

**At a meeting of the HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Committee Room 1 of the CITY HALL, SUNDERLAND on WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2022 at 5:30pm.**

**Present:-**

Councillor N. MacKnight in the Chair

Councillors Burnicle, Haswell, Heron and Potts

**Also in attendance:-**

Dr. Carol Aitken – General Practitioner, Sunderland GP Alliance  
Mr. Mark Cotton – Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement, North East Ambulance Service  
Mr. Nigel Cummings – Scrutiny Officer, Sunderland City Council  
Mr. Philip Foster – Managing Director, All Together Better Alliance  
Ms. Victoria Muller – Operations Manager, Sunderland GP Alliance  
Mr. Jon Ritchie – Executive Director Corporate Services, Sunderland City Council  
Ms. Gillian Robinson – Scrutiny, Mayoral and Members' Support Coordinator, Sunderland City Council  
Mr. Ben Seale – Public Health Lead (Business Management), Sunderland City Council  
Ms. Joanne Stewart – Principal Governance Services Officer, Sunderland City Council  
Ms. Gerry Taylor – Executive Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning, Sunderland City Council

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were given on behalf of Councillors Butler, McDonough, Speding and M. Walker and from Mr. David Chandler, CCG and Ms. Andrea Hetherington, ST&SNHSFT.

**Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2022**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 (copy circulated) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

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

Item 4 – CoVid19 in Sunderland- Update

Councillor MacKnight made an open declaration in the above item as he had a professional interest in the report from the Executive Director of Public Health.

## **CoVid-19 in Sunderland – Update**

The Executive Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group (SCCG) submitted a joint report which provided the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Covid-19 situation, including recovery, in Sunderland.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

The Committee were provided with a comprehensive update and taken through a presentation by Ms. Gerry Taylor, Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning, which set out the latest public health developments in relation to CoVid-19 across the city, including details on:-

- Key facts and figures in relation to the current situation and Sunderland's experience of the pandemic;
- The vaccination programme and possible scenarios;
- The plans for testing after 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2022; and
- The replacement advice for the public and adult social care.

Mr. Philip Foster, Managing Director, All Together Better Alliance and Carol Aitken, General Practitioner, GP Alliance, provided the Committee with joint presentations which gave updates in relation to performance standards; the All Together Better Alliance patient, carer and public survey; and the latest position of the CoVid-19 Vaccination Programme.

Ms. Muller drew particular attention to and thanked Councillor Haswell for the information on where to place the roving clinics to have the greatest impact and be most effective in and around his ward.

(for copy presentations – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Officers for their presentations and invited questions and comments from Members.

Councillor Haswell referred to the changes in CoVid guidance and the removal of Statutory Sick Pay for some workers and asked if the Council were trying to avoid members of staff continuing to work who may have CoVid as a result of this, particularly where contracted providers were operating on behalf of the Council in areas such as Adult Social Care. Ms. Taylor advised that she could not answer on behalf of the providers but she could look into this further and advised that they had provided contact information on their website to signpost people if they were suffering financial difficulty.

In response to a follow up question from Councillor Haswell, Ms. Taylor advised that the letter being sent out to businesses offering advice on the latest guidance had not been circulated yet so she could look to ensure signposts to the website and advice could be included.

Councillor Haswell referred to the long waiting times and asked when it was forecast that a reduction or consistent in the four-hour waiting time would be seen and was informed by Mr. Foster that they were unable to set out a forecast as yet and Sunderland had historically struggled to hit the four hour target. He added that they

were looking to the summer when they may be able to return to previous waiting times but he could not say when with any certainty due to recovery from the pandemic, any future spikes, staff pressures, etc.

Mr. Foster commented that they were aware that there may be a change in the standard being introduced by the Government but they remained focussed on trying to get as near as possible to the current standard. They were also continuing to look at a range of measures to change patient's habits as there were still a large number of patients presenting at the accident and emergency service who could access treatment through other services.

Councillor Heron raised her concerns around long term CoVid which could become more prominent as time went on and also for small children and young babies who may be having trouble with facial recognition; having only grown up around people wearing face masks. Dr. Aitken commented that the issue for young children had been recognised and studies undertaken; with the services involved being very aware of it and what may be needed going forward to help those young children and their parents. She added that many studies will come out over the coming years of the impact the pandemic may have had on babies and young children and added that potentially they may not be aware of some of these impacts for some years to come.

