

# **HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 17 OCTOBER 2023 ATTENDANCE OF THE DEPUTY LEADER**

Report presented by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Murray

## **Summary**

This annual report provides an account of the role of the Deputy Leader of the Council who has responsibility for Adult Social Care and Public Health. It details their ambitions for their areas of responsibility, how they have and will undertake political challenge and leadership and what their priorities and ambitions are for the year ahead.

### **1. Recommendation**

1.1. The Committee are asked to note the report.

### **2. Budget and policy framework**

2.1. The areas within the terms of reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and covered by the Deputy Leader of the council who has responsibility for Adult Social Care and Public Health, as set out in the Council's constitution are:

- Adults' Mental Health and Disability Services (including learning and physical disabilities)
- Adults' Partnership Commissioning (25+) and Better Care Fund
- Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)
- Carers
- Community Care
- External inspections
- Financial assessments, adult social care income and debt
- Health and health partnerships
- Kyndi
- Older people
- Public Health - Lead Member, including Health and Wellbeing Board
- Residential care
- Shared Lives
- Voluntary Sector

### 3. Background

- 3.1. I am particularly pleased to be the new Deputy Leader of the council with responsibility for Adult Social Care and Public Health having been the Spokesperson in opposition. I am very grateful for the warm and informative welcome I have been given by all staff whose willingness to share their skills and expertise with me and one another demonstrates their professionalism and enthusiasm for giving our residents in Medway the best service they can.
- 3.2. Before the election and since then the teams in the Directorate have been working extremely hard and in good spirits as we face many challenges.
- 3.3. Members will be aware that staff are coping with a significant overspend after budgets have reduced while demand on services especially in Adult Social Care continues to grow. Our staff's determination to keep residents as safe and well as possible is inspiring and I have been pleased to work alongside them as they come forward with innovative ideas to improve services and create efficiencies.
- 3.4. Despite these challenges there are many and continuing achievements. Senior managers have worked hard to tackle the staffing crisis in adult social care and I am delighted that we have seven newly qualified social workers starting work in Medway this October. We will also be bringing forward a paper to cabinet before the end of the financial year on Care for Medway which, if approved, is intended to kickstart a new investment strategy.
- 3.5. The work of our public health teams has again been recognised nationally and funded for five years by the National Institute for Health and Care for research for their developing work on the Health Determinants Research Collaboration, a crucial project which will help us to tackle the prevailing Health Inequalities suffered by more deprived communities in Medway. I was honoured to write a foreword for Dr David Whiting's report in order to demonstrate that this important work has political support and look forward to taking the Chair of the HDRC Partnership Board.
- 3.6. The Medway Workplace Health Programme won an Inside Out award in June for their work in helping local businesses to support health and wellbeing in the workforce. The Food Partnership goes from strength to strength and the partnership continues to offer cookery lessons across Medway to promote healthy eating and provide food for families who are struggling. It also works with schools to promote healthy meals for both pupils and staff. The partnership's annual networking event will be held on Saturday 25 November at the University of Greenwich's campus.
- 3.7. Public Health teams supported many summer events including Armed Forces Day, the Medway Mile and many smaller local fairs and community fun days. Over 2000 children across Medway benefitted from the summer activity

programme Medway Go. This programme goes from strength to strength supporting our children and families who are most in need.

- 3.8. My thanks go to all the staff, who day in day out, work tirelessly to support our population to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. They go about their business in fun and innovative ways. They attend health fayres within the community including the Copperfield Fun Day, Chatham Carnival, Sticks and Stones Festival, Wild about Capstone and next week will be hosting a social prescribing event in Princes Park. I am extremely thankful to our voluntary and community sector who are at the forefront of our Hypertension Heroes programme. This initiative is critical to work that prevents people succumbing to major health conditions. We have been shortlisted for a national Health Services Journal award due to the outcomes of this project and will hear in November if we win.
- 3.9. Other work that I have been directly involved in since taking on this portfolio includes attending the Combating Drugs Partnership to discuss how we can reduce the harms caused by drugs. I made a site visit to our commissioned alcohol treatment service, meeting with staff and services users to gain more insight into the local challenges faced by providers and those unfortunately dependent on alcohol and drugs.
- 3.10. I am committed to doing my bit to practically support my local residents. In the summer I trained as a walk leader and with other volunteers I am leading a health walk at Rochester esplanade. I have shone a spotlight on women's health and have been liaising with the Integrated Care Partnership to ensure women's health is a priority in the refreshed strategy. Together with James Williams our Director of Public Health, I signed the commitment for the Peoples Directorate to become a Menopause Accredited employer.

#### 4. Providing political leadership and challenge

- 4.1. I have been well supported by senior staff with regular briefings from Directors and Assistant Director keeping me up to date with the work of their teams and enabling us to discuss how we can sustain service improvements whilst managing a challenging budget.
- 4.2. Our administration has pledged to refresh ways of working across the council towards common policy objectives. To this end I have joined staff at budget meetings making my commitment to the safe delivery of our statutory services very clear.
- 4.3. My intention to gain the support of Cabinet for investment in social care is well established and I am determined to ensure that staff are not pressured to make short term cuts that achieve only one-off savings, rather we are developing a longer-term approach and modelling the way that new ways of working, and the associated investment can achieve sustainable efficiencies.
- 4.4. I chair the Public Health and Adult Social Care Oversight Board and have been impressed by the collective efforts of staff to maintain an in depth monitoring system which generates the detailed information needed to give us

a realistic view of performance in social care assessments, reviews and quality assurance .The council will soon be subject to the new regulatory assurance procedure by the Care Quality Commission and work is being undertaken now to set up a board with external partners learning from the good practice now established in Children's Social Care .

- 4.5. I have been appointed to the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board and attended my first meeting in September where I was pleased to attend a seminar with The Chief Medical Officer for England, Chris Whitty talking about the challenges of an ageing population and to hear from the CEOs of the CQC and ADASS on the financial challenges facing the sector with high inflation and to receive more detail about the CQCs expectations for assurance. Membership of the Board will provide me with a national perspective on developments and challenges which will help to inform and influence our local practice.
- 4.6. In my role as Chair of the Medway Health and Wellbeing board I have refreshed the Board's purpose to move away from a scrutiny style operation towards achieving a collective determination to improve the health and wellbeing of our population. In my opening speech at the partnership workshop to refresh the joint health and wellbeing strategy I was able to share these new ways of working and look forward to us implementing the new outcomes. Alongside this I have attended the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and have monthly private meetings with the CEO and Chairman of NHS Kent and Medway ICB to further develop our relationship and identify elements of the partnership that require more focus or renewal.
- 4.7. Most recently I attended a workshop to refresh and reaffirm our common commitment to the health outcomes identified by the ICB.
- 4.8. I attend the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adult Board and am a member of the Executive, championing the need for vulnerable adults in Medway.
- 4.9. I have met with the Adults' Partnership Commissioning teams to better understand how the teams work on commissioning services making it clear that I want the process to be as supportive as possible for bidding organisations because I have seen how distracting and costly the process can be especially for smaller Voluntary sector organisations. I am satisfied that the teams are committed to ensuring that the process is as easy to navigate as possible and I am pleased with the emphasis on social value and local suppliers.
- 4.10. I have accompanied a social worker on a visit to an adult social care client to better understand how we can modernise and improve the quality of service including with more training for the deployment of assistive technology in helping to maintain independence at home for more vulnerable clients. Further visits are planned to an Extra Care facility and Medequip who supply specialist equipment for our clients. I am pleased with the close working relationship that Partnership Commissioning and Medequip have.

- 4.11. On Cabinet I have been keen to share my aspirations for the services in my portfolio as well as garnering support for investment and the longer-term approach to budgeting and have been grateful to have full support. It was especially pleasing to gain Cabinet's approval for the recommendations from the GP Task Group which have been welcomed by our health partners and received significant media coverage, work is ongoing, but improvements have been made and good practice is starting to be shared across the 38 Medway GP practices and through the Primary care networks.
- 4.12. I have met with Medway Community Health leaders and I have also challenged the ICB's intention to recommission services under a single provider. I am very clear that there should be no diminution of services based in Medway as a result of this process and welcome the decision by the Health and Adult Social Care O&S Committee to declare that the proposals from the ICB constitute a significant variation.
- 4.13. This month I joined the regular meeting with our commissioned care providers to show my support for the work they do in the care sector, supporting initiatives for training and development and I will work with them on lobbying for better pay and conditions for carers who deserve parity with NHS colleagues.
- 4.14. In order to check the quality and reality of local services I have embarked on a round of visits to various community groups and providers. I have met carers and professionals, families and service users to listen to their experiences and ideas for improvements. These have included HooCares, The Net, Dementia café, Medway parents and carers' forum, Medway diversity and inclusion forum and various tenants' groups with more visits planned for the Autumn period. I meet regularly with MVA, have toured Medway Maritime Hospital and met with the CEO and senior staff to hear their plans for developing more community based services and attended Trust Members' AGM. I will receive feedback from the Year of Listening project event convened by Macmillan to understand how their clients receive and respond to support services.

## 5. Championing the Interests of people.

- 5.1. I have championed the voices of people in Medway at the Local Government conference in Bournemouth where I attended a number of debates and seminars on reducing health inequalities and modernising adult social care all of which generated insightful evidence and useful ideas to contribute to our local service improvement plans. During covid our consultation and engagement with older people's organisations diminished so I intend to renew the council's formal contact with this important group and set up a refreshed forum to ensure their views are heard and influence the direction of local policy.
- 5.2. I am delighted that Medway has become a Menopause friendly workplace and will open the World Menopause Day event to be held at Lordswood leisure centre on 11 October. This new commitment and the event represent crucial steps forward in recognising the challenges faced by menopausal women and

providing them and their employers with a supportive framework in which to share their experiences and make reasonable adjustments to cope with a time of significant change. This work accords with my long-term aspiration to achieve a higher profile for Women's health services and better resourcing.

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1. I am committed to supporting both Public Health and Adult Social Care to support our residents, ensuring that they are at the heart of all we do. We have an excellent opportunity to showcase some of the good work and dedication of staff in demonstrating to the CQC that we know ourselves well and have appropriate plans in place for any areas of development.
- 6.2. Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their warm welcome and for sharing with me their passion and expertise. We have a challenging year ahead with the budget and workforce pressures, but I know the services will do everything they can to achieve the very best possible service and outcomes for individuals in Medway.

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### Appendices

Appendix 1 - Adult Social Care Local Account 22/23.

### Background papers

None