

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 24th October,
2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Salman Akbar, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Anthony Lovell and Yvonne Smith

Also Present:

Councillor Ann Isherwood

Officers:

Sue Hanley and Anna Wallace

Senior Democratic Services Officer:

J Bayley

34. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Joanne Beecham, Mark Shurmer and Jenny Wheeler. It was confirmed that Councillor Anthony Lovell was attending as a substitute for Councillor Beecham and Councillor Yvonne Smith was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shurmer.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Thursday 5th September 2019 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

37. PUBLIC SPEAKING

There was no public speaking on this occasion.

38. HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSFORMATION PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE

Members welcomed the Director of Strategy and Partnerships for Worcestershire Health and Care Trust and the STP Communications and Engagement Lead to the meeting to discuss the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP). During consideration of this matter the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- In 2016 the NHS had been required to produce STP plans across the country. Locally, a decision had been taken for Herefordshire and Worcestershire to work together on an STP.
- The STP had provided an opportunity for different branches of the NHS to work together to address health issues in the local area.
- Increasingly the focus was on wrapping services around the needs of local communities rather than shaping services around the requirements of organisations.
- At a national level there was a movement towards an accountable care system. This had been interpreted by some as an attempt to privatise services but the real aim had been to enable the private sector to work better together in the delivery of care services.
- There was a lot of duplication in the NHS. The aim through working together was to identify duplication, streamline services and then use available resources to meet community needs.
- The Herefordshire and Worcestershire STP had progressed more quickly than some STPs in the country, partly because the organisational composition of the partnership working arrangements was less complex than in other locations.
- A key aim through work on the STP was to improve the performance of existing services. However, unfortunately in some cases services would not be available locally, including Tier 4 mental health beds, which meant that referrals had to be made out of the area.
- The NHS long-term plan had been published in 2019 and required further changes moving forward.
- There were some key objectives in the long-term plan, including to improve cancer services, improve mental health service outcomes, improve waiting times and to address

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issues, including waiting time at A&E. Many of these issues were a problem nationally, not just locally.

- Since the last Redditch Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting when an update had been provided on the STP, Worcestershire Healthwatch had undertaken a significant amount of consultation with hard to reach groups.
- There had been a number of messages consistently raised during this consultation process including the complexity of the NHS and social care system, the need for transport to be available to help people access services, the valuable work undertaken by carers and the need to provide support to them and problems accessing general practice.
- Consideration was being given to providing services in alternative formats to the traditional approach in order to meet the needs of patients. For example people who worked might appreciate a telephone conversation at an appointed time. In order to identify suitable alternatives the NHS needed to consult with the public about their needs and preferences.
- The local Neighbourhood Teams in Redditch were working to develop resilience within general practice.
- More support was being provided to eating disorder services and to mental health services than ever before.
- Social proscripting was increasingly being used to help those who approached their GP for help but who did not necessarily require a medical intervention. Social proscripting could also result in preventative action that helped people to avoid needing medical interventions at a later date.
- The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Worcestershire were shortly due to merge from four into one. It was anticipated that the new Worcestershire CCG would have a more strategic focus than the four CCGs had had in the past.
- At the local level detailed spending plans had been developed in response to the national long-term plan. These plans would be reported to the NHS West Midlands and would be reviewed on at least an annual basis.
- There was an expectation that organisations' plans would match local plans in the STPs and then this would also be reflected at a regional and national level.
- There remained a number of challenges facing the NHS locally which were generally replicated at a national level. This included medical staff shortages and financial challenges. There was a need to both encourage existing staff to remain in post and to promote medical careers to future generations.
- The collaboration that was taking place locally felt very positive and appeared to be different to the past. As part of this process organisations were working together to identify

how to respond to different health challenges and were pooling funding.

Following the presentation of the update report Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The potential impact that Brexit would have on the NHS. The Committee was advised that guidance had been provided at a national level in respect of planning for Brexit.
- The funding that would be available to the NHS once Brexit had taken place. Members were advised that the finances in the national funding plan for the NHS had been announced earlier in the year and was intended for; aging well, primary care, learning disabilities, cancer and mental health services.
- The good quality care that was received from staff working in the NHS. Members unanimously praised staff for their hard work and dedication.
- The difficulties that people often encountered when first attempting to access care services and the frustration and anxiety that this could cause, particularly to people diagnosed with cancer when placed on a waiting list.
- The performance of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (WAHT). Members noted that many targets had been missed in service provision and this caused concerns for the public.
- The action that was being taken to address the performance issues for WAHT. Members were informed that the STP and long-term plan both focused on driving up performance. Urgent care and cancer services both had their own work streams and actions that were designed to reduce waiting times.
- The need to encourage people to access a range of services, not just A&E. The Committee was advised that other parts of the country adopted a more active approach to encouraging people to use alternative services which meant that A&E in those areas concentrated on the more urgent cases.
- The systems in place within the NHS and the need for these to be streamlined to ensure that they did not act as barriers to effective service delivery.
- Mental health services for young people and the age at which children could start to access these services. Members were advised that there was a Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) support group for those aged under five.
- The age at which young people transferred from CAMHS to adult mental health services. The Committee was informed

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that the Government was considering increasing the age at which this occurred from 18 to 25.

- The increasing demand for the services of CAMHS which had been identified at a recent meeting of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.
- The important role of schools and GP practices respectively in terms of enabling early intervention in cases where children and young people were experiencing mental health problems.
- The issues that the Suicide Prevention Task Group had already identified, in terms of accessing crisis care and the funding available for mental health services. Members were advised that, whilst there were no Tier 4 mental health beds in the area, there had been an increase in investment in tier 3+ services which had helped to reduce demand at the tier 4 level.
- The difficulties for people experiencing social isolation, including people with caring responsibilities. The Committee was informed that Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations were delivering projects to tackle social isolation, including Age UK's Social Connecting project.
- The problem in Birmingham of people from outside the city registering at GP practices inside the city and the impact that this had had on demand. Members were advised that this was not a problem in Redditch.
- The digital introduction to the CAMHS service that was available for young people to use. Members were advised that lots of young people preferred to have a digital introduction to the service before they physically met with practitioners.
- The bar that had been set in order to access CAMHS services and the need for support to still be made available for those children and young people who did not meet this threshold. Members were informed that the Reach for Wellbeing service had been introduced in 2018 which was designed to provide services to children and young people before an intervention was required from CAMHS.
- The potential for information about local wellbeing services to be publicised in a single directory. Members were advised that it was likely that a single directory would be published by the Council in future.
- The difficulties encountered by children and parents if they had to wait for a lengthy period of time in A&E before treatment and the impact that this could have on a child's education.
- The capital investment funding that had recently been announced for WAHT and how this would be spent. Members were advised that a lot of capital spending was on hold in the

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NHS as discussions were taking place about how it would be released.

- The evidence basis for work on the STP and long-term national plans. The Committee was informed that much of the evidence basis was from other countries. For example in Holland demand was kept down through helping people to maintain independent lives in their own homes.
- The date when all of the plans would be fully implemented and no further change would be required. Members were advised that this was unlikely to occur due to advances in medical treatments and technology.
- The changing local demography and the challenges that this presented for the NHS and social care services. Members were informed that in the following five years there would be an increase of 49 per cent of the number of people in their 80s living in Malvern Hills district alone and they would have particular medical needs.
- The delays that some Members had encountered to ambulance services and at A&E and the impact that these waiting times could have on vulnerable residents.
- The process for making complaints about the quality of care received by residents and measures that could be taken to ensure that health services were held to account. The Committee was informed that complaints could be made directly to the relevant organisation. Reports could also be made to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and NHS services were held to account by the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).
- The role of NHS West Midlands. Members were advised that NHS West Midlands had been formed in the region following the merger of NHS England and NHS Providers.
- The positive recent development whereby it had been agreed that the drugs needed by some stroke patients within an hour of having a stroke could be administered at any location subject to approval by a consultant over the telephone, rather than the deadline being missed due to capacity issues.
- The potential for 5G to be introduced in Redditch and the medical advances that could then be made at the Alexandra Hospital as a consequence.

Members concluded by agreeing that a further update in future to the Committee would be helpful.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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39. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND SCRUTINY OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S WORK PROGRAMME - SELECTING ITEMS FOR SCRUTINY

Officers advised that at the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 10th September 2019 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations in respect of the disposal of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) asset from Green Road, Studley had been approved.

Members also considered the latest edition of the Executive Committee's Work Programme which covered the period 1st November 2019 to 29th February 2020.

During consideration of the work programme Members noted that in some cases the titles of the items listed in the work programme did not necessarily clarify the purpose of the item. This made it difficult for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine whether an item would be suitable for pre-scrutiny. Members therefore requested that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) should consider the titles of items listed on the work programme and ensure that these were recorded in a way that would clarify the purpose of each item.

The Committee also briefly discussed the meaning of the term "key decision" and how this was reported in the Executive Work Programme. Officers explained that key decisions could only be taken by the Executive Committee and clarification was provided of the meaning of the term "key decision" with reference being made to information provided on the front cover of the work programme. However, it was confirmed that whilst a report might not require Members to make a key decision the proposals could have very important implications for the Council and Members might still wish to pre-scrutinise reports in those circumstances.

Members subsequently discussed the content of the Executive Committee's Work Programme and agreed that, in addition to those items already on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme, the following items should be pre-scrutinised:

- Housing Strategy report.
- Review of the One Stop Shops.
- Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Programme 2020/21.
- Leisure and Cultural Services Strategy.

