

Lancashire County Council

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 10th September, 2020 at 2.00 pm - Virtual meeting

Present:

County Councillor Keith Iddon (Chair)

County Councillors

M Green	G Gooch
C Crompton	S Turner
M Parkinson OBE	P Williamson
A Atkinson	

1. Apologies for Absence

County Councillor Williamson replaced County Councillor Driver at this meeting.

County Councillor Iddon took the Chair in County Councillor Driver's absence.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 February 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

CC Crompton pointed out that he had requested updates on various issues at the September CCPI meeting. It was noted however that, due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, update reports were not able to be provided at this stage.

4. Corporate Strategy Monitoring report – Quarter 4 2019/20 Performance Monitoring and Quarter 1 2020/21 Updates

A report was presented by Donna Talbot – Head of Business Intelligence, on Quarter 4 2019/20 Performance Monitoring and Quarter 1 2020/21 Updates.

Appendix 'A' to the report set out Quarter 4 2019/20 monitoring, along with Quarter 1 2020/21 performance updates where available, against the indicators which had been agreed by Cabinet in February 2020.

In addition, summary documents detailing some of the major interventions and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic across Public Health & Wellbeing, Adults and Children's services were set out at Appendix 'B'.

The Cabinet Committee noted the highlights of good performance, and those indicators performing below the desired level as detailed in the report.

Dave Carr - Head of Service, Policy, Information and Commissioning (Start Well), Tony Pounder – Director of Adult Services and Mike Kirby – Director of Strategy and Performance attended the meeting and provided details and updates on their respective service areas.

Specific areas were discussed as follows:

Safety carriageway defects – due to Covid, the usual maintenance programme had been suspended, with the exception of emergency works including some defects as staff had been deployed to other county council services to assist with their emergency plans. The service was now operating normally (within Covid safety guidelines) although the pandemic had affected performance against these targets in the first part of the quarter.

Street lighting fault repair – it was noted that new indicators were in place to separate those faults requiring traffic management arrangements and those not requiring traffic management arrangements, and that these indicators were now more in line with those for highways defects. Details were provided in the report of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on service delivery in this area. Due to the crews staggered working system and one crew tasked with helping to build the Warton BAE morgue facility, delays had been experienced in the LED replacement programme. CC Iddon wished to place on record his thanks to all the Highways Team for all their efforts during the pandemic.

Percentage of children and young people who received targeted early help support from Children and Families Wellbeing Service which successfully met their identified needs – the service had continued to support vulnerable families and had remodelled the service offer to deliver support through 'digital' and 'remote' platforms. Home visits, where necessary, continued to be made in high needs cases, subject to a prior risk assessment being carried out. CC Williamson wished to place on record her thanks to all the staff concerned for continuing to keep in touch with vulnerable families.

Percentage of Looked After Pupils and SEND pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths at KS2 and percentage of Looked After Pupils average Attainment 8 Score at KS4 – lots of work was currently ongoing in relation to educational attainment which linked into the overall model of school improvement. A Team Around the School approach including school partners, school improvement advisers and multi-agency partners were working with schools on this matter. In addition, locality based data was being used to understand what was happening in different areas. Specific work has been done to recognise the impact of Covid and how teaching and learning in schools needs

to change. Evidence based continuing professional development was being delivered for teachers, especially in relation to valuable learners, including blended learning (face to face and distance learning), addressing gaps in vulnerable learners and those who had been out of education settings for a while, support for pupils to re-engage with education, targeted work with schools to better target the Department for Education catch up funding and developing offers around remote learning – training has been provided through the Lancashire Professional Development Service to support schools on how to take this forward. Close working between the School Improvement Team and the Inclusion Team was ongoing to raise the profile of SEND outcomes through headteacher and governing body briefings and via SENCO training. The virtual School Lead and staff were still monitoring Personal Education Plans and working with schools where there were concerns.

The Committee noted that these interventions were welcomed by schools and that they were making a difference. Committee were given assurances about the initiatives in place to improve these figures and it was hoped that these interventions would be reflected in future performance figures.

It was reported that the performance figure for SEND pupils' average Attainment 8 score at KS4 was very positive.

CC Williamson reported that throughout Covid, Lancashire had had a significant number of vulnerable children attending schools and that over 500 of our schools had been open throughout this crisis. CC Williamson stated that Lancashire's figure was significantly higher than in many others areas of the country.

CC Williamson was pleased to inform the Committee that 9 of our looked after children had now graduated from University – CC Williamson had written to all these young people congratulating them on their fantastic achievement.

Percentage of primary and secondary pupils offered one of their top three preferences – good performance in retaining high percentages in these areas was recorded. A query was raised about the 2% year on year difference between primary and secondary school figures. This would be looked into and reported to the next Cabinet Committee meeting in November.

Health Checks – Covid had obviously had a massive impact on these figures with GP surgeries prioritising other activity and being unable to deliver health checks in a Covid-safe way. GP delivery had ceased in February 2020, what was generally the busiest quarter of the year, which resulted in there being a reduction of approximately 8,000 health checks compared to a normal year. Despite this, Lancashire continued to perform well when compared to national figures. As the Public Health Team were currently running a 7 day per week Test and Trace Service, the health checks were not a priority at the moment.

Safeguarding outcomes for adults/older people – although there had been a continued decrease in the proportion of people who had indicated that their safeguarding outcomes had been fully met, it was reported that over 96% of

safeguarding outcomes had been fully/partially achieved. This had primarily been due to a change in processes and the system of recording, which was being reviewed.

It was reported that the county council had been meeting additional Covid costs for private sector care homes. Some private care homes had faced higher levels of under-occupancy, partly due to some reluctance of families to place their relatives in care homes amidst the current pandemic, and partly due to a higher number of deaths. Plans were having to be put in place for this issue and it was being reported at a national level.

For Lancashire County Council care homes, it was reported that occupancy levels were relatively high. County council homes were a very trusted brand and were well established. Lancashire County Council has been recognised nationally for the work being done in care homes and has been seen as a leader in the Covid pandemic.

Use of libraries – current performance was below target due to the closure of all libraries by 23 March 2020. As part of the phased re-opening, the Harris Library and 12 other libraries had re-opened on 27 July, with limited services. Performance data for the number of e-downloads was good – hardware and software had been upgraded for PNET sessions, to enable users to bring their own devices to libraries.

Percentage of young people in employment, education or training – figures had improved for both this and for SEND pupils who were currently in education or training. This was partly due to the amount of work being done to track these young people. Tracking had been significantly better over the past year and the focus was now on vulnerable learners, for which lots of activity was taking place with schools and the Further Education sector.

School exclusions – this figure had improved slightly. However, the Committee were informed this data should be treated with caution, due to lower school attendance during Covid. It was reported that the new way of working with schools in relation to those with challenging behaviours would hopefully make a difference. CC Williamson reported that the county council were committed to addressing the amount of exclusions, and that a report would be presented to October Cabinet on an Alternative Provision Strategy, which would include plans to increase the number of children and young people attending schools.

Percentage of adults with learning disabilities in employment – although this figure had risen since 2018/19, it was still considerably below target and under the national benchmark. The internal deployment of staff to other working areas during the pandemic had impacted on the number of adults with learning disabilities being introduced to a working environment. It was acknowledged, however, that it was important to improve this figure.

Number of Rosebud loans provided to new or existing businesses – Covid had slowed business by putting pressure on both the demand for products and

on the availability of business suppliers to meet orders. Business recovery measures had been put in place but the availability of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and Bounce Back loans had crowded out some potential Rosebud activity. Government funding had been received for Covid recovery and had been put out to Boost, and a series of campaigns had also been run to focus and help businesses. Businesses could contact Boost for help with finance, monitoring, training or structure support. The Committee noted that 6,000 new businesses had been registered in the county, during the last four months.

