particulate matter alone in the UK was estimated to be around £16 billion.

Interventions to reduce levels of particulate pollution required a concerted action by a host of sectors with a vested interest in air quality management (environment, transport, energy, health, housing) at regional, national and international levels.

The council had already taken action in five key areas to reduce air pollution arising from vehicle emissions, these included:-

- Promoting health initiatives that supported sustainable transport and behavioural change.
- Reducing congestion and minimising transport emissions through traffic management and highway improvements.
- Implementation of guidance and policy, working in partnership with key stakeholders to improve air quality outcomes.
- Improved understanding of pollutant behaviour particularly at hot spot locations.
- Reviewed the council's impact on air quality through an assessment of its vehicle fleets, taxi licencing and employee vehicle use.

The 2018-2023 Plan set out three key priorities: -

- **Priority 1 – Hot Spot Locations**
Seven hotspots had been identified in the borough and transport planning and traffic infrastructure management would be reviewed at each location to identify where additional resource was required.

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- Priority 2 – Sustainable Transport Initiatives
Walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport initiatives would continue to be promoted and additional health promotion campaigns would be undertaken to increase physical activity and the use of low emission vehicles.
- Priority 3 – Review what impact the council has on air quality and develop plan to reduce emissions from its activities.
A full review of fleet vehicles, licensing activities and employee vehicle use would be carried out.

Under the Environment Act 1995 the Council was required to consult a number of public organisations and bodies representing local businesses. Local communities and existing neighbourhood groups would also be consulted.

From the discussion, questions and contributions of those present, the following issues were highlighted:-

- The Clean Air Act 1993 outlined measures to address pollution caused by industry, including permit regimes.
- There were five monitoring stations in the borough, two of which were near motorways.
- There needed to be a careful balance between building the economy through new industry and controlling pollution, however, there were also positive health effects from being employed.
- The government had challenged local authorities to look at creating a better infrastructure to support electric vehicles.
- For major planning Applications, the applicant was required to complete an air quality impact assessment.
- As Sandwell had so many town centres and local centres it was difficult to create exclusion zones for certain types of vehicle.
- Specific consultation would be carried out with residents of Birmingham Road, Oldbury.
- More work was to be done on specific strategies to tackle the emissions related to taxi vehicles.
- Complaints in relation to specific premises would be investigated as reported.
- More work was to be done with bus companies, in particular with regards to the Bearwood High Street area, which was one of the seven hot spots.

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- Measures to reduce congestion on local motorways were the responsibility of Highways England.
- The government was moving towards stronger policies on emissions, however, this was taking time.
- Managed motorways and signalled entry points was one of the methods to address emissions levels.

Residents of Birmingham Road, Oldbury, present at the meeting raised the following concerns:-

- Despite diversions to alternative routes being in place, motorists were choosing to take Birmingham Road, which was resulting in more pollution that area.
- There was a lot of heavy industry surrounding the Road and residents believed this was impacting on their health.
- Measuring tubes for Nitrogen Dioxide seemed to have been moved.
- Measurements taken by Birmingham University and Friends of the Earth were different to those taken by the Council.

The Director – Prevention and Protection undertook to look into the issues raised by the residents.

Members remarked on the levels of physical inactivity in Sandwell and the added impact that poor air quality had on health. The Board felt that the Council should lead by example where possible in promoting measures to reduce air quality and recommended that free parking be offered to drivers of electric vehicles in Sandwell.

Resolved to recommend:-

- (1) that the Director – Prevention and Protection carry out targeted consultation on the draft Air Quality Action Plan 2018-2023 with residents of Birmingham Road, Oldbury;
- (2) that the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Protection liaises with the Council's representatives on the West Midlands Combined Authority to ensure that issues of air quality are addressed at a regional level;
- (3) that free parking be offered to drivers of electric vehicles in Sandwell.

21/17

Healthwatch

The Board had invited representatives from Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to report on how they had responded to Healthwatch Sandwell's report following its investigation into the experiences of young people who self-harm.

During 2015/16 Healthwatch Sandwell had been contacted by various people who shared their experiences of mental health services in Sandwell. These experiences were varied and related to different providers of care. Many experiences were negative, adding to already stressful situations. An engagement exercise with young people about their health and social care issues (reported in Healthwatch Activity Report 7, 30 June 2015) showed that 49% of issues raised were directly or indirectly related to mental health difficulties. Simultaneously parents of young people had contacted Healthwatch directly to share experiences of the difficulties they have had accessing appropriate and timely mental health care from primary, acute and social care.

Healthwatch reported that it had been difficult to ascertain actual figures of young people in Sandwell (or anywhere) who self harmed and available data did not relate specifically to self-harm as a stand-alone issue but to a wide range of mental health difficulties. In addition, the available data was based on engagement with services and concern was expressed about hidden numbers of people self-harming and not accessing the necessary support.

