

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 October 2021

* Councillor Paul Spooner (Chairman)

* Councillor James Walsh (Vice-Chairman)

* Councillor Chris Blow

Councillor Guida Esteves

Councillor Graham Eyre

* Councillor Angela Goodwin

Councillor George Potter

* Councillor Maddy Redpath

Councillor Tony Rooth

* Councillor Will Salmon

* Councillor Deborah Seabrook

* Councillor Fiona White

*Present

Councillor Jan Harwood (Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change) was also in attendance.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(i), Councillor Cait Taylor attended as a substitute for Councillor George Potter.

OS32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee was advised of apologies for absence from Councillors Guida Esteves, Graham Eyre, George Potter, and Tony Rooth and a substitution as detailed above.

OS33 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

In relation to item 5, Mental Health Improvement Programme, Councillor James Walsh disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as an employee of NHS England and Councillor Angela Goodwin disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of the mental health charity, Oakleaf Enterprise.

OS34 MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 September 2021 were agreed.

OS35 RESPONSE TO COVID 19 – UPDATE

The Director for Service Delivery gave a presentation on the current COVID-19 situation and the Council's response, beginning with an update on local cases.

The Director for Service Delivery advised the meeting that the COVID-19 infection rate in Surrey for the week ending 12 October was 432.4 per 100,000, higher than the national rate of 391.8 per 100,000 and the South East rate of 380.0 per 100,000, while Guildford's rate was 369.1 per 100,000. He added that that Guildford's rate had recently increased to 443.6 per 100,000. The Director for Service Delivery advised that in the previous week there had been 5,188 new cases in Surrey, of which 555 were in Guildford. The meeting was informed that as at 17 October there were 2,994 registered COVID-related deaths in Surrey, with 254 in Guildford.

The Director for Service Delivery updated the Committee on two key COVID-19 issues: vaccination and testing; and returning to the Council office. The meeting was advised that cases were highest amongst the 10-19 year olds followed by the 40-49 year olds, which could indicate infection spreading from the 10-19 year olds to their parents. In addition, the Director for Service Delivery indicated that COVID-19 cases were mainly associated with schools and leisure facilities. The Director for Service Delivery indicated that vaccination rates were improving across the Borough and analysis of the vaccination data was undertaken by Public Health at Surrey County Council and resources allocated to areas of concern. In addition, the meeting was advised that Surrey Heartlands CCG were employing a children's and young person vaccination lead to address vaccination hesitancy in young people.

With reference to the government guidelines for care homes that were coming into force on 11 November, the Director for Service Delivery advised that Surrey County Council reported 97% of residents, staff or agency workers in homes in Guildford had received their first and second COVID vaccination.

The Director for Service Delivery advised the Committee members of the Council's agile working policy and the expectation that staff would be in the office at least 50% of the time. He noted that operational services had been maintained throughout the pandemic and staff had continued to come into work to deliver services throughout the pandemic.

In response to a question from a Committee member about the COVID-19 infection rates among teachers, schoolchildren, and students, the Senior Specialist Public Health indicated that information about positive test locations and premises was shared with the Council by Public Health at Surrey County Council. The Head of Environment & Regulatory Services advised the meeting that support was provided by Public Health at Surrey County Council for schools with a COVID outbreak.

In reply to a question, the Senior Specialist Public Health undertook to ask for the uptake of booster vaccinations in the Borough.

In reply to a question about rising infection rates in the Borough and the policy requirement for staff to return to the Council offices, the Director for Service Delivery confirmed that the agile working policy would be kept under review.

The Chair thanked officers for attending and answering questions.

OS36 MENTAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Chair welcomed Professor Helen Rostill (Deputy Chief Executive, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP)), and Co-Chair of the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board's Mental Health Delivery Board), Sally Heath (Director of Business and Innovation, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust) and Sue Murphy (Chief Executive of Catalyst) to the meeting. He advised the Committee that the item was an opportunity to consider the impact of the pandemic on mental illness and mental health services and to hear about the Surrey Mental Health Partnership Board (MHPB) review and consequent improvement plan agreed by Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board.

Professor Helen Rostill, Sally Heath, and Sue Murphy gave a presentation to help explain the Mental Health Improvement Programme (MHIP). The background and context of the MHIP, its delivery architecture, and its governance were outlined to the Committee. Next the progress and ambitions of the programme areas of the MHIP were described to the meeting.

The Committee was advised that the recommendations from the MHPB review had been mapped into ten programme areas; specifically, three core delivery programmes (early intervention and prevention; no bouncing and improving access; and working together to break down barriers) and seven support and enabling programmes (digital and data; communications and engagement; how we work together; resourcing; workforce plan; training and awareness; and mental health system governance).

