

PUBLIC Minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 5 August 2022 10.30am-12.30pm

Present: Councillor Huelin (Chair)
Councillor Johnson
Councillor Liddiard
Councillor Ralph
Councillor Muldowney
Ian Wake, Corporate Director for Adults, Housing and Health
Jo Broadbent, Director of Public Health
Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director for Children's Services
Stephen Porter, Interim Director, Thurrock Alliance
Terry Fisher, Temporary Chief Inspector, Essex Police
Jim Nicholson, Adult Safeguarding Board
Fiona Ryan, Acting Managing Director, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Apologies: Julie Rogers, Chair Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Board / Director of Public Realm
Claire Panniker, Chief Executive, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Rita Thakaria, Partnership Director, Adults Health and Social Care (Thurrock Council/EPUT/NELFT)
Gill Burns, Director of Children's Services, Director, North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT)
Alex Green, Executive Director of Community Services and Partnerships, Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT)
Andrew Pike, Executive Member, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Michelle Stapleton, Interim Director of Operations, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Hannah Coffey, Executive Member, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Kristina Jackson, Chief Executive, Thurrock CVS
Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, Healthwatch Thurrock
Anthony McKeever, Chief Executive of the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board
Dr Anil Kallil, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System
Stephen Mayo, Director of Nursing – Patient Experience, Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System
Karen Grinney, HM Prison and Probation Service

Guests: Ewelina Sorbjan, Thurrock Council
Ryan Farmer, Thurrock Council

Elozona Umeh, Thurrock Council
Catherine Wilson, Thurrock Council
Allison Hall, Thurrock Council

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Colleagues were welcomed and apologies were noted.

2. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items raised in advance of the meeting.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes / Action Log

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting held on 24 June 2022 were approved as a correct record.

Members reviewed the action and decision log and this was updated accordingly.

5. Housing Strategy

This item was presented by Ewelina Sorbjan and Ryan Farmer, Thurrock Council. Key points included:

- The Housing Strategy addresses the range of tenures available in Thurrock - social housing, owner-occupiers, and the private rental sector. The Strategy considers housing need and services in the borough and the barriers residents may face with accessing safe and secure accommodation.
- Two other critical documents for the Housing service have been developed alongside the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 which provide supporting and supplementary information. These are:
 - The Housing Asset Management Strategy 2022-2027, which outlines the council's approach to managing, maintaining, and investing in Housing assets to ensure that properties provide attractive, good quality council owned homes for current and future residents;
 - The Housing Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-2027 which sets the aims and ambitions of the Housing service in improving its interaction and communication with those who live in and around Thurrock Council's homes and neighbourhoods.
- The Housing Strategy closely aligns with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the aims and principles of the Better Care Together Thurrock – The Case for Further Change
- Housing and health are intrinsically linked as access to a safe, secure, stable, warm, and affordable home will provide residents with a solid foundation upon which they can better protect their health and support their wellbeing. If a home is lacking any of these factors, it will have a detrimental impact on the household.

- The Local Authority recognises that affordability not only relates to rent and service charges, but also being able to run and maintain a home.
- The aims of the Housing Strategy 2022-2027 are:
 - To deliver a supportive Housing service based on a person-centred approach;
 - To meet Housing need by identifying and providing the right homes and preventing homelessness;
 - To protect resident safety by improving standards in private homes and within Council stock as well as strengthening links with community safety colleagues to tackle domestic violence;
 - To strengthen community engagement and empowerment by improving satisfaction with the Housing service.
- These aims have been developed in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and discussions have been held at Committee meetings and Community Forums. For example, the Housing Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 13 July 2022 and was subsequently approved.
- In addition to meeting statutory duties, it is the ambition that the Housing Strategy is both flexible and adaptable to residents' needs.

During discussions the following points were made:

- Board members welcomed the Strategy and its ambitions and principles, including its resident-led approach. The Strategy has been developed through partnership working across key stakeholders such as health and social care.
- The engagement process outlined in the Strategy was also welcomed, particularly the attendance at some Community Forums. Following discussions, Housing colleagues subsequently received an invite to the Chadwell St Mary Community Forum.
- Overcrowding and limited access to gardens was raised a concern as well the perception of out of borough placements causing a disadvantage to Thurrock residents. Members were reassured there is a clear Housing Allocations Policy which includes key criteria such as the need to meet a local connection. However, the private housing market allows free movement of people and there is no single dataset that captures the movement of individuals and families into the borough.
- It was noted there is a demand for both smaller and larger properties within the borough, however, these are limited within the Local Authority's own housing stock therefore considerations need to be given to working with other housing providers.
- Colleagues are linked into the ongoing work relating to the Local Plan, particularly in relation to the need to deliver approximately 500 new social homes within the borough and the spatial requirements of these, including communal gardens and green space. The Housing Strategy is also aligned to Domain 5 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Members considered the benefits of future proofing homes for future possible care needs as part of enabling residents to be cared for within their own home.
- The subjectivity of affordable housing and the current financial concerns regarding the cost-of-living crisis, rising inflation and the local financial position were discussed. There is a need to integrate

funding across the system including housing, adult social care, and health to reduce failure demand and ensure an integrated, person-led solution. External funding is to be considered, for example asset acquisition and borrowing from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

- Affordability of rents and service charges are governed by statutory definitions therefore the Local Authority is compliant with these and that any increase will be in line with national policy and the benefit cap.
- As part of implementing the Strategy, it was agreed that consideration needs to be given to the development of affordable housing within the borough and to meet increasing and varied demand.

