

ADULT CARE AND HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 6.30 pm on 20 January 2021

Present:

Councillor Mary Cooke (Chairman)
Councillor Robert McIlveen (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Gareth Allatt, Judi Ellis, Robert Evans,
Simon Jeal, David Jefferys, Keith Onslow and
Angela Wilkins

Vicki Pryde, Bromley Mental Health Forum

Also Present:

Councillor Diane Smith, Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Co-opted Members Roger Chant and Francis Poltera.

The Chairman noted that the newly appointed Independent Chair of the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), Teresa Bell, had been invited to attend the meeting. This offer had been politely declined, as it was considered that the previous Independent Chair had attended the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee meeting of her own volition. It was highlighted that attendance at PDS meetings was not included in the job description for the role.

Members expressed that they considered adult safeguarding to be an integral part of the work of Adult Social Care, and felt it was regrettable that the Independent Chair would not sit on the Committee. The Chairman advised that the Director of Adult Social Care was a member of the BSAB, and therefore provided a link for sending and receiving any information.

The Director of Adult Social Care said that there had often been confusion as to which of her two roles the previous Independent Chair was representing when she had attended meetings. When looking into this further, and it had been discovered that there was not a requirement for the Independent Chair of the BSAB to sit on the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee, but would attend meetings to present relevant reports. It was noted that the Independent Chair had only very recently started in post and had been unable to attend this evening due to a prior commitment. The BSAB Annual Report for 2019-20

was a “backwards looking” report, and as such would be presented to the Committee by the Safeguarding Adults Board Manager.

In response to a question, the Director of Adult Social Care stated that the other roles held by the Independent Chair had been taken into consideration during the appointment process, and that she was employed by the Local Authority for two days per month. During this time the Independent Chair would attend statutory meetings; provide support relating to safeguarding practice; and manage the formal meetings she was responsible for.

A Member questioned if the Committee was intended to have oversight over the BSAB’s operations. If so, the co-option of the Independent Chair could potentially be a conflict of interest, and therefore a representative from another organisation that covered safeguarding may be more appropriate. The Chairman agreed that this would be discussed further with the Director of Adult Social Care, outside of the meeting, and response would be provided to Members’ questions.

32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Angela Wilkins declared that she worked for Hestia, who were referenced in the reports for the items relating to the Contracts Register and Contracts Database.

33 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING

One written question was received from a member of the public and is attached at Appendix A.

34 MINUTES OF ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PDS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2020 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

35 WORK PROGRAMME AND MATTERS OUTSTANDING

Report CSD21010

The Committee considered a report setting out matters outstanding from previous meetings and the proposed work plan for 2020/21.

In response to a question, the Director of Adult Social Care advised Members that a summary of the LBB day services workshop would be provide in her

update to the Committee, and further details could be circulated after the meeting if required.

The Chairman reminded Members of the Learning Disability report which had been presented at the November 2020 meeting of the Committee. The Council had a contract in place with the Southside Partnership (usually referred to as the Certitude contract) to provide Learning Disability supported living and community-based day and respite services. The Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning informed Members that Executive approval had been obtained in November 2019 to extend the contract for a period of up to 2 years from 1st October 2020 to 30th September 2022. However, the Council was unable to reach mutual terms to extend the contract as originally intended, and subsequent negotiation resulted in a 6-month extension of the contract to 31st March 2021.

This reduced contract extension required the Council to review the current service, consult with residents and carers and go to tender to procure new providers in a very short space of time. There were four procurements in train as follows:

- a) Supported Living Services
- b) Residential Respite Service
- c) Day opportunities for residents with complex needs – day centre provision
- d) Community based day opportunities

As it was not possible to align the tendering timetables for the Supported Living Service and Residential Respite Service with the timetable for this meeting, it was proposed to hold a special meeting of the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee to consider the award of these two contracts. It was noted that taking these contract awards to the March 2021 meeting would not leave sufficient time to both award the contract, and put in place the new contractors in time for 1st April 2021.