The meeting was presented with examples to illustrate the focus for the three core delivery programme areas, including the formation of Surrey Workforce and Wellbeing Collaborative, the design of an engagement programme by Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) and the Independent Mental Health Network, the GP Community of Practice initiative, the 24/7 safe haven pilot, an independent review of SABP adult single-point of access, and the successful funding application for a tier 4 CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) unit within the county. Further examples shared with the meeting included the GPimhs (General Practise integrated mental health service) community-based model of mental health care, the establishment of a Young Adults Reference Group to better support the transition from children's to adult mental health services, the Epsom pilot of secondary care integration, the Community Connections in-reach service pilot at Farnham Road Hospital and the Abraham Cowley Unit, the establishment of Surrey Mental Health Alliance by April 2022, and projects to inform the culture changes necessary to improve working within and across organisations.

The Committee was advised of work to assess resourcing for emotional wellbeing and mental health services across Surrey, the launch of the Multi-Agency Emotional and Mental Wellbeing Training Collaborative in September 2021, and the Face of Support mental wellbeing campaign across Surrey. The Director of Business and Innovation informed the meeting that a Mental Health Summit to be held on 1 December 2021 would update on progress achieved and help maintain momentum.

During the presentation, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, commended to Committee members a report produced by SMEF in 2020 about the impact of the pandemic on people's mental health and offered to provide it to Committee members.

Concluding the presentation, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, indicated that the transformation of mental health services was happening against a backdrop of a continuing surge in demand caused by the pandemic. She advised the meeting of the pressure under which mental health services were working and the challenges of sufficient workforce to meet need.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, the Director of Business and Innovation, SABP, and the Chief Executive, Catalyst, for their presentation and praised the speed and progress of the improvement plan.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change indicated the Executive's support for mental health services. In addition, he undertook to pursue with local businesses the issues raised.

During the ensuing discussion a number of questions were asked and clarifications responded to and

- In answer to a question, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, suggested the value in the Committee meeting and receiving a presentation from her colleagues leading on the new emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children.

- In reply to a question, the meeting was advised of the benefit of community leaders, such as councillors, and business leaders having an awareness of and support for the actions and work of the improvement programme. She noted the importance of the county-wide improvement plan feeling both relevant to local communities and influenced by them. The Councillors were asked for help identifying and connecting to local groups and organisations that could be involved in and champion the aims of the programme. In addition, the meeting was advised of the value of promoting the mental health communications campaign within local networks and encouraging people to seek help at an early stage. The Director of Business and Innovation, SABP, stressed the importance of workplace support for mental health and asked Committee members for ideas to better connect with local businesses.
- In response to a question, the Director of Business and Innovation, SABP, indicated that there was not an earmarked budget for the improvement programme, although the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Board had recognised the need to ensure that the actions and initiatives proposed in the programme were sustainable in the longer term. The Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, advised the meeting that need was felt to be so pressing that SABP had decided to fund some of the programmes of work within the improvement programme without undertaking a formal business case process.
- A member of the Committee asked about resourcing of GPimhs across the county and suggested the importance of consulting with the police about alternatives if the Safe Havens for people experiencing a mental health crisis were not 24/7. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, advised that recruitment difficulties might cause some slippage in the extension of GPimhs but the financial commitment for the expansion was secure. The Chief Executive, Catalyst, confirmed that alternatives to the Safe Haven had been discussed with the police. She informed the meeting that a six-month pilot for a young person's safe haven was starting on 15 November in Guildford, for people aged 18-25.
- A member of the Committee requested further details and images to enable councillors to use social media platforms to raise awareness with communities and local businesses about the Face of Support mental wellbeing campaign.
- A member of the Committee questioned whether staff were trained specifically on how to challenge and address the damage Instagram and other social media caused to the mental health of young people, particularly young women. In reply, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, indicated that staff were not systematically trained in how to deal with social media and that there was a probable requirement for this for some staff.
- In reply to a question about male suicide, the Chief Executive, Catalyst, advised the Committee of the Taxi Watch suicide prevention drive in Ireland and a similar initiative to begin in Elmbridge, Surrey. In addition, the meeting was advised of training to be undertaken in Elmbridge by the Barbers Collective. The Committee was advised that if the training was shown to be effective it was hoped funding could be secured for a wider rollout.
- In response to a member of the Committee asking about efforts to build trust with minority communities and overcome the stigma associated of mental health, the meeting was advised of the work and growth of SMEF.

