

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COMMUNITY SELECT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 2 December 2020

Time: 6.00pm

Place: Virtual (via Zoom)

**Present:** Councillors: Sarah Mead (Chair), Margaret Notley (Vice-Chair), Sandra Barr, Stephen Booth, Adrian Brown, Alex Farquharson, John Mead, Claire Parris and Loraine Rossati.

**Start / End Time:** Start Time: 6.00pm  
End Time: 8.10pm

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Liz Harrington.

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 MINUTES - 21 OCTOBER 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Community Select Committee held on 21 October 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### 3 HCC DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH PRESENTATION

The Director of Public Health (Public Health Service - Hertfordshire County Council), Jim McManus, was in attendance at the meeting. He gave an update on the current local position in respect of the Coronavirus and responded to a number of questions from Members on the matter including:

- How was data collated from hospitals and how were the Trusts communicating with the public? The Local Outbreak Board, an officer Board Chaired by the Director of Public Health, was accountable to a Local Member Board which included the eleven Council Leaders across the County along with the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Director's team collected a series of data from a number of sources and published a series of reports including one allowing councils to carry out contract tracing. He advised that Communications was the responsibility of the communications group.
- In relation to walk-in test centres, these were already up and running in some areas with another 4 coming on line shortly. Lateral flow tests were being used by the NHS, in care homes and for the most vulnerable children and young people.
- In relation to Christmas, people should continue to be careful and try to reduce the risk as much as possible. Very limited mixing could happen and although the rules were 3 families being able to mix, people should limit their

social interaction where possible. He advised that enforcement had now been ramped up for people refusing to wear masks and warnings issued to those retailers who had not put measures in place.

- Currently there were only three symptoms of covid warranting a test but these were the most reliable symptoms – loss of taste, loss of smell and a fever.
- In terms of children at school, the evidence was that it was better to keep children in school and the Public Health Team was working with schools currently to ensure that this was as covid secure as possible. The Director was of the view that teachers should be higher up the vaccine priority list than they currently were. He agreed that the mental health concerns and fallout would be greater than envisaged.
- The Director advised that he did not have the figures for the number of people not being able to access other medical treatments since the start of the pandemic. Services had been affected however due to generic public health nurses having been diverted to covid wards.
- The bulk of the severe cases were related to age and pre-existing conditions.
- The Director's advice remained that people should treat everyone else as if they had Covid. People should go shopping at times when it is less busy and if the shop was busy when you arrived, consider returning at a different time.
- Long-covid clinics were beginning to be set up with support groups and pathways being developed.

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for his presentation and responses and asked that the Committee's thanks be passed on to the Director's staff and teams for their hard work on the issue.

It was **RESOLVED** that the update be noted.

#### 4 **PROGRESSING STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY DURING 2020**

Candice Bryan, Health and Sport Strategy Manager, Stevenage Borough Council gave a presentation to the Committee on progressing Stevenage Borough Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy during 2020.

Candice responded to a number of questions and points raised by Members of the Committee including:

- In relation to work on weight management and community kitchen, evidence was that a lot of people did not have the skills and knowledge but a more robust evaluation was now taking place working alongside the university. Candice advised she would come back to the Chair on any information on this issue contained within the Interim report. It was also agreed that the environment/place that people lived in affected health.
- People's levels of anxiety had increased since the beginning of the pandemic, but it was felt that anxiety support messages were non-existent. Candice agreed the need to bring this support and advice to the community rather than them to come to us.
- Candice agreed to find out the details of the activities happening at the St Nicholas Community Centre and advise the ward councillors. Members

should be encouraged to advise Candice of any suggestions for additional ideas for groups or new initiatives.

- Work was on-going on how services could be delivered to those residents who were not on-line.
- In relation to existing walking groups, Candice advised that she was aware of a number of groups and was looking at bringing all the information together in one place.

The Chair thanked Candice for her presentation and her work on the Strategy over the last year.

It was **RESOLVED** that the presentation be noted.

5 **URGENT PART 1 BUSINESS**

None.

6 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Not required.

7 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

None.

**CHAIR**