

## PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 SEPTEMBER 2020

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

#### (1) Questions from Maggie Cleary to the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning

- (a) **Could you comment on the many cases of data breach in Southend SEND team. What, who and how has this been rectified?**

Thank you for your questions Ms. Cleary. Over the past twelve months (August 2019 to July 2020) there have been four occasions when through human error information relating to a child with SEND was sent to the wrong recipient. Each incident was investigated by our specialist data protection team in accordance with the Council's procedure and guidance issued by the Information Commissioners Office. No harm to any individual has been identified as a result of the disclosures. Recommendations following an incident have included further data protection training, team discussions about incidents and how they could have been avoided and revised practices to reduce the likelihood of repetition.

- (b) **Who is on the multi-agency team? What is the purpose of this? How will it help SEND children in Southend? How was it co-produced with SEND families?**

As a result of the Government's announcement for schools to reopen for all pupils from 1st September 2020, the Council took the lead in establishing a task and finish group to support schools in welcoming back all pupils. The group was established at pace following the announcement and will stand down when the situation in schools and settings is re-established. The purpose is to provide advice, guidance and support over and above Government guidance and to provide a conduit between schools and wider services, including both reporting back to the Department for Education and lobbying them as and when required. In addition, a media campaign has been launched, working with public health, to assure parents and families as far as we can that it is safe to send their children to school and that school staff are ready to welcome them.

The multi-agency team is made up of officers from the Council in Education, Social Care, Media, Early Years Professionals and Public Health. It also contains a serving Her Majesty's Inspector from OSTED seconded to the local authority to support the return at that time. Critically, it also contains school and setting leaders directly responsible for the return to school from primary, secondary and college settings. Throughout the pandemic, the Council has had very regular communication with all school leaders across the age ranges through regular updates and webinars in order to support them more fully in their task of welcoming back pupils.

The task and finish group is inclusive of all schools and settings and all pupils attending those settings, including those who have SEND and including our special schools. Provision for supporting pupils who have SEND will form part of the risk assessments made by every school and setting to allow them to welcome back learners in a Covid-secure and safe manner. Schools and settings will continue to accommodate their particular needs and concerns as part of the wider return.

**(2) Questions from Peter Marrable to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

- (a) What procedure do Southend-on-Sea Borough Council follow with regards to Social Care Needs Assessments which is a legal requirement under the Care Act 2014. In particular to a Social Care Needs Assessment for a young adult whom has a recognised diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?**

Thank you for your questions Mr. Marrable. In line with Section 6.99 of the Statutory Care Act Guidance, Southend Borough Council has delegated responsibility for carrying out social care assessments to EPUT under their section 75 partnership agreement. This duty ensures that people who are experiencing a mental disorder are provided with a comprehensive social care needs assessment under the Care Act 2014, and enables a holistic response based on both clinical and social care needs. This assessment will aim to identify whether the person meets the eligibility criteria under the Care Act 2014 and if so, how their needs can be best met and supported. For those people who have a recognised diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, EPUT provide an Asperger's Service which covers the South of Essex for individuals above the age of 18 years. This service can be accessed following the person's Care Act assessment if identified as a need. The service provides support and intervention around for example access to work, managing anxiety and low mood, social skills, accessing the community and daily living skills. If the person has substantial difficulty in taking part in the assessment of their needs and they have no suitable support to assist in the assessment process, then they will be offered an advocate to support with their engagement. Once the assessment of need has been completed and if a need for funding for commissioned support has been identified then the assessment will be uploaded to the Southend Borough Council IT system, Liquid Logic for approval by Council.

- (b) What are the thresholds for adult social services to assist someone with a diagnosis of ASD as these are not set out clearly on the council website and thresholds could be seen as unfair as every person diagnosed with an ASD is different and has different needs?**

The legal thresholds for someone with a diagnosis of ASD are the same as for any person who has a need for care and support. Eligibility is not based on diagnosis, it is based on how the individual's needs affect their ability to achieve relevant, desired outcomes and whether as a consequence this has a significant impact on their wellbeing. The eligibility guidance that social workers apply upon assessment is laid out in sections 6.100-6.112 of the Statutory Care Act Guidance (updated 24 June 2020). A copy of the relevant section can be supplied on request.

**(3) Question from David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Children and Learning**

- (a) What activities are there for young children to keep active and off the streets in 2019, 2020?**

Thank you for your question Mr. Webb. Southend is extremely fortunate to have had a breadth of activities provided across the Borough on a universal basis during 2019 by voluntary organisations, faith groups, and uniform groups such as guides, brownies, scouts, air, army and sea cadets.

The Council's Early Help Family Support services including the targeted youth service also offered a variety of free positive activities for young people across Southend during 2019, including more intensive and targeted provision both on a 1-1 and group basis for vulnerable children and young people. Attendance figures for the Targeted Youth Service alone during 2019/20 saw children and young people attending more than 10,400 sessions at our youth based buildings in Shoebury, St Lukes and St Cedds ranging from sport based, art and craft, climbing wall to more structured activities requested by young people themselves (dance, martial arts etc). Further outreach activities took place throughout the year including a summer programme with over 202 young people attending for the whole of August 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic unfortunately necessitated changes to be made but also encouraged us all to 'think outside the box' as to how we could ensure activities could continue in a safe way for our younger generation. The targeted youth service has therefore distributed activity packs to 180 families across the Borough and have offered on-line activities through social media Monday-Friday for the past five months. They are currently running activities across the Borough for the month of August for young people age 8-12 years in Shoebury Park/Southchurch Park/Blenheim Park and Cluny Square Green and undertaking some outreach work on the Woodgrange Estate on a Wednesday evening.

