

REPORT TO COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

CONSULTATION RESPONSE - NHS GRAMPIAN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE 2022-28

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 This report details Aberdeenshire Council's response to Stage 1 of the NHS Grampian Plan for the Future 2022-28 consultation which starts to look to the future and plan how NHS Grampian will rebuild healthcare services after Covid-19.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Consider and approve Aberdeenshire Council's response to the Stage 1 consultation (Appendix 1 to this Report).**

3 Purpose and Decision Making Route

- 3.1 NHS Grampian invited individuals and organisations to participate in Stage 1 of its [Plan for the Future 2022-28](#). The aims of the first stage of engagement are to share what NHS Grampian is aiming to do and why, to find out what matters to individuals and organisations about health and care services and to discuss and identify opportunities for change.
- 3.2 The formal consultation opened on 1 July 2021 with a closing date of 31 August 2021. NHS Grampian has agreed to a short extension to allow submission following consideration and approval by Committee.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 NHS Grampian is a key partner of the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership. As such, it was decided that Aberdeenshire Council would submit a response, led by the council's Corporate Policy and Strategic Community Planning Team. The [public engagement pack](#) was emailed to Chief Officers on 5 July 2021, with a response date of 14 July 2021. A corporate response has been prepared based on feedback (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 Sixteen responses were received from officers within Education and Children's Services, Live Life Aberdeenshire, Transportation, Customer & Digital Services, Finance and Area Teams.
- 4.3 The Council is facing many similar challenges as NHS Grampian in terms of rebuilding our Services as a result of Covid, in particular restarting services that were stopped and the impact this has had on our residents, the impact of delivering services differently on our staff and the inequalities in our communities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Many of the strains

on NHS Grampian services are shared by Council services, for example our ageing population, the mental health crisis and obesity.

- 4.4 It is reassuring that the Council shares many of the same aims and ambitions as NHS Grampian: to work together with our residents and partners to design and deliver high quality services that have the greatest impact on our communities. Additionally we recognise the opportunities identified by NHS Grampian, including greater use of technology and the opportunity to build on positive changes that have been made to service delivery during the pandemic.
- 4.5 The Council is supportive of the approach that has been developed in terms of shaping the NHS Grampian Plan for the Future and looks forward to working with NHS colleagues to continue to build on the strong partnership that has been enhanced during the pandemic.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

- 5.1 This report is relevant to the Health and Wellbeing and Resilient Communities priorities.

<i>Pillar</i>	<i>Priority</i>
<i>Our People</i>	<i>Education Health & Wellbeing</i>
<i>Our Environment</i>	<i>Infrastructure Resilient Communities</i>
<i>Our Economy</i>	<i>Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation</i>

- 5.2 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation is agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		x	
Staffing		x	
Equalities		x	
Fairer Scotland Duty		x	
Town Centre First		x	
Sustainability		x	
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing		x	

- 5.3 An integrated impact assessment is not required because this is a response to a consultation and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

- 5.4 The following risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level:

[Working with other organisations](#) - this is controlled through the Partnership Working Policy, Partnership Risk Registers, and Procurement Policy

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to consider and take a decision on this item in terms of Section D.4.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as it relates to the Committee's power to approve a Council response to any external consultation on any policy matter falling within the delegation of the Committee.

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31 August 2021

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 Aberdeenshire Council Consultation Response

NHS Grampian Plan for the Future 2022-2028 – Stage 1 Consultation

Qu 1 - Can you think of 3 things that you liked or appreciated about any health and care services you have used, or were available, in Grampian before COVID-19?

The strong partnership that has been established between the Council and NHS Grampian has ensured a cohesive approach to service delivery across many areas including multi-agency initiatives, community planning work, education and children's services (e.g. pupils with additional support needs and special schools), occupational therapy, housing and mental health support. The joint commitment to reducing child poverty & the growing engagement in the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities (TPI) agenda is welcome, as is the support to deliver an information & advice pilot within the Peterhead & Fraserburgh practices lead to changing practice & improved services and outcomes and the local availability and range of services & support available for clients & communities.

There has been an increase in adult support and protection referrals during the pandemic, with vulnerable people's safety and wellbeing being supported as a priority by partnership working between Housing, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), NHS, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) and the voluntary sector. The work of the Adult Protection Committee has been critical in bringing partner agencies together.

