

Annual 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 provide full Council with a summary progress report and outcomes of scrutiny. This report covers meetings in from May 2020 to April 2021.
- 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

Each of our meetings had specific agenda items to consider the work programme and allow members and officers to suggest items we should scrutinise in more depth. We also frequently review how we monitor our suggested outcomes and/or recommended actions so we can understand the impact of our work so we can learn how to better focus our scrutiny work to ensure we have made a difference.

Scrutiny Members have endeavoured through the Committee meetings to make suggestions and express opinions to Directors and Cabinet Members

after discussion and debate. We have constructive relationships with our sister Scrutiny Committees, particularly the Scrutiny for Policies, Children and Families Committee.

06 May 2020

Virtual Meeting Guidance

As this was our first virtual meeting the agenda was restricted to guidance on how to conduct virtual meetings and an update on the current response to the Covid 19 Pandemic.

Covid - 19 Assurance

The Committee considered a detailed report on the key areas of activity that have been undertaken by Somerset County Council Adult Social Care (ASC), with its partners across health, care providers and the voluntary sector; relating to the care of vulnerable adults and their carers during the pandemic. The Committee heard that there have been several changed requirements and "easements" proposed to the way ASC is delivered by Councils across England.

03 June 2020

This meeting was a Mental Health trailblazer workshop. This was a cross party workshop with adult service from Somerset County Council, Somerset Commissioning Group, Somerset NHS Foundation Trust and the VCSE sector represented by Rethink.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together a new alliance of charities and is formed to develop a bold new community-based mental health support service for Somerset residents. The shared ambition for the Somerset Mental Health Alliance is to ensure that people living with mental health problems get the right support at the right time. As well as reducing waiting times for clinical services, it aims to ensure that people can live a full life in their community, accessing housing, jobs or volunteering opportunities, community activities and physical exercise, to help support and improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

09 July 2020

At this meeting we discussed two very detailed reports on the impact of Covid 19; first on the GGC response and the second on people with Learning Disabilities.

The CCG set out the Phased response (Phase 1 Major Incident Response and Phase 2 Recover, Restore and Transform). We heard that many of the actions taken to deal with the Major Incident were transformations that were changes that had been planned before; such as greater use of technology for Consultations with Primary and Secondary Care. The response also introduced some temporary changes to admissions and elective surgery, and it was important to restore these as soon as possible. There was a commitment from the CCG to evaluate all the changes and report back to Scrutiny with the

findings for discussion.

We also had a detailed report on the work undertaken to continue to support people with Learning Difficulties who had relied on a face to face building-based support service prior to the Covid 10 pandemic. We heard that there had been some quick and creative collaboration between various organisations to deliver a range of support best suited to the needs of individual service users. The setting up of the Nightingale Unit (Henford Court) was an example of collaboration between SCC and the CCG and had proved to be a useful release valve for Yeovil Hospital. We concluded by paying tribute to all the staff and teams who had responded with such speed and compassion in such challenging times.

09 September 2020

Fit For My Future -Update on Mental Health in-patient beds for People of working age

We were updated on the current position of this engagement as it had been paused in March due to the pandemic. The public consultation resulted in 538 surveys had been returned, 732 people attended the 63 events organised to promote and discuss the consultation, and 3,538 people were reached through a Facebook Live event. The next steps will be as follows: -

- Consideration given to the feedback from the consultation and the impact this has on the proposal taken to the public during the consultation
- Considering the findings of a travel sub-group to explore and identifying option to mitigate the travel issues raised through the consultation
- Collecting feedback from scrutiny committees and the Health and Wellbeing Board
- Bringing a Decision-Making Business Case (DMBC) to the CCG Governing Body on 24th September.

We raised a number of questions and challenges and all of these were addressed or incorporated as part of the consultation. We recognised that consultation had been difficult in the midst of the pandemic and welcomed the decision being made soon so as to share that and bring about some certainty and a better safer arrangement.

Integrated Quality, Safety and Performance

We had a report covering the May to June period comparing it to the same period last year. We heard the overall waiting list has been reduced but they are still too long. A recovery plan is still in development. Progress has been made by using independent providers such as The Nuffield in relation to cancer treatments. The increase use of digital solutions was having a positive impact.

Adult Social Care Performance Update

We had a report setting out the impact of Covid 19 on performance in Adult Social Care. Key achievements were noted as: -

- **Managing Demand** – There has been a significant spike in the number of people presenting (50% increase) to Somerset Direct, and the target for resolution of 60% has been met.
- **Overdue Assessments and Reviews** – The number of overdue assessments has been creeping back up due to workforce demands during Covid, but the number of overdue reviews has significantly decreased from last year.
- **Permanent Placements in Nursing and Residential Homes** – These numbers were very positive, with only three young adults (18-64) permanently placed in four months, while the over-65 placements are being made at a rate of 416 per 100,000 population, compared to 435 per 100,000 last year.
- **Complaints** – The average was 13 per month during the last year, but since March there has been a significant reduction.
- **Practice Quality** – Since the launch of the online auditing tool, 593 audits have been completed, with the results being analysed and fed back to teams to help improve performance.
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We discussed the report, challenged some aspects of the service that had been reported to Councillors and acknowledged some of the local exemplary service being reported from all around the County.

07 October 2020

We held a joint Workshop with Scrutiny Policies for Children as well as Adults and Health. The purpose of this workshop was to understand and explore transitions focussing on aspirations and outcomes for young people aged 14 plus into Adult-life. We had three workshops covering the following areas: -

Employment-

Creating a clearer understanding of what the evidence is that supports young people into employment. There should be clear, evidence-based employment pathways with opportunities for volunteering, supported internships, traineeships and apprenticeships and good careers advice and guidance to help young people with their decision-making.

Independent Living –

A focus on housing options and provide young people and their families the tools and resources they need to fully understand what is available. Young people are encouraged to think about who they would like to live with and where.

Community Inclusion –

Supporting young people to have opportunities to spend time with their peers outside of school and college. They are supported to develop and

maintain friendships and relationships. They can access their community and feel safe and confident.

The workshops provided very useful and constructive feedback. This will be used to improve the experience and support for young people as they transition into adult life.

2.2 12 November 2020

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board Plan and Annual Report

We heard a comprehensive presentation summarising the forward plan and annual report of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB). The main objective of the Board is to seek assurance that local safeguarding arrangements and partner organisations act to help and protect people aged 18 and over who:

- have needs for care and support; and
- are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or exploitation; and
- are unable to protect themselves from the risk of, or experience of, abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs.

We discussed the report. We expressed an interest in knowing how children services were included in the Board's model. They were assured that although there was no representative from Children's Services on the Board there were strong links with partners supporting children.

We were interested in any opportunities for reaching more vulnerable people as a result of the pandemic and the increased awareness of vulnerable groups. It was acknowledged that the pandemic had led to more groups becoming vulnerable. We considered the Annual Report and the proposed plans for 2020/21. We noted the progress highlights during 2020 and committed to continue to promote adult safeguarding across the County Council and in the services that are commissioned.

Winter Planning

We had a report covering the Adult Social Care Winter Plan. The Somerset Adult Social Care Winter Plan has been structured around the same themes as the DHSC plan. These are:

- Preventing and controlling the spread of infection in care settings
- Collaboration across health and care services
- Supporting people who receive social care, the workforce, and carers
- Supporting the system

We heard that the coming winter period was likely to be extremely challenging for the entire system. While Somerset had seen relatively low numbers of Coronavirus cases the numbers are rising. Coupled with normal

winter pressures it is expected the system will experience unprecedented levels of stress if current trends continue.

We considered the Adult Care Winter Plan for Somerset and supported the action contained therein. We noted the risks and the mitigations to address these contained in the Winter Plan.

Scrutiny Review

We were given a presentation setting out an update on the Scrutiny Review that started in 2018. We were reminded that a Peer Challenge identified that a review of scrutiny function was required in order to make it more effective, ensure all councillors are equipped to play an active role and contribute to policy making and key decisions and governance arrangements need to reflect this. There were eleven recommendations and the Committee were given the following update on the status of each recommendation.

