

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 28 January 2020

Attendance

Members of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Olivia Birch
Cllr Val Evans (Chair)
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman

In Attendance

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre Cabinet Member Education and Skills
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal Cabinet Member Health
Cllr Linda Leach Cabinet Member Adults

Employees

John Denley	Director of Public Health
Joanne Keatley	Head of Adult Education
Lynsey Kelly	Head of Community Safety
Hannah Pawley	Community Safety Manager
Earl Piggott-Smith	Scrutiny Officer
Lisa Taylor	Head of Service Improvement
David Watts	Director of Adult Services
Helen Winfield	Head of Community Financial Support

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies**
Apologies were received from the following members of the panel:

Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Asha Mattu
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest recorded.

3 **Minutes of previous meeting (12 November 2019)**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

Minute 5 – Adult Social Care Annual Report: The Local Account 2018-19

The panel highlighted ongoing concerns about the lack of data about LGBT+ people in reports generally and also the lack of evidence to show how equalities implications have been considered. A specific reference was made to the progress made by WMP and Wolverhampton CCG to improve the collection of data and include to it in reports for discussion.

David Watts, Director of Adult Services, repeated previous comments to the panel about the work done to encourage people from the LGBT+ community to provide information that will be used to shape the development of services offered. The Director of Adult Services added that there is no legal requirement for residents to provide information requested but they are encouraged and supported to do so. John Denley, Director of Public Health, added that Health and Wellbeing Board held a conference in November 2019 where representatives from a range of organisations representing the LGBT+ community and statutory agencies to discuss issues of concern. The Director of Public Health suggested that a report on work done to progress actions could be presented to the panel in January 2021. The panel agreed to accept this offer.

5 **Proposed changes to charges for non-residential services (report to follow)**

Helen Winfield, Head of Community Financial Support, presented the report and the outlined the background to proposal to extend the current transitional protection, due to end in April 2020, for a further two years. The Head of Community Financial Support detailed the reasons behind suggesting the proposed change and explained why option 3 was considered to be best approach to continuing to support people in receipt of transitional protection and would be the recommendation to Cabinet. The report was presented to SEB for comments and they were also supportive of Option 3 as it would offer the right balance in trying to limit the level of increase and also move people closer towards paying the correctly assessed amount.

The Head of Community Financial Support shared an example of completed financial assessment form to show the impact on people in receipt of non-residential adult social care, when different scenarios in each of the options is applied.

The panel expressed concern that the assessment would not properly consider other costs arising from their illness or disability and therefore limit the opportunity for them to engage in community and social activities. The Head of Community Financial Support advised that Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG), which is protected income in the assessment, is set by Government and is intended to meet the normal living costs of a person and also contribute towards covering the cost of their own care and support.

The Council has discretion to disregard more than standard MIG amount and has set an amount of £12 for disability related expenditure for people of pension credit qualifying age as shown on the financial assessment form.

For people below pension credit qualifying age who have a lower standard MIG, there is an additional amount of £5.04, which can be disregarded.

The Council can take account of other costs which can be disregarded during the financial assessment. A person can also ask for an enhanced financial assessment to consider the actual costs of disability-related expenses if these are higher than the set amounts applied in the basic financial assessment.

The panel welcomed the focus in wanting to protect individuals against unreasonable significant increases after April 2020, if the current support scheme ended.

The panel invited the Head of Community Financial Support to comment on future levels of transitional protection and possible changes to level of Minimum Income Guarantee which will impact on the amount of financial contributions. The Head of Community Financial Support commented that it is expected that the amount may increase in the future as it has not changed for 10 years.

The panel welcomed the report and agreed to support Option 3 as detailed.

Resolved:

1. The panel agreed to support the proposal for continuing transitional protection as detailed in Option 3.
2. The panel supports the recommendation to approve the Cabinet Member for Adult Services to have delegated authority to make further changes to the transitional protection scheme.

6 **Cllr Linda Leach Cabinet Member Adults /Cllr Jasbir Jaspal, Cabinet Member Health (to follow)**

Cllr Linda Leach, Cabinet Member Adults, gave a presentation detailing key priorities of areas within her portfolio and specific issues that she would be focusing on during the year. The Cabinet Member invited panel members to share their views of the priorities listed.

