

**MINUTES OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 5  
NOVEMBER 2015**

**Present:**

Councillor Benson (in the Chair)

Councillors

Critchley	Hutton	Scott
Humphreys	O'Hara	Stansfield

Mr Fred Kershaw, Co-opted Member

**In Attendance:**

Mrs Carmel McKeogh, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mrs Delyth Curtis, Director of People  
Mr Carl Baker, Deputy Director of People (Children's Services)  
Ms Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People (Adult Services)  
Ms Amanda Hatton, Deputy Director Early Help and Social Care  
Ms Val Raynor, Head of Commissioning  
Mr Tim Bennett, Director of Finance, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust  
Mr David Sanders, Independent Chairman of Blackpool Safeguarding Children's Board  
Mrs Claire Powell, Healthwatch  
Mrs Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance  
Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary for Resilient Communities  
Councillor Eddie Collett, Cabinet Member for Health Inequalities and Adult Safeguarding  
Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Development

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Kath Benson declared a and prejudicial interest in Item 9 'Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust – Financial Deficit and Impact Upon Quality of Care', the nature of the interest that she was an employee of Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust.

**2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record.

**3 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

The Committee noted that there were no applications for public speaking on this occasion.

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### **4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS**

The Committee considered the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions taken within the portfolio of the Cabinet Secretary since the last meeting. It was noted that only one decision had been taken in this period, PH52/2015 'Blackpool Challenge Board'. The decision had agreed the terms of reference of the Challenge Board and the Committee noted that detail of the progress of the Challenge Board was included within Item 6 'Children's Services Improvement Report'.

### **5 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the items contained within the Forward Plan, November 2015 – February 2016, relating to the portfolio of the Cabinet Secretary, and requested further information regarding the proposed implementation of a Milk Fluoridation Scheme in primary schools in Blackpool.

Councillor Collett, Cabinet Member for Health Inequalities and Adult Safeguarding advised that a decision regarding a Milk Fluoridation Scheme had initially been planned approximately two years ago, however, Public Health England had issued guidance prompting further research, which had delayed the decision. He added that there was no fluoride in the water in Blackpool and that parents would be able to opt children out of the scheme.

The Committee queried the cost implications of the scheme and was advised that they were not yet known and would be fully investigated prior to any decision being taken.

### **6 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT REPORT**

Mrs Del Curtis, Director of People presented the Children's Services Improvement Report to the Committee and advised that no Ofsted inspections of schools had taken place since the previous meeting. She added that the current number of children in care was 438 and that there had been an increase in the number of complex cases. The Committee also noted the Corporate Parent Conference scheduled to take place on 9 December 2015.

The Committee queried when the Improvement Plan, to which Blackpool Challenge Board was working, would be completed. Mr Baker, Deputy Director of People advised that a draft was available on the Council's website and a finalised plan would be approved by the Board on 1 December 2015. Members further queried whether all schools would be signed up to the Blackpool Challenge 'pledge' within a reasonable timescale. Mr Baker highlighted the complexities surrounding all schools agreeing to the same targets and advised that each school would also work to a set of bespoke targets included within the 'pledge'.

Members discussed the difficulty for some children of the transition between primary and secondary schools for some children and noted the ongoing work around this issue.

The Committee sought assurance that measures had been put in place following the

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safeguarding concerns that had triggered the Ofsted inspection of Highfield Humanities College. Mrs Curtis advised that work had been undertaken with the school to ensure the safeguarding issues were addressed. Further assurance was sought regarding the sponsor chosen by Highfield, Tauheedul Education Trust (TET), following recent negative media reports. The Committee was informed that TET had an excellent track record working with schools in deprived areas, with schools sponsored by TET amongst the highest performing in the country. Additionally, the Department for Education had formally communicated that Highfield would remain a community school.

Members discussed child protection audit activity and the high number of children currently in care. It was reported that audits had demonstrated that children had been appropriately taken into care and that many had very complex needs.

The CP-IS Project was discussed and it was reported that the project would allow data to be shared between the NHS and Children's Services, which included the Awaken Team, in relation to children who attended emergency settings who were either in care or subject to child protection plans. The Committee considered that this project should also include the walk-in centre, but was informed that there were no current plans to do so.

The Committee was advised that all children displaced by the closure of the two Council owned nurseries had found a new setting and that two requests for financial support for transport had been approved. Members queried when the projects to be provided by Better Start in the nurseries would commence and it was noted that some services had already started.

Members discussed the work of the Youth Offending Team and noted that a key priority was to wrap services around the young person and provide a single point of access. In response to questioning, Ms Hatton, Deputy Director Early Help and Social Care advised that the re-offending rate had reduced and that the level of contact with a young person was dependent on the level of need. She added that provision included targeting young people on the edge of risky behaviour and completion of Personal Education Plans. The Committee considered that children and young people who were not in education, training or work could be more prone to reoffending.

The Committee expressed concern that the number of calls to the Emergency Duty Team had risen by 100% and was advised that further work was required to identify the reason for the increase and any trends that there may be.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive additional information at the next meeting of the Committee on the Transition Pilot Scheme based at South Shore Academy.
2. That an update on the progress of the Blackpool Challenge Board Sub Groups be included in the report to the next Committee meeting.
3. To receive additional information regarding results of the audit of children placed on a Child Protection Plan for a second time at the next meeting.
4. That the percentage of transience of children in care be circulated outside of the

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meeting.

5. To receive a case study at the next meeting highlighting the complexity of issues surrounding children in care.
6. To receive an overview of the work of Better Start, including priorities and targets, within the next Children's Services Improvement report.
7. That updates regarding the Emergency Duty Team continue to be included within the improvement report to allow the Committee to actively monitor concerns surrounding the 100% increase in calls.

**7 BLACKPOOL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

Mr David Sanders, Independent Chairman of Blackpool Children's Safeguarding Board presented the Annual Report to the Committee and highlighted the priorities and progress against the priorities of the Board for 2014/2015. He advised that he had not been in post for the duration of the 2014/2015 year and considered that the priorities were not as strong as required.

Mr Sanders advised the Committee that the Improvement Notice issued by Ofsted had been lifted and added that a key focus of the Board was to improve data collection. It was considered that in order to provide assurance, the Board needed to understand trends and make comparisons nationally. Mr Sanders reported that additional key priorities for the Board in 2015/2016 included Thresholds, Getting It Right, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, neglect and Early Help and that there would be a continued emphasis on Child Sexual Exploitation. He added that ensuring the voice of the child was heard was also a high priority and that a working group had been established to further this work.

Members queried the number of staff who had attended the safeguarding training offer and Mr Sanders agreed that the numbers had not been high. He advised that a full time trainer had been appointed to significantly increase the number of people attending. He added that Child Sexual Exploitation training had not been included in the figures.

The Committee discussed the excellent uptake of Child Sexual Exploitation training, in particular amongst taxi drivers, and Mr Sanders advised that work with the licensing trade including taxi drivers and the hotel industry was included within the Board's business plan for 2015/2016.

In response to a question, Mr Sanders advised that he considered the relationship between the Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee and the Blackpool Children's Safeguarding Board to be very important and suggested that, in addition to continuing to present the annual report to Committee, the Committee was also consulted in the production of the Business Plan in February 2016.

The Committee agreed to receive a report in February 2016 to allow scrutiny of the Business Plan of the Blackpool Children's Safeguarding Board.

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### **8 PROMOTING THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS**

Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Development advised the Committee that she aimed to increase the number of volunteers in order to build a more sustainable community. She added that there were various projects ongoing and that it was a key aim to benefit the volunteer by assisting with development in order to help the volunteer re-enter employment.

The Committee considered that the approach to volunteers differed substantially across different services and noted that this was often related to what role the volunteer was undertaking. It was reported that whilst some roles offered through Adult Social Care required DBS checks, others such as Friends of Parks associations required very little to participate.

Members raised concerns that there was no central database for details of all volunteers and Councillor Kirkland agreed that improved coordination was required and would be taken as an action going forward. It was also noted that 'recruitment processes' varied substantially across different services and that a policy would be developed to provide a more consistent approach, whilst still allowing for the flexibility that different services required.

In response to a question, Councillor Kirkland advised that consideration was also being given to celebration events for volunteers and reported that the Volunteers Centre and Adult Social Care already held events for volunteers.

The Committee agreed to receive a report in 12 months in order to monitor the developments that had been made, in particular relation to a central database for volunteers, a policy for recruitment and a potential corporate celebration event.

### **9 BLACKPOOL TEACHING HOSPITALS TRUST - FINANCIAL DEFICIT AND IMPACT UPON QUALITY OF CARE**

Councillor Kath Benson, who had declared a prejudicial interest in the item, left the room for the duration of its consideration. Councillor Andrew Stansfield was in the Chair.

Mr Tim Bennett, Director of Finance, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust advised that the Trust had a significant financial challenge that was not unique with 78 out of 83 foundation trusts' facing a financial deficit. He highlighted the key reasons for the deficit as the use of agency staff, the cost of pay awards and the increasing costs of clinical negligence.