Following a brief discussion, Members agreed to a 4.30pm start time for the special meeting of the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee on Wednesday 3rd February 2021.

A Member noted that when commissioned providers were approached to extend a contract, incidents of demands for substantial cost increases, or no extension being possible, appeared to have become more frequent. The Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning said that he was unable to comment on what had happened historically, but that going forward, the Director of Adult Social Care and himself would ensure that this would not be the case.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning advised Members that the original contract was for 5 years, and with the 6-month extension would expire in April 2021. Discussions had been held with Certitude in November 2019, and they agreed in principal to extend the contract by a further two years, and this approach had been

agreed by the Council's Executive. When looking to sign the extension agreement in February / March 2020, the provider introduced terms that the Council were unable to agree to.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

36 UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

The Director of Adult Social Care gave an update to Members on work being undertaken across the Adult Social Care department.

The Director of Adult Social Care reiterated the message delivered to the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee the previous week, by Jonathan Lofthouse, Site Chief Executive – PRUH and South Sites – in Bromley, the whole system had worked well to support the community and reduce the impact of the pandemic. This was not taken for granted, but it was good to have recognition from a recent review of the discharge arrangements that they were an exemplar of how the system could work. It had also been recognised that bureaucracy had been reduced and managed efficiently across all partners at such a difficult time.

Away from the department's role to support the NHS, they were continuing with "business as usual". People were being supported flexibly, and the numbers of referrals for support had continued to increase, although this was still slightly below the normal level. In addition, the department continued to release a large number of staff to support the COVID workstreams, including support to vulnerable people; test and trace; PPE distribution; and vaccination and testing for staff, care providers and the wider community.

Sadly, there had been a recent increase in the numbers of both staff and service users in care settings who had returned positive COVID-19 tests. In order to manage this and provide support and oversight, daily meetings were being held, and were attended by Public Health, social care commissioners, quality assurance officers and the CCG. These meetings were proving invaluable in terms of spotting where there may be an issue arising, and providing training and support. More recently, this had been linked to the number of vaccinations given so that they could begin to estimate when problems would subside, or where more reassurance and support was required. It was noted that the department were keen to ensure that all staff working within care settings were given the COVID-19 vaccination. However, they were having to undertake work to reassure a number of these staff that this was appropriate, and they were working with the Bromley Care Practice who were rolling out the vaccination programme.

The Director of Adult Social Care informed Members that since the last Committee meeting, the second Infection Control Grant had been distributed. They had also recently been notified that some additional grant monies would shortly be received to support providers with testing, which was a heavy demand on their time. It was highlighted that during this period, the

relationship with providers had continued to go from strength to strength, which was a positive outcome of an awful situation, and discussions were more cooperative and supportive.

A positive workshop, hosted by Community Links Bromley, was held on the 16th December 2020 to examine the issues surrounding changes in demand for day centres and day activities. The session allowed time for all agencies to discuss how they could work together to rethink the future of day activities for people in the Borough. An outcome from the session had been the Council committing to working with partners to agree a shared vision for developing a broader day service and community support offer for people, and the practical steps to achieve this. The Director of Adult Social Care noted that a more detailed briefing could be circulated to Members after the meeting.

A Member noted that the Bertha James Centre had closed earlier in the year and queried if sufficient day places were available in the Borough to accommodate all those referred. The Director of Adult Social Care advised that following the closure, alternative placements had been provided to all that required them. During the pandemic, service users had been received support in different ways. The directorate had sent out questionnaires to service users, and their families, to gain feedback on what was important to them in terms of day activities, as prior to the pandemic they had already been seeing a drop in the numbers wishing to attend a physical centre. Members asked to be provided with a summary of this consultation.

In response to a question regarding support for carers, the Director of Adult Social Care noted that requirements varied for the different carer groups. The team were in regular contact with carers who they were aware were under a great deal of stress. This particularly related to carers of adults with learning disabilities, to whom it was difficult to explain the current situation, and why they were unable to attend places as part of their usual routine. Where appropriate, alternative provisions had been offered by the team, such as volunteers or staff to take service users out, rather than to collective settings, or providing support in the home to provide a break for the carers. It was recognised that this period had been particularly difficult for those carers who relied on the services that had been unable to remain open. Additional funding had been awarded through a grant, and going forward would be used to look at what else could be provided to support carers to enable them to continue in their roles. The Director of Adult Social Care stressed that they did not underestimate the impact of the pandemic, particularly on carers who had the individual cared for living with them.

A Member noted that it was positive to hear of this additional grant, and queried if carers, and the organisations that supported them, would be involved in developing the approach used to provide support. The Assistant Director for Integrated Commissioning advised that a grant of around £50k had been secured to provide additional support for carers, particularly those who had been unable to attend day centres in recent months. They would be working with Community Links Bromley to distribute small grants of up to £5k, and would be advertising the following week for small providers to put forward

ideas for extending their existing schemes, or new programmes that they could put in place. It was anticipated that these schemes would be up and running within a matter of weeks.

The Director of Adult Social Care advised that overall, staffing levels had remained positive, however they were starting to see more staff who were either unwell with COVID-19, or who were having to self-isolate following close contact with others who had tested positive. The Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation had been leading the asymptomatic testing for staff, which was being well attended and was a testament to her and the staff involved. The department had also been able to access vaccinations for front line staff and had put forward over 500 names to the PRUH for an offer of an appointment. These were now rolling out at pace.

A Member noted that the COVID-19 testing programme was an impressive operation and passed on his congratulations to all those involved in establishing a very efficient service. However, it was queried if a covered area could be identified that could be used as shelter for those waiting outside. The Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation advised that a gazebo was currently on order, and expected to arrive the following week, which would be used to create a covered waiting area. An inside area was not being used, as it made infection control more difficult.

The Director of Adult Social Care extended “a big thank you” to all the staff who had continued to deliver excellent support to the community, whilst also dealing with the personal impacts of the pandemic.

A Member highlighted that oversight of domestic abuse and violence against women had been moved from Public Protection and Enforcement to the Children, Education and Families portfolio. The rationale behind this was queried, as it was considered that it may sit better within Adult Care and Health. The Director of Adult Social Care advised that domestic violence sat within various portfolios across different Local Authorities. A number had it located under Children’s Services to ensure an oversight of the impact on children within a family setting. The Director of Adult Social Care agreed to check this in more detail outside of the meeting, and a response would be provided.

The Member further noted their concerns regarding the long-term impact of COVID-19, in relation to issues such as mental health; domestic abuse; obesity; and drug and alcohol abuse. It was anticipated that the demand for services would increase hugely, and it was queried if work was being undertaken to gauge this impact. The Director of Adult Social Care said the impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health and general wellbeing was recognised. They were keen to look at this as some residents were suffering from Long COVID-19, which would have an impact on their lives for a substantial amount of time. It was noted that the mental health setting would be receiving additional investment.

The Director of Public Health advised that a large amount of work had been undertaken to look at post-COVID health issues, particularly with regard to mental health, and other chronic conditions such as cancer, diabetes and obesity. It was noted that issues, such as cancer screenings being paused, had been discussed at meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Board. Data indicated that there had been a significant impact on drug and alcohol services, with both self-referrals and referrals from GP's having increased, and the Contained Management Outbreak fund had been used to boost this service. Members were advised that a Mental Health Strategy was being developed jointly with the CCG, and a specific item on mental health services would be presented at the February meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board. It was highlighted that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment would be reviewed in terms of how the priority areas had been affected by COVID-19. The Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board advised Members that the Council's 'Don't Wait to Lose Weight' campaign had again been relaunched to try and help mitigate some of the effects of COVID-19. It was noted that around 20% of those who had contracted COVID-19 were still suffering from the serious impact three months on, and it was predicted that the population would be living alongside the virus for at least the next five years.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

37 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORTS

The Committee considered the following reports where the Adult Care and Health Portfolio Holder was recommended to take a decision.

A CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2ND QUARTER 2020/21

Report FSD20098

On 18th November 2020, the Leader received a report summarising the current position on capital expenditure and receipts following the 2nd quarter of 2020/21, and agreed a revised Capital Programme for the four-year period 2020/21 to 2023/24. The Committee considered a report highlighting changes agreed by the Executive and Leader in respect of the Capital Programme for the Adult Care and Health Portfolio.

The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing advised Members that the main item within the Adult Care and Health Portfolio Capital Programme was the learning disability element. The Head of Complex and Long-Term Commissioning noted that a programme of work relating to day services would be created. Over the coming months, the spend of capital would follow this programme, and would be aligned with the other work being undertaken around day services.

A Member noted that a care homes option appraisal had been included in the capital budget for the previous year, but a decision had been taken not to progress with the review. With regards to the increased costs of residential care, it was questioned what alternatives had been considered. The Director of Adult Social Care said that it was not anticipated that the borough would be short of provision over the next couple of years. Sadly, there were a large number of vacancies following COVID-19 deaths, and as such it was not recommended for the Local Authority to revisit this plan in the near future.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder be recommended to note the changes agreed by the Leader on 18th November 2020.

B ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO DRAFT BUDGET 2021/22

Report FSD21006

The Committee considered a report setting out the draft Adult Care and Health Portfolio Budget for 2020/21, which incorporated future cost pressures, planned mitigation measures and savings from transformation and other budget options which were reported to the Council's Executive on 13th January 2021. Members were requested to provide their comments on the proposed savings and identify any further action to be taken to reduce cost pressures facing the Local Authority over the next four years. The Chairman noted that there was an extensive list of influences which may impact on the budget.

A Member noted that with regards to increased costs, a rate of 1-1.5% had been allocated to the Adult Social Care budget and queried why this was lower than the overall increase to the Council's budget of 2%. The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing advised that the Director of Finance's report to the Executive assumed contract price increases of 2% inflation across the Council, however it was usual practice for a lower amount to be allocated to the portfolios based on the current CPI level. It was highlighted that all portfolios had been allocated the same percentage increase of between 1-1.5%. The remainder of the inflation amount remained in Central Contingency, which could be drawn down if departments incurred increased inflationary pressures during the year.

The Member further noted that the Shared Lives service was an excellent programme, but as there appeared to be no increase in the numbers on stream, questioned how savings of £0.5m would be achieved. The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing acknowledged that so far this year, there had been not been an increase in uptake. This was partly due to staffing issues, which had been outside of the department's control, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there was now a strong plan in place to increase uptake going forward. The Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health highlighted that the Information Briefing provided to the meeting had included a business case for the Shared Lives programme. It was intended to enhance the recruitment process and develop a more robust

process for identifying people to provide support. Reassurance was given that this had been carefully considered, and it was anticipated that an improved service would be delivered, with more people willing to take on the role of a Shared Lives carer.

With regards to a question relating to the implementation of savings previously deferred, the Director of Adult Social Care noted that these were saving included in previous years with no clear plans to deliver them. This was now being corrected, and saving targets were built into the budget, and the directorate were working hard to build robust plans to provide these savings. Members were assured that there was now an “owner” for each saving target, and regular monitoring place to look at their delivery. In response to a further question regarding the strength-based provision, the Director of Adult Social Care reminded Members that they had previously been advised of the role out of a new approach. The directorate would be working with social workers and providers to build on people’s strengths and utilise support, rather than just provide services that were static. This work was reflected in the saving, as was the retendering of the home care services which would take a reablement approach to work with providers and ensure they had targets to reduce the ongoing demand for services. The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing highlighted that further details regarding these savings would be included in the regular budget monitoring reports that would be provided to the Committee in the new financial year, and would show any progress made towards delivering them.

