

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

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee held in the Luttrell and Wyndham Rooms, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY, on Thursday 26 January 2023 at 2.00 pm

**Present:** Cllr R Woods (Chair), Cllr G Oakes (Vice-Chair), Cllr H Bruce, Cllr D Denton, Cllr B Ferguson, Cllr A Govier, Cllr A Hendry, Cllr E Pearlstone, Cllr C Sully and Cllr H Farbahi

**Other Members present:** Cllr C Lawrence, Cllr S Osborne, Cllr L Trimnell, Cllr A Kendall, Cllr M Lovell, Cllr F Nicholson, Cllr L Redman, Cllr H Shearer, Cllr G Slocombe and Cllr M Stanton

**Apologies for absence:** Cllr N Cottle, Cllr T Robbins and Cllr F Smith

### **1      Declarations of Interest - Agenda Item 1**

Cllr Habib Farbahi declared that he was a member of the shadow Taunton Town Council.

### **2      Minutes from the previous meeting held on 12 December 2022 - Agenda Item 3**

The minutes of the meeting on 12 December 2022 were agreed subject to the removal of the words 'post Vesting Day' from the discussion about the forward Work Programme.

### **3      Apologies for Absence - Agenda Item**

There were apologies from Councillor Tony Robbins who asked Councillor Martin Lovell as a substitute, Councillor Nick Cottle who asked Councillor Habib Farbahi as a substitute and from Councillor Fran Smith.

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

There were no public questions.

### **5      Scrutiny for Policies, Adults and Health Committee Work Programme - Agenda Item 5**

The Committee discussed the proposed forward programme. They asked about progress on the proposed workshop on Mental Health. They were informed that no date had been set.

The performance of the Southwest Ambulance Service had been brought forward to the agenda for the 08 March meeting as the Committee had requested.

## 6 **Fit For My Future -Draft ICS Strategy** - Agenda Item 6

The Committee had a presentation on the draft strategy of the integrated Care Board which needs to be established under the Health and Care Act 2022. The Somerset Integrated Care Strategy will build on the existing work carefully developed under Fit for My Future, to ensure the momentum to further the transformative change needed to tackle challenges such as: reducing disparities in health and social care; improving quality and performance; preventing mental and physical ill health; maximising independence and preventing care needs, by promoting control, choice and flexibility in how people receive care and support. Progress as a Somerset system has been significant under the Fit for my Future direction, and its five strategic themes continue to be used in the engagement with partners about how to prioritise plans.

The five strategic aims are:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of the population,
- Provide the best care and support to children and adults,
- Strengthen care and support in local communities,
- Reduce health inequalities and
- Respond well to complex needs.

On 28 November the Health and Wellbeing Board / Integrated Care Partnership endorsed the work that has been undertaken to date to develop the outline health and care strategy for Somerset. This was published in December 2022. Currently work is being undertaken to develop this strategic outline (Fit for My Future) into a more detailed strategic document, that will provide the direction in Somerset for the Five Year Joint Forward Plan. The Joint Forward Plan will describe the detailed plans for delivering the first two years of the strategy, as well as describing the priorities over the five-year timescale.

The presentation highlighted the five identified obstacles to achieving the vision:

- The lack of focus on population health and prevention,
- There are fractured and clunky pathways and processes,
- Too much resource is spent on hospital care,
- Inequalities are worsening and
- There is poor co-ordination of care for people with complex needs.

The presentation set out a clear model of care with greater emphasis on Living Well and other early steps to reduce the demand for Inpatient and Emergency Care.

The Committee discussed the report and asked questions. The Committee were interested to know the gap between capacity and demand. It was agreed there was but limited resources meant it was necessary to work within the available

resources and by focussing on living well those limited resources would go further. Greater use of digital solutions and new technology would go some way to filling that gap.

The workforce challenge was acknowledged and to mitigate that the “Proud to Care” initiative was recently launched. This will train new recruits, develop clear career paths and attract people to Somerset to fulfil the wide range of roles on offer.

The Committee were interested in activity to achieve engagement from the population in taking care of themselves. This is covered by Public Health and is understood to be complex and challenging but some improvements have been made and the programmes are ongoing. The engagement of local communities is key to driving this forward and where they are active they are making a real difference. The Local Community Networks (LCN'S) are seen as a key driver to establish better links and encourage resilient communities, there are some good examples of this during the Covid Pandemic.

There was a question about 'measurable outcomes'. This is seen as fundamental to the strategy and these are still being agreed but will be published when they have been signed off.

Another question was raised about hearing the voice of young people. The Committee was reassured that there were some events targeted at young people and their feedback was frank and honest. They noted that the strategy was 'the duller thing they had ever seen' but they did want to get involved in the detail and practical ways of delivering the strategic aims.

#### **The Somerset Scrutiny for Policies Adults and Health Committee: -**

- **Noted the requirements for the Somerset Integrated Care Partnership (NHS commissioners and the local authority) to develop a detailed five year Integrated Health and Care Strategy,**
- **Agreed to support the commitment to work closely with local people and communities as well as providers and other partners in the delivery of system level, evidence based priorities in the short, medium and long term.**

#### **7 Adult Social Care - Performance Report - Agenda Item 7**

The Committee had a report that provided an update on key developments in relation to demand and performance activity across adult social care, both nationally and locally. It was supported by an accompanying presentation that detailed some key performance indicators for the service to help inform the Committee's understanding of current activity and offered an opportunity to assess local performance in the context of the ongoing pressures and challenges facing the national health and care system.

