

Minutes of the Meeting of the HEALTH LIAISON PANEL held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 8 November 2022

PRESENT -

Councillor Christine Cleveland (Chair); Councillors Liz Frost, Bernice Froud, Debbie Monksfield, Chris Webb and Peter Webb

In Attendance: Councillor Rachel Turner (Health Champion) (Reigate and Banstead Borough Council), Vicky Rushworth (Healthwatch Surrey – Communications and Involvement Officer), Virginia Fenton (Healthwatch Surrey – East Surrey Volunteer Group Chair)

Absent: Councillor Graham Jones

Officers present: Rachel Kundasamy (Health and Wellbeing Officer), Serena Powis (Community and Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer) and Gayle Osbourne (Community Development Officer)

5 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Health Liaison Panel held on 5 July 2022 were reviewed by the Panel. The Panel agreed that they were a true record and authorised the Chair to sign them.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in respect of the agenda.

7 HEALTHWATCH SURREY UPDATES

The Chair welcomed the visitors and invited Vicky Rushworth (Healthwatch Surrey – Communications and Involvement Officer) ('VR') to speak.

VR gave a presentation on "What is Healthwatch Surrey?" – an organization funded by Surrey County Council that operates on a completely independent basis and covers the whole of Surrey. She explained that this year is their 10th anniversary year. VR explained how they currently undertaking a rolling programme of "Community Engagement" across the County.

The Chair invited the next guest speaker, Virginia Fenton (Healthwatch Surrey – East Surrey Volunteer Group Chair) ('VF'), to speak.

VF explained that volunteers allow access for patients to ‘marry-up’ to people who could help solve their problems. They have a great range of volunteers and enhance the value of what Healthwatch has to offer the residents of Surrey. The Community Engagement they undertake is “Place Based”.

A Councillor made an enquiry regarding the powers of the organization. VR responded, saying they employ 17 people, 2 of whom are contracted out to other areas, and have 40 volunteers. VR said she did not have the budget figures to hand and would provide the information at a later time.

A Councillor asked if issues are audited and enquired as to what the largest issues currently are? VR replied that the lack of finance in social care is their biggest issue and discharging of people safely.

An invited attendee stated that 1 in 6 people do not have access to IT and that “Face to Face” must be seen as a priority. They stated that they had heard of cases of it taking 5 weeks for people to get a GP appointment. They enquired as to what Healthwatch does to help these people and deal with the issues of mental health and suicide. VR said that the voices of these people are being heard by the GP surgeries and that the GPs are feeding back what the people are saying. She said that Healthwatch is looking at raising awareness of these issues for GP services.

At this point in the proceedings, a non-member Councillor in attendance at the meeting requested to ask a question to the speaker. The Chair of the Panel informed the councillor that as they were not a member of the Panel or a nominated representative to it, this was not permitted

A Councillor asked what work Healthwatch does with other charities. VR said that Healthwatch work out of ‘Astolat House’, which is the main office location given by Surrey County Council to voluntary organisations and charities, so they work closely with other community partners due to their location.

A Councillor suggested that Healthwatch could set up links and work closer with the Citizens Advice Bureau’s across Surrey, as they are aware of Healthwatch and might be able to help. This suggestion was noted by the Panel.

A Councillor asked what support is offered to carers aged under 16? VR said that Healthwatch support over 18 Carers, but won’t ignore messages from Young Carers.

A Councillor asked if Healthwatch Surrey do any cross-county analysis with other Healthwatch areas? VR said she was not aware of what other counties do.

A Councillor asked what young influencers they have and how to get young people engaged with Healthwatch? VR said that they have links to organisations that attract young people – such as university students.

A Councillor asked what Councillors and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (‘EEBC’) can do to assist in raising the profile of Healthwatch Surrey? VR said that Healthwatch have leaflets that they can send to EEBC so that EEBC can

help to tell people about what Healthwatch do. VR says that Healthwatch will be more than happy to come along and talk to resident groups.

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE CLEVELAND (CHAIR)