



# Buckinghamshire Council

## Health & Adult Social Care Select Committee

### Minutes

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE HEALTH & ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 24 MARCH 2022 IN THE OCULUS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL, GATEHOUSE ROAD, AYLESBURY HP19 8FF, COMMENCING AT 10.05 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.46 PM**

#### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

J MacBean, S Adoh, M Collins, T Green, C Heap, H Mordue, C Poll, G Sandy, R Stuchbury, A Turner, S Morgan, J Wassell and Z McIntosh

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mrs E Wheaton, Ms J McAteer, Cllr A Macpherson, Mr M Begley, Mr A Battye and Ms N Donhou-Morley

#### **Agenda Item**

##### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Birchley, Gomm and Walsh.

##### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Chris Poll declared an interest in item 6 as South Central Ambulance Service were a lapsed client.

##### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

Cllr Julia Wassell added that she had sent her apologies for the last meeting.

The Chairman updated Members on the actions from the last meeting.

- The response to the consultation around healthcare provision in Buckingham would be circulated;
- The Chairman's report around future identification of healthcare need and progression of adequate provision would be circulated for comment over the coming weeks'.

##### **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions for this meeting.

##### **5 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

The Chairman explained that she had received Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust's clinical strategy. She suggested setting up a small group of HASC Members to review the strategy and circulate the response to all HASC Members.

Committee Members were asked to let the Chairman know if they were interested in being part of the working group.

**Action: Committee Members**

## **6 SOUTH CENTRAL AMBULANCE SERVICE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr M Begley, Head of Operations (Aylesbury Vale & Milton Keynes) and Mr A Battye, Head of Operations (South Buckinghamshire & East Berkshire).

During their presentation, they made the following main points.

- South Central Ambulance Service's (SCAS) key areas of work – 999 service, NHS 111, delivering integrated urgent care in partnership with other providers.
- SCAS also offers a range of commercial services – non-emergency patient transport service, logistics, first aid training, the national pandemic flu service as well as resilience and specialist operations.
- SCAS worked in partnership with Air Ambulances, Community First Responders, Co-responders, Student responders and volunteer car drivers.
- Longer-term service changes and developments, initiated in response to Covid-19, had become integrated in the strategic planning cycle.
- The impact of Covid-19 included staff fatigue, mental health pressures, long lasting effects of witnessing upsetting scenes and the feeling of hopeless, particularly at the start of the pandemic.
- SCAS had a clear strategy which promoted an integrated approach and focussed around enabling people to access the right care, first time; saving lives and improving outcomes and supporting people in their own homes.
- Ambulance crews were given iPads to help work smarter.
- The Blue Light hub in Milton Keynes was a great example of having all services under one roof which meant that communities received an enhanced service.
- There were lots of contributory factors which impacted on handover delays, including seeing sicker patients, Hospital capacity and also some patients needed to be seen somewhere else.
- There was recognition of the significant pressure on GPs and how the system was always looking to do things differently.

During the discussion, Members asked the following questions.

- In response to a question about the challenges around recruitment and retention, Mr Battye explained that other areas of the health system were recruiting to similar roles. The south of the county had the highest vacancy rates due, in part, to the high cost of living. He went on to say that the salary was set nationally so people in Buckinghamshire were paid the equivalent to those in York, for example. SCAS was looking to introduce incentives for working in Wycombe or South Bucks. The need for key worker housing was acknowledged.
- In order to bridge some of the current vacancies, private provision was being used but it was recognised that the longer-term plan would be to recruit people to SCAS and to reduce the reliance on private providers.
- Buckinghamshire New University were currently offering a paramedic degree and efforts

were being made to encourage the students to stay in the area on completing their degree. It was noted that it took 5 years to train paramedics.

- A Member asked whether SCAS were still using standby points in places like Princes Risborough. Mr Begley confirmed that, due to increased demand, this policy was not always possible as ambulance crews were responding to calls on a continuous basis. He went on to say that there was a critical care team based in Buckingham.
- In response to a question in relation to the eligibility criteria for the Patient Transfer Service (PTS), Mr Battye explained that the criteria were set within the PTS contract and patients were assessed accordingly. Members commented that a number of voluntary car schemes were available – Community Impact Bucks was specifically mentioned.
- In response to a question about first aid training, Mr Begley confirmed that this was not currently being delivered by SCAS as their focus had to be on delivering core services. It was acknowledged that there were other organisations who provided this training.
- Mr Battye confirmed that the new Wycombe site would be an ambulance only station and not a blue light hub but there would be more meeting space at the new station. He went on to say that the service had received excellent support from the Fire Service and the Military during the Covid pandemic.
- Following the recent CQC inspection which raised concerns in relation to safeguarding, a Member asked for more details on this. Mr Battye responded by saying that whilst no organisation wanted a negative CQC inspection, SCAS welcomed the report and said that in direct response to the findings, SCAS had brought in safeguarding specialists, although he reiterated that no patients were harmed. SCAS were reviewing the report and looking at ways to introduce improvements. An action plan had been developed which was currently being monitored by the Board. The Chairman requested that the Committee had sight of the action plan. Mr Begley and Mr Battye agreed to take this back.

**Action: Mr Begley/Mr Battye**

- In response to a question about the impact of HS2 disruption on ambulance response times, Mr Battye explained that SCAS was represented at HS2 meetings and SCAS had access to a computer system which would re-route the crews to avoid the road delays. Mr Begley added that there was also traffic disruption caused by East/West rail in the North of the County which also impacted on response times.
- A Member asked whether the pressure on primary care services had resulted in more demand on the ambulance service as, particularly elderly patients, might not be able to access their GP and cited a specific example. Mr Battye asked the Member to provide further details after the meeting. The Member asked whether comparative data could be provided showing pre-covid call-outs to a person's home and the current figures.

**Action: Mr Begley/Mr Battye**

- A Member expressed concern about the 111 service and the call waiting times for patients and asked what SCAS was doing to get key public messages out there so people were well informed about where to go. Mr Battye responded by saying that not all calls which came through the 111 service were for SCAS. He went on to say that the Clinical Commissioning Group were responsible for public communications. He provided an example at Wexham Park where there was a primary care unit at the Hospital, run by GPs but he recognised that there was space at the Hospital to provide this. He went on to say that the 111 service had experienced a significant increase in demand and some SCAS staff had been redeployed to help-out. The pressure on 111 was a national problem and there were recruitment challenges at a national level.

The Chairman thanked Mr Begley and Mr Battye for attending the meeting and suggested that some Members might be interested in visiting the SCAS Control Centre in future.

## 7 SUPPORT FOR CARERS

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Angela Macpherson, Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing, Ms Jenny McAteer, Service Director, Quality, Performance and Standards and Ms Natalie Donhou-Morley, Senior Policy Officer (HR & OD).

The Chairman explained that the HASC Select Committee had undertaken an inquiry into what support was available for carers (both young and adult) in 2018 so this item was an opportunity to hear about the progress that had been made and to build on what the Committee had already heard.

During their presentation and in their written report, the following main points were made.

- The Care Act required that all adult carers were entitled to receive an assessment of their care needs which could either be undertaken by the local authority or a commissioned delegated assessor.
- The Local Authority were also required to make sure that carers had access to information, advice and guidance to support them in their role and ensure carers maintain their health and wellbeing. Carers Bucks had been commissioned to deliver this to young and adult carers (funded by the Better Care Fund).
- In order to plan future services, a transformation programme had been approved by the Adults Health and Wellbeing Board to review and improve carers support in Buckinghamshire.
- There were currently around 15,000 registered carers in Buckinghamshire.
- The pandemic had delayed the progress with this transformation programme and it was described as being at the beginning of the journey.
- A number of events were planned across Buckinghamshire to help shape services for carers (Buckingham, Aylesbury, Amersham and Wycombe).
- The aim was to co-design a sustainable, whole system approach for carers which focussed on better quality assessments and a review of short breaks.
- There were currently around 15,000 registered carers.
- A quality assurance framework was now in place which had led to improvements in some areas, for example, carers assessments had been simplified. It was recognised that more needed to be done around access to carer information with the overall aim of creating a "One Stop Shop".
- A new online self-assessment process had been introduced.
- There had been progress with carers contingency plans – this was now part of the social worker management process.
- It was acknowledged that whilst there had been some progress, there was much more work to do around support for carers.

