

Minutes of the Cabinet

County Hall

Thursday, 25 May 2023, 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Simon Geraghty (Chairman), Cllr Marc Bayliss, Cllr Adrian Hardman, Cllr Marcus Hart (Vice Chairman), Cllr Adam Kent, Cllr Karen May, Cllr Richard Morris, Cllr Tracey Onslow, Cllr Andy Roberts and Cllr Mike Rouse

Also attended:

Cllrs Alastair Adams, Mell Allcott, Peter Griffiths, Matt Jenkins, and Tony Miller were also in attendance.

Available papers

The Members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated); and
- B. The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 (previously circulated).

2151 Apologies and Declarations of Interest (Agenda item 1)

Cllr Richard Morris declared an interest in Agenda item 5 as he had previously sat on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel that had considered the Developer Funded Highways Infrastructure Scrutiny.

2152 Public Participation (Agenda item 2)

None.

2153 Confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting (Agenda item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2154 **Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021-2022 (Agenda item 4)**

Professor Keith Brown, Chairman of the Worcestershire Adult Safeguarding Board introduced the Board's Annual Report for 2021-22. He emphasised the progress made by the Council in the development of the Complex Adult Risk Management (CARM) framework. He had written to two social workers involved to commend them on their working practises which were exemplary as well as to their team leader. The Council was at the forefront of dealing with adults with complex needs.

He added that the Exploitation Strategy was currently out to consultation with the final completion expected shortly. He thanked the Council for the additional resources provided to address the backlog of safeguarding cases. He considered that the peak workloads for adult social care had yet to be reached.

The Board had undertaken a lot of work developing a meaningful approach to the engagement with people with a lived experience. The Board continued to review its policies, particularly to speed up the process of Safeguarding Adults Reviews, which currently took too long and acted as a barrier to learning. The Government had deferred the introduction of the liberty protection safeguards until after the next general election and therefore the Council needed to refer to and fully understand the existing legislation.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care thanked Keith Brown and the Board for their work over the last year and congratulated them for their achievements on such a small budget. In response to the backlog of Section 42 cases identified by the CQC in November 2022, the Council had introduced a rapid improvement plan which provided additional funding and staff. Progress was being made but there remained considerable work to be done. He queried whether the Council's current safeguarding policies were at fault for this backlog. Keith Brown responded that the Council's policies were not at fault, it was just the current circumstances post-pandemic. The Council had quality officers who were providing a good service for the local community.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care queried whether the reported number of Section 42 cases was expected to increase. Keith Brown responded that the cost-of-living was starting to have a real impact on people's mental health and well-being and their ability to cope.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- In response to a query, Keith Brown explained that he had created an animated podcast around the issue of self-neglect and the Executive Function. The Executive Function, the ability of an individual to understand information, was key to determining cases of self-neglect. Bridget Brickley, Safeguarding Adults Board Manager added that the Board had introduced a Self-Neglect Policy which meant that where self-neglect had been identified, that individual would be entitled to adult social care including for example hoarders and rough-sleepers. In addition there had been improved dialogue with officers in mental

health. Keith Brown added that self-neglect was not necessarily intentional but could reflect the situation a person found themselves in.