Alongside Essex Police and community safety colleagues, the Council's Adolescent Team are engaging on a daily basis with young people on a detached basis aiming, with young people's input, to put in place some locality specific activities between September and March 2021. As well as working on a one to one basis with young people, the team are also working alongside Active Southend, referring young people to the activities that are taking place across the borough.

Southend YMCA has been commissioned to undertake detached youth work across the Borough via the Violence and Vulnerability Unit to compliment the excellent work our own targeted youth service have been providing for many years and continue to provide, even in these difficult times.

**(4) Question from David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

**(a) What ways has Southend Council put positive advice message to residents to stay safe during the last 6 months of the coronavirus?**

Thank you for your question Mr. Webb. The Council's approach to communications during the COVID-19 pandemic has been focussed on being a trusted source of information for local people, protecting public health and ensuring local people are clear on the changes and impacts on local services.

A coronavirus hub was quickly set up and has evolved and grown as the situation has changed. Key communications and campaigns over the last six months have included:

- Southend Coronavirus Action (SCA) line - driving volunteer sign-up and promotion of the helpline.
- LiveWell booklet - production and distribution of booklet to every home in the Borough, following the production and delivery of a leaflet promoting the SCA helpline.

- ‘Don’t Visit Southend’ - a targeted campaign to deter visitors to the Borough, as part of operational measures such as parking bans and car park closures. This has evolved into the more recent ‘Visit Southend Safely’ campaign which has been delivered in partnership with a variety of stakeholders.
- ‘Don’t Stay, Take It Away’ - countywide campaign to encourage people to take their takeaways home rather than congregating, this was a short campaign run before the government announcements on 10 May 2020.
- ‘Stay Safe, Stay Apart and Think Twice’ - campaigns to urge visitors and residents to take responsibility for maintaining social distancing during easement of the lockdown.
- Promotion of the Good Neighbours scheme.
- Supporting Southend BID and other stakeholders to deliver the ‘Shop Local, Shops Safe’ campaign, alongside the ‘Visit Southend Safely’ campaign to encourage people to plan ahead and visit the area safely and responsibly.
- Working with businesses and the Southend Tourism Partnership to devise and promote the ‘Southend Safe’ kitemark scheme.
- ‘Back to School’ campaign to reassure parents about the measures being put into place for schools to return safely in September.
- Ongoing campaign to prevent and control the spread of coronavirus and promote the key actions people can take, including washing hands regularly, maintaining social distancing and getting tested if they have symptoms.
- Working with Southend Association of Voluntary Services and other stakeholders to develop a community connectors scheme.
- A variety of media and external communication pieces covering the whole scope of the COVID-19 response
- Regular communication with care providers offering advice, guidance and support to enable them to provide care safely.
- Regular communication to staff to ensure they have the most up to date advice and guidance.
- A regular briefing to councillors to keep them informed and up to date to help them communicate effectively with residents of their ward
- Regular communication with businesses (via social media, email and e-newsletters) to make them aware of the various support available and changes in legislation/requirements.

These campaigns and communications have been delivered across a variety of channels, including traditional media such as print and radio, digital platforms such as social media, website, e-communications and bus stop screens, direct methods such as letters and newsletters, and ‘face to face’ methods such as telephone and virtual meetings/seminars.

**(5) Question from Tricia Cowdrey to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care**

- (a) At the People Scrutiny Meeting in March I posed a question on behalf of over 2,050 residents about the agreed public consultation into the downgrading of the Shoeburyness Ambulance station.**

**Cllr Harp and colleagues highlighted the lack of progress regarding any consultation during the last People Scrutiny meeting where an update report from EEAST was submitted.**

**As residents we are very concerned about the impact of any downgrade and are concerned that we are currently reduced to one physical ambulance where the external evaluation, carried out by the ORH on behalf of the Trust, revealed that a minimum of two ambulances were required to be at on site at the ambulance station to support the SS3 area.**

**I would ask the Portfolio Holder for Adult Health and Social Care if he would question the scope of any public consultation to date and highlight for EEAST, if possible, any assistance that Southend Borough Council or Healthwatch Southend may be able to provide to EEAST to support the its facilitation.**

Thank you for your question Ms. Cowdrey. In its response to the concerns raised by the Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2020, the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust advised the Council that it was not currently making any changes to the provision of services in the Shoeburyness area and will not therefore be going out to public consultation on this matter. However, the Trust has indicated that it wishes to ensure that councillors are briefed in order that comments can be given due consideration, and will shortly be releasing its Trust Strategy for the next five years with a communication plan for key stakeholders including the Council. The Strategy has had public and key stakeholders' input and the Trust has confirmed that it recognises that regular communication with local community groups ensures that local communities are involved in the delivery of services.

The Trust has stated that it will keep key stakeholders informed of any changes to service provision and will seek the views of the Council before making any such changes. Although the Trust has currently put on hold any changes at Shoeburyness Ambulance Station until the clinical review is completed, the Council will consider the provision of relevant support and assistance to the Trust alongside Healthwatch Southend to facilitate appropriate consultation and engagement in respect of local service provision, if requested. Whilst any support provided by the Council would principally be through signposting residents to any online surveys and planned events through its website and social media channels, it is important to be aware that such activity must be led and delivered by the Trust.