

**Minutes of: HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 2 March 2021

**Present:** Councillor S Smith (in the Chair)  
Councillors D Gunther, S Haroon, T Holt, K Hussain, O Kersh,  
B Mortenson, C Tegolo, R Walker and S Walmsley

**Also in attendance:** W Blandamer and L Jones

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

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor J Grimshaw, M Hayes & Councillor A Simpson.

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#### **HSC.001 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence submitted from Councillor J Grimshaw, Councillor M Hayes and Councillor A Simpson (as Cabinet Member).

#### **HSC.002 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

#### **HSC.003 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no pre submitted questions and no Members of the public were in virtual attendance at the meeting.

#### **HSC.004 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 3 December 2020 were submitted for approval.

##### **It was agreed:**

That the minutes be approved as a correct record.

#### **HSC.005 MATTERS ARISING**

In respect of Minute HSC.382, relating to Bereavement Services, Councillor Walker reported that the advice service had now launched in Bury.

#### **HSC.006 COVID UPDATE**

Lesley Jones, Director of Public Health provided the committee with a verbal update and the latest information related to Covid 19.

A presentation was given setting out the latest statistics were provided on the number of deaths and positive cases in the borough along with information on the vaccine programme.

With regard to the factors driving transmission, the presentation identified the following issues:

- Household transmission remains a significant driver of overall numbers. Contact tracing data shows that the vast majority of contacts fall into exposure groups 'household', 'household visitor' or 'visiting family or friends'.
- Care home outbreaks remain a challenge and are an important contributor to case numbers in the over 60s.
- The period when case numbers began to plateau coincided with an increase in cases reporting workplace or educational setting as possible sources of infection.
- Most cases (68%) identified as 'British', with around 10% from Asian backgrounds. The Asian community represents around 7% of the Bury population.
- There is a pattern of slight overrepresentation of areas of higher deprivation.
- Cases are concentrated among people aged 20-59 - accounting for 66.5% of all cases. This may suggest a role for workplace transmission.

An update was provided in respect of vaccination rates which highlighted that 66k first doses had been administered. It was reported that Bury had developed an Action Plan which focussed on the following areas;

- Vaccinations
- Communications and Engagement
- Testing
- Outbreak Management
- Provision of Humanitarian Aid
- Compliance and Enforcement

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee and the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Walmsley highlighted the importance of the Committee examining the issue of mental health in the context of Covid on an ongoing basis.
- With regard to vaccine hesitancy within the South Asian population, Lesley Jones reported on the positive work being undertaken with local GPs and community groups and organisations. Reference was made to the pop up vaccination centre at the Jinnah Centre.
- In response to a question concerning pressure on intensive care units, Will Blandamer explained that the healthcare system had operated well, working in conjunction with a strong community response. It was acknowledged that there were waiting list challenges for delayed elective surgery as a result of Covid. Councillor Walker suggested a future breakdown of people who were unable to get treatment for serious non covid conditions.
- With regard to the issue of long covid, Lesley Jones reported that a local needs assessment had been started in respect of the issue.

- The Chair, Councillor S Smith, highlighted the issue of transmission being driven by those in low paid insecure employment who were reluctant to self isolate.

**It was agreed:**

That the update be noted.

**HSC.007 PERSONA CONTRACT EXTENSION**

The Committee received a report which outlined the proposal to renew the contract between Bury Council and Persona Care and Support Limited from 1st April 2021 for a 10-year tenure until 31st March 2031.

It was noted that an outcome based 10-year contract will set out the status of existing services provided by Persona and will capture our future ambition to innovate service delivery and meet the changing needs of the partners and customers. The benefit of this approach will give the Council, Persona, and our wider partners a more sustainable commissioning platform on which to develop new and innovative services, sustain a quality and committed workforce and allow opportunities for external funding, broader business development and build on community assets, realising social value, which in turn will benefit the customers and the people of Bury.

The contract will also be flexible enough to allow for national policy change which may result in local changes in direction and/or financial restrictions that may be required in response to any such change. The overarching principles in the agreement between partners will minimise any emerging risks and provide reassurance to all parties.

During discussion of this item Councillor Walker commented that the report was fairly vague and lacked detail in respect of the contract.

In response to a question concerning budgetary challenges within Adult Care, Will Blandamer acknowledged the funding issues but highlighted the opportunities to transform how adult social care is delivered to focus on it becoming more person centred. With regard to the issue of prevention it was stated that early intervention was important as a means of keeping residents well and therefore reducing the numbers requiring a stay in institutional care settings.

The Chair, Councillor Smith, highlighted the importance of improving individual care packages which would enable people to remain in their own home.

**It was agreed:**

That the report be noted.

## **HSC.008 FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee was due to be held on 27 April. The date had been arranged prior to the pandemic and had assumed no elections would be taking place. As a result of the postponed 2020 elections, Members agreed that a short meeting should be arranged in early April to provide an update in respect of Covid-19.

### **It was agreed:**

1. That arrangements be made to reschedule the next meeting of the Committee.
2. That issues relating to the effects of Covid on mental health; domestic abuse; hospital staff morale; and learning disability services be considered for retention on the 2021/22 work programme of this committee.

**COUNCILLOR S SMITH**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.20pm)**