A Member noted the reference made in the report to the effect of ongoing population increases and questioned whether current figures should be used. The Assistant Director for Strategy, Performance and Corporate Transformation said there were a number of sources used to gather an understanding of the population. The GLA produced a London-wide prediction based on the number of households in each borough, and Adult Social Care used ‘POPPI’ and ‘PANSI’ data sources, which provided information related to older people. Locally, there was also a 3 to 5-year trend for Adult Social Care, which was also used to make predictions and assumptions, and more recently they had been looking at information around hospital discharges. They had worked with health partners to look at live data relating to the flow of hospital discharges; the proportion that were likely to require support; and any impact on budgets.

In relation to the credit figure of £140k included in the draft revenue budget under the heading of Public Health, a Member questioned whether this money should be spent to help address the ongoing health issues mentioned earlier in the meeting. The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing advised that the Public Health budget was still ringfenced, and that the credit budget of £140k was controllable budget which was effectively used to cover some of the corporate overheads. A Member commented that they were unable to see how the savings within the Public Health budget could be achieved, even if they were overheads. As the budget was ringfenced, it was considered that all this money would be required, and possibly more.

Following the meeting, the Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing confirmed that there were no additional savings in 2021-22 in Public Health, and the £140k credit controllable budget was the same as the current 2020-21 budget.

The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing informed Members that due to the degree of uncertainty, an allocation of £1.4m had been included within the Council's Central Contingency which would be available to help address the long-term impact of COVID-19 on Adult Social Care budgets for 2021-22. Government grant funding of £7.8m for COVID pressures had also been announced, which it was noted could increase.

In response to a question, the Director of Adult Social Care said that she would agree that Adult Social Care was underfunded at a national level. However, the directorate was still required to take responsibility to help manage the Council's budget. The demand on this was growing, due to the complexity of the young people coming from children's services into adult services, highlighting the need to ensure best use of the resources available.

A Member noted that there was an anticipated increase in demand for memory and cognition services. This was to be offset by an equivalent level of savings, and it was questioned how these would be made. The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing advised that this had been requested to show the increase in complexity of the care required. This growth was highlighted, but also recognised that the service was managing to mitigate the pressure within budget. It was requested that Members be provided with a further update on how this figure was calculated.

In response to questions from a Member, the Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing highlighted that in relation to the overspends being funded in the budget, was the projected full year effect of this year's overspend. This included some of the impact of COVID-19, but as the ultimate long-term impact was not yet known, some funding had been kept in contingency. The overspends that had occurred this year were not related to COVID, and were underlying budget pressures that had arisen due to the high number of new clients, particularly in learning disability and mental health services. It was noted that for learning disability services, work was undertaken early in the year to project growth based on the transition register. However, this year there had been a number of additional clients that had not been included on this list which had caused an in-year overspend. The impact on the budget for 2021-22 would be significantly higher, as the service would have these clients from the beginning of the year, and therefore the full year effect of the overspend was included in the 2021-22 budget growth allocations.

The Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing noted they were aware that there would likely be increased spending due to the impact of COVID-19. However, at this point in time, it was not something that could easily be quantified. There had sadly been a significant number of deaths as a result of COVID-19, which would reduce some of the spend on budgets. Due to this

uncertainty, the impact on Adult Social Care was not known so money had been kept in Central Contingency, and could be drawn once the pressures became clear.

With regards to the Transformation Programme, the Head of Finance for Adults, Health and Housing advised that all of the £1.2m savings in the current years' budget were included in the baseline budget for 2021-22. Currently, not all savings had been achieved, which had been reported through budget monitoring reports and was mainly due to the impact of COVID-19. Work was ongoing, and a number were on target to be fully achieved for next year's budget. For 2021-22, only a corporate transformation saving relating to training had been included – no additional transformation savings had been included for Adult Social Care, however mitigation savings had been identified. Work was continuing to identify future transformation savings, and they would be considered for future budget reports.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The financial forecast for 2021/21 to 2024/25 be noted;**
- ii) Members' comments on the initial draft Adult Care and Health Portfolio budget 2021/22 as a basis for setting the 2021/22 budget be noted; and,**
- iii) Members' comments on the initial draft Adult Care and Health Portfolio budget 2021/22 be provided to the meeting of the Council's Executive on 10th February 2021.**

38 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF EXECUTIVE REPORTS

A DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO APPROVE CONTRACT EXTENSIONS

Report ACH21-008

At its meeting on the 24th November 2020, the Committee had been provided with a Leader decision Contract Award report for pre-decision scrutiny. The report (ACH20-067) concerned the award of contract for the Direct Payments and Payroll Support Service contract. It recommended an award of contract for a period of five years, with an option to extend for up to two years. The estimated annual value of the contract was £202k, with the estimated value of the initial contract term being £1,010k and the estimated value of the extension period being £404k (estimated whole life value of £1,414k).

The report had recommended that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Adult Social Care to approve the extension option in due course, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder and relevant officers as determined by the Contract Procedure Rules. Members had queried the request for delegated authority for the extension option. In response, the Leader approved the

award of contract, but deferred a decision on the delegation of authority for the extension option to allow further investigation into the circumstances under which such authority was routinely delegated to officers, and therefore a report had been provided to the meeting.

The Assistant Director for Governance and Contracts noted that delegated authority was not an assumed, and it was a Member decision which must be requested at the point of Contract Award and the decision maker, whether at Portfolio Holder or Executive level, must specifically grant approval. If approved, scrutiny could still take place via various methods. Contracts with a whole life value of over £500k should be reported to Members on an annual basis which, if performance suggested, could also prompt a referral back to Members for extension options in the future. Any delegated authority was subject to ensuring that a contract extension was taken several months before its end date so that alternative action was possible.

If a contract was not adhering to KPI's, a Member questioned if it was correctly assumed that it would not be extended. The Assistant Director for Governance and Contracts advised that underperformance on a contract would be looked at on a case by case basis, as it depended on the nature of the underperformance. For any extension where there was delegated authority, it needed to be taken in sufficient time to consider all factors and it would also be subject to consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder and key officers. A governance process took place in the background, and a Gateway Report was required to justify the business case to enact the extension. Contract Database reports were provided on a quarterly basis, in which a summary was provided, and actions proposed for any contract coming towards its end. It could also be raised with the Chairman and Portfolio Holder at any point if there was a contract which Members would like brought back for scrutiny.

RESOLVED that:

- i) The report be noted; and,**
- ii) The Executive be recommended to approve the deferred recommendation in Report ACH20-067 (Direct Payments Support and Payroll Contract Award), specifically the granting of delegated authority to the Director of Adult Services to apply the extension option for this contract, subject to agreement with the Portfolio Holder and relevant officers as determined by the Contract Procedure Rules.**

39 ANNUAL ACS DEBT REPORT

Report ACH21-005

The Committee considered a report providing an update on the current level of Adult Care Services (ACS) debt, and the action being taken to reduce the

level of long-term debt. The Assistant Director for Exchequer Services noted that since the report had been written, the overall debt figure (£15.18m for ACS Invoices and Domiciliary Care) had decreased by £5.73m as at the end of December 2020.

Domiciliary Care debt had increased by £350k when compared to September 2019, which was partly due to an increase in fees, which were reviewed each year. Over the last three years, there had been above inflation increases in the charges due to the impact of the National Living Wage and the continued freeze in the cost of the living allowance (known as the Minimum Income Guarantee) for adults receiving Domiciliary Care. The COVID-19 pandemic had also had an impact, due to recovery action having to be suspended. The Local Authority was unable to take legal action, and although recovery letters were issued, they were required to make more favourable arrangements than they would usually allow.

As at 30th September 2020, there had been a large outstanding debt owed by the Clinical Commissioning Groups, however the Assistant Director for Exchequer Services advised Members that this had now been cleared, which had contributed to the overall reduction in debt at the end of December 2020.