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Officers confirmed that the quarterly financial monitoring reports would be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group as and when available.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme be updated to include the items for pre-scrutiny detailed in the preamble above;**
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 10th September be noted; and**
- 3) the content of the Executive Committee's work programme for the period 1st November 2019 to 29th February 2020 be noted.**

40. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the items that had been identified for pre-scrutiny during the meeting would be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme. The majority of these items would need to be considered at the December meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, if all proceeded according to schedule. This would create a very lengthy agenda and Members were advised that it was therefore possible an extra meeting of the Committee would be required in December to enable Members to consider all of these items.

During consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme the Chair proposed that the Committee should consider the subject of the Council's Concessionary Rents Policy at the meeting due to take place on 7th November. Members were advised that the report in respect of Concessionary Rents that had been due to be considered by the Executive Committee on 29th October would not now be considered until December. Whilst the report that had been published in the agenda for the 29th October meeting remained in the public domain this report had been withdrawn. There was a possibility that the contents of the report would change by December and the proposals could differ from those in the document that had already been published. Therefore it would not be appropriate for the report already in the public domain to be discussed at this stage. A verbal update or short written statement could, however, potentially be provided.

Members discussed the subject of the Concessionary Rents report in some depth. On the one hand concerns were raised that by

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discussing the report in November rather than December the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be debating an item at a time when Members did not have access to the full facts of the matter. On the other hand Members noted that the Concessionary Rents Policy was a subject of significant interest to the public and recent local press coverage indicated that there were concerns in the community about potential forthcoming changes. Therefore, it was suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should debate the matter in order to address an issue of concern to the local community.

On being put to the vote it was agreed that the item should be considered at the 7th November meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **the subject of the Concessionary Rents Policy should be considered at the meeting of the Committee due to take place on 7th November 2019; and**
- 2) **the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme be noted.**

41. TASK GROUPS, SHORT SHARP REVIEWS AND WORKING GROUPS - UPDATE REPORTS

The following updates were provided in respect of the work of a number of Task Groups and Working Groups:

- a) Budget Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Jenny Wheeler

In Councillor Wheeler's absence Officers advised that the latest meeting of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group had taken place on 14th October 2019. During this meeting Members had interviewed the Head of Environmental Services and Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development about the work of the Commercialism Programme Board, progress at the authority with delivering commercial services and the role of Black Radley. The group had also considered the Section 24 Notice and the implications of this for the Council's financial position moving forward.

Updates had been provided to the group in respect of the new Enterprise finance system at a number of meetings. Members

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had welcomed news that the roll out of this system was progressing well.

Members were advised that the group had agreed some recommendations at their latest meeting. These would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th November 2019.

b) Parking Enforcement Scrutiny Task Group – Chair, Councillor Mark Shurmer

In Councillor Shurmer's absence Officers explained that Members of the group were in the process of shadowing one of the Civil Enforcement Officers in order to observe the service in action and to find out about the challenges facing staff. At the following meeting of the group Members were hoping to interview a representative of Worcestershire County Council, though this meeting had not yet been confirmed.

The group had circulated a survey for the consideration of other Members. This had been designed to provide all Members with an opportunity to contribute evidence in respect of the parking enforcement issues that were reported to them by local residents. Members were thanked for completing copies of this survey, the feedback from which was due to be considered at the following meeting of the group.

c) Performance Scrutiny Working Group – Chair, Councillor Andrew Fry

Councillor Fry reported that at the latest meeting of the group Members had interviewed the Chief Executive and Head of Economic Development for North Worcestershire about work in respect of the strategic purpose 'help me run a successful business'.

Each member of the group had opted to take a lead on monitoring the measures for a strategic purpose. They provided an update on the information that they had gathered at every meeting. Any recommendations arising from their work would be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in due course.

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- d) Suicide Prevention Task Group – Chair, Councillor Debbie Chance

Councillor Chance informed the Committee that the group had interviewed a representative of Worcestershire County Council and of a local community group which helped people experiencing mental ill health. Members were aiming to hold further meetings in December with a view to reporting the group's recommendations early in the new year.

RESOLVED that

the update reports be noted.

42. EXTERNAL SCRUTINY BODIES - UPDATE REPORTS

Members thanked Councillor Michael Chalk for providing written updates in respect of the latest meetings of both the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The following additional updates were provided in relation to these Committees:

- a) WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee

During the latest meeting of the Committee the subject of homelessness had been debated. The Committee had been advised about Housing First initiatives in the region and Councillor Chalk had learned that there was a pilot Housing First project in Redditch. Officers explained that this pilot was at an early stage and was resource intensive but the Council was learning many very valuable lessons.

- b) Worcestershire HOSC

During the latest meeting of the Worcestershire HOSC Members had interviewed the Chief Executive of WAHT. The Committee had welcomed news that the trust was out of special measures and had been informed that 50 nurses had been employed from India. Unfortunately there still, however, remained over 200 nursing vacancies at the trust.

RESOLVED that

the updates be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.05 pm