

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 28th August, 2013

Present:- Councillor Colin Eastwood – in the Chair

Councillors D Becket, Mrs Hailstones, Loades and Taylor.J
J Williams (Portfolio Holder)

Officers Mark Bailey (Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships)
Dave Adams (Executive Director – Operational Services)
Martin Stevens (Democratic Services Officer)
Louise Stevenson (Scrutiny Officer)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Johnson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr David Loades declared an interest on the agenda items as he was Vice Chair of the County Council's Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee and a Governor of University Hospital North Staffordshire.

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the spelling correction of David Becket's surname in the list or recorded apologies.

4. INFANT MORTALITY

The Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships stated that it had been raised sometime ago that Newcastle-under-Lyme had a higher infant mortality rate than the national average. In 2008 a group had been setup, made up of a number of organisations, to look at the issues. Progress had been quite slow, partly as a consequence of the changes in the health service. The situation had however improved since 2008. There had been a specific focus on the behaviour of expectant parents and their behaviour towards children after the birth.

A Member asked what the current situation was statistically to assess whether the Council was working on an historic problem and whether the peak in deaths had been reached. Smoking was an area that could have a direct impact and it was something which the Council could be proactive about.

The Chair stated that infant mortality was unacceptably high compared to other European countries and other areas within the United Kingdom.

It was reported that an Officer of the Council had been excluded from some meetings because they had been deemed purely clinical in nature. Members however felt that this wasn't fully in the spirit of collaboration that the group had intended.

A Member stated that more effort needed to be put into the educational aspects surrounding the morning after pill.

5. **TACKLING RISING ALCOHOL RELATED HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS IN THE BOROUGH**

The Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships stated that the item was on the agenda as a direct consequence of the presentation given at the last meeting. There had been a notable increase in alcohol related hospital admissions in North Staffordshire. In 2011/12 the area had seen a 10% rise in alcohol related admissions. The National rise had only been 1%. In 2012/13 it was believed the rate of increase would be 7% in North Staffordshire. On the positive side there was a concerted effort to deal with the issue. There was a push towards prevention through education and early intervention. There had been some good examples of partnership working. The CCG had admitted that they were not sure why there had been an increase. They were though focusing resources to the problem. Commissioning plans had been focused on treatment with 96.3% of the budget focussed to this area. Only £25,000 out of a total of £10 million had been allocated to prevention. It was clear that there needed to be a shift in resources towards prevention and for progress to be monitored to see how the situation was progressing.

A Member suggested that the County Health and Well Being Board should be approached regarding access to statistics to avoid a duplication of work. He had some concerns over the triage process at A & E. He wanted to see some action from the County Health and Well Being Board.

A Member stated that people who were drunk were being sold alcohol. He asked whether any action could be taken by the Council's licensing team. It was important to support the Police on the issue. The Chair stated that he was aware that the Alcohol and Drug Executive Board were engaging with the district Council's on the matter of Licensing. It was also on the Committee's work plan for the next meeting. A Member stated that he believed the extension of licensing hours for pubs and the cheap alcohol in supermarkets had exasperated the problem

A Member asked what the definition was of an alcohol related hospital admission. It was important to understand this to appreciate the extent of the problem. He was also interested to know the areas that the people admitted came from. The Chair asked it if was worth developing an educational programme in Youth Centres. In response, The Head of Business Improvement and Partnerships stated that he was not aware of a current programme within the Youth Centres. There were however other initiatives such as the Strengthening Families programme. He would report back on the Youth Centre idea.

RESOLVED: That for the next meeting there should be a further analysis of the figures relating to alcohol admissions, an understanding of the current educational processes relating to alcohol and how the Borough's major trauma unit was dealing with the issue.

6. **MINUTES FROM THE HEALTHY STAFFORDSHIRE SELECT COMMITTEE**

The Chair stated that he had asked for the minutes of the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee to be circulated with all of the Health Scrutiny agendas, so people could be better informed as to what was happening. He had attended two meetings recently with Cllr David Loades on the 30 July and 12 August.

A Member, in reference to the summary notes, asked if the Health Scrutiny Committee would see sight of the consultation document on the modernisation of day services for people with learning disabilities. Cllr Loades undertook to email a copy of the consultation document to the Committee Office for circulation to the Committee. He personally had some concerns regarding the potential closure of some of the day services. There was currently an under utilisation of day services. It was agreed that the Committee would give a response to the consultation.

There was a discussion about community based delivery of care. Some Members expressed a concern about the difficulties in covering holidays, sickness leave and the level of payment for carers. In the care of the elderly, some carers were only being paid contact time.

With reference to the Mid Staffordshire Trust Administrator Proposals it was reported that the consultation was for the catchment area of Mid Staffordshire hospital. The Chair stated he had considered inviting University Hospital North Staffordshire to the Committee, but he had been advised that Staffordshire County Council were taking the lead to avoid duplication. Members of the Committee though could still have an impact and he would be attending a meeting on the 2 September with Cllr David Loades where any points could be raised. A Member stated that University Hospital North Staffordshire had made it clear they wanted to be involved in the consultation process.

A Member stated that the important question was how the proposed changes at Mid Staffordshire would affect North Staffordshire. Stoke-on-Trent City Council was particularly concerned and they were calling for an extra meeting. The University Hospital of North Staffordshire had only just recovered from its problems. Extra resources would be required at the hospital if they were to take on more work and there should be an assurance that additional work would be fully funded.

The Portfolio Holder stated that he was appalled that the people of North Staffordshire were not being consulted. He was taking steps with the Leader and Chief Executive to protest the situation. A Member stated that the UHNS had approached mid Staffordshire as way of improving their financial position. By taking on services they hoped to secure a larger budget.

7. **WORK PLAN**

The Chair reported that the work plan had been revised into a more accessible format so it was easier to see which items were coming forward in the future. He stated he would be contacting the County Council on the issue of accountability sessions as he believed they didn't give the full opportunity for local residents to give their views.

8. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business within the meaning of Section 100 B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

COUNCILLOR COLIN EASTWOOD
Chair