

CABINET SECRETARY (RESILIENT COMMUNITIES) – COUNCILLOR GRAHAM CAIN

The Resilient Communities area covers my portfolio and those of:

- Councillor Kathryn Benson (Schools and Learning)
- Councillor Amy Cross (Adult Services and Health), and
- Councillor Maria Kirkland (Third Sector Engagement and Leisure Services).

The full details of the portfolio areas can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Your-Council/Your-councillors/Executive-members.aspx>

Corporate Issues

Inspection Outcomes: Youth Offending Team and Children's Services

Members will no doubt be aware that since our last meeting we have had inspection visits from Ofsted and Her Majesty's Probation Service. In both service areas, our practice was deemed inadequate. Improvement plans are in progress. Given the very recent release of reports, I have been unable to provide further detailed information in this Council report. However, I will be supplying more detail via a verbal report at the meeting.

Demand Management

We continue to experience high demand across all our children's services. At the same time, I am pleased to report that our overall direction of travel shows that demand continues to decrease steadily. Crucial to this has been productive discussions and challenge with our partners through our Improvement Board. The Improvement Board has recognised the need to address demand for services in Blackpool and we fully acknowledge that further work is necessary over the coming year to support and embed improvement. Our strategy continues to be about building resilience within our communities and where it is safe to do so, enabling children to remain within their families with the right support.

Our numbers of children becoming looked after remains lower than in previous years and work is ongoing in relation to discharge from care. The number of children currently in our care as of mid-January 2019 is 562.

School Improvement

I am pleased to announce that St John Vianney Catholic Primary School has been selected as one of the 32 new English Hubs in England. English Hub Schools will promote a love of reading and support schools across the country to provide excellent phonics and early language teaching. Literacy specialists within each Hub will provide tailored support to schools, which

will include running events to showcase excellent practice in teaching and reading and working with local schools to develop their practice.

Care at Home Tender Update

As many Members are aware, care at home services are very important to many people in our town. Indeed, around 1,000 individuals access approximately 12,000 hours of commissioned home care each week across Blackpool. We are intending to implement a new model of 'person centred' home care, via a geographically zoned approach across the town. The move to a more zone based allocation of care hours will enable efficient ways of working and mean paid carers will spend less time travelling and more time with the person they care for.

In September 2018 we commenced a formal OJEU tendering exercise to select suitable suppliers to provide these vital services for a period of five years to Blackpool residents (with the option to extend for a further period of five years subject to budget and satisfactory review). Some 70 suppliers expressed an interest and we received 17 tender responses. I can inform Members that we have now appointed 12 companies, some of which are our current providers. Seven of the 12 companies appointed have offices based within Blackpool.

We have now written to all residents that receive these services to inform them of the process that has been undertaken. We will be working with all our providers to ensure that there is as little disruption as possible.

During the period following the award and just before Christmas, an existing provider (who was not successful in the award of a new contract) went into administration at very short notice. This development was not related to the tender decision. Fortunately, a new provider was able to step in rapidly and take on the care delivered, guaranteeing Christmas care for the service users and Christmas wages for the staff, working closely with ourselves in the management of the handover. I would like to thank everyone who worked very hard at short notice to secure this essential transition.

Strategic Issues

The National Health Service Long Term Plan

The NHS long-term plan was published on 7 January. It aims to set out what will be achieved by the NHS over next ten years and prioritises the use of the additional funding that the NHS will receive. Key areas for investment include cancer treatment, mental ill health and heart disease together with a preventative focus on smoking, alcohol, obesity and diabetes. The investment in areas that are a priority for Blackpool is, of course, to be welcomed. I was pleased to note that many of the initiatives outlined in the plan are areas that Blackpool Council and Blackpool CCG have already made investment, for example smoking in pregnancy and smoking cessation in hospital.

Nevertheless, I am sorry to say that it is clear that Government ambitions for our NHS will fail if it continues to choose to cut public health budgets and continues to offer no solution to plug the funding gaps caused by cuts to both the NHS and to adult social care.

At a national level, the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) responded to the plan by saying that it was pleased to see that priority would be given to primary care, mental health and community services. Alongside social care and housing, these services were seen as vital to enable people to live as independently as possible on their own and prevent the escalation of care costs. However, ADASS rightly highlighted that it was hard to see how this could be delivered with continuing cuts to public health budgets, where spending per person has fallen by nearly a quarter since 2015/ 2016.

