

## **Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Active Communities**

At 10.00 am on Friday 28th April, 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Cube, George St, Corby NN17 1QG

### **Present:-**

#### Members

Councillor Helen Harrison (Chair)  
Councillor King Lawal  
Councillor John McGhee

Councillor Russell Roberts  
Councillor Geoff Shacklock

#### Officers

David Watts (Executive Director of Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing), Michael Bridge (Consultant Public Health), Shirley Plenderleith (Assistant Director Public Health), Susan Hamilton (Interim Director of Public Health), Pauline Brennan (Democratic Services).

### **9 Chair's Announcements**

None on this occasion.

### **10 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Smith-Haynes and Helen Howell.

### **11 Members' Declarations of Interests**

None on this occasion.

### **12 Minutes of the meetings held on 9th December 2022 and 3rd February 2023**

The minutes of the EAP meetings held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 had been circulated.

**RESOLVED** that: - The minutes of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2023 be approved.

### **13 Drug and Alcohol Services in Northamptonshire**

Chair advised that the EAP were going to be looking at drugs, treatment and recovery services in Northamptonshire and look at how to develop that policy going forward.

There had been a considerable amount of work done in the last year since the Government's new policy on tackling drugs was released. Susan Hamilton, who is interim Director of Public Health, Shirley Plenderleith, Assistant Director of Public Health and Mike Bridges, Public Health Consultant who had been leading on the drugs and alcohol work primarily for North Northamptonshire.

Mike Bridges explained that the set of slides he would be using complimented the paperwork sent out. He took the EAP through each slide briefly explaining there were 3 main contracts with offices in Corby, Wellingborough, and Kettering.

The lead responsibility for commissioning drug and alcohol treatment and support services rest with local authorities. Investment into treatment and support services is through the public health grant. Currently the commissioning for drugs and alcohol treatment and support services is led by the West Northants on behalf of both Northamptonshire Councils with an annual spend of £7.09m.

The new national drug and alcohol strategy was "from harm to hope", this included additional funding for drug and alcohol treatment and recovery systems, from 2023 to 2025, Family Hubs, Youth Offer, Levelling up initiatives, Community Wellbeing Forums to inform and help shape the strategic priorities, Local Area Partnerships to provide better engagement leading to better service design and a National drug and alcohol workforce development programme by Health Education England (HEE) to support retention, quality and capability.

Councillor Harrison asked if the SSMTRG grant was extra grant money on top of what there already was. Mike Bridges explained that recognition had prompted extra budget which would allow enhancement and improvement as well as workforce capacity.

Susan Hamilton (Director of Public Health) confirmed that additional activity had prompted the additional funding and in terms of percentage increase it was considerable. The Assistant Director of Public Health (Shirley Plenderleith) advised that they were looking for a steer from the EAP as to how they would like to move forward.

David Watts asked how this could be twin tracked and move really into that entity of educational approach whilst money was available and because we will not always have money, he had been in local government long enough to know that, secondly it was really about the hard to reach people.

Members expressed concerns about those seeking treatment then drifting back into old ways, the success rate was about 4%, the extra money only brought things back to where they were years ago, we had the organisations in place but no extra money.

Mike Bridges explained that there was a specific criterion on how this grant was spent. It was agreed that if you identify people sooner, if you get that special support earlier, we do have quite a good opportunity here to look at our path and see where we can pick people up in a systematic way across health, social care, and the voluntary

sector.

We need to be designing these services with those groups that are high risk we cannot just make suggestions about what works for them, and that integration approach actually takes time, but we won't get the service side we need unless we can do that.

Mike Bridges took the EAP through a considerable amount of information regarding not only adults with drug and alcohol problems but children who either had issues or lived with parents who had issues. Work needed to be done in schools and businesses to make people understand and to try and assist even those who did not think they had a problem.

Councillor Harrison raised the point that perhaps what was required was that there needed to be a service that embraced both mental health and drug and alcohol abuse rather than having mental health services and drug and alcohol services.

Councillor Marks said that the drugs and alcohol seemed to come first with children due to peer pressure then the mental health issues followed. Mike Bridges outlined 2 possible options subject to discussion at the meeting, he went through the slides showing the advantages and disadvantages of both options and asked the EAP to advise which option was preferred. Members agreed that their preferred option was Option 1.

Option 1: To extend and align prevention, treatment, and recovery service contracts to March 2026 with caveat of contract variations. Contract extension will enable us to do full co-production that we want to do and working with people with experiences, working with families, community engagement, professional networks and helping us shape services that fit, and again, it gives us the ability to align our prevention, treatment, and recovery services as well. All of this would assist in shaping the service going forward. Councillor McGhee had concerns as there were issues, he suggested there should be talks with residents to see what they felt was needed and perhaps a Hotline so that calls could be made anonymously regarding drugs and alcohol issues (It was confirmed that the police operate a system for reporting concerns).

Joint Commissioning was also important, this was not something that was being done. One other concern was that those who had gone into rehab were coming back out and straight back to the same place, this was not acceptable, these people needed to have somewhere to go away from the problems they had previously. Discussion was had regarding Voluntary Services, they needed to be recognised, they had good local knowledge. There was a need to know how responsive referrals would be, how progress would be sustained and support with work and housing.

**ACTION:** Mike Bridges advised that the service was quite responsive, and he would provide more detail on that.

**ACTION:** A request to bring back information on County Lines was made.

**ACTION:** Regular updates and place on Forward Plan.

David Watts explained that this was to focus on areas and bring in Assistant Directors to outline what work was being done, these would not be completed articles, it was to allow the EAP to provide feedback on what was wanted.

Councillor Harrison suggested one item per meeting be presented so that a good discussion could be had. There would be one meeting per year that brought the smaller items for discussion.

Shirley Plenderleith said that this session had been really helpful.

**15 Forward Plan**

Forward Plan would be populated by both Chairs and David Watts.

**16 Terms of Reference**

This would be included on the next Agenda.

**17 Close of Meeting**

Meeting closed at 11:55am.

---

Chair

---

Date

The meeting closed at 11.55 am