

**COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 27th November, 2018

Present:-

Councillor P Innes (Chair)

Councillors Borrell
Dyke
Flood

Councillors Sarvent
Niblock

Councillor Bagley ++
Councillor Derbyshire

Mick Blythe, Client Manager ++
Damon Bruce, Customer Centric Services Manager ++
Clare Fowkes, Operational Benefits Manager ++
Brian Offiler, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Ian Waller, Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing +

+ Attended for Minute No. 32
++ Attended for Minute No. 33

**29 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

No declarations of interest were received.

30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L Collins.

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee held on 2 October, 2018 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

32 CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING - PROGRESS REPORT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING DEVELOPMENT

The Assistant Director - Health and Wellbeing presented a report to update Members on the key actions being delivered to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and to address health inequalities in the borough since the previous report to the Scrutiny Committee in May 2018.

The report referred to the positive interventions which the Chesterfield Health and Wellbeing Partnership continued to promote and develop across the borough through close partnership working to enable communities to grow their capacity to deliver positive change.

The Partnership was currently focusing work in the Staveley and Poolsbrook area, which had been identified as being in need of targeted support to tackle social isolation through physical activity.

Following assessments and consultation in Poolsbrook a range of interventions had been started, including junior sport and physical activity sessions, junior art and craft sessions and a weight management programme. A healthy cooking programme would commence in the New Year. Further consultation with the community in Staveley was continuing to direct the most appropriate interventions there.

The report explained the development of Place Alliances across Derbyshire involving commissioners, community services providers, local authorities, primary care, the voluntary and community sector and the public to work together to meet the health and wellbeing needs of local people. The Chesterfield Alliance was now established with the focus of improving health outcomes for the most frail in the community.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following issues were discussed:

- The importance of identifying leaders from within local communities to be able to continue activities beyond the short-term and the difficulty and cost of otherwise bringing in external activity leaders;

- The possibility of all those involved in delivering holiday activity programmes across the borough sharing their experiences to learn from each other;
- Whether the attendance at the summer holiday activities at the Healthy Living Centre had been proportionately lower from Poolsbrook and Middlecroft and from academy schools;
- Patients at Inkersall surgery having to travel to Grangewood if they needed to see a GP.

The Chair suggested the possibility of the Committee considering some of the initiatives in Poolsbrook in greater detail through an appreciative inquiry approach in the New Year.

There were initial indications that usage of foodbanks was continuing to increase, and further detail would be provided to Members of the Committee outside the meeting. It was noted that food was being donated by various suppliers through different groups and schemes, including Fareshare.

The Committee expressed its support for the work being undertaken to improve health and wellbeing and the Chair thanked the Assistant Director - Health and Wellbeing for his contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the ongoing work through the Health and Wellbeing Partnership be supported.
- (2) That the Chair explore with the Assistant Director – Health and Wellbeing the possibility of the Committee considering some of the initiatives in Poolsbrook in greater detail through an appreciative inquiry approach in the New Year.
- (3) That progress on the work to improve health and wellbeing in the borough be considered further by the Committee in March, 2019.

33 **CABINET MEMBER FOR HOMES AND CUSTOMERS - PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIVERSAL CREDIT**

The Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers, the Client Manager, the Customer Centric Services Manager and the Operational Benefits Manager presented a progress report on the implementation of Universal Credit (UC) in Chesterfield since the previous report to the Committee in May, 2018.

The report referred to the continuing work by the benefits team with partners and stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for claimants and the Council. A strong working relationship had been developed with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and this had resulted in the Council and Arvato being identified as a best practice organisation.

Following the introduction of full service UC in Staveley in July, 2018 benefits staff were working closely with staff at Staveley Job Centre, and arrangements to support claimants in the Staveley area appeared to be working well.

The report provided updated statistical information on the implementation of UC, including:

- 12,247 UC notifications from DWP for the assessment of Council tax support since April, 2018;
- 306 Housing Benefit transitional payments to a total value of £45,000 since April, 2018;
- 1,229 Council Tax Support claims live in payment for UC recipients;
- 110 Employment Support Allowance (ESA) claimants had received increased weekly awards with arrears payments totalling £577,328 since November, 2017;
- 157 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) had been made to UC recipients since April, 2018, totalling £81,732.
- Assisted digital support had been provided to 446 customers and budgeting support to 146 customers since November, 2017.

Foodbank vouchers had been issued in 27 cases of budgeting support;

- 672 Council households in receipt of UC were claiming Council Tax Support, with average arrears of £474 for those in arrears (average arrears nationally for UC claimants was £662).

The report referred to the provision of assisted claim support and budgeting support transferring nationally to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) from April, 2019. The benefits team was liaising with Chesterfield CAB regarding this proposed change to seek to address the concern that it may be more difficult to identify claimants in need of support.

The concern that 2019-20 was a 53 week rent year whilst the UC calculation was only based on 52 weeks had been raised with the DWP.

Future challenges for the benefits team in implementing UC were identified in the report, including:

- managed migration being delayed;
- claimants with a severe disability payment in their legacy benefit having to claim Housing Benefit;
- the carer element not being included in UC awards;
- sole occupiers with others named on a tenancy only receiving 50% or less housing costs.

A case study illustrating the complexity and impact of the scheme for the claimant and the benefits team was attached to the report.

Members asked whether it was possible to further increase opportunities for access to IT to enable claimants to keep their online journals updated and whether printed information about where IT access and advice was available could be provided for Members to distribute via their street surgeries.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work being undertaken by the benefits and neighbourhood teams in partnership with voluntary services. The Committee endorsed the approach being taken to identify and resolve individual and systemic problems with the DWP and supported the Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers in considering how best to escalate concerns where necessary.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers, the Client Manager, the Customer Centric Services Manager and the Operational Benefits Manager for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That the ongoing work on implementation of UC and the consideration by the Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers of how to best escalate concerns where necessary be supported.
- (3) That a progress report be submitted to the meeting of the Committee in March, 2019.

34 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS PROGRESS UPDATES

The Chair reported that the Scrutiny Project Group on Council owned community rooms was continuing its work on the review and that it was now expected that the group's report would be presented to the Scrutiny Committee in March, 2019.

RESOLVED -

That the progress report of the Scrutiny Project Group on Council owned community rooms be noted.

35 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered the Scrutiny recommendations monitoring schedule. It was noted that some of the recommendations from the HS2 report would be due to be monitored by the Community, Customer and Organisational Committee.

RESOLVED -

That the Scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

36 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 December, 2018 – 31 March, 2019.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

37 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the list of items included on its work programme for 2018/19.

RESOLVED -

That the work programme be approved and updated to include the decisions of the current meeting.