As the previous NHS Five Year Forward View recognised, an effective NHS depends on adequately funded social care, as the two services are inter-dependent. We are all aware that social care is in a state of crisis nationally, although our services are managing much better than others across the country, brought about by this Conservative Government's relentless assault on local authority budgets. ADASS responded that now there is a long-term plan in place for the NHS, it was deeply disappointing that the promised Green Paper setting out proposals for sustainable long term funding for social care had still not been published. The Government needs to set out its position on the future of social care as matter of extreme urgency.

Winter Pressure Success: Adult Care and Support Services

I am very pleased to report to Members that a number of new models of care developed during 2018 by the Council's House Homecare Service are playing a crucial role in assisting Blackpool Victoria with its winter pressures.

The winter planning process commenced in July 2018 and we developed a number of new elements of provision. For example, we increased care hours available to rapid response, enabling us to support people at home rather than at Accident and Emergency. We also increased hours available to enable people to be discharged from hospital and get home on the same day. Social workers were placed in Accident and Emergency at key times to prevent unnecessary hospital admission and to ensure individuals get the right support.

The outcome of our new range of provision meant that there was no queue for care over the festive period, with nobody waiting for discharge from hospital; we were also able to develop spare capacity across a number of services to enable them to respond to any potential surges in demand over Christmas.

It is telling that Blackpool Victoria Hospital was operating at OPEL 1 and 2 during December and in to January. The same period last year was more difficult with the Hospital at OPEL 3 and 4 and capacity across health and social care was at critical levels with queues for care and Accident and Emergency waiting times at the highest levels for several years. We are certain that our service developments outlined above played a pivotal role in securing the positive change for this year.

I am of course mindful that winter is still very much upon us and we will continue to work closely with our health colleagues to ensure we provide solutions to these ever increasing demands on care. With our new provision and robust plans in place the health and social care system is more capable of responding to the additional pressures that may come along.

Policy Issues

Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

I am pleased to report that the proposed Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy has been through a comprehensive consultation process, which has involved the general public, local interest groups and the business community alike. Many members from all parties have contributed and I was delighted that a task and finish group comprising of representatives from the three Scrutiny committees came together to consider the strategy and provide valuable input. The aim will be for the strategy to progress to February's Executive for approval.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Report and Hospital Investigation

The LGO has published a report into the circumstances surrounding a woman suffering burns after being left on a commode next to a radiator. The care provider was iCare (GB) Limited, who were found to be at fault in a number of respects. The Council was ordered to pay £5,000 to the woman and £500 to the woman's daughter. A full action plan has now been agreed with the LGO and is in the process of being implemented. This incident took place in 2017 before we made changes to the way our commissioned care is monitored and we have raised the issue of heat sources being considered in all risk assessments when necessary in order to prevent any other similar incidents.

As Members will be aware, there was an incident late last year in which staff were accused of medication maladministration on the stroke ward at the hospital. I can inform you that a formal Serious Incident Panel has been convened in response to the allegations. This Panel is chaired by the Chief Nurse for North West England and has senior representation from the Police, the Hospital Trust and the Council, who is represented by the Director of Adult Social Services. The purpose of the Panel is to oversee at a strategic level the investigation into the allegations and pick up any learning that is identified, ensuring that all relevant partners are involved.

Supporting 'Our Children' with employment opportunities

I am pleased to inform Members of new steps we have taken to provide the best chances for supporting 'Our Children' into employment. As a Council, we have agreed to ring fence for 'Our Children' all grade A to C posts prior to any internal or external advertising. We have committed to support 'Our Children' with the application process and develop a pre apprenticeship programme. I am encouraged that our wholly owned companies have now committed to signing the national care covenant, revisiting their offer to 'Our Children'.

Transforming Services

Recognition for our Work on Healthy Weight

I am pleased to report to Members that our work on tackling obesity is acquiring significant national and international recognition. Since the signing of the Local Authority Declaration on Healthy Weight in January 2016, the Public Health team has been working in partnership with a range of organisations to drive the health weight agenda forward. As Members are aware, the declaration was about demonstrating a commitment to reduce unhealthy weight in our communities, protect the health and well-being of staff and the local population and to make an economic impact on health and social care in the local economy. This was to be achieved through 12 commitments ranging from access to free drinking water and protecting children from inappropriate marketing. In addition to this, we agreed a range of local commitments to improve packed lunches, encourage walking to school and supporting healthier retail. Work that has been undertaken in Blackpool has received national recognition through various conferences, in particular at the recent LGA conference on Childhood Obesity where Steven Brine, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care, acknowledged our good practice. Additionally, one of our Public Health Practitioners has been working on a secondment with Public Health England at a national level on this issue. Our positive profile on this issue has resulted in Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health, being invited to the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to take a leading part in a seminar to promote the work of Blackpool alongside the work of Amsterdam.

