

Health and Wellbeing Board

10 June 2013

Walsall Health and Wellbeing Board Relationship with Scrutiny Panels

1. Purpose

In order to respond to a request of the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board to clarify the working relationships between the Health and Wellbeing Board and all Scrutiny Panels.

2. Recommendation

That the contribution all Scrutiny Panels can make to delivering the health priorities of the Board be recognised and the principles for helping to achieve this, set out in paragraph 3, be supported.

3. Report detail

During its shadow phase, members were concerned that there was a lack of clarity between the roles of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Health Scrutiny Panel, thereby risking duplication of work. The Board asked for a report in this respect. The Shadow Board also recognised that the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy cut across all aspects of the Council's Services and asked for the report to address the relationship with all Scrutiny Panels.

Both the Health and Wellbeing Board and Scrutiny Panels have specific functions set out in the relevant Acts however both have a role to play in the way local services are planned and delivered. How they interact with each other will have a direct influence on improving outcomes for communities and people who use services. Essentially:

The Health and Wellbeing Board

- Collectively takes the lead and plays a strategic role on improving health and wellbeing outcomes and reducing health inequalities for their local communities and brings together individual and organisational knowledge, expertise and experience accordingly.
- Produces, monitors and reviews the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Drives integration and partnership working by holding Commissioners and Providers to account for the development and delivery of coherent commissioned outcomes between the NHS, Social Care, Public health and other local services.

- Supports and encourages partnership arrangements such as Joint Commissioning and Pooled Budget arrangements.

Scrutiny Panels:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committees (known in Walsall as Scrutiny and Performance Panels) were instituted by the Local Government Act 2000 as a counter-balance to the power of the new Executive (Cabinet). Cabinet is responsible for managing 90% of the authority's functions, it means that Councillors who are not Cabinet members monitor what Cabinet is doing and call it to account if it strays outside the policies and budget set by the Council. The 2000 Act also empowered Scrutiny Committees to review or scrutinise decisions made and make recommendations about matters whether or not they are the responsibility of the Executive and to make reports and recommendations on matters which affect the authority's area.
- The guiding principle for the Scrutiny and Performance Panels is that they should be consensual and positive rather than adversarial. Whilst it is accepted that some aspects of the work of Panels (particularly call-in) could potentially be adversarial in a political environment, the emphasis of the work of Panels should be on making a proactive and positive contribution to the development of policy and the discharge of the Council's functions.
- The Council has six Scrutiny and Performance Panels.
- Panels make a proactive and positive contribution to the development of policy and the discharge of the Council's functions, providing constructive challenge as appropriate at a strategic level; and making reports and recommendations accordingly.
- Panels encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options.

Health Scrutiny Panel:

- Encourages transparency, involvement and accountability by proactively reviewing health and social care themes and provides timely evidence and constructive recommendations to commissioners and providers.
- Scrutinises and monitors the effectiveness of the strategic decisions of the Health and Wellbeing Board including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and specifically the action plans arising from the Strategy to ensure that those actions are delivered.
- Can hold NHS bodies to account for the quality of their services; is involved very early on in discussions about reconfiguration of health services and patient, user and carer experience; and will take a view about whether changes are in the interest of local people.

Whilst recognising that the roles of the two bodies are different and distinct, a mutual understanding of working relationships and behaviours is essential to ensure that all opportunities are used to interact, and better work together to add value to each other's work. It is clear from legislation that how this is done is for local determination. The approach needs to be flexible and therefore making

specific recommendations about ways of working between the various contributing bodies is considered to be counterproductive.

In order to work towards the common goal to improve health outcomes for local people and reduce inequalities, the Health and Wellbeing Board and relevant Scrutiny Panels should, with the support of the Director of Public Health, relevant Directors, Panel Chairmen and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer:

- Work collaboratively in a positive and proactive way
- Encourage open and honest communications
- Share information and strategic plans prior to those plans being formally adopted so that all views and issues can be taken into account and the impact on related areas of work can be considered
- Whilst maintaining independence, share work programmes, which could be loosely aligned to create pathways for influence, co-ordinate activity and avoid duplication of work.

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