

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 3 September 2024

Present: Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)
Councillors N Bayley, J Southworth, A Arif, R Bernstein,
C Birchmore, R Gold, G Marsden, E Moss, T Pilkington and
D Green

Also in attendance: Councillor T Rafiq and Councillor T Tariq (Deputy Leader and
Cabinet Member, Health and Adult Care) Sam McVeigh
(Director of People and Inclusion) Adrian Crook (Director of
Adult Social Care and Community Commissioning) Catherine
King (HR Business Manager)

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: There were no Apologies

OSC.11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

OSC.12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

OSC.13 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

OSC.14 MINUTES

It was agreed that the minutes from 24th July 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Matters arising from the Minutes:

The Head of Governance reported that a Cyber update report is due to be considered at the October meeting of Audit Committee, this report will be shared with Members of the Scrutiny Committee. On receipt if Members would like further information or the matter to be considered at a subsequent meeting, please inform Democratic Services.

The Bury Team training is unable to be held prior to a future Council meeting as all slots have been allocated an alternate date is being sourced.

OSC.15 NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES

During the meeting, Councillor Tariq, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, along with Adrian Crook, the Director of Community Commissioning, provided an update on the Neighbourhood Housing Support Services strategy. The focus of the update was on the division's upcoming tendering exercise for two key contracts: supported accommodation and floating support services. These contracts are part of a broader initiative aimed at offering short-term, outcome-focused interventions for vulnerable adults, helping them build resilience, improve their well-being, and maintain stable housing.

Adrian Crook explained that the procurement process would soon begin and highlighted the increasing demand for such services, particularly for individuals with complex needs. This increase, partly attributed to the cost-of-living crisis, has placed added pressure on tenancy services, prompting the need for more floating support aimed specifically at single-person households.

In response to a question from a member about how the council plans to raise awareness of the services provided by Calico, the officers mentioned ongoing discussions about relaunching communications. A communication plan is set to be developed in consultation with councillors to ensure that the service is well-publicized and reaches those in need. It was further clarified that the locations where Calico will deliver services will be determined by demand, and consultations will guide these decisions.

The financial savings generated from the procurement exercise were also discussed. It was reported that the tender had resulted in a 4.7% saving for the council's general budget. However, as Calico operates as a private company, they are not required to disclose the specifics of their pricing structures, which prompted some questions from the members.

A member inquired about the referral process, specifically whether multi-agency collaboration would be possible for individuals leaving the criminal justice system. The officers responded by emphasizing the partnerships between Calico, Adullam, and public sector agencies, including the criminal justice system. These partnerships are designed to meet the complex needs of service users, particularly those with mental health issues, ensuring that individuals receive the support required to reduce the risk of reoffending.

There was a discussion about the background of Calico and Adullam, with officers highlighting both organizations' strong presence across Greater Manchester and Lancashire. Though they are large regional providers, their operations are rooted in local service provision, and they maintain close connections with the communities they serve.

The meeting also addressed concerns regarding the rise in complex needs among service users, with members noting that this increase may be partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing cost of living challenges. The officers emphasized that health inequalities and life expectancy issues are being examined through initiatives like the Health and Wellbeing Board, and partnerships are being developed to address these concerns more effectively.

When asked about the service's capacity, the officers explained that the supported accommodation service typically supports around 60 people per year, though some individuals stay for shorter or longer periods. The aim is always to work towards securing permanent accommodation for those individuals. It was also noted that referrals to the service can be made directly by anyone, either through the Council's Central Access Point or by contacting Calico directly.

Lastly, there was a brief discussion on how the Council monitors the contracts with service providers. Due to the sensitive nature of these contracts, the Council has specific legal

obligations and conducts regular monitoring. This includes quarterly reviews, though more frequent monitoring can be arranged if needed. The performance of service providers like Calico and Adullam is closely watched to ensure they meet the needs of service users effectively.

In conclusion, the meeting acknowledged the importance of the Neighbourhood Housing Support Services strategy and the role of both Calico and Adullam in delivering vital services to vulnerable individuals.

Councillor Tariq and Adrian Crook were thanked for their report and the detailed discussion that followed.

It was agreed:

- The report be noted

OSC.16 HEALTH AND SAFETY REPORT

Councillor Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, provided an overview of the annual Health and Safety Report, supported by Sam McVeigh, Executive Director of People and Inclusion. The report, produced in accordance with Health and Safety Executive (HSE) best practices, outlines the key health and safety activities from the previous financial year. It also includes a summary of reported incidents, allowing members to comment on the Council's overall approach. Alongside the annual report, the Council's Health and Safety Policy was reviewed and updated, in line with HSE guidelines, and presented for feedback.

Councillor Rafiq highlighted that this year's report also includes a new three-year Health and Safety Strategy for 2024-27, developed in response to recommendations from an external review conducted in 2023. This strategy outlines key priorities for the coming years and was presented for approval by the Council.

In the discussions that followed, Councillor Bernstein raised a question regarding the incidents of violence and aggression against staff, specifically asking how many of these incidents had led to action by Greater Manchester Police (GMP). The report noted that 39 incidents of work-related violence and aggression were reported during the last financial year. Councillor Rafiq emphasized the Council's zero-tolerance policy toward such incidents and explained that, while incidents are always encouraged to be reported to the police where appropriate, not all cases require direct police involvement.

For example, five incidents related to the passenger transport function for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), where the Council's response focused on reviewing risk assessments and improving staff training. However, in 10 cases, police were directly involved, with statements taken and investigations carried out. At least one of these incidents resulted in a formal police caution.

Councillor Bernstein also inquired about whether mechanisms exist to share learning from health and safety incidents. Sam McVeigh responded by confirming that sharing lessons learned from incidents is a critical component of the Council's health and safety systems. Information on incidents and patterns is included in quarterly health and safety reports, which are reviewed by the Senior Leadership Group, Departmental Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs), and the Corporate Health and Safety JCC.

He further elaborated that the learning from incidents informs the Council's management development programs, such as the IOSH Managing Safely course, and is incorporated into

the work of the health and safety team. For example, following the rise in incidents of work-related violence and aggression, the Council updated its guidance and commissioned specialist training in key areas. Additionally, a special health and safety session was recently held for the Council's top 100 leaders, where recent incidents were discussed, and key lessons were shared.

The meeting concluded with members acknowledging the importance of continuous learning from health and safety incidents and the need for proactive measures to ensure staff safety across all Council services.

It was agreed:

- The report be noted

COUNCILLOR D VERNON

Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.10 pm)