

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| REPORT TITLE: | Discharge of Roles and Responsibilities since the last meeting of the Council |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | Councillor Tim Swift MBE |
| AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: | Leader of the Council Public Health and Cohesion |
| DATE: | 9th February 2022 |

Cabinet decisions

Cabinet has met twice since the last full Council meeting and there are several items for approval at Council. In addition to these, Cabinet –

- Received both the six month performance report and report of progress against Cabinet priorities;
- Agreed to procuring a new contract for installing and maintain stairlifts;
- Approved a coordinated and targeted approach to supporting communities in North Halifax;
- Approved the annual Health and Safety report;
- Agreed various land acquisition orders and powers required to progress the development of Elland Station and the associated access package; and
- Supported a ward councillor request to allow time for community organisations to put forward a plan for community ownership of the Foundry Street centre in Sowerby Bridge.

This of course in addition to the considerable amount of work involved in preparing and bringing forward the proposals for the Council's revenue budget.

Vision Zero

In December, I attended the first meeting of the Vision Zero Board, set up by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and West Yorkshire leaders to pursue the aim of tackling road safety and reducing road deaths and serious injuries.

Ash Green School

I know everyone will have been shocked and concerned by the recent fire at Ash Green School. Everyone associated with the school has been amazing in the way they have responded to this crisis – as has the wider community. And big thanks to our officers who have gone above and beyond in supporting the school and helping to put

plans in place to make sure the children don't miss out.

Senior Management Changes

As most members will know, Nigel Broadbent is sadly retired as Chief Finance Officer at the end of March. We have recently been through a recruitment process and I am pleased that his successor will be Chris Forrester, who is joining us on 28th March.

I am sorry also that Lesley Bowyer and Rob Murray, our hard working Assistant Directors in the Children's Services directorate, are both retiring later this year. We are in the process of recruiting to these important positions.

Queen's Jubilee

Sunday marked the 70th Anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen's accession to the throne and a remarkable 70 years of service. Thank you to Halifax Minster for hosting a special Choral Evensong to mark the occasion.

In sympathy

I was sorry to hear of the recent deaths of Richard Marshall from Mytholmroyd, and of Tony Mahon the husband of former Halifax Labour MP Alice. Deepest sympathies go to the families and friends of Both.

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT

Update for Full Council- Councillor Tim Swift – February 2022

Covid-19

The current wave of Covid-19 driven by the Omicron variant led to the largest number of Calderdale residents testing positive and needing hospital care in the whole pandemic. A combination of vaccination uptake, improved treatments and Omicron leading to less severe illness for most people, meant that thankfully despite the enormous number of cases, a much smaller proportion led to serious illness requiring intensive care and deaths. However, the impact that the Omicron wave had on the local health and care system was significant. January saw more outbreaks in care settings than ever before, and the number of people with COVID-19 in hospital remains high when compared to previous waves of the pandemic. This takes its toll on our health and care workforce and volunteers who continue to work exceptionally hard to protect those at greatest risk of serious illness if they contract COVID-19.

It appears that in Calderdale the Omicron wave peaked for cases on 4th January and for hospitalisation a week later. Cases have reduced since then, although the reduction has slowed in recent days. At the time of writing, the reduction in the number of people

in our local hospital with COVID has stopped and remains around 80.

The Omicron wave has also impacted on children. In the autumn term, it was largely the Delta variant of COVID-19 that was spreading in schools. On the return to school in January, the Omicron variant spread quickly, particularly in primary school aged children, who have yet to be eligible for vaccination. In common with the rest of England, Calderdale schools are experiencing an unprecedented number of outbreaks, which appear to have peaked at 183 outbreaks in 77 settings on 28th January. Our education settings continue to work hard to manage outbreaks so that as many children as possible can be in school.

