

SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Thursday 27th November 2018

Conference Room 2, Council House, Walsall

Committee Members Present

Councillor D. James (Chair)
Councillor B. Allen
Councillor G. Clarke
Councillor D. Coughlan
Councillor W. Rasab
Councillor J. Rochelle
Councillor H. Sarohi
Councillor I. Shires
Councillor V. Waters

Portfolio Holders Present

Councillor R. Martin – Adult Social Care

Officers Present

Walsall Council

Martin Thom – Head of Community Care
(Social Care)
Barbara Watt – Director of Public Health
Adrian Roche – Head of Social Inclusion (Public Health)
Emma Thomas - Public Health Intelligence Manger
Nikki Gough – Democratic Services Officer

33/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor T. Wilson, Councillor M Follows, Councillor S. Neville and John Taylor.

34/18 Substitutions

Councillor V. Waters substituted for Councillor M. Follows for the duration of the meeting.

35/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor B. Allen declared an interest in items as an employee of Walsall Healthcare Trust.

36/18 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

37/18 Minutes of previous meeting

The Committee considered the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2018.

Resolved

The minutes, as circulated, were agreed as a true and accurate record.

38/18 National Social Care Investment to ease winter pressures briefing

The Head of Community Care stated that Central Government had announced £240 million additional funding to councils across Adult Social Care services. The intention was that the funding to alleviate winter pressures on the National Health Service. Separate guidance had been issued providing areas for which the funding could be used. It was stated that Walsall was well placed to support a range of options in relation to discharge from hospital, as integrated teams already existed. The additional funding would allow this to be further developed alongside NHS colleagues. The exact conditions relating to the funding were not yet available.

A Member expressed concern that the success of the additional funding could be dependent on Walsall Healthcare Trust's performance. Members also suggested that appointment cancellations at Walsall Healthcare Trust put pressure on adult social care. The Head of Community Care informed the Committee that the previous winter and summer had been severe and there had been a spike in admissions. A Member expressed concern that Walsall Healthcare Trust discharge figures were not good and also that discharges were being made to the night shelter. The Chair stated that the opportunity to consider this at a future meeting.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

39/18 Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2021/22

The Committee considered the proposals as set out in the report. The committee raised a general query to ask if when determining budget savings, a cost analysis was carried out on proposals to identify any potential pressures that might be created in other areas of the health and social care system, to ensure that decision makers were fully informed of the true system wide costs attached to proposals.

The Committee discussed the knock on effects of budget reductions to partners within the health and social care economy and that budget savings in one organisation created demand for different services in another.

Resolved:

That the Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2021/22 was noted.

40/18 Drug and Alcohol Services

The Head of Social Inclusion (Public Health) informed the Committee that the Committee had previously considered this issue in November 2017 and at this time, there were proposals to make savings of £500,000 from the drug and alcohol service. The savings had since been reduced to £350,000.

The Committee were informed of the difficult financial context for the service which had meant £1,203k total reduction. It was noted that there had been increased hospital admissions due to drug and alcohol abuse.

The proposed savings for 2019/20 were:-

- £100,000 saving from a drug and alcohol related supporting housing project
- £191,000 from the core drug and alcohol treatment service
- £39,000 reduction in the budget for residential rehabilitation services
- £20,000 ceasing the alcohol brief interventions in primary care settings(GPs)

There would also the withdrawal of £147,500 Police Crime Commissioner Community Safety Grant investment. A Member questioned why this was being withdrawn; the Head of Social Inclusion explained that the West Midlands was the only region to still receive this grant.

Members stressed the impact of drugs and alcohol, including increased hospital admissions, cost to the police, community safety, children's services, and the clean up of needles. It was noted that drug and alcohol misuse leads to deaths and concern was expressed that in Walsall there had been an increase in the number of people dying because of drug and alcohol misuse.

Members were informed of a pilot running with Housing First, which had been very successful in accommodating rough sleepers. It was hoped that this could be expanded and its methodology applied to drug and alcohol residential focused services.

A Member asked for reassurance that frontline staff were given the appropriate training and support to ensure that despite the savings frontline staff were safe. The Head of Social Inclusion informed the Committee that the organisation that provided drug and alcohol services had mechanisms in place to ensure that this happens.

Resolved

- 1. That the Chair of the Committee writes to the Police and Crime Commissioner to seek the continuation of the Community Safety Grant.**
- 2. That the Chair of the Committee writes to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express concern at the reductions to the Local Authority budget, and to the budgets of Local Authority partners, which were having a direct impact on the Councils ability to deliver services.**

41/18 Walsall Plan

The Director of Public Health introduced the item and informed the Committee that the current Walsall Plan had too many priorities and that there was a desire to simplify this to ensure effectiveness. There was also a move towards priorities becoming more SMART.

The Public Health Intelligence Manager stated that the suggested priorities would be:

1. Helping us to be safe/preventing violence
2. Getting Walsall Active
3. Developing a Town Centre to be proud of.

Officers explained that there was an opportunity to work towards priorities in a coordinated way alongside partners. It was stressed that inactivity seriously harmed health and that a priority should be to make it easier to be active in Walsall and harder to be inactive.

A discussion by the Committee ensued with a Member noting the increase in the number of people begging in Walsall. The Director of Public Health agreed that the right approach was needed to deal with this issue, as it was known that some beggars were in fact homeless. Action had begun to ensure that public health was part of the planning process to assist in creating a healthy town.

A Member expressed frustration that employed families were living in poverty and were reliant on foodbanks which often provided food which was not fresh and healthy. It was also noted that the town centre was just a small part of Walsall.

The Director of Public Health stressed that the three priorities were issues, which partners could commit to and make a difference.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

42/18 Areas of Focus 2018/19 and Forward Plans

The Committee considered the areas of focus 2018/19 and forward plans. The Chair informed that Committee that at the January meeting the Committee would receive a health service theme, which would include diabetes care. At the following meeting, the Chair suggested that the Committee considered women's health, domestic violence and cancer screening. Members were invited to raise any other issues.

A Member informed the committee of the Severe Mental Impairment (SMI) form, it was agreed that SMI forms would be sent out to all elected Members to ensure that Members were able to support residents.

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 17th January 2019.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.50 p.m.

Signed:

Date: