

Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 13 July 2023 at. 6.00 p.m.

Conference room 2, Walsall Council.

Committee Members Present

Councillor K. Hussain (Chair)
Councillor V. Waters (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Gill
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor S.B. Hussain
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor R. K. Mehmi
Councillor A. Parkes
Councillor W. Rasab
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor P. Smith

Portfolio Holder – Adult Social Care

Councillor K. Pedley

Portfolio Holder – Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces

Councillor G. Flint

Officers

Walsall Council

K. Allward	Executive Director for Adult Social Care
S. Gunther	Director of Public Health
J. Thompson	Democratic Services Officer

01 Apologies

There were no apologies received for this meeting.

02 Substitutions

There were no substitutions for this meeting.

03 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting.

04 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

05 Minutes

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on the 6 April 2023 was submitted to the Committee for consideration. It was noted that Councillor W. Rasab was not included on listed apologies and that this would be amended.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 6 April 2023, a copy previously having been circulated, be amended to correct the list of apologies, approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

06 Areas of focus for 2023/24

At the invitation of Chair, the Executive Director for Adult Social Care went through a presentation on the directorate (see annexed)

At the end of the presentation the Chair invited Members of the Committee to ask questions on the presentation, some of the responses included:

- There had been increase the number of children moving into Adult Social Care;
- There had been an increase in the number of children moving into Adult Social Care with complex needs;
- The Council had vacancies within the Adult Social Care and 17 of these had recently been filled due to a large recruitment drive;
- The Adult Social Care Team at the Council was leaner than most other local authorities and produced good results;
- The vacancies with Adult Social Care had affected service delivery as only 67 percent of the annual reviews had been completed;
- There was currently a work force crisis within Adult Social Care;
- Information on Social Worker referrals for Adult Social Care would be shared with Members of the Committee;
- The Adult Social Care Team mostly worked from home, however, did attend the office when needed and for team meetings;
- The Fair of Cost of Care exercise from national Government was withdrawn, but due to the results of the Fair Cost of Care the Council had contributed an additional £5 million last year and planned to spend an additional £7 million next year;
- The Committee could be provided the cumulative impact of the Fair Cost of Care exercise;

- The Council did measure the amount of readmission to hospital from Adult Social Care using a national measure of 91 days;
- The Council was the best performer in relation to readmissions to hospital from Adult Social Care;
- The national benchmark at the 91-day measure was 74% of those in care since their discharge from hospital would be still at home and had not been readmitted into hospital. In the Borough the figure was 82%-84% for last year;
- The 91-day measure was flawed as it did not cover those who were not part of the Adult Social Care system and residents could have been admitted to the hospital within the 91-days but be at home at 91 days and thus their readmittance to hospital would not have been measured;
- There was an anticipated increase in nursing home and domiciliary care due to the Covid-19 Pandemic;
- Funding for Adult Social Care can come from client contributions, as this is a statutory requirement, and some can come from the NHS as part of joint funding arrangements;
- The Council was working to improve the speed of financial assessments of those who were required to contribute towards their care and was working to reduce the existing backlog;
- The Council was owed £9 million at the start of the year in client debt however this figure was flawed because many of the debtors would not have yet received a bill, there were changes to the amount being charged due to the changes in the cost of care and care needs and some would have their debt recalculated as their financial assessments were carried out;
- Only a small number of clients made up the debt that had yet to be paid;
- A report on debt in Adult Social Care would be presented to the Cabinet in the near future;
- The ongoing dispute with the ICB regarding outstanding Section 75 payments was complex and the Council was in conflict resolution with the ICB;
- The Council believed that to resolve the dispute they would have to enter into formal arbitration with the ICB;
- The Council had also put in a formal complaint to the ICB in relation to its proposed continuing care criteria and how it was being applied;
- The Council did use agency staff to fill vacancies, however, they were only used within the limits of the current staffing budget to avoid overspends;
- The overspend for the next year was predicted at £9 million and the council would be taking measures to mitigate this.

The Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Councillor K. Pedley, then set out his vision for the Committee. Councillor K. Pedley began by expounding that he believed that not as much attention had been paid to the 75-year

anniversary of Adult Social Care as had been paid to the NHS's and that he made no apologies for not increasing the Adult Social Care precept on Council Tax at the last budget setting. The Council was dealing with more complex needs and the Council had shown care to improve Adult Social Care and make it more efficient. The Council would focus on Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection readiness and ensure that care they Council provided was at least a rating of good. Councillor Pedley also stated that he would continue to pressure national government to for equivalent pay and funding as the NHS.

The Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces, Councillor G. Flint set out his vision for the Committee. The Council would be launching a new alcohol and drugs service and there would be a focus it during the municipal year. Moreover, the service would be moving into local family hubs, and these needed to be supported. Finally, the Council would be looking into social prescribing and how it can be standardised across the Borough.

In response to Members questions officers informed the Committee that it would be possible to provide the Committee with the percentage of council tax spent on Adult Social Care. Additionally, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and the Executive Director of Adult Social Care informed the Committee that they were both lobbying national government for additional funding and support for Adult Social Care.

The Director of Public Health informed the Committee that the ICB received funding for social prescribing and the Council also invested in it. The Council was looking at the wider offer it could provide on social prescribing.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Chair requested suggested items for the Committee work programme. The suggested items included:

- Primary Care Access – Update on GP telephone systems;
- Debt association within Adult Social Care;
- Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Programme;
- Budget Scrutiny;
- CQC Inspection Readiness;
- Outside Social Prescribing and its impact;
- Update on the Walsall Manor Hospital's Urgent Care Centre;
- Update on the planned move of the Midwifery Led Unit to the Manor Hospital and an update on neonatal services;
- CQC inspection update on the Manor Hospital;
- Update on elective care and waiting times.

The Chair then informed the Committee that he would like to form a working group on primary care access and GP services. The Democratic Services

Officer informed the Committee that there were resources issues within Democratic Services constraining the number of working groups that could be set up in the municipal year and that it was for the Scrutiny Overview Committee to decide on the topic of the working groups. The Committee's recommendations would be passed onto the next meeting of the Scrutiny Overview Committee at its next meeting in September 2023.

Resolved

- 1. The following items be agreed as the Committees Areas of Focus for 2022/23:**
 - a. Primary Care Access – Update on GP telephone systems;**
 - b. Debt association within Adult Social Care;**
 - c. Adult Social Care Continuous Improvement Programme;**
 - d. Budget Scrutiny;**
 - e. CQC Inspection Readiness;**
 - f. Outside Social Prescribing and its impact;**
 - g. Update on the Walsall Manor Hospital's Urgent Care Centre;**
 - h. Update on the planned move of the Midwifery Led Unit to the Manor Hospital and an update on neonatal services;**
 - i. CQC inspection update on the Manor Hospital;**
 - j. Update on elective care and waiting times.**
- 2. That the suggested items be thematically grouped.**
- 3. A copy of the completed work programme for the year be circulated to Members.**
- 4. That a working group on Primary Care Access and GP Services be recommended to the Scrutiny Overview Committee.**

07 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would take place on the 14 September 2023.

The meeting terminated at 7.32p.m.

Signed:

Date: