

HEALTH SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Tuesday, 12 March, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

Conference Room, Council House, Walsall

Panel Members Present

Councillor M. Longhi (Chair)
Councillor D. James (Vice-Chair)
Councillor O. Bennett
Councillor M.R. Burley
Councillor M. Flower
Councillor E. Russell
Councillor H. Sarohi
Councillor K. Sears
Councillor V. Woodruff

Officers Present

Andy Rust - Head of Commissioning
Lloyd Haynes - Finance Manager
Ben Percival - Sport and Leisure Manager
John Bolton - Executive Director. Social Care and Inclusion
Isabel Gillis - Director of Public Health
Chris Holliday - Head of Leisure and Community Health
Nikki Gough, Committee Business and Governance Manager

215/13 Apologies

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Woodruff for the duration of the meeting.

216/13 Substitutions

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

217/13 Declarations of interest and party whip

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

218/13 Minutes

The Chair stated that at the previous meeting, there had been a debate around primary care practice. Officers had been asked to consider a performance assessment framework. The Panel would be receiving further detail on this in the coming months.

Resolved

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29 January, 2013 are approved as a true and accurate record.

219/13 Statement on mortality

The Panel were informed that the review was not yet completed, however, a formal meeting was held where initial feedback had been provided to stakeholders. The Chair suggested that it would be unwise to provide the Panel with feedback as the remaining work may alter the end report. The Chair stated that he wanted to provide the Panel with assurance that the process had been robust, wide ranging and had integrity.

When challenged about the cost of the review, the Chair stated that in light of the Mid Staffordshire scandal, he considered it to provide value for money. The Chair stated that despite the Panel receiving assurances that performance was improving at the hospital, it remained one of the worst in the country for mortality rates. Therefore, it was considered important to seek an independent opinion on the hospital mortality rates.

220/13 Draft Health and Well Being Board Strategy

The Director for Public Health informed the Panel that on 1 April, 2013, Walsall Council would take on responsibility for public health. The report had been taken to the Panel to give them the opportunity to comment on the Joint Health and Well Being Strategy.

Below were the principal points ensuing from the discussion:-

- The issues contained within the report were not new and had existed within the Borough for many years;
- The East/West divide still existed and needed to be addressed as did health inequalities;
- If Children's Centres were to be integral to the health of children, their funding should not be cut;
- The strategy was dated up to 2016 because the Authority had to demonstrate improvement in 3 years, as a consequence of adoption by Walsall Council;
- The culture of the Council needed to be challenged to ensure health was considered in all areas of work;
- A Member suggested that the following should be considered as part of the strategy: self harm, loneliness, activeness, alcohol. Although the Director of Public Health stated that the Council had been challenged to look at positive measures for well being;
- The Director of Social Care stated that Social Care would hope to have an influence and weave into the document;
- There needed to be a consideration of assets existed in the community within the voluntary sector;
- Work should not be duplicated by different agencies.

The Chair stated that there was still work to do and he felt that the document should be more specific about how objectives would be achieved.

Recommendations

The Joint Health and Well Being Strategy should come back to the Panel as and when appropriate.

221/13 Active Living, Sport and Leisure (Leisure Centres)

The Head of Leisure and Community Health and the Sport and Leisure Manager introduced the presentation (annexed). A Member stated that this was a good time to receive the information as it follows on from the item on health and well being. He stated that Members needed to be assured that leisure services and public health were working together. The Head of Leisure and Community Health and Director of Public Health confirmed that this was already the case.

The Panel were informed by officers that there is evidence that leisure centre users in Walsall were representative of the demographic make up of Walsall. A Member highlighted that for the same monthly amount people could access privately run facilities. It was noted however that the Oak Park Leisure Centre did manage to compete well against Fitness First private sector facility across the road.

Officers stated that a concern for leisure services was that 55% (c.110,000) of the Borough's adult population were doing absolutely no exercise at all. The Council were trying to refocus their service to encourage this group of people to exercise. The Chair asked if this group of people were more likely to be geographically placed in the East of the Borough. Leisure officers confirmed that this was the case.

Research from Sport England and nationwide had indicated that if leisure centre provision was improved this would attract more people into leisure centres. Nine target groups had been identified such as men over 40 years old, young people in transition and looked after children. As part of research compiled it had been identified that swimming and fitness were high demand leisure services. The Director of Public Health stated that some staff at leisure centres needed to be more friendly and welcoming. Another Member discussed issues with the Gala Baths current timetable. The Head of Joint Commissioning suggested that leisure centres were not the future of the whole agenda and there also needed to be a focus on public health contracts. The Head of Leisure and Community Health confirmed that the focus of this review was on leisure centres and that they did have a key role to play in delivering against the Marmot principles. Leisure Centres were not however the only player in solving the problem; parks, play, diet, lifestyles etc also had a key role.

It was agreed that additional information (a borough-wide leisure map) would be circulated to Members of the Health Scrutiny Panel, along with Councillors Burley and Sears.

Members raised questions around the possibility of having a 50m pool and officers stated that Birmingham Council had aspirations for a 50m pool but this would not be suited to Walsall where the focus needed to be at a community level.

Work that was ongoing with schools was discussed to ensure that positive behaviour was embedded from a young age, this included schemes such as 'Food Dudes', a joint scheme between the Council's school Catering Service, Public Health and the schools themselves. Free swimming for under 16 year olds had increased participation of children at leisure centres. It was noted that participation for adults aged 60 plus had not increased however this was always unlikely as this group are less likely to change their behaviour and learn to swim. The new concessionary scheme 'Move It' was described, the intention of the scheme was that take up would be more straight forward. Early results have been very promising.

Members were informed of the proposed developments to replace the Oak Park and Bloxwich leisure centres with the intention that if a fit for purpose, well built centres were built then uptake would also improve. This had been seen in other Authorities. The current intention is that the proposal to do this would be taken to Cabinet on 24 April, 2013.

In order to fund this, applications had been put into Sport England for an "Iconic" facilities grant and the Olympic Development Agency / DCMS had already earmarked one of the stainless steel London 2012 Olympic Legacy pools to Walsall. The future of Gala Baths had been considered and it was noted that if it were to continue in the medium to long-term then refurbishment of the centre would be needed.

Recommendation

That the leisure service proposals were considered within the wider agenda of public health.

222/13 Quarter three finance report

The Finance Manager presented the report which summarised the revenue outturn position for 2012/13 based on financial performance for Quarter 3. The Integrated Community Equipment Services (ICES) pooled budget is forecast to fully utilise the resources available. There was a forecast overspend against the budget of £4.00 million. Members were assured that there were plans in place to deal with the projected overspend. Members asked if there were any risk factors for setting a balanced budget. The Finance Manager stated that changes in client need or new demand may place pressure on the budget.

The report was noted.

223/13 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the time and date of the next meeting was 6.00 p.m. on 23 April, 2013.

Termination of meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8.15 p.m.

Signed:

Date: