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HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD
22 MARCH 2022

(18:15 –19:44pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Rebecca Lanning (in the Chair), Mark Creelman (Locality Director Merton and Wandsworth), Brian Dillon (Chair Healthwatch Merton), Dr Vasa Gnanapragam, Chris Lee Director of Environment and Regeneration , Jane McSherry (Director Children Schools and Families) and Dr Dagmar Zeuner (Director of Public Health)

ALSO PRESENT Gemma Dawson (Consultant NHS), Phil Howell, Clarissa Larsen (Health and Wellbeing Board Partnership), Bola Roberts (Democratic Services Officer)

ATTENDING Amy Dumitrescu (Democracy Services Manager)
REMOTELY

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for Absence were received from Dr Andrew Otley and Dr Mohan Sekeram.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

4 LIVING WITH COVID (Agenda Item 4)

Living with COVID

The Director of Public Health gave an overview of living with COVID. She outlined the current transition phase in which there is a gradual winding down of support, particularly for care homes and vulnerable people, rather than any abrupt withdrawal. The remaining vaccinations programme continued to be important to living safely with COVID, as is the continued focus on equity.

She reported that population immunity is currently high, but it could not predict the position in the autumn and winter and there remains a possibility of new COVID variants. The Board should therefore be ready to respond quickly as needed in future, and work with the community, including that of Community and Vaccination Champions continues to be important. She also emphasised the legacy of the collaborative response to COVID that can be built upon.

The Director of Public Health explained that, given current testing, local data was no longer reliable and the regular Situation Assessment Report had consequently ended. However, national data will continue to monitor infections. She advised that the Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) team have conducted training in care homes and educational settings and have provided IPC toolkits to support future procedures, while local contact tracing officers are currently supporting Ukrainian refugees.

The Director of Public Health referred members to the report which had been circulated recommending that, in light of the new stage of living with COVID that the Community Subgroup be stood down, and that the core HWBB take oversight of vaccination, Long COVID and therapeutics with a particular focus on equity.

The Chair and Vice Chair extended thanks to the Director of Public Health and all partners for their work on the HWBB Community Subgroup.

RESOLVED:

A That the Board noted the agreed recommendation of the Health and Wellbeing Board Community Subgroup that the subgroup be stood down.

B. That the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed to retain oversight of vaccination equity, Long COVID and support for fair access to COVID-19 therapeutics.

C. That members of the Subgroup remain ready to be reinstated as a task and finish group, when it is considered necessary and requested by the Health and Wellbeing Board.

5 MERTON 2030 PRIORITIES - FOCUS ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING (Agenda Item 5)

The Director for Environment and Regeneration presented the Board with a summary of Merton 2030 as agreed by the Council's Cabinet in February; with a particular focus on health and wellbeing.

The slides from his presentation are attached to the minutes.

He emphasised that Merton as a healthy place is a cornerstone of Merton 2030, with high streets seen as community hubs and use of green spaces a priority for connectivity that can benefit both physical and mental health. He referenced a Merton 2030 summit in June as an opportunity for partners to get involved in delivery of the vision and would confirm that HWBB members will be invited to this.

He outlined ongoing joint work between his team and Public Health including work on air quality. Collaborative work with the voluntary sector was also taking place including Green Social Prescribing. A concern was raised about the current cost of living crisis, particularly food and fuel poverty, and the need to respond to this in order to achieve the vision of Merton 2030.

The Director of Public Health stressed the importance of creating the conditions for people to thrive at the same time as delivering integrated health services. She linked this to the work underway on Health in All Policies which is due to be reported to the next HWBB.

6 ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE (Agenda Item 6)

The Locality Director Merton and Wandsworth referred members to the circulated report and gave a presentation outlining access to primary health care.

The slides from his presentation are attached to the minutes.

The Director of Public Health commented that anecdotal feedback was that access to GPs is not always straightforward, and it is important to understand what is already out there in terms of support. She stressed the need to consider what combination of services are most useful to residents, and saw a link to Merton 2030 in terms of development of estate as something that the HWBB could help take forward.

Dr Vasa Gnanapragam raised the importance of partners working together to ensure that preventive offers are fully accessible and focused on equity. The Locality Director Merton and Wandsworth agreed that wherever possible services should be developed and delivered together with our communities.

RESOLVED:

- A. That the HWBB noted the contents of this report

7 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (Agenda Item)

The Chair asked the Committee clerk to read out the dates of future meetings:

21 June 2022
20 September 2022
29 November 2022
24 January 2023
28 March 2023

RESOLVED: the Board agreed to adopt the dates for future meetings

The Chair thanked Chris Lee, Director for Environment and Regeneration, who is retiring from the Council later this year, for his work both as part of the HWBB, and in leading his department, which has had real impact that will continue in years to come.

The Chair announced she was stepping down at the May local elections and that this would be her last Board meeting. She reflected on the strong partnership of the HWBB which had been highlighted in the collaborative response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Vice Chair paid tribute to the Chair as a great advocator who always understood the issues presented, showed reason and humanity and had been a true friend through difficult times. Councillor Stringer endorsed his words and proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair for her hard work as did Councillor Moulton.

8 MERTON HEALTH AND CARE PLAN (Agenda Item 7)

Gemma Dawson, Merton and Wandsworth CCG referred members to the circulated report and made a presentation on the full, final Merton Health and Care Plan (MHCP).

Slides from her presentation are attached to the minutes.

She set out the MHCP as a dynamic plan which will continue to evolve and iterate in response to developments, including, for example, Merton 2030. This full MHCP built on the draft previously agreed by the Board in November 2021. The purpose of bringing the full MHCP to members was to present some of the details of key priorities and encourage collaboration to build on them. She gave a commitment to carry on the dialogue, including with the community, to help shape implementation and ensure alignment with wider strategic plans.

The Director of Public Health highlighted the inclusion of children and young people in the MHCP, referencing intergenerational opportunities, and suggested that young people may be well placed to take an effective lead in promoting healthy place and engaging with the HWBB on this. The Director of Environment and Regeneration welcomed the inclusion of healthy place in the MHCP and stressed its link to prevention and need for action planning on this area. The importance of workplace and wider mental health was raised, along with a need for ongoing evaluation of new work, in order to effectively assess how well initiatives are working and respond in an agile way.

The Chair thanked Gemma Dawson and looks forward to future reports to the HWBB on the progress of the MHCP.

RESOLVED:

That The Health and Wellbeing Board endorsed and provided comment on the refreshed Merton Local Health and Care Plan 2022-24.