

Date: 28 February 2023

Portfolio: Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector

The Report of: Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis

Report Author and Contact Details: Maria Burton, Portfolio Advisor
mburton@westminster.gov.uk

1. **Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 05 December 2022:**
 - 01 February 2023 – Investment in Community Grants Programmes (joint decision with the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection)

2 The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date:

Adult Social Care and Public Health

2.1 Carlton Dene

The contract for demolition of the Carlton Dene site has been through procurement and is due for exchange by 17 February 2023. The invitation to tender was published back in November 2022 and several bids were received for evaluation. The Cabinet Member report for this decision will be completed by February 2023.

The new site will include 65 units for 'extra care' (Carlton Dene) and 22 units of social housing (Peebles House). Planning permission for the new buildings has already been secured and was recognised in the 'project' category of the Housing Design Award for 2022. Procurement of a development partner will take place between January and March 2023, with completion expected by Summer 2025.

Concurrently, procurement of an operational partner is taking place. There has been ongoing market engagement with extra care providers, including organisations in the city. As part of developing the proposals, the option to deliver the care element in-house is also being examined.

The next significant update on this project will be the commencement of demolition work and the appointment of a construction partner. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) are working closely with colleagues in Growth, Planning and Housing to ensure the project milestones are met.

2.1 Hospital Discharge

In December 2022, 113 Westminster residents were discharged from hospital. Of these less than 10 patients faced a delay in their discharge from hospital. This is very positive in the context of increased demand and high bed occupancy levels.

Work remains ongoing with a range of health and community partners to facilitate discharges through the establishment of new pathways that aims to improve individual outcomes, promote independence, and provide the right services at the right time.

Additional investment has been received from NHS England (NHSE)/Department of Health and Social Care to support pressures over the winter period, up to the end of March 2023. Most of the funding has been invested in additional intermediate care capacity, reablement and home care. There is also a requirement to report to NHSE fortnightly, as part of their assurance process.

2.2 Complaints and Compliments

The Adult Social Care Annual Complaints Report (2021-2022) was circulated in November 2022. It reported 103 statutory complaints which is 12% higher than the year before but in line with previous years. It is possible that the decrease was because of the pandemic and now numbers are returning to a more typical level.

The largest proportion of complaints (42%) related to quality of service, which could relate to issues such as cleanliness, inconsistency of carers, care tasks not being completed or not being completed to a good standard, loss or breakage of items, among others. The other areas of complaints were charging/finance (13% of complaints), service failure (10%), staff attitude/behaviour (10%), objection to an eligibility or assessment decision (10%), communication (9%) and service delay (6%).

The team with the highest number of complaints was assessment and care, with 35% of complaints relating to this team. The teams with the next highest numbers of complaints were homecare (29% of complaints) and charging/finance (13%).

There were two LGSCO cases; one relating to charging/finance, which was not upheld, and one relating to homecare, which was upheld. This was an increase on the one case referred to the LGSCO in 2020/21, but lower than pre-pandemic figures.

ASC received 20 compliments. Service response was deemed timely - 67% were responded to within 10 working days, which is an improvement on last year's 65% and 90% complaints were responded and closed within 20 working days. Overall, 44% complaints were not upheld, compared to 17% that were fully upheld, and this is in line with previous years.

Work will continue with all partner providers via contract monitoring meetings and provider forums to ensure there is effective complaints handling in line with the Ombudsman's guidance on third party complaints.

2.3 Engagement Events

The Commissioning department has been incorporating user engagement activities as a core part of its work. In 2022, surveys were conducted with stakeholders using and working in our residential care services. This year, we have planned interviews, and engagement events such as workshops and case studies around key projects including:

- review of the digital keysafe service.
- tender of learning disability (LD) care and support framework.

- review of day care opportunities.

Strategy papers are being developed that will give a focus and overarching direction to ASCH's work including the Co-production strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Carers' Strategy. Engagement sessions with stakeholders have started in January 2022, and the initial feedback would shape the key pillars of these strategies.

Five new members have been recruited to The Local Account Group (LAG). Meetings will be monthly throughout the first part of the year to establish the new membership and set group goals. The group will be creating a new, two-year Ambition Plan based on achieving goals framed around the Directorate's six priorities and are imminently being involved in work for the Health and Wellbeing Board also.

2.4 Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Adults Reference Group is a 'user by experience' led group of residents who have been through the safeguarding process or have a specific interest in safeguarding. As Safeguarding ambassadors, they have been working to bring real stories identifying local safeguarding issues to the attention of the Safeguarding Adults Executive Board.

Highlights include planning and delivering 'Illegal money lending' webinars in December 2022 and March 2023, as well as collaborating with Community Safety and the Metropolitan Police during Hate Crime week in October 2022 to launch the 'Advocators Against Hate Crime' programme. This programme aims to educate and train the voluntary sector and residents about hate crime and its impact on our communities.

In November 2022, the ambassadors hosted a session on 'Sensible Precautions & Local Solutions' across the Bi-borough to support residents during the cost-of-living crisis. Their motto this year is 'Think Fire', with the intent to urge residents to stay safe by taking fire safety precautions when heating their homes this winter.

2.5 Budget

Substantial work was undertaken to support the Council's medium term financial planning process.

For ASCH, new financial efficiencies of £2.350m over the next 4 years were proposed and this has been put forward for budget scrutiny. A detailed breakdown of the saving proposals is as follows:

- **Prevention initiatives** - £1.590m: We will continue driving prevention initiatives over the next 4 years. Examples of this approach include offering equipment, adopting technology, direct payments and supporting residents placed outside of Westminster to return if they choose to.
- **Enhanced brokerage and void efficiency** - £0.310m: It is forecasted that quicker turnaround of voids in all accommodation-based services with block contracts and automation of transactional brokerage functions for commissioned services will bring about efficiencies.
- **Digital account** - £0.250m: This involves the use of the digital account to diversify spend beyond 'hours of care' to more outcome specific activities and includes predicted increase uptake of Direct Payments and adoption of digital solutions.

- **Appropriate application of NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC)** - £0.150m: We will continue to advocate for the fair application of NHS CHC criteria to all client groups, ensuring those entitled to CHC funded care by the NHS receive it.
- **Learning disability (LD) contract efficiency** - £0.050m: We will explore ways to generate efficiency within LD spend through contract efficiency and moving people into alternative accommodation so as to reduce the placement spend.

In 2023-2024, total efficiencies expected to be delivered are £1.980m. Of this, £1.180m of commitments have already been agreed and £0.800m are new. Prevention initiatives constitute 50% of the total.

Through the National ASC Discharge, Westminster received £3m in 2022/23 to offset existing cost pressures and to support discharges through additional packages of care, intermediate care beds, workforce capacity and equipment. Westminster expects to receive £2.5m in 2023/24.

2.6 Winter Pressures, Cold Weather Plans, COVID-19 and Flu

Public Health (PH) continues to work with communications and engagement colleagues to deliver our 'Boost your Immunity' campaign in Autumn/Winter. This amplifies central government and NHS messaging and is supported by Community Champions, our local community and faith groups. This includes localised resources including animations explaining vaccination with short clips from local GPs and Community Health and Wellbeing Workers in commonly spoken languages. PH is working with council settings and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners to prominently display the campaign across the city.

Collaboration continues between ASCH and the NHS regarding the delivery of the NHS flu and COVID-19 vaccine programmes to high-risk groups. Plans are in place to vaccinate care home residents and staff, housebound residents and inclusion groups (includes rough sleepers, hostel dwellers, asylum seekers, refugees, sex workers, some people using drug and alcohol services). In addition, PH is working with domiciliary care providers to improve rates of vaccination amongst domiciliary care staff and to ask them to check on how prepared their service users are for this winter.

Hostels and rough sleeping settings now have access to COVID-19 testing. PH is working with housing colleagues to ensure that these new arrangements are now in place for these settings in our borough.

2.7 Launch of Social Care Marketplace for Residents

The Digital Social Care Marketplace is currently 'live' and has met its initial target for 'onboarding' up to 25 residents. This initial group are drawing on a range of provision for different support reasons, including learning disability, dementia, and physical disability. For instance, a group of residents were able to use the platform to purchase their day trips collectively. The intention is to take careful, iterative steps to expanding the use of the platform, learning from user feedback to improve and prepare information for residents who may wish to use this platform in future.

Targeted promotion and a learning campaign are being delivered for social workers and Occupational therapists to equip them to introduce Digital Social Care Marketplace to the residents who would benefit from it. Furthermore, the Council has cleared the first round of a bid for £100k from the London Office for Technology and Innovation that would fund a local 'shopfront' enabling residents and staff to test a range of assistive technology, as well as this new platform.

It is important to note that the Digital Social Care Marketplace is not intended to replace the care arrangements by social work professionals through commissioned providers. Rather, it is an option that for residents who prefer to manage their care and budgets independently.

3. Cost of Living Support

3.1 Winter Grants

30 Community organisations have been funded with small grants to support weekly activity sessions. Each session provides at least 3 hours in a warm place including a warm meal, a cultural, physical or social activity and a health message. In the first 5 weeks of operating at the end of November and through December, 7% of attendees were age 18 or younger and 29% were aged 60 or older, with 9% of attendees from Global Majority backgrounds.

3.2 Support for Food Banks

HAFS Academy has been supported to start up a food voucher scheme in Church Street, supporting local families on benefits and in hardship and with vouchers which could be used in local businesses. Hallfield Residents Association were supported to extend their foodbank offer. A new location for Mary's Pantry in Lupus Street, Pimlico, has been agreed with the pantry to relocate by the end of March.

3.3 Advice Services

Capacity in advice services has been reviewed, and gaps identified to extend support through Cost of Living funding. Cardinal Hume Centre, Asylum Aid, Paddington Law Centre, Age UK, CAB have all been allocated funding to extend the work they are doing, including supporting of apprenticeships, trainee schemes and volunteering to develop the local advice workforce. MEWSO, Midaye, Kulan Association and the Abbey Centre have all been allocated funding to provide same language advice services to Kurdish, Somali and Arabic speaking communities.

4. Voluntary Sector

4.1 Community Investment Review and Strategy

The first draft of the strategy has been drafted ready for consultation looking at investment in strategic partnerships, capacity building, space, impact measurement and our processes and systems for grants.

4.2 Community Contribution Fund

A survey of donors and non-donors was completed to give insight into the areas of support that matter to donors, communication preferences and how we can market the fund more effectively. The next funding round will open on 23 February.

4.3 Community Grants Programme

The Cost of Living crisis has added additional challenges for residents facing hardship, and for community organisations, in particular small local organisations. This has created an additional urgency to be able to disperse funds rapidly if needed.

The Community Priorities programme begins with undertaking a needs assessment through interviews with residents. This work needs to start immediately for the grant fund to be opened in February 2023. The programme has been extended to a total value of £600,000 (£300,000 from Public Health and £300,000 from Communities), with an additional emergency fund of £100,000 for community organisations in temporary crisis.

The Programme extends the reach of the Community Priorities Programme from four wards in North Westminster to any ward in the city which has high levels of deprivation. Community development work will be undertaken in 2023 to identify needs or priorities outside North Westminster.

The Emergency Fund has been created following a number of small community organisations approaching the council for emergency funding due to the unprecedented economic challenges. This fund formalises the process, and will be operated by the Communities department. This funding is designed to support organisations that are in short-term financial crisis, and organisations will be expected to demonstrate their plan for financial recovery and the benefit to the community.

The decision to grant funding has been delegated to the Director of Communities, although both the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector will be notified prior to decisions. The entire community grants programme will contribute to enhanced outcomes for communities and will be evaluated.