

# BRIEFING NOTE

**TO: Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**DATE: 11<sup>th</sup> April 2019**

## **Review of the 2018/19 municipal year.**

The Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee amended the structure of its work programme and took a thematic approach to selection of topics. This has allowed the Committee to consider a wider range of topics from a range of organisations. To compliment these themes the Committee also received review papers, which aimed to provide members with briefings on topics, which may not have otherwise been scrutinised. There has been an ongoing dialogue of information provided to Members outside of the meeting, which has included finance reports. The Committee established a Working Group to consider the mental well-being of young people and to understand the needs of young adults in Walsall to stay mentally well and to access support into training, skills and employment.

Walsall Council's scrutiny committees reflect the corporate plan priorities, the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee has contributed throughout the year to the following priorities.

### ***Corporate Plan Priority:***

***People have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.***

Theme: Women's Health.

The Committee considered the issue of period poverty; representatives from the charity period power attended the Committee to describe work that had taken place in Stoke on Trent and to describe the need in Walsall. In response to this information, the Committee made recommendations to Cabinet requesting that the Authority agree to provide sanitary products in all publically owned buildings. In addition, that Cabinet be asked to support local businesses to do the same. The Committee also agreed to write to the Government Minister to request funding to better support women in Walsall.

As part of this theme, an NHS England representative attended the Committee to describe the breast and cervical cancer screening programme in Walsall and provide assurance that residents in Walsall were receiving a good service. Members considered how attendance at screening could be encouraged, particularly to employees.

Members also received a presentation on domestic violence, which described the services available in Walsall. Representatives from Black Country Women's Aid attended the meeting and Members were assured that the training offer and partnerships in Walsall were excellent. It was noted in the future that a strategy would be developed to set priorities for the service. Members requested the strategy once available and a more in-depth report.

## Theme: Sustainability of Health and Care Workforce in Walsall

In recognition of the challenges faced by the healthcare sector in recruiting and retaining staff, the Committee invited representatives from the health sector and Walsall College to attend the committee and describe efforts to ensure that local people had access to education and training to allow local residents to work within the healthcare sector. The Committee received information describing vocational courses available to local people wishing to pursue a career in health and social care.

### Community Alarm Call-in

The Committee considered the future of the community alarm service in response to a call-in notice. Service users and representatives from local organisations attended the meeting and were able to address the Committee to raise their concerns with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

### Theme: Hospital Services and Community Care.

In the context of increasing pressure to meet standards with reducing resources and workforce pressures Walsall Healthcare Trust were invited to attend to provide assurances that the services provided would remain local where possible. The Committee considered how Walsall Healthcare Trust was ensuring that acute and community services were sustainable for the future in Walsall. Assurance was provided that sustainability reviews were being conducted to ensure that the Trust's strategic objectives could be met. Members challenged how services would be modernised to provide a service, which could respond to future needs of the Borough.

To compliment this theme the Committee received review papers on the Black Country Transforming Care programme, Outpatient Service Improvements, and Stroke Services.

### **Corporate Plan Priority:**

***Internal Focus: All council services are efficient and effective***

### Theme: Finance

Under a finance theme, the Committee considered the national social care investment to ease winter pressures, the Committee were assured that Walsall was well placed to deliver the requirements of additional funding, as integrated teams already existed.

The draft revenue budget and capital programme 2018/19 – 2021/22 was considered and the Committee noted 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.

Reductions to drug and alcohol services were considered. Members were concerned that the impact of drugs and alcohol were costly to society as a whole. As a result of discussion the Chair of the Committee wrote to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express concern about the reductions to Local Authority budgets.

**Corporate Plan Priority:**

***Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.***

The Young People's Working Group held several meetings, and met with witnesses to consider a range of evidence in relation to mental health service provision for young people. A final report has been produced which contained a range of conclusions and recommendations in relation to the Groups findings.

The Chair would like to thank all Council, health service and CCG staff, community organisation representatives and members of the Public who have attended and contributed to committee meetings.

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