During discussion, Members asked the following questions.

- A Member commented that adult carers could find themselves widowed which meant that they needed other support services, for example, making connections back into the community. Ms McAteer responded that the current offer was not clear and that direct payments were not always the answer. The forthcoming engagement events would explore these issues in more detail so that the future offer could be broadened and provide a more co-ordinated service for carers. The events would also focus on addressing inequalities and exploring tailor-made, local services.
- The Chairman asked whether the service had made links with the primary care social prescribers - a relatively new role which helps people make links with their local

community. The Cabinet Member said she would ensure this was included as part of the transformation programme.

- In response to a question about the community cafes, the Cabinet Member explained that these were in the pilot stage and the day opportunity centres were currently being used to have conversations with carers. A Member suggested that a “mobile café” would be a good idea as some people were unable to travel too far due to their caring responsibilities.
- A Member referred to the Better Care Fund and asked what the funding formula was in terms of allocating the fund between young and adult carers. Ms McAteer said that she would need to take this back and provide more details around funding after the meeting.

**Action: Ms McAteer**

- A Member asked whether there was additional funding to help support the increased numbers of people with dementia and their carers (eg. housing adaptations). The Cabinet Member responded that she would come back with more detail about funding and explained that there was cross-over between some of the projects within the transformation projects.
- A Member asked for clarification in terms of the charts showing the sex and gender of carers contained within the written report. Ms McAteer said that she would come back with clarification on this.

**Action: Ms McAteer**

- A Member referred to page 50 in the written report which stated that the young carers service had sent out requests to all schools in Buckinghamshire offering renewed support and trying to reach new contacts - 10 new schools responded. The Member asked how many schools there were in total as it was difficult to know whether this amounted to good engagement with schools. The Cabinet Member explained that this was a question for the education service area and would need to be directed to them.
- A Member expressed concern about what felt like a fragmented service and the difficulties in moving between the children’s service and the adult’s service and cited the waiting times for autism assessments as an example. The Cabinet Member explained that there was a programme of work around “Preparing for Adulthood” which would pick-up on some of these issues and the aim was to create a more integrated, joined-up service. The Chairman suggested that this was added to the HASC Select Committee work programme.

**Action: Scrutiny Officer to add transitions to the work programme**

- The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council would be looking to appoint a Member Carer Champion.
- A Member expressed concern about the current waiting times for carer assessments and asked whether there was a plan to reduce the waiting times. Ms McAteer explained that she did not have the figures with her but would come back on the current waiting times. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that there had not been as many assessment conversations over the last few months and more work was needed to improve this and to ensure these conversations were of a good quality.

**Action: Ms McAteer**

- A Member asked for more detail around what activities had been commissioned to support both young and adult carers in each local community. The Cabinet Member said that it was early days but more information could be provided at a future meeting.
- A Member said that they were pleased to hear that there was a dementia transformation programme. A Member offered to send details of specific groups in their local area who were supporting people with dementia and their carers to the Cabinet Member.

**Action: Cllr Carol Heap**

- A Member asked about the progress with support for staff who were carers. Ms

Donhou-Morley explained that a staff toolkit would be launched in June which included details on a new “passport” which could be shared with new managers so staff did not have to repeat discussions about their individual circumstances when they moved jobs. The toolkit would be reviewed annually.

- In response to a question about how many managers had attended the virtual training, Ms Donhou-Morley said that only 3 or 4 Managers attended but this would be run again in conjunction with the launch of the toolkit.
- A Member commented that the needs of veterans should be included in the work around carers. The Cabinet Member agreed to speak to the Members on the Armed Forces Champion Board.

**Action: Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing**

The Chairman thanked the presenters for attending the meeting and suggested that an update on the carers transformation project be added to the work programme.

**Action: Scrutiny Officer to add item to work programme**

## **8 HEALTHWATCH BUCKS UPDATE**

Committee Members noted the update from Healthwatch Bucks.

## **9 WORK PROGRAMME**

Committee Members discussed possible items for the next meeting which would, hopefully, include the draft Primary Care Network Inquiry report.

## **10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The proposed dates for future meetings would be agreed at the full council meeting in April 2022.