The success of all this work has been made possible by the political leadership and support on the obesity agenda through the Health and Wellbeing Board and other working groups.

The Mental Health Partnership Board has taken a new approach to its meetings, inviting people along to see how decisions are made and to show how services work. At the last meeting, Laura, a young apprentice at Head Start, assisted Cllr Cross in chairing a meeting so she could better understand mental health services available for young people. This forms part of the new coproduction ethos that is happening across the council.

Connecting Pupils and Students with the World of Work: Blackpool Opportunity Area Programme Update

I have previously reported to Members on the activity of Blackpool's Opportunity Area Programme. A very important objective for the programme is to better connect children with the world of work as part of raising aspirations. The programme is now in its second year of delivery and I am pleased to report that Enterprise Advisers are now working in secondary schools, sixth forms and colleges to ensure that all young people are receiving four high quality experiences of the world of work. I am very encouraged to report that in 2017/ 2018, 26,337 encounters were achieved against a target of 14,000.

It is also encouraging to report that we have been able to extend our 'Primary Futures' project to cover 25 primary schools. This project is a collaboration between schools and businesses

locally and from further afield which sees volunteers from the world of work going into schools to address gender stereotyping and raise aspirations.

Developments that are more exciting are in preparation, in particular a Careers Hub, which will co-ordinate action from a range of partners to help all our young people prepare for work. This includes a customised careers guidance portal to promote future local job opportunities on the Fylde Coast.

Working with Partners

Teaching Partnership Success

Blackpool Council has been successful in a Department for Education (DfE) funded bid with our partners Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council, Lancaster University and the University of Central Lancashire to work together to form a Teaching Partnership. A principal aim of the partnership is to improve the quality of teaching on pre and post-qualifying social work training programmes, by strengthening links between higher education institutions (HEIs) and employers of social workers.

As a result of this bid, two new posts have been created within Blackpool Council, called Practice Development Workers (PDW). We have a post in Children's Services and a post in Adult Services. They are supporting the teaching partnership with improvements in recruiting high quality students, developing practice educators and continuous development of post qualification support. A Greater Lancashire Teaching Partnership (GLTP) conference is taking place in April and Lyn Romeo (Adults) and Isabelle Trowler (Children's) Chief Social Work Leads for England will be our speakers.

Children's Takeover Challenge 2018

I am delighted to report that Takeover Challenge 2018 was a huge success with more of our children and young people than ever taking up Blackpool Council's offer of a takeover opportunity. Blackpool Council staff and partner agencies embraced their corporate parent responsibility and offered some amazing opportunities to 25 of our children and young people. Children spent the day with Lancashire Police, the Heritage Trams Blackpool Transport, our Street Scene Team, Visit Blackpool, Family Hubs, SEND, Bickerstaffe reception, The Virtual School as well as taking over Team Managers and Service Managers roles with Children's Services. Four young people spent the day working alongside our social work and development teams. They developed and wrote their own training for social workers, which they then delivered to 16 children services staff in the afternoon. The feedback from the staff was extremely positive, saying it was great to hear direct from our children on the things that matter most and what they can do, as workers, to support our children in the best ways possible.

Our Corporate Leadership Team did not miss out either. A few lucky (or unlucky perhaps!) children spent time on their 'take over' day with Neil Jack, Antony Lockley and John Blackledge. As part of this, they accompanied Chief Officers to important meetings with Union

representatives and site visits on our regeneration projects. Neil, Antony and John gave our children an insight into what their job involves and I am reliably informed they had to answer some very direct questions!

All young people and staff involved had an enjoyable and worthwhile experience. It not only gave our young people an insight into the world of work, but started positive conversations about their ambitions and plans for the future and how we can all support them to achieve their goals.

Third Generation Football Pitch

It was wonderful to see Manchester United and England legend, Rio Ferdinand, open a fully refurbished third generation (3G) artificial grass pitch (AGP) at Stanley Park in Blackpool on Tuesday 11 December. The new facility was made possible thanks to investment from the Premier League and The Football Association (FA) Facilities fund, which is delivered by the Football Foundation. This new all-weather pitch, which is part of a town wide approach to developing football in Blackpool, will provide continued and extended use for numerous local partner community clubs, including Clifton Rangers FC, FC Rangers and Blackpool FC Girls and Ladies. As well as the partner clubs, the Poulton and District Primary League and Blackpool and Fylde Sunday Alliance will benefit from the improved facilities.

Blackpool Council was awarded a £308,133 grant from the Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund towards the project. The Council worked alongside the Football Foundation and the Lancashire County FA to compile a five-year Football Development Plan, which is a vision of how sport will be played on site with an emphasis on increasing participation.