

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

25 April 2022

- * Councillor Paul Spooner (Chairman)
- * Councillor James Walsh (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Chris Blow | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| * Councillor Guida Esteves | * Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor George Potter | * Councillor Fiona White |

*Present

Councillor John Redpath (Lead Councillor for Economy) was in attendance, with Councillors Colin Cross and Cait Taylor (Lead Councillor for Climate Change) in remote attendance.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(i), Councillor Graham Eyre attended as a substitute for Councillor Jan Harwood.

OS67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Committee was advised of apologies for absence from Councillors Chris Blow and Jan Harwood and a substitution as detailed above.

OS68 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

In relation to item 5, Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) Service – Update, Councillors Fiona White, Angela Goodwin, and George Potter disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as Surrey County Councillors.

OS69 MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 March 2022 were agreed.

OS70 COVID-19 RESPONSE – UPDATE

The Senior Specialist Public Health gave a presentation on the current COVID-19 situation and the Council's response. She reminded the meeting that the Government's Living with COVID plan had been introduced on 1 April and the changes in testing arrangements meant it was no longer possible to report community rates of infection. The Senior Specialist Public Health advised the Committee that the Office for National Statistics did estimate the percentage of the population with COVID at a national and regional level, and that these estimated rates were reducing.

The Committee was informed that Covid testing was still available to a number of different groups: NHS patients in hospital; people on COVID anti-viral and other treatments; NHS staff; and adult social care staff in care homes. The Senior Specialist Public Health advised that the main focus of vaccinations was the 5–11-year-old age group and that pop up vaccination sites would continue in the Borough. She stated that the vaccination rates in Guildford were in line with the average across Surrey and England.

In response to a query from Committee members shared prior to the meeting, the Head of Environmental and Regulatory Services informed the Committee that information on obtaining Covid vaccinations was provided to Ukrainian refugees and their sponsors.

The Senior Specialist Public Health indicated that hospital admissions were decreasing and that as at 25 April there were 360 registered Covid-related deaths in Guildford.

The Senior Specialist Public Health advised that the presumption was now for COVID-19 to be treated like any other infectious disease and for employers and employees to act accordingly. She confirmed that the Council was reviewing its risk assessments for vulnerable clients or staff.

The meeting was informed that service leads were being asked to consider work bubbles and training additional officers to ensure that key services and activities were maintained. The Senior Specialist Public Health advised that the Council would redeploy staff if necessary. The Committee was informed that test availability would be maintained for staff carrying out health or social care activities.

The Senior Specialist Public Health advised that if staff had coronavirus symptoms but are well enough to work then, if possible, they would work from home. She indicated that for staff were working from home was not an option then managers would make appropriate arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

In response to a question, the Senior Specialist Public Health confirmed that the pop up vaccination sites would cater for all residents. The Senior Specialist Public Health undertook to provide details to Committee members on the take-up of the latest vaccination dose and plans for the next tranche in the autumn.

RESOLVED: That the updates to the Committee on the response to COVID-19 be discontinued.

OS71 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH (EWMH) SERVICE – UPDATE

The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust (SABP), the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, and the Chief Executive, Surrey Wellbeing Partnership, updated the Committee on Mindworks Surrey.

With the aid of presentation slides circulated in advance with the agenda papers, the Committee was advised of the partnership approach of Mindworks and the iThrive framework being used since April 2021. The meeting was informed that the Mindworks contract was for seven years, with an option to extend for a further three years. The meeting was informed that the iThrive framework was replacing the traditional delivery of children and adolescent mental health services.

The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, outlined the organisations and partners delivering Mindworks and the role of the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust in the development of the framework for Surrey. The meeting was advised that the main Mindworks services were based around seven areas: access and advice; school-based needs; building resilience; intensive interventions (including the children and young people's eating disorder services); crisis admission avoidance; reaching out; and neurodevelopmental services.

The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, informed the meeting of the ongoing challenge of recruiting staff to the Mindworks service across Surrey, but

indicated that all seven new service areas were being delivered. The Committee was advised of an out-of-hours phone line providing advice to parents and carers of children with neurodevelopmental need, such as autism or ADHD.

The Committee was advised of the school-based needs offer in Surrey, including multiple teams working collectively. The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, indicated that every district or borough within Surrey had a named primary mental health worker and a community wellbeing lead, and would have a mental health support team. The meeting was advised that the mental health support team for Guildford would be in place in September 2022.

The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, informed the Committee of the Amplify participation group, designed by young people and led by a young person with expert by experience. The meeting was advised of the Mindworks launch event organised by Amplify and to be held on 14 May 2022 at Sandown Racecourse, Esher.