Performance highlights were:

- - **Calls resolved at first point of contact:** The proportion of calls resolved by Somerset Direct (the Council's front door) at 'first point of contact' has remained consistently above target despite demand and enquiry levels remaining very high.
- **Continued high levels of overdue assessments and reviews:** The number of overdue assessments and reviews continues to grow, impacted by rising demand, complexity of need and ongoing internal workforce challenges and vacancies.
- **Somerset's performance across ASCOF (Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework) measures:** Each year the Government collects data from Local Authorities and conducts surveys of people and their carers who use our services.
- **ASC Hospital Discharge Pathways:** In November, 92.1% of all people discharged from Somerset Hospitals were able to return home.
- **Learning from ASC Stakeholder Feedback:** Since launch in January 2022, our ASC Feedback Form responses have offered enormously valuable insights into the experience of service users and their carers, our partner colleagues and other key stakeholders. 81.8% rated the service as good or excellent.

The Committee asked about resilience and heard that recruitment remains a challenge but there are a number of actions being taken including recruitment from Africa for qualified staff, graduates from the new course at Yeovil College now coming through but there is still a demand for staff.

The Committee wanted to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the Contact Centre as 60% of calls are resolved during the first call which reduces the pressure on other services.

The Committee heard that the focus on supporting people to remain in their own homes has increased by another 3% over the last three years but the average support package cost has increased by 25%. Somerset is leading in the Southwest for this and the strategy to encourage people to take control of their personal budget and using micro providers to achieve this has been key. The Committee asked about the decision making process in relation to going home from hospital. They were told this is a joint decision between the medical team, Health and Social Care and the individual -if they have capacity. It was recognised that there was sometimes resistance from family but the focus is to support people in their own home and the statistics demonstrate that this is working well. Currently 76% of people leaving hospital are still at home 90 days later and those that do return to hospital do so with different conditions.

**The Somerset Scrutiny for Policies Adults and Health Committee: -**

- **Noted the key updates provided in relation to Adult Social Care demand and performance, and to considered whether to make any recommendations arising from the report and wider discussion.**

## 8 **Suicide Prevention Strategy** - Agenda Item 8

The Committee received a very impactful presentation on the Suicide Prevention Strategy In Somerset. This strategy has been developed using a multi-agency partnership. The suicide rate in Somerset is 14.3 per 100,00 of the population compared with 10.4 nationally. The rate for men is higher than women. The strategy aims to target the high risks groups but also to encourage wide participation is helping to raise awareness of support available to empowering the community to help these groups.

Using local and national information the Somerset system has been working for over 10 years to identify and put in place work to reduce risk of suicide for key groups through commissioning projects such as:

- Stepladder,
- Unbreakable Men,
- Farmerados and
- Training for staff who work with high-risk groups.

There are many complex reasons why Somerset has such a high rate and these are linked to : rurality, means (farmers having access to weapons), low wage economy and long term health conditions.

There are a number of agencies and charities who are there to listen and support such as Mind, Somerset Suicide Bereavement Support Service and Mental Health Support Services.

The presentation highlighted the current successes of the partnership in getting the messages shared . A Partnership with Somerset County Cricket Club and Yeovil Football Club encourages young man to talk about their mental health. There had been a Walk for a Life event on World Suicide Day and a Social Media Campaign to raise awareness of the Orange Button Training Scheme. The Orange Button Training aims to equip ordinary members of the public with the skills to feel comfortable talking to someone who is currently experiencing a crisis. This is not full Mental health training but an opportunity to encourage people to open up about their mental health is a safe way with someone who feels confident they can listen and signpost to the best source of help for that individual.

The presenters all recognised that this can often be a taboo subject but felt it needs to be discussed in the open so help can be arranged before another life is lost to suicide.

The Committee discussed the presentation and were open about their own experiences of the impact of suicide and Mental Health deterioration in family

and friends. The Committee were keen to assist in destigmatising conversations about suicide and wanted to be assured that the strategy did involve schools as well as sporting organisations. One Councillor present had completed the Orange Button Training and said that they were worried beforehand but found the course and content very helpful and now feels more confident to wear the button and have a conversation without feeling they might do more harm than good.

**The Somerset Scrutiny for Policies for Adults and Health Committee:**

- **Thanked the presenters for a very positive presentation on a difficult area**
- **Agreed to take leaflets on the Orange Button Training and encourage appropriate people to sign up and**
- **Agreed that a workshop open to all Councillors should be arranged as this was a subject that needed to have widespread understanding.**

**9 Stroke Consultation - Agenda Item 9**

The Committee agreed that as the previous presentation had taken up so much time it would not be appropriate to take this item at this meeting. As the report that had been published made clear there was a need to agree that the proposed public consultation could begin as proposed on 30th January 2023. The paper set out all nine options but the consultation was going to be limited to four options (including a do nothing).

The Committee was asked to vote on this and it was carried by a majority with a request that this item was on a future agenda. As the consultation was going to be Somerset wide Councillors were encouraged to actively participate in the consultation.

**The Somerset Scrutiny for Policies Adults and Health Committee:**

- **Agreed to the start of a formal public consultation on the hyper-acute and acute stroke services options as set out in the report.**

**10 Any other urgent items of business - Agenda Item 10**

There were no other items of business.

**(The meeting ended at 5.10 pm)**

**CHAIR**