In Aberdeenshire, the community hospitals managed by the Health and Social Care Partnership provide a valuable resource for residents to access important healthcare services locally, including rehabilitation and enablement, palliative care, GP acute as well as many outpatient clinics. These services are appreciated by our communities.

Partnership working has been evidenced in terms of delivering joint office space strategy. In respect of operational aspects of Housing service delivery, the interaction in respect of hospital discharge and identification of adaptations required to enable discharge is appreciated and valued, although this could be improved in some cases.

Qu 2 - Do you have any worries, concerns or disappointments about any health and care services that you have used, or were available, in Grampian before COVID-19?

Partnership working with the Council and Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) has been more critical during the pandemic and the approach has ensured that critical services continue to be delivered to our most vulnerable residents.

The innovative use of digital technologies to deliver services has been integral to the success of the approach. The Council shares concerns around the inequalities that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and the lockdown measures imposed, both

in terms of health inequality and digital exclusion. The Council would be keen to explore opportunities to reduce these inequalities in partnership with NHS Grampian colleagues. For example, Gypsy/Travellers experience the poorest health and wellbeing outcomes of any ethnic group and can benefit from greater access to health and social care services.

It is recognised that delays in treatment and the number of people living with diseases and long-term conditions has impacted on Council and HSCP staff and resources, as well as NHS Grampian, and the Council looks forward to identifying opportunities for joint working to alleviate these issues.

The shift of emphasis to prevention and empowering people to engage positively with their own care is welcome and aligns with the Health and Social Care Partnership's priorities.

Operationally, Housing experienced and continue to experience problems with Mental Health referrals due to a perceived lack of capacity.

Through the Tackling Poverty & Inequalities Partnership, concerns were raised in relation to people not being able to access medical appointments highlighting that not everyone was able to access appointments online or on the phone. There were some concerns raised in relation to individuals accessing mental health services as for some families/households there is no confidential space within their home where they could talk openly about their medical conditions.

Inequalities for those with a disability or long-term medical conditions were increased as care plans were reduced, or put on hold, which resulted in some people experiencing a deterioration in their condition more quickly than anticipated.

Lived experience –

“I normally go to a hospital which is about 7-8 miles from me, which is okay and easy to get to. Can get there and back by the time my son gets out of school. But now that hospital is closed so I have to go to one which is about 80 miles away there and back. Not to mention my son would have to take the day off school as there is no way I'd be back in time for him.”

“The doctors need to be more accessible to just help with mental health not just if the problem can be seen. My doctor family doc saw me when I lost my mum would give me a well needed hug which isn't allowed anymore and for a lone parent isolated no contact of anyone who care it be nice”

“Just wish they would realise not everyone has or knows how to use the internet. My Dad has a video call appointment and has no internet.”

Good quality, affordable housing is essential when looking at improved educational attainment or indeed health outcomes. This is often overlooked. Many tenants have multiple complex needs which require healthcare involvement. Housing is however, not always considered when looking at needs or it is considered at too late a stage.

Qu 3 - Can you think of 3 things that you liked or appreciated about any health and care services you have used, or have been available, in Grampian during COVID-19?

The solid, established partnership between the Council and NHS Grampian has been fundamental to the rollout of the vaccine programme in Aberdeenshire, particularly for hard-to-reach communities and the delivery of the Grampian Assistance Hub. Operationally, Housing benefited significantly from the Grampian Assistance Hub. With an early emphasis placed on contacting and supporting vulnerable groups, the ease of referral proved to be invaluable. The assistance that Housing was able to provide as a result was recognised by tenants in a satisfaction survey completed.

Innovative thinking in collaboration with Third Sector and other organisations has been key to the delivery of key services during Covid 19 and needs to be built on in terms of future working.

The provision of ongoing advice and support to all schools has been exemplary, particularly availability during both office hours and outwith hours. Partnership working to ensure there are clear procedures and processes to follow has been very helpful to all, as has the ability of staff to attend virtual meetings to offer support and advice for pupils.

The joint approach adopted in relation to the Health & Transport Action Plan delivered real benefit for our communities. This related to both safe use of transport (on Public Transport, funding for Spaces for People etc), but also supporting co-ordination of transport for NHS staff and patients via the jointly funded project THInC (Travel to Health & Social Care Information Centre), recruiting volunteer and maintaining dialogue between key partners.

