

**At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2019 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor D. Dixon in the Chair

Councillors Beck, Cunningham, Fletcher, Heron, Johnston, Leadbitter and N. MacKnight.

Also in attendance:-

Mr Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council

Ms Ann Dingwall – Commissioning Manager, Sunderland City Council

Mr David Noon – Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council

The Chairman opened the meeting and introductions were made.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors Davison, McClennan and O'Brien.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2019 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

Item 5 - Managing the Market

Councillor Fletcher made an open declaration as Board member of Sunderland Care and Support.

Item 6 – Formal Response to Making Urgent Care Work Better in Sunderland

Councillors Cunningham, Fletcher, Heron and Johnston made open declarations having voted in favour of a notice of motion considered by Council at its meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018, which opposed 'the intention of Sunderland CCG to downgrade the Urgent Care Services at Houghton-Le-Spring, Bunnyhill and Washington to extended hours GP provision only' and left the meeting during consideration of the item.

## **Managing the Market**

The Executive Director of People Services, submitted a report (copy circulated) providing information relating to the care and support provider market in Sunderland, including the on-going work undertaken by the Commissioning Team with regards to working with and developing a diverse care and support market, and an update on quality and adult safeguarding matters.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ms Ann Dingwall, Commissioning Manager briefed the Committee on the report highlighting how the Commissioning Team engaged with the provider markets as set out at paragraph 3 and addressing questions and comments from Members thereon.

The Chair referred to the sudden closure, without warning, of a care home in early February and praised the work of Ms Dingwall and her team in ensuring that all the residents were transferred and were now thriving. He stated that it was the second time in two years that the council had been faced with such a sudden closure and in both cases the contingency planning had proven to be robust and exemplary. It was pleasing to know that systems had been tested and shown to work. Councillor Heron referred to the previous closure and endorsed the Chair's comments.

Councillor Fletcher referred to appendix 1 regarding the CQC inspection ratings and expressed disappointment at the Donwell House rating in respect of 'Well-led'. She asked if there had been a change of ownership at the home. Ms Dingwall confirmed that there had. The gaps in the table in the appendix indicated that the CQC had not carried out a full inspection and had only focused on 2 out of the 6 categories indicated. She advised Councillor Fletcher that she had confidence that the home was still doing well overall.

Councillor N. McKnight referred to cases where a Home had been deemed inadequate by the CQC and asked if the Local Authority would continue to refer placements to it. Ms Dingwall replied that nothing would be done automatically. The Local Authority would undertake a risk assessment before deciding on a course of action. The decision would be informed holistically. Councillor McKnight further stated that he was aware that the CQC would on average only visit a home on average once every three years. Given this, he asked if the Local Authority undertook a programme of visits in the meantime. Ms Dingwall confirmed that they did. Annual visits of each home were undertaken based around the quality standards framework. In addition each home was subject to quarterly contract monitoring visits in respect of each service that it provided.

Councillor Johnston referred to families with multiple and complex needs as detailed in paragraph 4.6 and asked if these families would be affected by the roll out of universal credit and what mitigating actions would be taken. Ms Dingwall confirmed that they would. Cases would be managed by the welfare benefits service using a pathway approach passing families onto her service if they were unsure if the families could manage without support.

The Chair also referred to families with multiple and complex needs as detailed in paragraph 4.6 and asked if it was possible for the Committee to receive case studies to help illustrate the work of the Service in this particular field. The Chair then

referred to breaches of Regulation 13: (Safeguarding service users from abuse and improper treatment), and asked how the Council became alerted to such issues. Ms Dingwall informed the Committee that the Council had confidence that it knew what abuse looked like and the processes to be followed when it was discovered. The training given to providers in this regard was good and checks were made during visits that staff understood what was expected of them. There was an emphasis placed on reporting concerns being the right thing to do, for example some providers such as Sunderland Care and Support provided a mechanism for staff members to 'whistle blow' anonymously. The Chair asked if this information was collated and if so would it be possible for the Committee to receive anonymised examples.

The Chair referred to the Home that had recently closed as detailed in paragraph 4.1.4 and queried what would happen to the building now. He also asked about the ownership of the building and whether it could re-open as a care home or change its use. Ms Dingwall replied that the building was owned by an independent landlord and the Council was liaising closely with the CQC to monitor whether it deregisters as a care home. If the registration remained active it could reopen however any new providers would undertake their own due diligence given the negative publicity regarding the closure of the home.

There being no further questions or comments for Ms Dingwall the Chair thanked her for her report and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted and that regular updates from the Commissioning Team in relation to the market position, taking into account the above requests for further information, be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee.

## **Annual Report**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) which sought members' approval for the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny aspect of the overall Scrutiny Annual report to be submitted to full Council during June 2019.

(For copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Cummings, Scrutiny Officer having briefed the Committee on the contents of the report, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that approval be given to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee report 2018/19 for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19.

## **Change in the Order of Business**

The Chairman advised that he was proposing to consider items 7 and 8 on the agenda at this juncture to allow members who had declared an interest in item 6 (Urgent Care) to leave thereafter and prior to consideration of the item. This was agreed accordingly.

## **Annual Work Programme 2018/19**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information, the current work programme for the Committee's work to be undertaken during the 2018-19 Council year.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

4. RESOLVED that the current work programme for the Committee's work to be undertaken during the 2018-19 Council year be noted and endorsed and that emerging issues be incorporated into the plan as they arose throughout the year.

## **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 26 February, 2019.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

5. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted

## **Urgent Care**

The Head of Member Support and Community Partnerships submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide feedback to the Committee on the CCG's decision in respect of the future of Urgent Care in Sunderland in order to consider and agree their response.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

In considering their response the Committee was informed that the following options were available to it:-

- o Acknowledge the decision and take no further action.
- o Acknowledge the decision and maintain a monitoring role over a number of the key areas of concern.
- o Referral to the Secretary of State.

Members were advised that that it was important to note that in considering any referral to the Secretary of State the Committee may do so only on certain grounds namely:-

- o It is not satisfied with the adequacy of the content of the consultation;
- o It is not satisfied that sufficient time has been allowed for consultation;
- o It considers that the proposal would not be in the interests of the health service in its area;
- o It has not been consulted, and it is not satisfied that the reasons given for not carrying out consultation are adequate.

The Committee would also need to be clear, in terms of any referral, on what grounds the referral was made and also provide clear evidence to support this action.

The Committee having given consideration to the matter were of the opinion that it did not have sufficient grounds to make a referral to the Secretary of State. It was proposed and subsequently agreed that Mr Cummings in conjunction with the Chair write to the CCG on behalf of the Committee acknowledging the decision and highlighting the Committee's key areas of concern as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report to ensure a monitoring role was maintained through mobilisation and beyond.

Mr Cummings advised that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee would continue to receive regular update reports and these would be highlighted in its future work programme. In addition if any other issues arose, that the committee became aware of, it would also look into those as a matter of course. The importance of this monitoring and challenge was to provide assurances to the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee regarding the service changes and implementation.

With regard to the operation of the NHS 111 Service, Councillor MacKnight advised that he had received anecdotal evidence of patients being sent straight to Pallion rather than their local centre. Councillor Leadbitter confirmed that she had received similar complaints. The Chairman replied that he was to meet with the CCG during the following week to seek assurances regarding the monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of the urgent care proposals moving forward and he would draw this to their attention.

6. RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the CCG on behalf of the Committee acknowledging the CCG's decision regarding Urgent Care and highlighting the Committee's key areas of concern as detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report to ensure a monitoring role is maintained through mobilisation and beyond.

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contributions.

(Signed) D. DIXON,  
Chairman.