- The Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, indicated that the number of people with mental health needs helped across Surrey could be provided to the Committee members.

Members agreed the value in receiving further information at a Committee meeting on the new emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children, young people, and families.

In answer to a question from the Chair, the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, advised that the timeline for delivery of the improvement programme was 12-18 months and suggested a progress update to the Committee in the late spring or early summer of 2022. Accordingly, the Committee members agreed an update on the improvement plan be added to the Overview and Scrutiny work plan.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Chief Executive, SABP, the Director of Business and Innovation, SABP, and the Chief Executive of Catalyst for attending the meeting to present information and answer questions.

OS37 AIR QUALITY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services introduced the report and reminded the Committee that on 21 October 2021 the Guildford Joint Committee would receive a report recommending the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area in Guildford Town Centre. In addition, the Committee was advised that the Council was working with National Highways and Surrey County Council to address the air quality breaches on the A3.

The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services indicated that the pandemic had impacted on progressing the air quality action plan measures.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change indicated that the Air Quality Strategy would be reviewed in the coming year. He stated that the capacity of the Council to tackle the core issues of air quality was somewhat limited.

In reply to a question, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services confirmed that work on a new Air Quality Strategy would begin in 2022.

In response to questions on the A3 through Guildford, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services advised the meeting that a report on measures to address the air quality issues would be released by National Highways. The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services confirmed that details of the worst polluting vehicles on the A3 through Guildford, along with vehicle journey information, would be included within the report. Additionally, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services indicated the importance of a modal shift to electric vehicles. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change spoke of encouraging a behavioural shift to driving electric vehicles.

The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services acknowledged that compliance with legal air quality limits on the A3 through Guildford was predicted to be some years away. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change indicated his support for immediate measures and interventions for the A3 providing they did not transfer the pollution elsewhere, but stated he was not aware of such measures.

A member of the Committee asked how high a priority the new park and ride on new A281 was in terms of air quality improvement. With reference to the number of properties with exposures to air pollution exceedances in Shalford, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services stated that such a park and ride site had been discounted due to the time to implement such a scheme and a lack of funding.

In response to a question about the adequacy of monitoring points to establish the scale of the air quality problem in the Borough, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services explained the network of monitoring locations and its development and review. The Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change indicated his confidence that the monitoring network had not missed any areas of exceedance.

With reference to query about an exceedance and a possible previous monitoring point near the Gyratory, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services requested further details to investigate the matter.

With reference to education in communities to change behaviour, and the designation of a theatre project tour of primary schools in 2020 as completed, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services confirmed that education was not viewed as a one-off exercise and advised the meeting of other organisations locally taking a lead on the issue, including the University of Surrey.

Members questioned the lack of action to tackle idling vehicles in the Borough. The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services confirmed that her team had not been able to progress anti-vehicle idling plans and updated the meeting on actions taken by staff in parking. The meeting was advised that during 2019-20 as part of a school watch initiative parking staff had moved on nearly 1,700 vehicles and issued over 200 fixed penalty notices at schools across the Borough with controlled parking zones. The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services indicated that businesses were encouraged to help staff travel more sustainably.

A member of the Committee advised the meeting of anti-idling signage erected by a supermarket in its Guildford car park and suggested the value of involving children in raising awareness of anti-idling. The Head of Environment and Regulatory Services indicated that such proposals were included in the Council's draft communications plan on air quality.

In reply to a question from a Committee member, the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services informed the meeting that the Council worked with Surrey County Council and National Highways on air quality issues and had spoken to Experience Guildford about the proposed air quality management area for Guildford town centre.

A member of the Committee asked for advice concerning the possible exposure of schoolchildren to air pollution at Onslow Infant School. In reply, the meeting was advised that the Council had commissioned a report to establish if air quality breaches were likely at various sites, including Onslow Infant School, and that this report would be available shortly. She also advised the member of the Committee that passive diffusion tubes to monitor air quality were to be installed at locations at Onslow Infant School.

The Chair thanked both the Head of Environment and Regulatory Services and the Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Councillor for Climate Change for attending and answering questions.

RESOLVED: (I) That the air quality actions completed in the last 12 months and presented in the report submitted to the Committee be noted.

(II) That the proposed review of the Air Quality Strategy 2017-22 be endorsed.

(III) That monitoring of the Air Quality Strategy be continued by the Committee.

OS38 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report containing the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2021-22 and the terms of reference of the overview and scrutiny Affordable Housing task and finish group. There were no comments.

The meeting finished at 9.16 am

Signed

Date

Chairman