The Aberdeenshire Care Home Providers Forum has enabled closer working with independent care home providers, with shared learning and good practice highlighted at weekly meetings organised by the Aberdeenshire Care Home Oversight Group, keeping residents and staff safe. Similarly, the Aberdeenshire Care at Home Assurance Group has enabled a forum for independent homecare providers to link in for weekly updates and sharing of best practice. Housing are connected to this forum for our Sheltered Housing complexes.

The NHS near me online system has been used to access financial support/ welfare rights services however the digital inclusion is still an issue.

Accessible, understandable information about Covid and how to protect each other has been positively received.

The roll out of vaccine at a community level has been positive.

Health services have been very helpful in dealing with localised outbreaks within homelessness accommodation

Qu 4 - Do you have any worries, concerns or disappointments about any health and care services that you have used, or have been available, in Grampian during COVID-19?

Whilst the growth of the use of online technology has been positive, we need to carefully consider digital exclusion and ensure no one is left behind. The focus on digital has made it more difficult for those who do not have digital capacity (either accessibility, affordability or confidence) to access services and there needs to be support to enable those who are currently digitally excluded to participate. Reduced physical contact and meetings with NHS Grampian has resulted in fewer public services carrying out checks on vulnerable children in Aberdeenshire which is a concern.

The need for strengthened participation at strategic level in developing Aberdeenshire's Digital Strategy and Office Space Strategy programmes. Current pressures are recognised, but the need for developing strategies beyond the immediate crisis is necessary in order to shape plans and secure budgets for the longer term and the Council looks forward to developing these in partnership with NHS colleagues.

The Council would welcome an opportunity to capture some of the positive changes to service delivery and how the work of our services may support NHS ambitions – for example through the Live Life Aberdeenshire Respiratory Programme.

Waiting times and availability of face-to-face appointments is still a concern. TP&I partners are concerned that the positive partnership working with NHSG had been interrupted and the higher level of engagement often experienced may not be possible due to the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

There is a concern over the capacity of services to meet the growing needs of those whose health & wellbeing, especially mental health, has been affected by the pandemic. Partners are reporting more clients are feeling isolated or marginalised. There is an increase in harmful behaviour including increased number of those self-harming, increase usage of alcohol & drugs, and an increased number of clients who are anxious or scared to go out which has a negative effect on people's health & wellbeing.

Lived experience:

“NHS Grampian seem to forget not everyone have access to computers & internet or even know how to use these devices & nor does everyone have cars or access to vehicles to access certain service which has resulted in leaving even more people isolated. So as much as i understand the need for some of the changes.....”

It was apparent that there was a lack of consistency across different areas of Scotland. The Council's Housing Service experienced some unrealistic expectations around what could be provided. There was an assumption that housing would be

available on request, with little discussion around this. This was not the case across Scotland, and we are aware of other areas where communication was better.

Joint working was set aside in many cases. While that is understandable to some degree there is also benefit of collaborating in times of crisis.

Qu 5 - Thinking about the things that help to keep you (and those you care for) well and in good health, what are the 3 things most important things to help achieve this?

The Council has developed close partnership working with NHS Grampian which has provided a solid foundation for collaborative working and identification of improvement and transformation programmes. We have used our partnership approach with NHS Grampian and others to co-develop improved care pathways, to have seamless services reducing / removing time delays, with digital solutions and modern ways of working embedded across health and care service working practice.

The joint approach that has been established has allowed us to develop and implement a rights-based approach to planning and delivery. Partnership working has enabled early intervention that supports mental and physical wellbeing delivered with the person at the centre.

Evidence indicates that some of the things that will keep as well and in good health can be as simple as access to good quality, low-cost healthy food.

Access to low-cost recreational activities including swimming, team sports and exercise classes for children, young people, families and those with a range of abilities is also important as is support from specialist services such as health visitors, GP, outreach cancer nurses when required.

A multi-agency approach is essential; early involvement of key partners is critical particularly around hospital discharge which can be disjointed.

Qu 6 - Do you have any worries or concerns about your (or anyone you care for) health and wellbeing? If yes, what are these worries, concerns or disappointments about?

There is a need to ensure that we continue to develop partnership working and proper, meaningful collaboration and don't lose the progress and innovation that has been evidenced during the pandemic. Additional focus should be on reducing inequalities and preventing digital exclusion and early involvement of partners to ensure a truly collaborative approach. It is reassuring but not surprising that the challenges identified by NHS Grampian are shared by the Council and we look forward to working together to address these for the benefit of our communities.