Councillor MacKnight referred to plans for the vaccination programme up to September, 2022 and asked if future vaccinations for CoVid would be looked to be wrapped up with the flu vaccination programme and was informed by Dr. Aitken responded that it would be difficult to answer his question at the moment; although in an ideal world it is what they would want to be aiming for. She commented that there were underlying complexities around it but it was too early to advise the Committee at this time. The Chairman asked if the Committee could be provided with an update as and when more information was available.

In response to a query from Councillor MacKnight regarding how rates were now being recorded given the ceasing of required national reporting, Ms. Taylor explained that they were still receiving data based on PCR and asymptomatic testing; although they were coming to the end of that period so they were trying to look at what would then be available and what rates they could record. Mr. Seale advised that currently they were still receiving a significant volume of LFT results but that by the following week they would see this begin to peter out and the data recorded would not then be comparable.

The Chairman thanked all attendees for their presentations and information provided, and on behalf of the Committee gave thanks to all staff involved, and it was:-

2. RESOLVED that the updates provided within the report and presentations be received and noted.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement of North East Ambulance Service submitted a report which provided an overview of activity and performance for the North East Ambulance Service.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Mark Cotton, Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement, North East Ambulance Service, took Members through the presentation which provided information on the following:-

- 111 phone calls, average time to answer and outcomes;
- The number of 999 phone calls offered and hear and treat rates;
- The average response times to categories 1-4;
- The average time to handover at hospital; including delays; and
- The service vision, mission and goals.

(for copy presentation – see original minutes)

Mr. Cotton also provided the Committee with detailed performance at a trust wide and South Tyneside and Sunderland level for Members' information.

Councillor MacKnight thanked Mr. Cotton for his presentation and invited questions and comments from the Committee.

In response to a question from Councillor Burnicle regarding Sunderland response times trailing those of South Tyneside, Mr. Cotton advised that they had found that demand did not follow a pattern so it was difficult to forecast which areas would require a greater presence. They were talking to the Commissioner around having more resources available in Sunderland which would give a greater flexibility in the future.

In a follow up question Councillor Burnicle commented that he wasn't sure if it was down to the traffic network in Sunderland versus that of South Tyneside and Mr. Cotton advised that this had never been raised as a particular issue; adding that Sunderland also had a larger population than that of South Tyneside so would cause a greater pull on demand.

Councillor MacKnight referred to the 999 calls offered and asked if they were increasing, irrespective of those in relation to the pandemic, and Mr. Cotton advised that there had been a gradual increase; and that this was also the case nationally although at a greater level.

With regard to a query from Councillor Heron around welfare support for ambulance crew members, Mr. Cotton informed the Committee that they had a line manager on duty and available 24-7 and whenever a crew had faced a difficult job they could immediately call upon a critical care manager who could respond and undertake a debrief. He explained that recently they had also introduced a system known as TRIM (Trauma Intervention Risk Management) which was taken from the military and this allowed staff to have a much richer, deeper debrief and helped to support them.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Cotton for his report and presentation and the information provided, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the Committee noted the content of the presentation and performance information provided.

### **Automated External Defibrillators**

The Executive Director of Corporate Services submitted a report which provided an update to the Committee on Automated External Defibrillators (AED's) following a motion agreed at Council on 17 November, 2021.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Jon Ritchie, Executive Director of Corporate Services and Mr. Ben Seale, Public Health Lead, took Members through the report advising that a review of the current provision have been undertaken and setting out the next steps in relation to current AED's in the city; which would be registered once they had been replaced and the widening of the provision in the city, working with partners and Cardio Proof; a local charity who focus on improving survival rates for cardiac arrest in the North East.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their informative presentation and invited questions from the Committee.

Members commented that the AED's were beneficial to have around the city but raised concerns over ensuring that there were people trained to use the devices and that they were being correctly maintained and reset after they had been used.

Councillor Potts asked if they knew if everyone who had an AED was registering them on the national site or if this was an area the Council needed to be encouraging and also commented that it may be helpful to have a link through the Council website to the placement of AED's in and around the city. Mr. Richie advised that the strength of using the circuit network would be that there was consistency, so people could be directed to the location of AED's. He could look to ensure information was provided through the Council website.

In response to a further query from Councillor Potts regarding how long it would take until there was a proposal, Ms. Taylor advised that the draft was almost finalised so it should not take much longer for the proposal to be ready; the implementation plan would follow which would take longer to put in place.

In relation to maintaining the AED's around the city, Mr. Ritchie advised that those that were Council procured would be monitored and maintained but they could not be responsible for others, although the strength of pushing people to register devices was that they would have to have service schedules, etc. They needed to ensure that where funding was raised for devices the groups understood the need for ongoing costs for servicing, etc. which the Council could not agree to take on unless it was agreed that it was a strategic objective and the funding was put in place.

Ms. Taylor advised that as part of the work being undertaken with NEAS and the CCG they could look to provide guidance on good practice with defibrillators so that organisations and charities had an understanding of what was needed when considering purchasing and installing them.

Mr. Cotton advised that when NEAS used an AED it was then taken off the circuit until they were advised that it had been reset and serviced so crews would not be directed to use that device until it was in good, working order. He also advised that the NEAS had a team that could look to provide support and training which people in the community could access.

The Chairman Heron thanked Officers for their very informative report, and it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the information set out within the report be received and noted.

### **Sunderland Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA)**

The Executive Director of Public Health and Integrated Commissioning submitted a report to the Committee on the Sunderland Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA).

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Ben Seale, Public Health Lead (Business Management), took Members through the report advising that the purpose of it was to:-

- Raise awareness of the work undertaken to produce and updated and approved PNA for Sunderland for publication by 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2022;
- Provide an update on the work that has been undertaken by the PNA Steering Group to produce and updated PNA in line with the statutory duty;
- Provide information about the required statutory consultation; planned to run for late March to late May, 2022; and
- Raise awareness of the opportunity for Members of the Committee to comment on the draft statement of PNA during the consultation period.

The Chairman thanked the Mr. Seale for his informative report and invited questions from the Committee.

Councillor Heron raised concerns over there being no out of hours pharmacy in the Coalfields area, and commented that there were out of hours GP's and the Primary Care Centre where if they were provided with a prescription they had to access a pharmacy in Sunderland and a lot of residents may not have the transport to access those sites and Mr. Seale advised that this was an area that they were aware of as the issue had been raised as they had worked through the assessment.

Councillor MacKnight followed up by asking if a deficit was identified in a particular area of the city how it would be addressed and was informed that they would be informed by NHS England if a pharmacy was closing down to be asked to review the PNA to see what the impact was going to be, which would include looking at alternatives and if a gap in essential services was being created. A judgement would be made to decide if it created a market entry requirement and Public Health would give this view back to NHS England.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee noted that there was no access to community pharmacy services within the Coalfields locality during most of the

extended GP hours on weekday evenings and generally on Sundays and weekday evenings. The Committee noted that given the current expansion in terms of new build within the Coalfields area and current travelling distances to the nearest pharmacies this could be an area for further consideration in terms of out of hours provision.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Seale for his report, and it was:-

5. RESOLVED that:-

- The Committee's concerns on the lack of an Out of Hours Pharmacy in the Coalfields area be submitted in relation to the draft statement of PNA arising from the process as detailed in the report;
- The work that had been undertaken so far to produce an updated PNA for Sunderland in line with the Health and Wellbeing Board's statutory duty be noted; and
- The dates for the statutory consultation on the PNA and the opportunity for Members to comment on the PNA be noted.

### **Work Programme 2021/2022**

The Scrutiny, Mayoral and Members' Support Coordinator submitted a report (copy circulated) which attached the current work programme for the year and also provided an update on a number of potential topics, as raised by Members, for the Committee's consideration.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr. Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, presented the report which set out the business that had been considered by the Scrutiny Committee during the municipal year 2021/2022 and also identified items that were to be scheduled for the next municipal year.

Members having considered the report and update, it was:-

6. RESOLVED that the work programme be received and noted.

### **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Strategic Director of People, Communications and 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 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2022.

(for copy report – see original minutes)

Mr Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, having advised that if any further Members wished to receive further information on any of the items contained in the notice they should contact him directly, it was:-

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

The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked everyone for their participation.

(Signed) N. MACKNIGHT,  
Chairman.