The investigation had included a survey reaching over 10,000 people, via partner organisations and social media. It was noted that only one of 17 schools contacted had responded. Given this poor response rate, it was acknowledged by Healthwatch that this limited the value of the findings. The first of the four recommendations therefore recommended that further research be undertaken to try to establish the scale of the issue in order to support the development of appropriate support services.

The report had been published in November 2016 and had made four recommendations:-

- Research into the prevalence of self-harm in Sandwell should be considered by appropriate organisations.

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- A reduction in waiting times for appropriate care/support.
- Raise awareness of signs of self-harm in young people and where to signpost for help.
- Commissioners and providers of services to consider alternative service delivery that may be more appropriate and accessible to the audience.

The representatives present from CAMHS highlighted the following in their response:-

- CAMHS provided a range of services from universal to specialist services.
- Working with the local authority and commissioners, the Crisis Intervention Home Treatment Team had been remodelled and the Team now worked more closely with A & E departments to prevent hospital admission and instead provide intensive support in the home. This data could be looked at in relation to self-harm.
- The Sandwell BEAM service was due to be launched on 28th November, 2017. Led by the Children's Society, several agencies had come together to provide drop-in services for young people aged 5-18 who needed support with their mental health.
- There was an integrated pathway for young people presenting at GP surgeries with one document for professionals to complete to tell the young person's story.
- Specialist CAMHS teams were working with commissioners and looking at capacities, consent and legalities around self-referral pathways.

From the discussion, and questions and contributions of those present the following points were highlighted:-

- An online counselling service was provided by CAMHS, called Kooth and fliers had been sent to schools to promote this.
- Waiting times for referrals had been reduced to nine weeks.
- There was a triage system for urgent help.
- The CAMHS website had won an award.
- It was difficult to fully understand the levels of self-harm since some people used it as a coping strategy so did not feel they needed to approach support services.
- There were challenges in talking to schools since their focus was on delivering the curriculum.

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- Commissioners had recently reviewed the new model and had concluded that a gold standard of service was being offered.
- Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust were due to merge in the new year.
- Research showed that females internalised mental health issues whilst males externalised so it was necessary to look at behaviour indicators to identify risk.
- There had been a 40% increase since 2013 in young people presenting at A&E departments with mental health issues.
- Brook had been commissioned to set up young people's groups across Sandwell, which would assist in providing more data on prevalence of self-harm.
- The young person's voice was a central part in the CAMHS transformation plan.
- Austerity had created greater demands on services.
- A specialist social worker seconded to CAMHS from the Council had been withdrawn which had left a gap in service provision. The Executive Director Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing undertook to look into this.

The Board felt that promoting services and talking to young people was central to establishing the scale of the problem and seeking to address it. The Board felt that the Council had a role to play in promoting the services available to young people.

Resolved:-

- (1) that an update on the merger of Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust be submitted to the Board in early 2018;
- (2) **to recommend** that the Council works with partner agencies in promoting the services available to support young people with mental health issues.

22/17

Update on Delayed Transfers of Care

The Board noted a presentation from the Executive Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing on the Council's work with

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partner organisations to reduce delayed transfers of care from hospital to home or an appropriate care setting.

Under the Improved Better Care Fund, the government had made around £11m available to local authorities to support the timely discharge of Sandwell residents from hospital. Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group and the Council were committed to building on the progress made in year one and two of the Better Care Fund and had agreed to align their respective commissioning duties to deliver improved health and wellbeing for the people of Sandwell. Both agreed that the best solution was to develop a placed based integrated care system that delivered better integration of general practice, out of hospital services, social care, primary, community services and specialist out of hospital care (physical and mental health services). However, this type of change was complex and the transition required careful management, including the development of a financial framework which created opportunities whilst reducing instability and managing risk.

A project had been established with the aim ensuring that a person was sent home or to the right care setting on the same day. Working on the principle of placed based commissioning, and Sandwell being the “place”, a number of workstreams had been set up to deliver the project, focusing on the following areas:-

- low level support in the community to support prevention through targeted collective spend
- closer working with GPs
- working with community services
- co-ordinating services for residents in hospital outside of Sandwell
- partnerships with acute services

Currently Sandwell had the lowest delayed transfer of care amongst all authorities in West Midlands and was following a downward trajectory. However, the late reporting of data by Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust sometimes made it difficult to manage and this had been raised at the Health and Wellbeing Board and with the Trust.

If government targets weren't met then there was a risk that the funding would be lost or the government would step in and dictate how it was spent. In 2017/18 the funding had been committed to support adult services directorate as a whole and avoid the need for

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cuts to be made, and to support the growth of services that would support timely discharge from hospital. The funding provided an opportunity to strengthen and further develop joint working with benefits for commissioners and providers.

23/17 **Work Programme Update**

The Board noted an update from the Chair and Vice-Chairs on their activities outside of the Board's meetings.

(Meeting ended at 8.08 pm)

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