The Government Plan B restrictions were lifted on Thursday 27 January, an important step towards recovery from the pandemic. Through 4 waves of the pandemic, we've learned that the situation is constantly changing and often Covid-19 cases and issues in Calderdale are different to the national picture. This means we all constantly need to adapt the way we work and deliver services, so that we balance risks and benefits. The lifting of national restrictions and associated Covid rules is a good time to reset our approach, as we learn to live with Covid. Living with Covid doesn't mean ignoring it, so it is important that each of us is Covid-aware now and in the future. We are working with employees and communities to explore what a Covid-aware Calderdale means in practice.

At the time of the 2 year anniversary of the UK's first COVID-19 case, the UK Chief Medical Officers and the Presidents of the Faculty of Public Health and Association of Directors of Public Health, have written to all Local Authority public health teams to thank them for all their work over the last 2 years to protect the public from harm from the virus.

Long Covid

The public health team have undertaken a review of Long Covid which identifies the evidence about Long Covid and its impacts on people's lives, the scale of Long Covid in Calderdale and the existing services in place. It also uses evidence and good practice from other areas to highlight developments that could be put in place to improve outcomes for people affected. The review highlights that there is still much that is not yet known about Long Covid. The review estimates that 4,600 Calderdale residents have Long Covid and 950 have severe Long Covid. Women and middle-aged people appear to be at greater risk from Long Covid. A task and finish group is being established involving a range of relevant partners to develop and implement a Long Covid strategy in Calderdale to ensure people affected by Long Covid have adequate support that meets their needs, this will be informed by Calderdale residents with lived experience of Long Covid.

Wellbeing Strategy

Calderdale Health and Wellbeing Board approved a refocused [Wellbeing Strategy](#) at its meeting in December. The overall purpose of the strategy is to enable Calderdale residents to live a larger life, recovering our health and wellbeing following the pandemic. Like the previous strategy, it takes a life course approach and includes one

priority outcome for each life stage, with an indicator which will be measured to monitor progress.

- Starting well – Children are ready for school
- Developing well – Every 15-year-old has hope and aspiration
- Living and working well - Working age people have good emotional health and wellbeing and fewer suicides
- Ageing well - Older people have strong social networks and live in vibrant communities

Health and Wellbeing Board partners are now working together to put in place a streamline delivery and governance system to oversee and co-ordinate multi-agency action to achieve the outcomes in the strategy. This includes a refreshed approach to Calderdale's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which will focus initially on data, evidence and public insight about the four Wellbeing Strategy priority outcomes, to inform the development of a delivery programme for each.

Pharmacy services

Calderdale's health and wellbeing board is also currently undertaking a Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA). This is a statutory responsibility and describes the current and potential future need. It is used by NHS England and local commissioning bodies to inform decisions around pharmacy provision. As part of this we are inviting views from the public on pharmacy services in Calderdale. All our residents are invited to take part. To do the survey, which takes around 10 minutes to complete, please visit [Public Survey](#). The closing date is 11th February 2022.

Children's Public Health

Starting Well

Women who are more than 10 weeks pregnant and families with a child under 4, may be entitled to get help to buy healthy food and milk under the Healthy Start scheme. The scheme is changing so that it becomes a digital service and with a pre-paid card and the previous paper application forms will not be accepted from the end of March 2022.

To support this change, the Public Health team and Local Health Visiting provided update training sessions for front line practitioners during January to promote the Healthy Start Scheme and the Healthy Start Vitamins Scheme and the changes to the application process. The training has been attended by staff and volunteers from Children's Centres, Early Years settings, Health Visiting, Voluntary Sector, Housing, Health Early Years Support and the Benefits Team. A further training session is

planned for the 16th February.

To support the change in those that are digitally excluded, 37 free smartphones loaded with unlimited calls, unlimited texts and 6GB of data each month, have been provided to Health Visiting and Children's Centres to distribute to families with children aged under 5. The phones have been provided by Hubbud a national charity, through the Council's Digital Inclusion team. In Calderdale, the offer of free smartphones is being targeted at families in the early years, who are digitally excluded and need online access to apply for the Healthy Start Scheme.