- The Leader of the Council commented that the report highlighted the breadth of the activities undertaken by the Board which included hoarding and fraud
- The Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being welcomed the work of the Board. The Council would support any action needed to safeguard the elderly members of society
- Criminals were now carrying out high level, audacious and complex fraudulent activities including the use of AI. This represented a challenge to the Council in disseminating information to its residents. It was queried how the Council could address this challenge. Keith Brown responded that the stage had been reached where it was no longer possible to educate or prevent fraud because the criminal activities had become so sophisticated. This issue therefore needed to be addressed at source possibly with the use of AI, but certainly by demanding more action from the Government to improve structures and processes of for example banks and internet providers. The scale and seriousness of the issue needed to be recognised without blaming the victim. He queried how much of this type of fraud also took place within families
- All instances of fraud should be reported to Action Fraud yet the Government indicated that fraud was constantly under-reported. It was therefore not possible to measure the scale of the problem and the resources necessary to address it
- It was queried how the sensitivities around liberty/freedom and issues associated with hoarding and sleeping rough were being addressed. Keith Brown responded that the dilemma was how society responded to the action of an individual which could be construed as an "unwise" decision i.e. whether to take the view that it was the individual's decision so leave them alone or try and understand the reason for their decision and their executive function. A key element was to understand loneliness before addressing any other issues. Many people who had made "unwise" decisions had experienced trauma earlier in their life. Bridget Brickley added that aspects of the understanding the individual had been included in the local Self-Neglect Policy. The combined work of social workers and the voluntary sector had been particularly effective
- The Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being commented that loneliness was being prioritised as part of the Council's Health and Well-being Board Strategy. Asset based community development had an important role in keeping communities connected to prevent social isolation and loneliness
- It was queried how the ongoing work associated with dementia could be used to address loneliness. Keith Brown responded that it was important to work with colleagues in health and stress to them the impact of loneliness on mental health and well-being as well as improve integrated social care
- In response to a query, Keith Brown explained that the online safety bill had been postponed as part of the Government's pause on policy-making until after the next general election.

The Leader of the Council thanked all staff in adult social for their day-to-day work on behalf of the Council.

Cabinet received the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021-2022 and any actions resulting from it.

2155 Developer Funded Highways Infrastructure Scrutiny Report (Agenda item 5)

RESOLVED that consideration of the scrutiny report be deferred to a future Cabinet meeting to allow more opportunity for discussion between the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group together with officers in the development of a response.

2156 Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation Training and Automated External Defibrillators across the County (Agenda item 6)

The Cabinet Member for Health and Well-being introduced the report and commented that a detailed audit had been carried out of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation Training and Automated External Defibrillators across the County with proactive recommendations resulting from it. She thanked Luke Ward, an apprentice in public health for an extensive piece of work he had undertaken on this topic. The audit found good coverage of defibrillators across the county with a high percentage being publicly available. 96% of secondary and middle schools had defibrillators and the Government would provide them to all schools by the end of the academic year. CPR training was part of the curriculum and schools had received information on this. Priority areas had been identified across the county. A dedicated web site would be created as well as other sources of information to promote CPR training and support.

In the ensuing debate, the following points were made:

- The audit work would allow the Council to identify the gaps in AED provision across the county and address them. The great work taking place in the community needed support to improve access. The grant scheme would be of real benefit in this respect
- A key aspect of the scheme was the availability of training in the use of defibrillators including staff and councillors
- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport indicated the possibility of introducing AEDs at bus shelters was being considered. This would be particularly beneficial as many bus shelters were in the more deprived areas of the community where need could be greater. There were operational challenges in terms of electricity and heating but he was optimistic these could be overcome. In particular, the Bus Service Improvement Plan included provision for the creation of “super” shelters which were currently being scoped
- The Leader of the Council emphasised the importance of rolling out training to all staff and members. The Council had a huge reach in

terms of the number of people that could be affected though this training programme

- In relation to the cost of electricity for these appliances, most energy suppliers had a charitable link which allowed parish councils to apply to cover the energy costs for the instalment of AEDs.

Cabinet:

- a) Noted the audit of CPR training and AED availability conducted by the Public Health team and presented within this report (see paragraphs 20-31 of the report);**
- b) Agreed that all WCC staff and elected members are encouraged to undertake online CPR training (see paragraph 32 of the report);**
- c) Agreed the proposed promotional work by Public Health aimed at increasing awareness of CPR training and community located AEDs; to include Public Health providing signposting and support to community organisations in obtaining funding for AEDs (see paragraph 34 of the report); and**
- d) Agreed that Public Health create a grant scheme to assist local organisations to purchase AEDs where alternative sources of funding could not be accessed and where specific criteria are met (see paragraph 37 of the report).**

The meeting ended at 11.10am.

Chairman