The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, confirmed that demand for Mindworks services was increasing and partners were working collectively to reduce waiting times for services.

During the ensuing discussion a number of questions were asked, and clarifications offered:

- In reply to a question from a member of the Committee about the impact of the pandemic, the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, confirmed an increase in both the number of children presenting in crisis and the complexity of their conditions. She stated that improved collaboration with Mindworks partners meant that children were able to access help much earlier than under the previous CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health services). The Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, outlined the school-based offer of Mindworks in Surrey and the improvements in early intervention. In addition, the Committee was advised of the introduction of more transparent and collaborative governance arrangements.
- In response to questions, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, indicated that the Mindworks contract was overspent, and a decision had been taken not to manage financial risk ahead of clinical risk.
- In reply to a question about funding, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, advised that children's eating disorders had seen a threefold increase in referrals during the pandemic. The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, informed the meeting that there was an ongoing national and regional response to the increase in mental health illness and referred to the flexible response possible under the Mindworks partnership in Surrey. The Chief Executive, Surrey Wellbeing Partnership, advised the Committee that involvement of the voluntary sector through the Mindworks Surrey offer facilitated increased agility and workload sharing between organisations.
- In reply to a question, the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, stated that waiting times had improved significantly compared with rates from two years previous. The Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, advised that children waiting for diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental disorder were currently waiting too long due to the demand for the service. She expressed confidence that children in a crisis were being seen in a timely way and that children requiring assessment were able to access the broader Mindworks Surrey offer

immediately. In addition, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, informed the meeting that the urgent care and short-term treatment teams had been stepped up during the pandemic.

- A member of the Committee questioned the current vacancy rate and was informed by the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, that staff turnover was approximately 17 percent, compared to a figure of 14 percent for SABP. The Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, stated that the workforce as specified in the Mindworks contract was almost fully recruited but indicated that recruitment was an ongoing challenge.
- The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, advised the meeting of the opening of a twelve-bed inpatient unit in Surrey at April Cottage, Horley, in the spring of 2023.
- In response to a query, the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, updated the Committee on discussions at recently introduced regional meetings.
- A member of the Committee noted that the information submitted on the referrals received into Mindworks Surrey from GP practices did not include surgeries in the west of the Borough in Ash and Tongham. The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, stated that the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, would look into the matter.
- With reference to the information submitted to the Committee on referrals received into Mindworks Surrey from GP practices, a member of the Committee asked what had been learnt from such data. The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, indicated that a breakdown of referral information, not based on geographical areas, or a data pack illustrating trends could be provided to Committee members. The Committee was advised that data was usually collated and analysed by service area rather than by GP practice.
- In reply to a question about service challenges, the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, informed the Committee of the increase since 2020 in the number of young children referred to services, resourcing the expansion of school-based services to primary schools and, following the loss of the universal offer for all families at children's centres across Surrey, long-term investment in prevention services.
- In response to a member of the Committee suggesting the value in apprenticeships, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, advised the meeting that there were a range of roles within the mental health in schools teams that were designed to grow skill and expertise for the future in a manner similar to apprenticeships.
- In reply to questions, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, confirmed that the move from primary to senior school was viewed as significant and acknowledged that strengthening support for children and their families at such a transition was a priority. The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, stated that information on Mindworks Surrey was updated regularly online and available at www.mindworks-surrey.org.uk.

- In response to a query from a Committee member, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, confirmed that references to parents and families included all carers and looked after children.
- With reference to a question about early years intervention and prevention, the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, indicated that she could circulate the Better Start Programme strategy to Committee members.
- The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, outlined efforts in Surrey to aid refugee families and children from Ukraine and elsewhere.
- In reply to questions, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, outlined the processes on the pathway to diagnosis of a neurodevelopmental condition and advised that such a diagnosis would ideally take no more than 6-12 months. She indicated the need to take away a request for details of the average wait from referral to neurodevelopmental diagnosis. The Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, confirmed that support was available along the pathway and diagnosis was not the route to support.
- The Committee was informed that cognitive behaviour therapy was one of a range of interventions available to children.
- With reference to every district or borough within Surrey having a named primary mental health worker and a community wellbeing lead, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, confirmed that the primary mental health worker was a point of contact for every school in the cluster and had a role in upskilling and consultation with those in the school system.
- In reply to a question about the transition from children's to adult's services, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, indicated the measures in place, including governance and other links with adult mental health services, and the transition service team. The Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, suggested that a future update for the Committee could focus on the 18–25-year-old age group.
- In reply to a question, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, advised the meeting that progress with the adult eating disorder service was on track and suggested that a future update for the Committee could include neurodevelopmental pathway advances.
- In reply to a question on the mental health education of schoolchildren, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, reminded the meeting of the Amplify participation group and its work, especially on social media.
- In reply to a question, the meeting was advised by the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, of professional referral routes and that parents and carers using the contact information on the Mindworks Surrey website would receive a response. In addition, she informed the meeting that sixty-four percent of requests for support came from GP practices.
- In response to a question about information within the presentation submitted to the Committee over video or face-to-face appointments, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, indicated that an evaluation of the video and telephone appointments between young people and their child wellbeing practitioners

was in progress. She advised that feedback from Healthwatch Surrey suggested that young people with autism often preferred video meetings.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director for Children's Community Services, SABP, the Director of Children and Young People's Services, SABP, the Children's Emotional Health Alliance Programme Director, SABP, and the Chief Executive, Surrey Wellbeing Partnership, and confirmed that the Committee would welcome a further update in future.

OS72 GUILDFORD AND WAVERLEY COLLABORATION – UPDATE

The Joint Chief Executive of Guildford and Waverley Councils updated the Committee on the two strands of work being undertaken on the collaboration programme: the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) and the joint shared management team. The Committee was reminded that the heads of terms for the IAA had been agreed recently by full Council and were to be considered by Waverley Borough Council on 26 April 2022. The Joint Chief Executive indicated that if the heads of terms of the IAA were approved by Waverley Borough Council then consultation would begin with senior managers over the future structure of the joint shared management team.

In reply to a question, the Joint Chief Executive indicated that details of options and proposals for the shared management team could not be discussed in a public meeting while the formal HR consultations with employees were underway.

A member of the Committee asked for an indicative timetable for the creation of a joint executive and the appearance of business cases for potential mergers of services or operations. In response, the Joint Chief Executive advised that he expected a joint management team in place by October 2022 and that it would be tasked with prioritisation and presentation of such business cases.

In response to a question from a member of the Committee about arrangements in the period between the departure of the Director of Resources and the establishment of a shared management team, the Joint Chief Executive advised the meeting that discussions were proceeding about possible interim arrangements for a Section 151 Officer for the Council.

The Chair thanked the Joint Chief Executive for his update.

OS73 LEAD COUNCILLOR QUESTION SESSION

The Chair welcomed the Lead Councillor for Economy and reminded the meeting of Councillor John Redpath's areas of responsibility: Economic Development; Social Enterprise; Rural Economy; Heritage and Community Assets; and Customer Service including Web Services. The Chair indicated that customer service would likely be the focus of questions for the Lead Councillor for Economy.

During the ensuing discussion with the Lead Councillor a number of points were made, and responses offered:

- In reply to a request for the priorities for each area of his portfolio, the Lead Councillor for Economy outlined the achievements of the Council's Economic Development team over the past year, including the distribution of several government grant schemes. The Lead Councillor for Economy stated that the connection of rural homes and businesses to highspeed broadband was a priority. With reference to the heritage and community assets element of his portfolio, the Lead Councillor for Economy indicated that options for the future of the heritage service were being prepared. The Lead Councillor for Economy advised the

Committee that he favoured an accessible museum located in one of Guildford's new town centre developments.

- The Committee was informed by the Lead Councillor for Economy that customer services was the most challenging area of his portfolio. He linked the deterioration in the customer service at the Council to cuts to the Council's funding by government and advised that the Future Guildford transformation programme had introduced a single team of twenty-one staff to handle customer enquiries to the organisation, with seventy-five percent of queries handled online. The Lead Councillor for Economy indicated that difficulties staffing the customer service team and insufficient options online were responsible for a shortfall in customer service at the Council. He advised that key performance indicators for the Council's customer service were made available to the public and discussed at the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee.
- The Lead Councillor for Economy indicated he had somewhat limited involvement in social enterprise projects.
- A member of the Committee suggested that, even accepting funding issues and the changes introduced by the Future Guildford transformation programme, there had been a rapid deterioration of Guildford's customer service, to such an extent that the Council was now ranked very low in terms of its customer service. Councillors advised the Lead Councillor for Economy that they were using their own MyGuildford accounts to report constituents' issues and questioned whether there were plans for a version of the MyGuildford portal for Councillors. In reply, the Lead Councillor for Economy suggested the value in Councillors helping residents to use the Council website and register for a MyGuildford account.
- With reference to the Council encouraging the transferral of service demand online, members of the Committee questioned whether the Council could do more to aid the provision of sustainable and reliable broadband. Suggestions were put forward by a member of the Committee that the Local Planning Authority should require provision of broadband to new properties and that the Council should consider involvement in the Gigabit Broadband Voucher Scheme. In addition, another member of the Committee suggested the establishment of a social enterprise company to help solve issues around the provision of broadband. In reply, the Lead Councillor for Economy indicated he would explore the suggestion.
- With reference to the Future Guildford transformation programme, Councillors suggested that Ignite, and consultants in general, had an optimism bias in relation to the public's willingness and keenness to go online, and that household budgeting cuts might lead to less take-up of broadband, especially by vulnerable residents.
- Councillors questioned how written enquiries, both electronic and paper, were dealt with by the Council's customer services, and suggested they were handled differently from phone calls. A member of the Committee asked if residents' email queries were forwarded on or sent direct to services which no longer had dedicated customer service staff and the quality and timeliness of responses therefore varied. In reply, the Lead Councillor for Economy indicated that publication of analytics to inform the public of the best times to call customer services was planned. He indicated that the aim was for customer service staff to answer ninety percent of enquiries themselves. In addition, the Lead Councillor for Economy offered to update Committee members on how email enquiries were handled by individual services.

- The Lead Councillor for Economy advised the Committee that when customer service became part of his portfolio the customer service team had about ten staff, many not fully trained.
- In response to a question, the Lead Councillor for Economy indicated he hoped that Guildford town centre businesses would support the continuation of the Experience Guildford Business Improvement District in the upcoming ballot.
- A member of the Committee advised the meeting that the Council responded to queries on Twitter and Facebook quicker than those made by phone or email.
- With reference to an unanswered online enquiry from a resident about a missed food waste collection, a member of the Committee asked if there were Service Level Agreements for responding to such online forms and enquiries. In response, the Lead Councillor for Economy requested the customer reference number be forwarded to him and asked all Councillors to advise him of such issues.
- With reference to the request from the Lead Councillor for Economy to be advised of customer service issues experienced by residents, members of the Committee questioned why there was need to advise the Lead Councillor for Economy; they suggested the Council should have a process in place to identify any gaps or patterns of failure in customer service. A member of the Committee proposed that the Lead Councillor for Economy ensure officers embed processes to seek out and identify customer service issues.
- The Joint Chief Executive confirmed customer service team recruitment was an issue and advised the meeting of the importance of data to progress improvements.
- Several members of the Committee questioned the need for an opt in tick box to get feedback on an issue reported by residents online. Some Councillors suggested that an opt-in should be the default, while others advised that residents could be legitimately re-contacted with updates on specific enquiries. The Lead Councillor for Economy confirmed he would progress the matter with officers.
- A member of the Committee questioned whether the customer call centre and online methods were suitable for reporting urgent or emergency issues.
- In response to a member of the Committee asking if the Council analysed customer demand at its call centre and reception to help identify customer service gaps online, the Lead Councillor for Economy agreed the importance of such an approach and advocated changes to the Council's online customer service to better identify service demand and further develop the online menu of customer service options.
- Councillors advocated improving the marketing of MyGuildford, the possible value of a targeted direct mail campaign to increase registrations, and banner advertising of MyGuildford on the Council website.
- In response to a query, the Lead Councillor for Economy explained that residents did not need to be on MyGuildford to use the Council website to report an issue.

The Chair thanked the Lead Councillor for Economy for attending and answering questions.

OS74 REVIEW OF VISITOR STRATEGY

The Chair reminded members of the Committee that the item had been deferred because the Lead Councillor for Environment was unable to attend the meeting.

The Committee was advised that the item would be re-scheduled for its next meeting, on 7 June 2022.

OS75 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Senior Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) advised the meeting that since the publication of the agenda two items had been scheduled: the Review of the Council’s ownership of Liongate House to July 2022 and the Monitoring of the Council’s Air Quality Strategy to November 2022. In addition, the Committee was advised that the quarterly corporate performance monitoring reports currently considered by the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee might be moved across to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

The meeting was advised that a report on the Borough’s response to refugees (not just those from Ukraine, but Syria, Afghanistan and elsewhere) had been requested by Councillors.

A member of the Committee questioned the advancement of the unscheduled items on the Overview and Scrutiny work programme and was advised that all items were being progressed.

The Committee agreed to add a review of the Dogbusters stray dog service and contract to the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.

The meeting finished at 10.03 pm

Signed

Date

Chairman