Cllr Jasbir Jaspal, Cabinet Member Health, gave a presentation detailing key public health priorities and key areas of action during the year. The Cabinet Member gave a summary of key achievements and future plans.

The panel thanked the Cabinet Members for their presentations.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the presentations.

7 **Adult Education Service**

Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre, Cabinet Member Education and Skills, introduced the main sections of the report and outlined the key findings. The Cabinet Member

commented on the progress made by the Adult Education Service in meeting its priorities and the plans for the City Learning Quarter.

The Cabinet commented on the work planned to identify people within more prosperous wards where there are pockets of deprivation to encourage and support them to consider adult education learning opportunities.

Joanne Keatley, Head of Adult Education, invited panel members to comment on the strategy document and to share views on future challenges to the service.

The panel welcomed the achievements of the service and the excellent progress made to support adult learners as detailed in the Outcomes for Students section of the report. The panel suggested that more information was needed to understand how the demographic detailed in the report should be interpreted. The panel suggested that comparative data should be included to provide information about the impact of actions to improve basic skills and knowledge of residents. The Head of Adult Services commented on the challenges facing Wolverhampton in closing the performance gap between Wolverhampton and regional and national levels. The Head of Adult Services advised the panel that the demographic data detailed in the report is based on Census data and other sources published over timeframes which make it difficult to show trends over time. The panel wanted more details to show rate of progress and also help identify areas of poor performance where action is needed. The Head of Adult Services agreed to review the presentation of data and consider how to respond to the concern about wanting to see patterns of progress.

The Head of Adult Services commented on the importance of partnership working with community groups to help support adult learners and the success of current initiatives. The panel expressed concern about the equalities implications statement in the report and the lack of information about the work done to support adult learners from the LGBT+ community. The panel added there was a need to show which services are being accessed also to monitor trends and to evidence that their needs are being met. The panel suggested that future report should include a breakdown of different groups and greater efforts to collect data on LGBT+ issues.

The Head of Adult Services advised that there are a number of equalities questions on the enrolment form and people are encouraged to complete the information. The responses are analysed to assess how the service is meeting the needs of underrepresented groups. The Director of Public Health supported the approach of Adult Education and outlined the benefits of working with partners on place-based initiatives to achieve better outcomes. The panel accepted the offer by the Director of Public Health to present a report on place-based initiatives to a future meeting.

The panel queried how the service is linking with the Wolves at Work programme to support adult learners to improve vocational skills and knowledge. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that there were good working relations and commented on a recent example of joint working which was included in evidence given to Ofsted during the recent inspection.

The service has specific performance targets for the unemployed. The Head of Adult Services highlighted examples of work done with residents in nine target wards which is supported by local community groups to give opportunities for residents to learn new skills and knowledge. The Head of Adult Services explained that the

service is engaging positively with members of the third sector to provide support on entry level maths and English courses, with the hope that they will progress to courses offered by Adult Education.

The panel discussed the implications for the provision of adult education as a result of the review commissioned by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) into Community Learning funding. The panel agreed for a report to be presented to a future meeting if any changes to the funding for community learning are being proposed following the review.

The panel welcomed the report and congratulated the Head of Service on the performance of the service and the progress made against the strategy objectives.

Resolved:

1. The Director of Public Health to present a report on place-based approach with partner agencies to improve population outcomes to the panel in 2021.
2. The Head of Adult Services agreed to review the presentation of data to include LGBT+ and also trend data to show patterns of progress against key performance measures in the next annual report.
3. The Head of Adult Services to report on the outcome of the funding review commissioned by WMCA at a future meeting to consider any proposals which may impact on the current budget for community learning.

8 **Blue Badge Scheme - update report**

Lisa Taylor, Head of Service Improvement, introduced the report to the panel and outlined key areas of progress against key performance targets and future plans. The Head of Service briefed the panel about changes introduced to the administration of the Budget Badge service to meet revised guidance published by Department of Transport.

The Head of Service explained the new application and assessment process and the range of improvements introduced which has led to reduce waiting times. The processing time for applications received was reported as continuing to improve as a result of changes made since June 2019 and significant progress has been achieved. The Head of Service commented on work done to process applications made on the hidden disabilities criteria, which was introduced in December 2019. The panel were advised that due to complexity of hidden disability applications the average processing time is longer but was still considered to be satisfactory.

Lisa Powell, Customer Services Team Leader, described a number of different initiatives such as booked appointments, changing how calls for Blue Badge applications had reduced processing time. For example, offering a booked appointment system which gives applicants the opportunity to have their form checked in local venues and there are plans rollout the service to other community venues.

The Customer Services Team Leader added that the changes were aimed at giving people support who may need help to complete their application form. The changes have led to performance improvements in reducing application processing times.

In the future a new payment option system will be offered which is expected to further reduce application processing times by up to 7 days.

The panel queried if employee resources were sufficient to meet the current demands on the service. The Customer Services Team Leader advised that there is three full time permanent dedicated posts dealing with processing applications and two people dealing with telephone enquiries.

The panel asked for details of the shortest and longest times taken to process Blue Badge applications. The Head of Service Improvement agreed to include the information in a future report. The panel agreed to receive a further briefing in 12 months on the performance of the service against key indicators.

The panel welcomed the report and the progress made.

Resolved:

1. The Head of Service Improvement to present a briefing paper on progress against key performance measures for the Blue Badge service to the panel in January 2021.

9

Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy 2020-2023

Lynsey Kelly, Head of Community Safety, introduced Hannah Pawley, Community Safety Manager, and Superintendent Simon Inglis to the panel. The Head of Community Safety presented the report and commented on specific aspects of the strategy document. The Community Safety Manager outlined the process used to agree the overarching priorities to help reduce crime and disorder. The priorities were selected to allow sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging crime trends and performance framework would be monitored by Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board. The Community Safety Manager outlined the aims of draft Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy.

The Head of Community Safety explained that a place-based approach to reducing crime and disorder has been adopted, with a focus on empowering and supporting local community to get involved. The draft is currently being out for public consultation which ends shortly. The panel were encouraged to take part in the consultation. The draft has been shared with Wolverhampton Youth Council and the issue of hidden crimes was identified as a priority.

The panel were invited to comment on the draft strategy. The panel queried the resource implications of the strategy and if there were any concerns. Superintendent Simon Inglis, West Midlands Police, advised the panel that WMP has also adopted a place-based approach to tackling the priorities detailed in the strategy, with a focus on reducing reoffending rates as one of the key priorities. Superintendent Inglis advised that an extra 600 police officers will be recruited across the West Midlands as a result of increased Government funding. The Director of Public Health commented on the importance of partnership working across the different agencies and the added value of engaging members of the local community in helping to deliver the strategy. The panel queried the lack of detail in the strategy about how the concerns about LGBT+ community will be addressed, and work being done to engage them in its development. The panel suggested more work needed to include data about the needs of this group in the report. The Head of Community Safety responded the concerns of the LGBT+ community were included in previous strategy

documents drafts. However, it was estimated that represent about 2% of the population and was decided not to include it in the current strategy. The Director of Public Health agreed to bring a further report on the work done engage with the LGBT+ to a future meeting of the panel.

The panel welcomed the report.

Resolved:

1. Lynsey Kelly, Head of Community Safety, to be consider panel comments on the draft Safer Wolverhampton Strategy and make changes as necessary.
2. The panel support the overarching priorities for the draft Community Safety Strategy 2020-2023 agreed at the consultation event held in June 2019.
3. John Denley, Director of Public Health, to present a report to a future meeting of the panel on work being done to engage with the LGBT+ community and also to address the specific concerns of the panel about the collection of data to inform the draft strategy and policy making generally.

10

Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel 2019 20 - Draft Work Programme

Earl Piggott-Smith, Scrutiny Officer, presented the draft programme for information and comment. The work programme will be updated to reflect other possible topics that could be added as future items.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the report.

The meeting closed at 20.00