

PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

7th December 2020

Present: Councillor Liddle in the Chair, Councillors Afzal, Akhtar, Davies, Gee, M. Hussain, Oates, Smith, and Whittle,

Also Present- , Councillor Julie Gunn, Executive Member,
Councillor Damian Talbot, Executive Member,
Dr Gifford Kerr, Consultant in Public Health
Jayne Ivory, Director of Children Services and Schools
Joanne Siddle- Head of Schools.

Paul Conlon- Scrutiny and Technical Lead, Democratic Services.

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed those present to the meeting and received apologies from Councillors Jacqueline Slater and Salton.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest on items on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Reconfiguration of Renal Haemodialysis and Outpatients Services Across Lancashire and South Cumbria.

The Committee received an update on the reconfiguration of Renal Haemodialysis and Outpatients Services across Lancashire and South Cumbria. The Committee had considered and made comments on the reconfiguration of services as part of the consultation in September 2019.

The Committee were informed of the key outcomes for the consultation and in particular the service delivered in East Lancashire and the reasoning behind this. The key change for the Borough was the new purpose built facility with significantly increased capacity. This would enable more patients to be treated at Blackburn many of whom currently travel to Accrington or Chorley due to lack of capacity.

RESOLVED- 1. That the Committee that Update be noted.

2. That the enhanced service for Renal Haemodialysis and outpatient services in the borough be welcomed.

5. Schools, Education and Children's Services

The Committee received an update on the way that the Council had responded to the services provided to children through schools and Children's services. The Committee looked at the way that schools had worked to open and continue to stay open safely for both children and staff.

The Committee looked at the support that schools had received from the department and the guidance on interpretation of the government changing rules. The Committee also reviewed how the education response team had worked with schools and to keep people safe and would continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

The Committee would continue to look at how services provided and safety maintained in the delivery of services to schools and Children in the Borough.

RESOLVED- That the work of the department be noted.

2. That all Staff in the Department be congratulated on the outstanding work that has been carried out to meet the challenges and difficulties that they have faced during the pandemic.

6. Ofsted Children in Our Care Focused Visit update on Practice Improvement.

The Committee looked at the findings of the focused visit from OFSTED that had taken place in February 2020 and would be followed up in the near future. The focused visit had found that-

- Senior leaders understand the strengths and areas for development within the service. While there have been improvements in some areas of service, progress remains slow in key areas of weakness that were identified at previous inspections.
- When children are at immediate or significant risk, decisions to bring them into care are made promptly and appropriately. However, decision-making when children are suffering neglect is too slow. This means that some children are left in harmful situations and plans for their future are delayed.
- Social work caseloads are too high in the assessment and support teams, which impacts on social workers' ability to build relationships with children and understand their experiences. Although leaders have acted to try and reduce demand for social work services, this has not had any impact on workloads in

these social work teams. At the point of this visit, effective interim plans to address workload pressures were not addressed.

The improvements highlighted in the area of social work were outlined and the Committee were informed that the department had taken steps to meet these together with improvements made which included updating the service development plan, implementing and embedding the quality assurance and practice improvement framework and implementing a workforce strategy which had seen social work caseloads reduced by 25%. All newly qualified social workers would have caseloads under 15 children each. A number of areas of practice improvement were outlined together with the next steps that included Ofsted focused visits in January and peer challenge in February.

RESOLVED-

1. That the actions taken by the Portfolio and the Council be supported that the Committee receive further reports back on the outcome of the review to improve services delivery and outcomes for children in the Borough.

7. Test and Trace, the Vaccine and arrangements for Vaccination.

The Committee received an update on the test and trace system and how this was working in the Borough. Blackburn with Darwen had been one of the first Councils in the country to start tracing cases locally as it had been recognised that the sooner a positive case has been identified and contacted the sooner their contacts can be identified and supported to self-isolate. The aim was to break the chain of transmission and support people in isolation. The Council will continue to work closely with the Government and Public Health England to secure additional resources and testing pilots to maximise capacity and value of test and trace at a local level.

The Committee examined the way that the vaccine was proposed to be rolled out for inoculations and the priority order that would be used. The logistics of the actual delivery was examined and the sites that would be used as delivery centres. The Committee were informed that the cathedral would be a primary location and by the next meeting of the Committee considerable progress would have been made on the key target groups.

RESOLVED-

That the delivery of vaccinations and progress on testing be noted and that further reports be considered by the Committee in the future.

Chair at the meeting where the minutes were signed.....

Date.....