We discussed the presentation and raised the question of public participation in scrutiny meetings. It was recognised that since the introduction of virtual meetings there has been a marked reduction in the number of public questions and attendance. We acknowledged that progress had been made in relation to clarity around the roles on Scrutiny Committees making it clearer for members of the public to be able to identify the members of Committees and officers supporting.

2.3 Devon Doctors - Out of Hours report

We had a report on the Integrated Urgent Care Service provided by Devon Doctors Limited. Devon Doctors Limited is a social enterprise group which is run by healthcare professionals and reportable to a board of directors. Meddcare Somerset, a trading name of Devon Doctors Limited, is the provider of Somerset's Integrated Urgent Care Service. The Integrated Urgent Care Clinical Assessment Service delivers a "consult and complete" model of urgent care access that streamlines and improves patient care across the urgent care system. Patients receive a complete episode of care concluding with either: advice, a prescription, or an appointment for further assessment or treatment.

In July 2020, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) carried out an announced focussed inspection of the service which resulted in the application of urgent conditions to the provider registration of Devon Doctors Limited. The Care Quality Commission Report was published on 14 September 2020 and noted some Requirement Notices relating to regulations that had not been met. The Care Quality Commission took account of the exceptional circumstances arising as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic when considering what type of inspection was necessary and proportionate.

The report has resulted in plans to improve the out of hours service, improve

governance and improve safety.

We discussed the report and asked why it took such a challenging report to introduce these changes as the service must have been aware of failings. It was recognised that the previous leadership arrangements were not open to learning but that has changed.

02 December 2020 -Meeting cancelled due to Coronavirus pandemic

27 January 2021 (limited agenda due to the ongoing Pandemic)

Medium Term Financial Planning

We had a presentation that summarised the key areas of specific interest within the Medium-Term Financial Plan. It outlined the key points that were included within the report made to Cabinet on the 20th January 2021. There was an overall narrative from the Directors of Adults Services and Public Health Services to provide assurances around the changes made to funding and spend. A review of this detail through Scrutiny will be presented as part of the overall challenge and assurance process to Cabinet on the 8th February and Council on the 17th February in setting the final budget for 2021/22.

The MTFP links pressures, growth, and savings to the delivery of the Council's key priorities within the Council's vision to create:

- A thriving and productive County that is ambitious, confident and focussed on improving people's lives;
- A county of resilient, well-connected and compassionate communities working to reduce inequalities;
- A county where all partners actively work together for the benefit of residents, communities and businesses and the environment, and;
- A county that provides the right information, advice and guidance to enable residents to help themselves and targets support to those who need it most.

We considered the proposed budget for 2021/22 and indicative budgets for 2022/23 and 2023/24 for Adults and Public Health Services budgets. We reviewed specific proposals for changes from previous years and commented on them. We welcomed the projected increase in spending, in particular the proposed Capital Expenditure.

Meetings Overview for 2020-21

We have considered a number of reports on a range of topics and these have included:

- Fit for My Future
- Deprivation of Liberty -revised guidance
- Care Homes and Nursing Home Support Service (LARCH/CCG)
- Regular clinical quality review reports from Somerset Clinical Commission Group (CCG)
- Dementia Report
- Reports regarding the performance and transformation at Weston Hospital
- Regular updates regarding Adult Social Care Performance
- Somerset Safeguarding Annual Report and strategic plan
- Somerset CCG finance and performance issues
- Community Hospitals
- Council performance reports
- Learning Disability Service Contract
- NHS waiting times for Somerset patients
- Somerset suicide prevention
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Medium Term Financial Plan
- Out of Hours service – detailed scrutiny

Suggestions for the Future

We look forward to an interesting and informative year ahead

Many of the reports we have considered have been information reports where our ability to make constructive input or provide feedback has therefore been limited.

We have always endeavoured to approach our task as a 'critical friend' by trying to be supportive to officers and encouraging them to highlight areas of concern to us, whilst hopefully providing a suitably robust challenge to question poor performance and seek reassurance that appropriate action is taken to achieve improvement. We feel the Council would benefit from Scrutiny being asked to undertake more pre-Cabinet decision work to help the transition from policy development to implementation.

Consultations Undertaken

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

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.

2.4 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

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