Number of working days per full time equivalent lost to sickness absence – due to Covid, a series of briefings with managers to look at sickness absence has had to be paused. Mental health remained the top reason for absence and a targeted approach for these absences had been implemented, promoting early intervention for employees in which they were provided with additional sources of support at the earliest opportunity. A split of figures between home and office working would be looked at. As part of the county council's improvement journey, different models of working were being looked at. Positive feedback had been received on working from home and virtual meetings throughout the pandemic and, moving forward to recovery, a managed return to the workplace would be arranged. Tax relief for staff working from home was also currently being looked at.

Public Health and Wellbeing – specific details of the public health response to the Covid pandemic in Lancashire the Director of Public Health was leading on were provided. The Public Health Team were central to the Lancashire Resilience Forum response, supporting the organisation and statutory/Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector partners in delivering interventions, to manage and reduce the impact of the pandemic on communities and individuals in Lancashire.

Details of close working with Public Health England, district councils, health visiting/school nursing, drug and alcohol services, sexual health services, domestic abuse refuge services and the NHS were provided in Appendix 'B'.

There had been a significant rise in the need for domestic violence services; all the refuges had been kept open and a full service continued to be provided. Active engagement with the homeless was continuing, and figures on how many homeless people were living in hotels and on the streets would be looked at once these were available.

The Committee wished to thank Sakthi Karunanithi – Director of Public Health and his team for the update and for all their hard work during the Covid pandemic.

Adult Services

A summary of some of the major interventions carried out to meet the county council's top adult social care priority to ensure the safe and effective delivery of support and care to those who need it during the Covid pandemic, was provided.

These included supporting care homes and other providers, ensuring supplies of Personal, Protective equipment, infection prevention and control, expanding the social care workforce and funding for the social care sector. CC Gooch stated that these interventions were an example of good practice of how things should be done. The Committee noted that Lancashire County Council were doing well in these areas, compared to other local authorities.

The Committee noted that 95% of requests to supply Personal, Protective equipment had been delivered by the next working day, and that more than half had been delivered the same day, as requested.

The county council had committed to provide £7.3m to the social care sector for extra costs due to Covid, to provide support including meeting the extra staffing costs, personal, protective equipment, extended service hours and transport costs. It was reported that the government had been approached in relation to the re-imbursement of these monies.

Education and Children's Services

A detailed explanation of the impact of Covid on Education and Children's Services was provided. A table summarised the impact of Covid on the following Children's Social Care demand indicators:

- Early Help Module contacts
- Referrals
- Assessments started
- Open and closed assessments
- Open Children in Need Plans
- Open Child Protection Plans
- Open Children Looked After figures

It was reported that there had been a notable increase in the number of open Children in Need plans during lockdown, and a decrease in open Child Protection plans. Significant improvements were seen in Children in Need/Child Protection and Children Looked After visits, with reviews being up to date and timeliness of single assessments and health assessments. These improvements were due to the huge efforts of staff being innovative in finding ways to facilitate contact between children and their families.

In addition, a detailed summary of the different social care and education interventions implemented during the pandemic, was provided to Committee.

There had been a big focus on partnership working. Social Workers had risk profiled cases where those in the highest need continued to be seen. Although there had been a big national increase in domestic abuse referrals for children's social care, this had not been the case in Lancashire, due to the production of a large scale campaign, multi-agency response being urgently activated.

It was reported that, during the lockdown period, the response from schools and settings to support vulnerable children and critical workers in Lancashire had been excellent. Prior to the summer break, 610 schools and settings had been open supporting 33,733 children including 2706 vulnerable children and 13,459 key/critical worker's children.

The Committee thanked all staff across the county council for their efforts throughout the Covid pandemic.

Resolved: That the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement note the performance against the indicators set out in Appendix 'A', and the COVID-19 summary document at Appendix 'B'.

5. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

6. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement would be held at 2.00pm on Thursday 26th November 2020.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston