

HEALTH, WELLBEING & PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 7th March, 2022
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors:	Julie Cooper	Silvia Burgess	Graham Hutton
	Barry Panter	Sue Moffat	
	Mark Holland	Ruth Wright	

Apologies: Councillor(s) Bert Proctor

Substitutes: None

Officers:	Andrew Bird	Head of Sustainable Environment
	Denise French	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Joanne Halliday	Head of Commercial Delivery

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

72. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bert Proctor; and Councillor Jill Waring, Portfolio Holder.

73. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

74. MINUTES OF A PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

75. UPDATE FROM CABINET

There was nothing to update from Cabinet.

76. DELIVERY OF NEWCASTLE HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

The Committee considered a report on the delivery of the Newcastle Housing Advice Service which had returned to an in house service from April 2021. Members were advised that key benefits including the introduction of a new Joint Housing register and Allocations Policy in partnership with Aspire Housing and availability of housing

advice at the first point of contact. There was assisted support available for those who needed it.

Members asked about accuracy of homelessness figures and whether the figures were masked by people who may be temporarily staying with friends (sofa surfing), had difficulties accessing systems or were not eligible for emergency support. The Committee was advised of the legislation; how priority needs were assessed which included people with children below the age of 18 years; and that current numbers of Rough Sleepers showed there were 9-10 which was higher than previous years. Housing Advisors gave a lot of support but it was noted that not everyone was willing to accept support. The report outlined arrangements to develop emergency and temporary accommodation; this was important as it was less likely to fail and less expensive than hotels which would be used as temporary accommodation in the absence of other options.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

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77. HOW SERVICES HAVE MANAGED WITH WINTER PRESSURES

The Committee considered a report on how front line services had managed over winter including the additional pressures caused by the Omicron variant of Covid. Members heard that in the first week of January there was a 30% absence among the Recycling and Waste workforce alongside a 50% increased tonnage of recycling collected and a 30% increase in food waste. The service managed to continue with minimal disruption due to the usual suspension of garden waste collections and support from streetscene and agency staff. Members expressed their gratitude to staff for maintaining the services.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

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78. SPACE PROGRAMME

At the previous meeting of the Committee, a presentation had been received from Ben Adams, Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner for Staffordshire. During the presentation Mr Adams had made reference to the Space Programme held over the summer holidays to provide activities for young people and offered to share the Evaluation report once ready; this was attached to the agenda. The Committee agreed to refer back to Mr Adams queries relating to provision for people with Special Educational Needs and whether there were any learnings or initiatives that hadn't worked well.

Resolved: that the SPACE Evaluation Report 2021 be received and the Police, Crime and Fire Commissioner be contacted regarding the provision that was made for people with Special Educational Needs and whether there were any learnings or initiatives that had not worked well.

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79. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

The Committee considered the reports from meetings of the Staffordshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel.

Resolved: that the reports be received.

80. **STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee considered the regular digest from Staffordshire County Council outlining the work of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 November, 13 December and 31 January.

Resolved: that the update be received.

81. **WALLEY'S QUARRY HEALTH IMPACTS**

The Committee considered the latest information regarding Walley's Quarry. A regular email was circulated by Staffordshire County Council to Members and the latest communication included reference to a consultation by the Environment Agency on its draft decision to vary two environmental permitting conditions for Walleys Quarry Landfill.

Members discussed the ongoing issues with odours from the landfill and the following points were raised:

- Concern about the unknown long term physical impacts on health
- The ongoing detrimental impact on mental health
- Concern over whether hazardous waste was being dumped at Walley's Quarry as raised by the local MP in parliament
- Whether the Posi-shell capping was effective or was it disintegrating?
- Impact on the watercourse
- Residents experiencing 'reporting fatigue' and giving up reporting odours on the official channels.
- Members were also concerned about traffic issues at the site from HGVs queuing on the highway and difficulties of reporting obstructions via 101 due to long call wait times and asked whether there could be police presence at the site.
- Members asked whether the Director of Public Health was aware of any studies looking at the long term impact of odours on health.
- Members noted that supporting the permit variation could be seen as supporting the operation whereas the view of the Council remained that the Quarry operation should be shut down and the permit withdrawn immediately.

Resolved: that the points made at the meeting be referred to the County Council in its statutory health scrutiny role and any update be made to the next meeting.

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82. **MEETING WITH THE CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP**

Health, Wellbeing & Partnerships Scrutiny Committee - 07/03/22

The Committee considered the notes of the regular meeting with Tracey Shewan of the Clinical Commissioning Group held on 18 February 2022. The meeting had discussed the current situation with Covid; pressures at Royal Stoke Hospital and the 111 online system.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

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83. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme. Members suggested the next meeting could consider the topics of Dementia, Safeguarding, Emergency Planning specifically climate change and flooding as well as the regular overview of health impacts arising from Walley's Quarry.

RESOLVED: that the Work Programme be approved and items for consideration at the next meeting include Dementia, Safeguarding, Emergency Planning specifically climate change and flooding; and the regular items including Walley's Quarry health impacts.

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84. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

85. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

86. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 23 JUNE 2022

**Councillor Ian Wilkes
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.02 pm