

## **SCRUTINY FOR POLICIES, ADULTS AND HEALTH COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee held in the Library Meeting Room, Taunton Library, Paul Street, Taunton, TA1 3XZ, on Wednesday 5 December 2018 at 10.00 am

**Present:** Cllr H Prior-Sankey (Chair), Cllr M Healey (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Clayton, Cllr M Caswell, Cllr B Revans, Cllr M Keating and Cllr L Redman

**Other Members present:** Cllr M Chilcott, Cllr G Frascini, Cllr D Huxtable, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr T Munt and Cllr R Williams

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr A Govier, Cllr A Bown and Cllr G Verdon

### **144 Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 2**

Cllr Bill Revans declared a personal interest as his son works for South West Ambulance Service.

Cllr Mark Healey MBE declared a personal interest as his wife works for the NHS in Dorset.

### **145 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 07 November 2018 - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to the following changes:-

1. South Weston Ambulance Service should read South West Ambulance Service
2. Add apologies from the Junior Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care,
3. A request for a full and expanded explanation of Critical and non-Critical services for Adult Social Care in relation to reviews.

### **146 Public Question Time - Agenda Item 4**

There were no public questions.

### **147 Somerset Health & Care Strategy Update - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee considered a report which included an update on the Somerset Health and Care Strategy.

The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee considered the report, commented on the proposals and noted the overarching strategy and agreed with the proposals for public engagement.

The Chair welcomed the valuable and interesting public events that have been staged to support engagement. It was noted that future events are to be held in Bridgwater and South Somerset. Views from the public are being encouraged through a variety of means in addition to the events; social media and

engagement with a range of support organisations. With the aim of getting views from the widest possible range of people in Somerset.

The areas out for consultation are:

- Acute Services – including Stroke services, paediatric and obstetric services,
- Community Setting - looking at the whole range of settings beyond hospital beds. Use of Urgent Treatment Centres and phasing out of Minor Injury Units.
- Mental Health Services – looking to deliver best practice and review the current arrangement of two centralised Mental Health Units in a county with a large geographical spread.

Discussion included:-

- The need for the proposed Urgent Treatment Centres to be fully integrated with the 111 service and an understanding that Ambulances would take relevant patients to these units rather than automatically to A&E. A public awareness initiative to make it clear that the 111 service will book an appointment at the nearest suitable unit and is unlikely to be A&E for most people. The purpose of Urgent Treatment Centres is they will relieve the pressure on A&E Departments.
- The purpose of looking at the Mental Health facilities is that the evidence shows that treatment is most effective if it is done with the support of family and friends and not in isolation in a secure ward.
- It was noted that the Children's Services elements will be aligned and that it was proposed to use Social Media and the Somerset Youth Council to ensure this part of the population had the chance to express views.
- The limited use of the Bridgwater Maternity unit was raised, and the Committee were pleased to hear that when not in use it was not staffed and so not a drain on other services. This is part of the wider midwifery service and is only designed for low risk births.
- There was confirmation that the proposed move towards Urgent Treatment Centres was in line and compatible with the plans to merge Somerset Partnership and Musgrove Park Hospital.
- The review of stroke services highlighted the new treatments being used in Bristol and the success of early intervention and use of stroke beds in Community Hospitals. There will be a public consultation exercise in October and November and these plans are still on track.

#### 148 **Healthy Weston Programme Update** - Agenda Item 6

The Committee considered a report and presentation on the Healthy Weston Programme and noted the proposed next steps.

The Committee were informed that 20% of the footfall in Weston Hospital was from Somerset which was why it was important to consult and inform this

Committee. The pressure to change the service at this hospital is driven by demographics and resources:-

- Weston has a higher than national average age patient
- Weston has some very deprived Wards
- There is a great disparity in the local GP:patient loads
- Recruitment and retention of staff is a challenge
- 23% Vacancies at Consultant level
- Weston General is one of the smallest General Hospitals. The subsidy for this is not enough to offset the higher costs.

The Healthy Weston Programme is designed to address some of these issues by trying to move patients away from acute services by better joined up working. Following the public consultation there have been some suggestions that can be acted on immediately but there are others that will need further consultation. The options were laid out in the report and are subject to further discussions with NHS England, and the local governing body.

Further discussion covered:

- The Oncology Unit at Weston and confirmation that this was still open, would remain so and plans were to increase the capacity.
- The extent of the public consultation and confirmation that this generated 3000 individual items of feedback from a very wide cross section of the community.
- Ensuring all plans were 'future proof', it was confirmed that the data used to plan was based on ONS forecasting for the next 30 years.
- Using staff most efficiently by making sure staff operate at the 'top' of their licence. Meaning a Nurse does not do work that can be carried out by an Health Assistant.
- It was asked if staff could be given enhanced pay rates to attract them to Weston. It was confirmed this was not possible as the NHS operated National Pay schemes and any move away from this would increase pay bill and may result in a bidding war with other Hospital Trusts.
- There was discussion about the need for a University of Somerset to develop these skills and have some home-grown students to undertake their clinical experience in local hospitals.

The Committee asked to be kept informed of progress.

#### 149 **Community Hospitals Update** - Agenda Item 7

The Committee welcomed an update on Community Hospitals in Somerset. They were pleased to hear the plans to re-open Wellington Community Hospital early in January 2019.

The Committee noted the report and asked to be kept updated.

The Committee discussed the report and the following arose during that discussion:

- Wellington Community Hospital reopening will see the return of staff who have been redeployed to Williton and Bridgwater but there are still vacancies equivalent to 7.5FTE.

- The impact of Brexit and the return of many European nurses and despite regular recruitment exercises overseas there are still vacancies.
- The matter of a Nursing Degree being delivered in Somerset was again discussed as this would attract nurses and statistics indicate that many student nurses settle near to where they trained.
- The Committee discussed the withdrawal of the Nursing Bursary and the impact this was having on numbers of applicants. It was noted that there was an Apprenticeship route and Councillors were encouraged to make this known in any dealings with local residents.
- The recording of Bed Occupancy was discussed in relation to optimum numbers. It was noted that the optimum ration of patients to nurses was 1 to 8 plus 0.5 HCA so the most efficient ward would have 16 patients and three members of staff.
- The Community Hospital in Shepton Mallet has 9 unused beds. This is because the area is well served for other local facilities and this is kept under review.
- The increasing age of the nursing population with an anticipated 25 % who have already reached retirement age. Many chose to go on working but they all could retire now if they want to. The turnover in Somerset is 13% which is lower than some neighbouring districts.
- Other incentives to make nursing more attractive were discussed and these included; Free Car Parking for Nurses and Travel Discounts.
- When staff leave they are all offered the opportunity to have an exit interview (face to face, on line or via questionnaire) , any emerging issues are fed back to local managers and addressed.

150 **Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 8**

The Committee considered and noted the Work Plan and endorsed the changes made to balance the meetings in the early part of 2019. There was a request to add CCG Financial Report to the March 2019 meeting.

It was also noted that many of the requests made by Cllr Jane Lock had been included in the forward programme apart from an item on the CAB and an update in Universal Credit. It was agreed that this is a District Council matter.

151 **Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 9**

There were no other urgent items of business.

**(The meeting ended at 12.08 pm)**

**CHAIRMAN**