The Assistant Director for Exchequer Services informed Members that active steps had been taken with regards to debt prevention. In 2019, two new roles had been created, one in Social Services and the other in the Debt Recovery Team. They worked primarily with clients who lacked capacity to manage their finances and who had difficulty paying their charges, which were areas identified as impacting on the build-up of debt. Some case studies had been provided, which highlighted the invaluable work being carried out by the Finance Care Manager Assistant and Visiting Recovery Office. For the six cases listed, £83.5k (78.51%) of the £106.3k debt outstanding had been paid following intervention by these officers. These roles were a bridge between care management, clients and finance in supporting service users, and/or family members, to resolve debt issues quickly.

A Member noted that as there were a number of specialist legal firms who assisted relatives to evade financial responsibilities for family members with a view to maximising estates, it was queried if a specialist legal adviser was used to seek debt recovery. The Assistant Director for Exchequer Services responded that there were internal legal advisers, and external legal advice was also sought, particularly in relation to debtor estates. There had been a number of successful cases where external legal advisers had been used to take possession of, and sell, properties in order to satisfy the debt owed to the Council.

RESOLVED that the level of Adult Care Services debt over a year old, and the action being taken to reduce this sum, be noted.

40 BROMLEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Report ACH20-065

The Committee considered an overview of the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board's (BSAB) Annual Report 2019/20.

The Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager advised Members that under the S43 (1) of the Care Act 2014, the Local Authority was required to establish a Safeguarding Adults Board. The primary objective of the Board was to help and protect adults in Bromley, by co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of Board partners. The Board had an unrestricted remit in what it was able to do to achieve its objectives.

The Board was required, under Schedule 2 (4) the Care Act 2014 to produce an annual report outlining its achievements and those of its members in relation to the Board's strategic objectives. The report covered the period from April 2019 to March 2020. It was noted that the Board was also required to develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they would meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies would contribute to these. A three-year strategy for 2020-23 had been developed in September 2019. Section 44 of the Act required the Board to publish the findings and recommendations from any Safeguarding Adults Reviews undertaken. The Board took the decision in February 2019 to commission a SAR related to a care home in the borough, the completion of which was still ongoing.

A Member stated that although very thorough and useful, the report was quite long, and enquired if a summary or easy-read version would be produced, particularly for adults with learning disabilities. The Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager advised that this had already been pre-empted, and discussions were taking place with regards to producing an easy-read version which could be widely distributed.

In response to a further question, the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board Manager said that they were mindful of the numerous implications that the COVID-19 pandemic was having. Work was being undertaken with all agencies to find ways of engaging and interacting, where possible, with residents that were isolating, or feeling isolated.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Councillor David Jefferys, Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board confirmed that the BSAB Annual Report 2019/20 had been presented at its December 2020 meeting.

RESOLVED that the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board's 2019/20 Annual Report be noted.

**41 CONTRACTS REGISTER AND CONTRACTS DATABASE
(PART 1)**

Report ACH21-012

The Committee considered an extract from the November 2020 Contracts Register for detailed scrutiny by the PDS Committee. Members noted that the Contracts Register contained in Part 2 of the agenda included a commentary on each contract.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**42 QUESTIONS ON THE ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PDS
INFORMATION BRIEFING**

The Adult Care and Health PDS Information Briefing comprised four reports:

- Local Account 2019-20
- Annual Monitoring Report – Direct Payments Support and Payroll Service
- Annual Monitoring Report – Integrated Community Equipment Service
- Shared Lives Business Case

RESOLVED that the Information Briefing be noted.

**43 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)
(VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF
INFORMATION ACT 2000**

RESOLVED that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business listed below as it was likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries
Refer to matters involving exempt information**

**44 EXEMPT MINUTES OF ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PDS
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2020**

RESOLVED that the exempt minutes of the Adult Care and Health PDS Committee meeting held on 24th November 2020 be agreed, and signed as a correct record.

45 CONTRACTS REGISTER AND CONTRACTS DATABASE (PART 2)

Report ACH21-012

A Member noted that the Contracts Register and Contracts Database were beneficial but considered that the reports did not appear to be doing what it had hoped they would. An example was that over half of the contracts had their procurement status flagged as 'red', which implied there were issues, however it was often that they were just nearing renewal. The document did not facilitate looking at contracts in any depth, which in the past had not allowed sufficient time to debate possible extensions or procurement options. It was suggested that a review of how the register was used should be undertaken.

The Assistant Director for Governance and Contracts advised that there were two risk statuses included in the register – an overall risk status, based on its value or the nature of provider; and a procurement status, which indicated how soon a contract would be coming to an end. It was noted that even if action had been taken by the contract owner, it still was shown as 'red', which could give an inaccurate perception to Members. Internal discussions had been taking place regarding how to present the risk rating so as not to cause undue alarm.

With regards to the comments included in the report, the Assistant Director for Governance and Contracts said that a standard format was used for the commentary, the nature of which had not changed. Commentary could be limited by space, however, they included a timetable for action; what the next decision would be; who would make it; and an indication of when it would be made. It was noted that every contract over £500k was subject to an annual monitoring report, which set out the progress of its delivery and gave early indication of the plans for the contract.

A Member considered that the issues highlighted should be referred to the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee, asking them to undertake a review of the document. Following a brief discussion, Members agreed to this suggestion.

RESOLVED that:

- i) the report be noted; and**
- ii) a request be made to the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee to undertake a review of the Contracts Register.**

The Meeting ended at 8.28 pm

Chairman

ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PDS COMMITTEE 20th January 2021

WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE ADULT CARE AND HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Written Question to the Adult Care and Health Portfolio Holder received from Chloe-Jane Ross

- 1) What initiatives are the council undertaking (or providing direct funding for) to tackle loneliness especially during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Reply:

The Council is committed to doing all it can to support people who may feel isolated or lonely as we recognise the impact that loneliness can have on our residents. This work, led by the Executive Assistant to the Leader, Councillor Aisha Cuthbert, was initiated in the Spring 2019 with the launch of "The Tackling Loneliness" initiative in June 2019 via a seminar hosted by the Council during loneliness awareness week.

For those that are eligible for council services following assessment, this may be funded directly or services may be provided as part of a support package. For those who are not assessed as eligible for social care support the Council has worked with voluntary organisations within Bromley to publicise and grow the support they offer.

The piece of work with our third sector/voluntary partners has continued to be taken forwards by Councillor Aisha Cuthbert since the seminar in June 2019. Prior to the pandemic, Cllr Cuthbert was working closely with Community Links Bromley to bring together like-minded charities in order to raise the profile of services for Bromley residents experiencing loneliness or social isolation from all different backgrounds and walks of life. This continued via a virtual panel 'Tackling Loneliness' event, hosted by the Council via WebEx during the midst of the pandemic in June 2020. At this meeting the panel, representing various organisations in Bromley, discussed what they were doing to support residents during the Covid crisis taking into account the fact that as a result of the pandemic, and due to safety reasons, services that provided support to groups of people had to close to face-to-face activities and events had to be stopped.

Agencies across the Borough identified that they had been working to deliver their services in a different way including online and through digital platforms, also via phone calls, Royal Mail or appropriately distanced visits to ensure that they were still able to reach out to Bromley residents.

A sum of £170k from Direct Line was allocated to the Council to support Bromley's voluntary organisations whose services were impacted by Covid-19, as well as £15k which Cllr Cuthbert helped to secure personally from Clarion Futures. Community Links Bromley was responsible for coordinating and awarding the funding based on applications from a wide variety of local organisations.

The Council has itself also offered direct support to organisations affected by the pandemic, by various means including advancing payments of bills and by using government grants to offset additional expenditure. The Council has also used a large number of volunteers to support people who have felt isolated due to the restrictions and is currently working on developing a befriending service looking towards our volunteer cohort.