

HEALTH, WELLBEING & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13th September, 2021
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillors: Julie Cooper Silvia Burgess Wright
Panter Tony Kearon
Holland Moffat

Apologies: Councillor(s) Wilkes, Allison Gardner and Bert Proctor

Substitutes: Mayor - Mr Kenneth Owen

Officers: Andrew Bird Head of Sustainable
Environment
Denise French Democratic Services Team
Leader

Also in attendance: Councillor Gill Heesom Portfolio Holder - Community
Safety and Wellbeing

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Councillor Ian Wilkes and Councillors Allison Gardner and Bert Proctor (substitute Councillor Ken Owen).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2021 be approved as a correct record.

4. UPDATE FROM CABINET

Councillor Heesom, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, updated that the Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2021 had approved the recommendations from the scrutiny review of 'encouraging greater use of parks and open spaces'.

5. UPDATE ON HEALTH IMPACTS FROM WALLEY'S QUARRY AND THE COUNTY HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JULY 2021

The Committee considered the County Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 July 2021 that had considered the health impacts from Walley's Quarry. The Committee had held a lengthy meeting and heard from the Director of Health and Care, Staffordshire County Council; the Environment

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Agency; Public Health England; and the Director of Strategy Planning and Performance for the 6 Clinical Commissioning Groups in Staffordshire. The County Committee had resolved to write to various ministers including the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care; requests had been made to Public Health England for written information relating to safety of employees at Walley's Quarry and a number of requests had been made to the Environment Agency. Responses were awaited.

The Committee discussed the ongoing situation at Walley's Quarry and the following points were made:

- Residents were experiencing sustained stress
- A number of protests had taken place outside the site of the quarry
- The response of the Police and that some local people felt criminalised
- The visibility of the Police at the site compared to a lack of presence in town centres
- That the operator continued to breach permit requirements
- Whether this Committee could receive regular updates
- That Cabinet was receiving regular updates and the Council had served an Abatement Notice which had been appealed
- Whether a regular bulletin could be provided to all Councillors to keep them updated.

Resolved: that

- (a) The update be received and noted;
- (b) A regular update be made to the Committee on the health impacts relating to Walley's Quarry; and
- (c) Cabinet be asked to provide a regular update to all Councillors on the current situation at the Quarry.

6. MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the regular digests from Staffordshire County Council outlining the work of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 June; 5 and 26 July; and 9 August.

Resolved: that the updates be received.

7. MEETING WITH THE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP - 20 AUGUST 2021

The Committee considered a report from the regular meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair and Tracey Shewan of the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Andrew Bird updated on the most recent figures regarding inpatients which included 70 patients in Royal Stoke hospital with Covid, with 13 in the ITU. Other points noted from the meeting included difficulties in accessing primary care; waiting lists for hospital treatment which it was suggested could take between 2 and 4 years to clear; vaccine and mask hesitancy; that younger people were more likely to attend for vaccines at walk in centres rather than on an appointment basis; and that obesity was a challenge regarding health and wellbeing of the population and the NHS was looking at prevention measures.

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It was noted that there was currently a two week suspension of elective surgery at Royal Stoke and Stafford Hospitals.

Members discussed a number of points including:

- The importance of ensuring accessibility issues were managed so there were no barriers to treatment and testing
- The importance of accessing primary care including face to face appointments
- The impact on NHS staff of ongoing pressure on services
- The impact of the flu virus particularly on those with long Covid and what plans were in place to address this
- Were there any plans to address the backlog in hospital waiting times and was the Government providing any extra resource
- What lessons were being learned for the future
- Were any Council staff impacted by the need to be fully vaccinated for their job role and were statistics collected on the percentage of staff who were fully vaccinated? In response, Andrew explained that no members of staff needed to be fully vaccinated for their job role; from staff surveys it appeared a large proportion were double vaccinated.

Resolved: that the update be noted and the points made at the meeting be raised at the next meeting with the CCG.

8. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME PANEL - 21 JUNE 2021

The Committee considered a report from the Chairman of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel held on 21 June 2021. The Panel had been introduced to Ben Adams, the new Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner who had outlined initial priorities. The Committee was informed that Mr Adams had accepted an invitation to attend the next meeting of the Committee on Monday 29 November 2021.

Members discussed a number of issues:

- There were a large number of boarded up windows in Newcastle town centre due to vandalism and anti-social behaviour and the level appeared much higher than in other towns in the county
- The importance and value of visible policing
- A role for wider partnership working such as with West Midlands police on issues such as County lines and Serious and Organised Crime
- Response times
- Whether the Committee could have a regular presentation from the Local Policing Team as happened previously.

Resolved: that the report of the Panel be received and the upcoming visit by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner be welcomed.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

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The Committee considered the Work Programme. As discussed during earlier items, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) would be attending the next meeting of the Committee. There would also be the regular update from the meeting with the CCG and bulletins from the County Scrutiny Committee. It was suggested that the item on the Newcastle Housing Advice Service could be postponed to March 2022 to enable the next meeting to focus mainly on the PFCC. It was also suggested that the start time be brought forward to 6.30pm to enable sufficient time for discussion.

Members suggested the meeting of the Committee in March could include discussion of how services have coped with winter pressures plus the item on the Housing Advice Service.

Resolved: that

- (a) The next meeting focus on the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner plus standard items and commence at 6.30pm subject to agreement with the Chair; and
- (b) The meeting in March 2022 include the Newcastle Housing Advice Service and a report on how services have managed during the winter season.

10. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 29 NOVEMBER 2021

Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.27 pm