Members queried the action the Trust would take in order to reduce the use of agency staff and increase recruitment and retention of NHS staff. Mr Bennett advised that agencies could charge a premium as demand for services exceeded supply of staff. To alleviate this pressure, a national policy had been put in place that would commence in 2016 and would limit the amount agency staff could be paid to 25% more than an NHS wage. That, in

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addition to the benefits of working for the NHS such as sick pay, annual leave and a pension, would hopefully have a positive impact on the retention of staff. Mr Bennett added that the Trust was also being innovative in its approach to recruitment and retention by seeking employees from outside of the UK and considering how to promote a better work life balance for current employees.

In response to further questions, Mr Bennett advised that the key reasons for employees' leaving the Trust had been identified as retirement and a desire to work more flexibly. He added that the NHS needed to be able to respond to agencies who could offer staff a working pattern that they could control.

Mr Bennett advised that the Trust was also aiming to reduce the length of stay in hospital and that Blackpool Teaching Hospitals Trust recorded a length of stay up to one and a half days longer than other trusts. He added that the Trust was hoping to achieve a reduction in length of stay through streamlining processes and ensuring patients were given an expected date of discharge upon admission, as that was proven to reduce length of stay.

In response to further questioning, Mr Bennett advised that the significant increase in the cost of clinical negligence was not due to an increase in claims, but a national policy to discontinue the 'no claims discount' previously awarded to Trusts with lower claims for negligence.

The Committee queried if the Trust had produced a plan for financial recovery that would allow Members to understand the key targets of the Trust and how it was meeting those targets. Mr Bennett agreed that he would present the recovery plan to a future Committee meeting in addition to the strategy that had also been developed.

The Committee agreed to add consideration of the financial recovery plan and strategy to the Workplan.

### **10 ADULT SERVICES OVERVIEW REPORT**

Ms Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services presented the Adult Services Overview Report and highlighted that Deprivation of Liberty Applications would be a consistent feature of reporting due to the statutory requirement to hold reviews within timescales.

It was noted that, at the previous meeting, the Committee had requested additional information regarding how feedback of services was sought. Members considered the additional information and noted that other organisations' published a selection of feedback on their website to inform the public of views of services and requested that something similar be considered for Adults Services.

The Committee discussed the safeguarding alert data from the previous quarter and noted that from the next quarter new categories of Modern Slavery and Adult Sexual Exploitation had been introduced. Ms Smith advised that it was likely that incidents in these two new categories would be recorded.

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In response to a question, Councillor Collett advised that his current concerns in relation to safeguarding adults included 'care at home' incidents. The Committee requested that additional focus be placed on safeguarding for adults cared for at home within the next report to Committee, including detail of trends and key issues. The Committee raised additional concerns relating to persons with dementia and other challenging conditions being cared for at home and the need to ensure carers were provided with the support required.

The Committee agreed:

1. To request that publishing a selection of feedback on the website be considered.
2. To receive the 'Pink Book', the Adult Services' Quarter 2 Performance Information when it was finalised.
3. That further information regarding the uptake of personal health budgets be included in the next report to Committee.
4. To receive additional information relating to safeguarding concerns of adults cared for at home including identification of any trends and the support offered to carers.

### **11 THEMATIC DISCUSSION: DEMENTIA CARE**

The Committee considered the thematic discussion paper on dementia care and requested further information regarding the work to deliver Dementia Friends sessions to the local community. Ms Val Raynor, Head of Commissioning advised that work was ongoing with bus drivers, taxi drivers and pharmacists, amongst other businesses, to recruit local people to become dementia 'friends'.

Members discussed the training on offer to nursing home staff, care at home staff, Councillors and other Council employees and it was reported that training would be ongoing due to staff turnover. It was noted that the training offer was well respected and had been requested by partners including Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service. Councillor Cain expressed concern that a recent training session for Members had been cancelled due to lack of interest and the Committee considered that it was essential that Members received training on dementia.

In response to questioning Ms Raynor advised that services were flexible and could adapt when younger people were diagnosed with dementia and described a case study to demonstrate when and how services could adapt. It was noted that there was still a gap in service provision for younger people with dementia and that the issue was being addressed through the Dementia Services Forum.

The Committee discussed the importance of early diagnosis and the ability of people to interpret the symptoms correctly in order to slow the progression of the disease through early use of medication.

The Committee recommended that all Councillors be requested to attend dementia awareness training.

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**12 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN**

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager presented the Scrutiny Workplan report to the Committee and highlighted the Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations table, which would be appended to every Scrutiny Workplan report going forward.

The Committee agreed:

1. To approve the Scrutiny Workplan subject to the inclusion of the additional reports requested previously in the meeting.
2. To note the Monitoring the Implementation of Recommendations table and the briefing note on the Uptake of Immunisations.

**13 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 12 November 2015 commencing at 6pm in the Council Chamber.

**Chairman**

(The meeting ended at 8.45 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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