

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Health & Wellbeing and Vulnerable People

Held at 9.30 am on Friday 1st July, 2022 in the Members' Room, Corby Cube, Corby, NN17 1QG

Present:-

Members

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

Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Chris Smith-Haynes

Officers

John Ashton	Interim Director of Public Health
Carly Hohn	Housing Solutions Manager
Victoria Ononeze	Consultant in Public Health
Henna Parmar Raj Sohal	Public Health Officer Democratic Services Officer
David Watts	Executive Director – Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Hazel Webb	Community Services Manager

Also in attendance – Councillor Matt Binley

1 Chair's Announcements

The Chair opened the meeting at 09:30 am and welcomed members and officers to the meeting.

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Russell Roberts.

3 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8 April 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2022 had been circulated with the agenda papers.

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2022 be approved.

5 Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy (2022 - 2025)

The EAP considered a report by The Interim Director of Public Health, which outlined the Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-25.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried whether officers held a view concerning the effectiveness of mental health first aid training in suicide prevention strategy.
- Members queried what officers considered to be the most significant driving factors behind cases of suicide.
- Members queried how certain groups were identified as more high-risk than others.
- One member requested that work be carried out to analyse suicide rates among those residing in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Members queried how the local authority was working with central government to police social media, to prevent cyberbullying and malicious online use as driving factors behind suicide.
- One member questioned how accidental deaths arising from self-harm were differentiated from cases of intentional suicide.

In response, the Public Health Officer clarified that:

- A significant factor in suicide prevention was awareness therefore, the local authority sought to roll out greater mental health first aid training for frontline staff.
- Multiple factors such as substance misuse and relationship breakdown were significant driving factors behind cases of suicide, particularly among middle-aged males.
- While some groups were more easily identifiable as high-risk, others were not. Therefore, officers recognised that substantial work would need to be carried out in order to ensure detailed training could be delivered, for people to pick up on identifying factors. North Northamptonshire Council's audit would ultimately identify priority groups of concern.

- The local authority would provide support educational packs around social media and suicide, to raise awareness among young people in particular. Training and research around self-harm and accidental suicide would also be increased to promote up-to-date awareness.

The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing clarified that:

- There also existed an economic cost of suicide. The average cost for this was £1.7M (disruption to motorways, railways etc).

RESOLVED that:

The Northamptonshire Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-25 be approved.

6 Homes for Ukraine Programme

The EAP considered a report by The Community Services Manager, which outlined North Northamptonshire Council's proposed use of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Local Authority Funding to support families to rebuild their lives and to integrate into communities in North Northamptonshire.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried how long background checks for sponsors took.
- Members queried whether hosts would be able to continue to host sponsors following the initial six-month period and what other future planning was in place, to ensure sponsors would be matched to jobs and provided with opportunities.
- One member posited that it would be essential for the local authority to work with the voluntary sector.
- Members queried how closely the local authority was working with the Northamptonshire Children's Trust (NCT), to ensure that children would not get lost in the system.
- Regarding recruitment proposals, members queried whether recruitment would be carried out internally, with existing employees being seconded to vacant positions. Members also questioned whether these appointments would be fixed term or permanent and suggested utilising agency staff short-term, to ensure there would not be a lack of capacity during the recruitment process.

In response, the Community Services Manager clarified that:

- When the Homes for Ukraine programme was initially introduced, the government allowed hosts to take in guests as background checks were processed, due to the high volume of people arriving in the UK. The local authority aimed to send housing officers out to visit homes within 5-10 days. DBS checks could take longer, depending on whether hosts applied online. Other checks were carried out fairly quickly.

- There existed various options for hosts and sponsors at the six-month mark. Government guidance ensured that hosts would be required to give sponsors two months' notice before stays would come to an end. Should hosts not wish to extend past six months, the local authority would rematch sponsors to new hosts however, officers were mindful that guests should be kept in the same area if they were to find jobs or begin schooling.
- At the time of meeting, there were no unaccompanied children in North Northamptonshire. Nevertheless, these applications were in the system and officers anticipated unaccompanied children to arrive imminently. The Community Services Manager assured members that officers would work closely with colleagues in the NCT to ensure that checks and follow-ups would be managed appropriately.
- Recruitment would be carried out both internally and externally, with an emphasised search externally for more specialised roles. While agency staff would be utilised initially, so as to not reduce capacity within service, employees would primarily be provided with fixed term contracts of three years. The Community Services Manager maintained that lengthy fixed term contracts would give employees surety in rules and ensure that the right candidates would be recruited to the local authority.

RESOLVED that:

The Council's proposed use of the Government's Homes for Ukraine Local Authority Funding be approved.

7 Rough Sleeping Initiative Programme 2022 - 2025

The EAP considered a report by The Housing Solutions Manager, which outlined the Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 (RSI5) grant award.

During discussion, the principal points were noted:

- Members queried which council-owned properties could be utilised as temporary accommodation for rough sleepers.
- One member suggested that when accommodation was provided for rough sleepers, the local authority should maintain a duty of care to ensure that housing be managed properly and that the consumption of drugs and alcohol would not be permitted.
- Another member questioned whether North Northamptonshire Council intended to acquire St Jude's in Kettering, as potential accommodation for rough sleepers, since the legacy authority had attempted to purchase the property, prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In response, The Housing Solutions Manager clarified that:

- There existed a variety of schemes for the temporary housing of rough sleepers. The local authority had received capital funding through the government's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Scheme and expected the acquisition of ten additional units to be completed by the end of 2022. North

Northamptonshire Council also maintained a general fund acquisition portfolio in Kettering and Wellingborough.

- Officers also felt that it was vital to ensure that any rough sleepers' opportunity to settle would be stable and sustainable.
- The local authority had explored the possibility of acquiring St Jude's however, the private landlord/owner of the property had no intention of selling.
- Regarding the armed forces covenant, homelessness legislation reflected the priority to support former members of the armed forces and North Northamptonshire Council was fully compliant in this area.

RESOLVED that:

The programme to deliver the activities detailed in the original Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 funding bid be approved.

8 Forward Plan of Executive Items

The Panel received the Executive Forward Plan covering the period 1 July 2022 to 31 October 2022.

RESOLVED that:

It was agreed that the Executive Forward Plan of items be noted.

9 Work Programme

Members reviewed the forward list of items for future consideration by the Panel.

RESOLVED that:

It was agreed that the work programme of the Health & Wellbeing and Vulnerable People EAP be noted.

10 Updates and Alerts

The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing explained that officers would provide further updates regarding Afghan resettlement at future meetings of the EAP.

The Executive Director also suggested that Panel members should consider looking at integrated care systems, since 47 integrated care systems were launched nationally on the 1st July.

RESOLVED that:

The updates be noted.

11 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified