

Minutes of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Conference Room 2, Walsall Council House

Thursday, 11 July 2024 at 6PM

Committee Members present:

Councillor K. Hussain (Chair)
Councillor M. Coulson
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor R.K. Mehmi
Councillor A. Nawaz
Councillor A. Parkes
Councillor W. Rasab

Portfolio Holder:

Non present

Officers Present:

Andrew Osborn – Director for Commissioning (Walsall Council)
Seanna Lassetter – Principal Social Worker (Walsall Council)
Jack Thompson – Democratic Services Officer (Walsall Council)
Caroline William – Interim Chief Executive of Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust
Deborah Hipkins – Head of Primary Care and Place Development (Black Country Integrated Care Board)
Kuli Kaur-Wilson – Chief Strategy and Partnerships Office (Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust)

76 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Committee Members, Councillors: L. Rattigan, S.B. Hussain, V. Waters and J. Chapman.

Apologies were received from the Portfolio Holders: Councillor G. Flint (Health and Wellbeing) and Councillor K. Pedley (Adult Social Care).

77 **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for this meeting.

78 **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

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

79 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

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

80 **Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 4 April 2024 were submitted [annexed].

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 April 2024, a copy previously having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

81 **Areas of focus – 2024/25**

The Chair welcomed new Members to the Committee and asked participants to introduce themselves.

The Chair then invited the Democratic Services Officer to introduce the areas of focus report and outline the salient parts [annexed]. The Democratic Services Officer highlighted the following:

- That when selecting items for the Committee's work programme Members should take regard to the Committee's remit as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- That at the request of the Leader of the Council through the Chair of the Scrutiny Overview Committee the Portfolio Holder priorities

presentations would be presented to the Committee at its second meeting in September.

- That quarterly financial monitoring reports would be provided to the Committee via email, excluding the report for quarter two which would be presented to the Committee alongside the draft budget report for 2025/26.
- There were several items that were recommended in the previous year and two from health partners. It was for the Committee to decide whether to add these items to its work programme for the current municipal year.

The Director of Commissioning, Andrew Osborn, took the Committee through the Adult Social Care presentation [see annexed]. The Director highlighted that the Council did not spend as much as other regional local authorities on its commissioned services however the Council maintained high levels of service satisfaction from users. Furthermore, the Council was seeking to make improvements in relation to supporting carers and in stabilising the current adult social care workforce. The Council was reengaging providers to help manage changes in the care market. Work was also continuing on the Adult Social Care Continues Improvement Programme and preparation for a Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment.

The Principal Social Worker, Seanna Lassetter, took the Committee through the Principal Social Worker Annual Report 23/24 [see annexed]. The Principal Social Worker highlighted the role of the Principal Social Worker, current changes to quality assurance and auditing. Furthermore, the Principal Social Worker highlight to the Committee to success of the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team as one of the best performing in the region. The Committee was informed that adult social care social working team would be focusing on carers, social work practice and preparing for the CQC assessment this municipal year.

The Chair invited Members of the Committee to ask questions on both presentations. The responses to the questions included:

- The Council was paying below the regional average for commissioned care services.
- The lower levels of CQC ratings for bed-based providers and community providers could be due to a combination of lower fee levels and Covid-19.
- It was noted that there were delays in when commissioned service providers were inspected by the CQC and that this affected the accuracy of the data provided on care provider quality.
- At anyone time there were a number of people waiting for an assessment for care, on average this would be forty to fifty people a week.
- The Council was working to improve how it carried out assessments for carers, this involved working with health colleagues to identify those caring for others.

- All social workers were subject to an internal audit of their work based on the CQC rating system and work was being carried out to develop the skills of supervisors in the social worker team.
- The CQC were provided with social worker cases and then chose a selection to moderate.
- Many Local Authorities during the Covid-19 Pandemic maximised their social care capacity to meet increased demand and it was important going forward that the balance between maintaining capacity with using the right care providers was important and would be addressed going forward.

A Member requested that the data on the number of occupational therapy appointments offered by the occupation Therapy Team and a breakdown of the demographics of those who used the service be shared with Members of the Committee.

The Chair invited Members to suggest items for the Committee work areas of focus for 2024/25 that were not listed as suggested items in the report.

Members of the Committee suggested the following additional items:

- An update report on cancer services;
- Elective care waiting times;
- Home carers;
- Update on midwifery services and the move of the midwifery led unit.

The Chair invited Members to offer suggesting for potential working groups for this municipal year. A Members suggested that the Committee carry out a working group on health inequalities in the Borough.

The Chair thanked Members for their suggestions.

Resolved

- **The following items be agreed as the Committees Areas of Focus for 2024/25:**
 - **An update report on cancer services.**
 - **Elective care waiting times.**
 - **Home carers.**
 - **Update on midwifery services and the move of the midwifery led unit.**
 - **Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring**
 - **Draft Budget and Capital Programme**
 - **Update on the Urgent Treatment and Emergency Treatment Centre.**
 - **Localisation and realignment of Mental Health and Learning Disability & Autism inpatient provision.**
 - **Walsall level dentistry service data including secondary wait times.**
 - **CQC self-assessment of Adult Social Care Services.**

- **Interim update response to the Primary Care Access and GP Services Working Group.**
 - **Draft Statement on Quality from Chief Executive of the Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust.**
 - **Update on the work of the Integrated Care Partnership.**
- **That the Democratic Services Officer seek to work with health partners to thematically organise the suggested items and combined them where possible.**
 - **That a complete copy of the areas of focus 2024/25 be circulated to Members of the Committee.**
 - **That a working group on Health Inequalities be recommended to the Scrutiny Overview Committee.**
 - **That the data on the number of occupational therapy appointments offered by the occupation Therapy Team and a breakdown of the demographics of those who used the service be provided to Members of the Committee.**

82 **Forward Plans**

The Democratic Services Officer outlined the Forward Plans to the Committee.

Resolved

That the Committee note the Forward Plans.

83 **Recommendation Tracker**

The Democratic Services Officer outlined the Recommendation Tracker which covered items from the previous municipal year.

Resolved

That the Committee note the Recommendation Tracker.

84 **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be decided at Annual Council scheduled for 12 September 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 19:24.

Signed:

Date: