

Annual Report of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee

Chairman: 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 since July 2021. It has been a source of frustration that the Scrutiny Committee has faced some resistance from parts of the Council to submit reports and deliver workshops with sufficient commitment to allow the Scrutiny Committee to undertake a comprehensive scrutiny role.
- 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 Programme.
 - any Member can be asked by the Committee to contribute information and evidence and to participate in specific scrutiny reviews.

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.

2.2 Meeting 07 July 2021

Out of Hours – Report

We had a presentation and report from Devon Doctors who run the Out of Hours Service for Somerset. This report was requested as the CQC had rated the service as Requires Improvement and the Committee requested an update on the progress towards bringing the service up to standard.

CCG Performance and Quality Report

We had a presentation and report on the current position and a comparison of February 2020 and March 2021. We heard of the impact of Coronavirus on all services ranging from the closure of an operating theatre at Musgrove Park Hospital to allow for infection control. We also discussed the temporary closure of the Minor Injuries Unit overnight at Minehead as a result of safety concerns. We had updates on all the current areas of focus for all area of performance. We challenged some of the figures seeking further clarification and requested further information on the Mental Health provision for Children and Young People in Somerset.

SCC Business Plan Report

We had a tailored presentation on the Somerset Business plan for next year; this brought the County Vision to reality. This report had already been shared with members and that consultation had resulted in some revisions to ensure it was transparent and had a clear measure of outcomes.

Learning Disabilities Report

We had a presentation that began with a tribute to all those working in the Learning Disability arena as the last year had been most challenging for this group of people. We welcomed the proposed capital spend in improving housing. We welcomed the flexible and individual support packages being made available. We had an overview of the Discovery contract and the steps being taken to fully embed the Dimensions Standards.

2.3 Meeting 08 September 2021

Stroke Services Consultation

We had a report that set out the proposals to improve Stroke care in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) and were invited to consider the impact on Somerset residents.

Adult Social Care Performance Report

We had a report that set out the challenges the pandemic has placed on Adult Social Care over the past year. The pandemic has reminded us of the importance of collaboration, communities, and of the care, support and protection of those who need some help the most. It has served to demonstrate why adult social care work is both vital and valuable.

Supporting Unpaid Carers in Somerset

We had a report and presentation on unpaid carers in Somerset. There are 58,000 people who have identified themselves as carers, there are many more who are not known to the Council. Somerset County Council commissions a broad range of support services for carers. We welcomed the follow up to the workshop in 2019 and commended the positive outcome from a productive event.

2.4 Workshop 06 October 2021

We had a very productive and interactive Workshop on Neighbourhoods and Communities setting out the Localities model of health and care. Good news stories were shared, and we looked at future opportunities.

2.5 Meeting 03 November 2021

Integrated Quality, Safety and Performance Report

We had a report that provided an update on the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Integrated Quality, Safety and Performance and an overview of performance against the constitutional and other standards to the period ending July 2021. It was a retrospective report which compared the reported month (July 2021) to the same period in 2019/20 to provide a comparative view of performance.

Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) Report

We had presented the Annual Report of the Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB). The Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (SSAB) operates as an independently chaired, multi-agency body under The Care Act 2014. It became statutory from April 2015. The SSAB's role is to have an oversight of safeguarding arrangements within the County, not to deliver services or become involved in the day-to-day operations of individual organisations, including those of Somerset County Council.

Adult Social Care Reform

We had a report and presentation on recent developments in relation to national plans relating to Adult Social Care reform and assurance. It was made clear that at this stage these represented directions of travel as the full details are not yet available.

2.6 Meeting 26 January 2022

Fit for My Future – Update

We discussed a report on the Fit For my Future strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to set out how to support the health and wellbeing of the people of Somerset by changing the commissioning and delivery of health and care services. We had a further wider consultation meeting after the meeting during which many views were shared.

NHS Dental Services

This was a substantive discussion that covered the concerns expressed by many regarding access to NHS dental Services before and during the

pandemic. We concluded that it was appropriate to ask the Leader Of Council to support pressure for a Dental Reform Bill to be brought to Parliament as soon as possible.

Adult Social Care (ASC) Performance Report

We had a report provided an up-to-date information on key developments in relation to demand and performance activity across adult social care both nationally and locally, as well as associated risks, mitigation activity and reform plans. We welcomed the report and positive performance over a very challenging period.

Adult Social Care (ASC) Budget Report

We had a report setting out the Medium term Financial Plan setting out a 12.8% increase to the overall budget. This increase was welcomed by the Committee.

2.7 Meeting 03 March 2022

Integrated Care Board

The Board had an update on the proposed governance of the Somerset Integrated Care System(ICS) Board. Integrated care systems are partnerships that bring together providers, commissioners and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector across a geographical area ('system') to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their local population. We supported the proposed high level plans and were keen for the scrutiny process to be developed further and that representation on the Integrated Care Board should not be dominated by 'health' but should include a wide representation of the community in Somerset.

CCG Performance

We had a comprehensive report from the Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The CCG had evoked Opel 4 for the first time due to the escalating pressure on the service. Musgrove Park Hospital recorded an occupancy rate of 108% . This was because they were having to open beds in areas not usually used for this. This was as a result of the Omicron variant and staff being redeployed for the vaccination programme.

Fit for My Future – Update

We had a report covering the Fit for My Future Strategy. This report covered Stroke Services, Minehead Minor Injuries Unit (MIU) and Victoria Park Medical Centre in Bridgwater. These were discussed at length with many local concerns raised. It was agreed that Scrutiny wanted an evaluation of these discussions to be brought back to the Committee later in the year.

Musgrove Park Hospital Redevelopment

The Board had a report and presentation on the New Hospital Programme for Musgrove Park Hospital in Taunton. Somerset Foundation Trust is developing outline proposals for the redevelopment of Musgrove Park Hospital site between 2026-2030. These proposals are in response to Musgrove Park Hospital site being designated one of the schemes in the New Hospital Programme. We discussed the proposals and agreed that a wider public consultation would be appropriate in the future.

3 Consultations:

We have during the year shared and commented on a number of papers that were circulated to the Committee as we have not been able to meet as frequently as usual. These have covered: -

Musgrove Park Hospital Redevelopment

Dental Services

Stroke Services

Weston Hospital

Annual report for Hospital and Ambulance Trusts

4 Meetings Overview for 2021-22

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

- Fit for My Future
- Access to Dental services
- Waiting lists post Covid 19
- Changes to Stroke Services
- Improvements to Out of Hours Service
- Care Homes and Nursing Home Support Service (LARCH/CCG)
- Regular clinical quality review reports from Somerset Clinical Commission Group (CCG)
- Dementia Report
- 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
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4.1 Suggestions for the Future

We look forward to an interesting and informative year ahead.

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.

5. Consultations Undertaken

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

6. 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.

7. 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.