Action Ryan Farmer

RESOLVED: Members noted and commented on the following:

- **The vision, aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Housing Strategy 2022-2027;**
- **The aims, objectives and actions outlined in the Housing Asset Management Strategy 2022-2027 and Housing Resident Engagement Strategy 2022-2027.**

6. Children Looked After (CLA) Needs Assessment

This item was introduced by Elozona Umeh, Thurrock Council. Key points included:

- Children and young people looked after (CLA) and care leavers are a particularly vulnerable group with greater health and social needs than their peers.
- The aim of the report sought to further the understanding of the health and wellbeing needs of CLA, engage with CLA to capture their lived experiences, including experiences of foster carers and professionals working with CLA.
- An overall summary of the local and national context for CLA is provided within the report as well as the risks and protective factors that predispose or prevent children from being taken into care or help stabilise them whilst in care. This includes safeguarding and health inequality challenges.
- The report aligns with several supporting strategies, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Domains 1 and 4), the Brighter Futures Strategy and Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- As of 31 March 2021, there were 301 CLA within the borough which is equivalent to a rate of 66 CLA per 10,000 children under the age of 18. This is similar to England and Thurrock's Statistical Neighbours; however, it is higher than the regional average.
- There is a strong positive association between ward level deprivation and the rate of CLA in each ward in Thurrock. Children living in the most deprived area of Thurrock are 4.3 times more likely to be taken into care than those living in the least deprived area of the borough.
- The report highlights the need for secure and stable placements, and it was reported that 9% of CLA in Thurrock had experienced at least once placement change. Furthermore, 3% had experienced at least

one school move and 77% had experienced at least one in change in social worker.

- The Thurrock fostering recruitment campaign seeks to increase stable and local placements, however, recruitment of local foster carers is a national challenge.
- All CLA in Thurrock in 2019 were offered the opportunity to take part in the engagement exercise for the report. This exercise resulted in a response rate of 22% (66 of the 2019 CLA cohort), and 19 foster carers and 15 professionals.
- The majority of CLAs involved responded positively, with responses relating to having a safe, secure and strong relationship with foster carers and being involved in the decision-making process of their placements.
- However, the following concerns were raised by participants, including:
 - The high turnover of social workers and the issue of continuity;
 - Delays in the completion of initial health assessments;
 - More support for foster carers in accessing information and services relating to mental health issues and other health care needs, such as sexual health services, dental checks, and immunisations;
 - The advocacy service needs to be strengthened and requires further facilitation.
- It was recognised there is also a gap in the voices of care leavers in relation to their experience of transition and that there is a need to ensure mental health information is used for transition planning.
- The report proposed actions and recommendations, including targeted prevention and support services for those with an increased vulnerability of becoming looked after through exposure to a variety of factors, including domestic violence, mental health issues and substance misuse.
- The report is due to be presented at the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the CLA Steering Group where an action plan will be developed in conjunction with the recommendations.

During discussions the following points were made:

- It was noted the report was initially drafted before the pandemic therefore it required updating due to the time that had lapsed and the changing stakeholders. Colleagues were thanked for their contributions.
- Members discussed the concerns outlined within the report, particularly some negative experiences of foster carers regarding a lack of communication and inconsistent relationships with social workers. It was recognised Thurrock is not an outlier for social worker retention as the Local Authority offers a good salary, training, and case management rates.
- Colleagues were advised there is a Social Worker Retention Programme within Children's Services and work is ongoing in this area. The importance of attracting and retaining good social workers and foster carers was reiterated as CLAs would experience significant challenges without them.
- Members noted there is a dedicated newsletter for foster carers which acts as an information sharing platform.

- Members were advised the Annual Foster Carer Event is due to take place in September / October 2022 and is the first event since the pandemic. Further events have been arranged to improve bonding and relationships between CLAs and their carers, including activity days at Grangewaters. These events are also opportunities to build CLA and foster carer support groups.
- Colleagues noted that some foster carers are more engaged than others in the CLA and foster carer community and access to technology was suggested as a barrier to engagement. It was recognised more exploratory work is required to identify the barriers to wider engagement with peer support groups.
- Members agreed a more holistic approach is required which encompasses system wide services, collaboration, and commissioning, particularly in relation to the transition of CLA to adult services.
- As part of this system wide approach and following an Ofsted recommendation, members requested a joint report with health colleagues at the next Health and Wellbeing Board. The report needs to outline the current challenges in completing these assessments within the statutory timeframe and how this can be improved.

Action: Secretariat to add initial health assessments to the forward planner for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Members were reassured that the timelessness of initial health assessments are being monitored by NELFT and the appropriate action is being taken.
- Members agreed that the recommendations within the report surrounding the initial health assessments require strengthening and nuancing to reflect the statutory nature of these.

Decision: The recommendations in relation to initial health assessments are to be strengthened prior to publication of the report.

RESOLVED: The Board completed the following:

- **Considered, commented, and endorsed the Children Looked After Needs Assessment for Thurrock;**
- **Approve publication of this needs assessment in line with other Joint Strategic Needs Assessments for Thurrock;**
- **Supported the delivery of its recommendations through the Thurrock robust areas of work for CLA**

7. Essex Southend and Thurrock Dementia Strategy refresh

This item was introduced by Catherine Wilson and Allison Hall, Thurrock Council. Key points included:

- In 2017, as a response to feedback about needing better joined up services for people with dementia and their carers, an overarching joint health and social care Southend, Essex and Thurrock Dementia Strategy was agreed by

all partners. The Strategy came to an end during the pandemic which caused delays in the initial consultation period for the refreshed document.

- Following consultation across the wider Essex area, the following nine priorities were agreed:
 1. Prevention;
 2. Support for unpaid carers;
 3. Reducing the risks of crisis;
 4. A knowledgeable and skilled workforce;
 5. Access to the right information and advice;
 6. Diagnosis and support;
 7. Living well with dementia in the community;
 8. Living well in long-term care;
 9. Appropriate end of life care
- Whilst the Local Authority is committed to working with all partners across Essex to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers, a Thurrock specific implementation/action plan will be developed to ensure a local strategic approach.
- As part of developing the implementation / action plan, a more in-depth engagement process will be conducted within Thurrock to ensure defined actions are developed against the wider priorities and commitments.
- Once the Thurrock implementation / action plan has been drafted, partners will have the opportunity to comment and review; the report will be considered through the appropriate governance structures, including the Health and Wellbeing Board prior to publication in late 2022. Progress against the priorities will also be reported at future Health and Wellbeing Board meetings.
- The approach outlined within the refreshed Strategy was recently endorsed by the Adult, Housing and Health Leadership Team, with the caveat of information relating to hypertension being included within the document.

During discussions the following points were made:

- Members welcomed the practice of working across the Alliance footprint but also the development of a local implementation plan to ensure priorities are shaped by Thurrock patients and carers with a lived experience of dementia.
- It was recognised that capacity and funding are challenges to the delivery of the Strategy as Thurrock has a high number of residents with dementia.

These risks will be mitigated as much as possible, and members were reassured of the good working relationships with the voluntary sector, including the Alzheimer's Society. In addition, current service provision focuses on providing support as early as possible to keep patients well and within their home and local community.
- Colleagues were advised that Healthwatch Thurrock will lead on the comprehensive consultation as part of the implementation plan development.
- Members discussed public awareness around the causes and symptoms of dementia, particularly the lack of knowledge around lifestyle choices. Dementia is an all-encompassing illness and effects both the older and young generations. It was recognised further work

regarding dementia friendly communities is needed and more awareness raising around the causes of dementia.

- It was noted the Strategy recognises the different levels of support required at various stages of the illness, and that maintaining independence is key.
- The Board welcomed the Guardian Angel initiative and partnership working with local businesses to help them connect with customers and to support those with dementia to stay safe whilst maintaining their independence.

RESOLVED: Members of the Board completed the following:

- **Agreed the draft priorities and commitments contained in the refreshed Essex, Southend, and Thurrock Dementia Strategy;**
- **Agree the next steps in the development of a Thurrock Implementation/Action Plan.**

8. Virtual items for members' consideration

This item was introduced by the Chair of the Board. Key points included:

- There are two items for members to consider virtually: the LeDeR Annual Report 2019-20 update and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).
- A briefing note and updated LeDeR annual report provided by Rebekah Bailie will be circulated to members shortly.
- Sign-off of the final PNA was previously delegated by the Health and Wellbeing Board to the Director for Public Health and the PNA Steering Group. The final PNA will be circulated virtually to the Health and Wellbeing Board during September before publication, which needs to be completed by 1st October.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to virtually review and comment on the LeDeR Annual Report 2019-20 update and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).

9. Work Plan

Members were encouraged to contract the Board secretariat (Darren Kristiansen and Claire Quinn) in relation to future items for Board's consideration.

The meeting finished at 12:19pm.

CHAIR.....

DATE.....