

## **Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee**

Chair: Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey

Division and Local Member: All

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### **1. Summary**

- 1.1** The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee is required by the Constitution to make an annual report to the Council each year and also to provide each other meeting of the Council with a summary progress report and outcomes of scrutiny. This report covers the meetings of 5 December 2018 and 30 January 2019.
- 1.2** The Committee agreed their work programme would comprise of items considered directly at meetings plus other items considered or 'commissioned', using flexible arrangements outside of the formal committee structure.
- 1.3** Members of the Council are reminded that:
- all Members have been invited to attend meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees and to contribute freely on any agenda item;
  - any Member could propose a topic for inclusion on the Scrutiny Work Programmes;
  - any Member can be asked by the Committee to contribute information and evidence and to participate in specific scrutiny reviews.
- 1.4** The Committee has 8 elected Members.

### **2. Background**

#### **2.1 Scrutiny Work Programme**

At each meeting, the Committee considers and updates its work programme, having regard to the Cabinet's forward plan of proposed key decisions. Members appreciate the attendance of representatives and stakeholders from partner agencies.

#### **2.2 5 December 2018**

##### Somerset Health and Care Strategy Update

The first main item was a report from the Somerset Health Care Committee setting out the overarching strategy and in particular the proposals for public engagement. It was noted that future events will be held in Bridgwater and South Somerset. Views from the public are encouraged through a variety of

means in addition to the events including social media and feedback from support organisations. The areas 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

Members discussed the proposals and noted the proposals. We were pleased to see that Children's Services elements were aligned, they noted the plan to move towards Urgent Treatment Centres and the review of stroke services. We supported the proposal to raise public awareness of the 111 service and that the service will book appointments at the nearest suitable unit – not necessarily A&E.

#### Healthy Weston Programme Update

The next item we considered was a report and presentation on the next steps. As 20% of the patients treated in Weston Hospital were from Somerset it was appropriate to consult this Committee. The Programme for change was driven by the higher than average age of the population served and the relative deprivation of some of the Wards covered.

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.

Members discussed the proposals and were reassured that the plans had an element of 'future proofing' for the next 30 years. Shared concerns about recruitment and retention of medical staff, including questions about local enhanced pay (not possible because of NHS National pay schemes). Members were keen to support a call for here to be a University base in Somerset allowing home-grown students to undertake their clinical experience in local hospitals.

#### Community Hospital Update

We welcomed an update on Community Hospitals in Somerset. Members were pleased to hear the plans to re-open Wellington Community Hospital early in January 2019. We were concerned to hear that the closure had been due to staffing and the ability to recruit nurses and as in Weston the lack of a Nursing Degree being available in Somerset. Incentives to make Nursing more attractive were discussed. These included; free car-parking while on duty, travel discounts and the re-introduction of some sort of Nursing Bursary.

## **2.3 30 January 2019**

### Nursing Home Support Service

The first main item was a report introducing the Nursing Home Support Service, an opportunity for the Committee to understand the vision for its future to better support the delivery of strategic ambitions across key agencies.

This Service is a joint NHS Somerset CCG and Somerset County Council initiative. To support local nursing homes with improving quality, raising standards and reducing avoidable hospital admissions.

We congratulated the NHSS on the positive contribution it was making in Somerset. The Committee agreed that it was evident that there was no room for poor quality care and being in the top 10 nationally for high quality was to be welcomed.

### Fair Cost of Care Update

We were given an update on the exercise to ensure the fee levels for 2018/19 that were commissioned by Somerset County Council reflect the actual cost of care in the local market. The exercise was conducted by an organisation who are qualified to carry out the exercise and are independent of the local authority. The report they produced informed the decision to offer an increased rate for both Care at Home and for enablement. We were also informed that there was an oversupply of care home beds in Somerset and this was despite some care homes closing in 2018.

Members were pleased to hear that Quality levels have continued to improve and 90% of providers were rated good or above and there were none rated inadequate.

While these costs have been agreed for this financial year there was a concern about next year as budgets had yet to be approved and the promised Green Paper from Government has been delayed by 8 months already and without a decision about the ongoing funding for Adult Social Care it was difficult to plan. We discussed the report and asked to assurance that the increase in hourly rate was passed on to employees and that proper travel time was paid to individuals when they were working in the more rural parts of the county. We were pleased to hear the high quality and effectiveness of the service was maintained despite the significant cut on the budget over the last three years however, they were concerned that this level of service could not be sustained if further reduction in budgets was expected

### Medium Term Financial Plan

The final report was the key messages from the Somerset County Council financial plan 2019-22. to be presented to full council in February 2019.

We noted that a further spending review is due in 2019 and direct representation and through the LGA was going to be made to ask for a long-term funding solution. Mid-year and mid-cycle grants; although welcome, did not assist in long term planning. We agreed to send a recommendation to Cabinet.

**Proposed by Cllr M Healey, seconded by Cllr B Revans**

**The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults & Health Committee recommends that the Cabinet, in partnership with other stakeholders including Group Leaders and Somerset MP's, takes a leading role in proactively lobbying central government about the urgent need for sustainable long-term funding for adult social care in Somerset.**

After discussing all the items individually, we came to the agreement that the high level of achievement and ratings of all the services in Somerset was to be commended however, the need for a commitment to a long-term funding arrangement that reflected the demand and cost of these services was vital. To this end they agreed another Recommendation to Cabinet as follows: -

**Proposed by Cllr B Revans, seconded by Cllr M Healey**

**The Scrutiny for Policies, Adults & Health Committee wishes the Cabinet to be aware of the future risk to adult social care funding, particularly the future capacity to deliver further savings and the impact this will have on preventative services.**

### **3. Consultations Undertaken**

The Committee invites all County councillors to attend and contribute to its meetings.

### **4. Implications**

The Committee considers carefully and often asks for further information about the implications as outlined in the reports considered at its meetings.

For further details of the reports considered by the Committee, please contact the author of this report.

### **5. Background Papers**

Further information about the Committee including dates of meetings and agendas and reports from previous meetings, are available via the Council's website:

[www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers)

**Note:** For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.