a co-operative council

Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL

Addenbrooke House Ironmasters Way Telford TF3 4NT

Scrutiny Report 2019/20 - 2020/21

Foreword 2

What is Scrutiny? 3
- Who carries out scrutiny work? 3
- How is scrutiny work carried out? 3
- How do we monitor the effectiveness of scrutiny? 3

Scrutiny Management Board 5

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee 6

Buisness & Finance Scrutiny Committee 9

Communities Scrutiny Committee 11

Environment Scrutiny Committee 13

Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee 135

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee 147

Looking Ahead 21

Contacts 15

Foreword

In the four years since I last held this role, the scrutiny landscape has changed, and brought new challenges with it. What has not changed is the commitment of our scrutiny committees in its scrutinisation of the Council, the Cabinet and wider public sector organisations such as the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups and providers of care on the decisions that affect the residents of our Borough. We have strived to truly embody the role of the “critical friend”.

Like many local authorities nationwide, Telford & Wrekin continues to face financial challenges and as the Council continues to look for innovative ways to work with our partners and the community to meet these challenges head on, scrutiny must keep pace to ensure residents are still getting the services they need and that service providers remain accountable for their delivery.

This report sets out the varied work that scrutiny has undertaken in the last two years looking at wide range of issues including Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, the Travel Assistance Policy and Transport Review Consultation, a review of Housing and Homelessness and a review of Single Use Plastics, TELDOC and the Hospital Transformation Plan (formerly known as Future Fit).

I feel it is important to note that while real work has been undertaken, the past two years have not been without their challenges. Since early 2020, the world has faced the global COVID-19 pandemic; the ensuing lockdowns limited the scope for scrutiny whilst essential services, the NHS, and Council, were placed under exceptional strain to combat the virus locally.

Technological solutions that were put in place during the first lockdown have enabled meetings to resume and continue to take place as we enter the new municipal year. Despite the various obstacles scrutiny has faced, our committees have continued to a make a difference and will continue to do so in the year to come.

Now more than ever I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank everyone who has participated in the scrutiny process this year including officers, Members, the community, and our partners.

Councillor Derek White
Lead Scrutiny Member (2019/20 – 2020/21)

What is Scrutiny?

Scrutiny acts as a check and balance to ensure decision making in local government is democratic, effective and transparent. Local authorities with a Cabinet system – where a relatively small number of elected members are responsible for day-to-day decision-making – must have a scrutiny function. Scrutiny is a way for elected members who are not on the Cabinet to have a greater influence in policy decisions and the work of the Council.

There are four nationally accepted principles set out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny:

- Providing "critical friend" challenge
- Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public
- Taking the lead and owning the scrutiny process
- Making an impact on the delivery of public services

Who carries out scrutiny work?

Scrutiny is carried out by elected members who are not on the Council's Cabinet and members of the public co-opted for expertise in a particular area or to represent certain groups. They sit on Scrutiny Committees which carry out scrutiny work. The committees reflect the overall political balance of the Council.

In 2019/2020 and 2020/21 Telford & Wrekin had six scrutiny committees:

- Scrutiny Management Board
- Business & Finance Scrutiny Committee
- Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
- Communities Scrutiny Committee
- Environment Scrutiny Committee
- Health Scrutiny Committee
    - Certain members and co-optees of this committee also sit on the Joint Health Overview Scrutiny Committee in partnership with Shropshire Council to scrutinise healthcare provision across the county.

How is scrutiny work carried out?

Scrutiny can be carried out in a number of different ways.

The Scrutiny Management Board takes the role of 'holding the Executive to account' and holds regular sessions to question Cabinet Members in public.

The individual scrutiny committees carry out the majority of other scrutiny work. This usually involves reviewing services or policies at scrutiny committee meetings. A review can be a one-off item discussed at a meeting or may be considered in detail over a series of meetings. Reviews may involve discussions with Cabinet members, officers at the Council, managers and officers from other organisations, providing a service, service users or members of the public – whoever may be relevant to the topic being discussed.

At the end of a review the committee may make recommendations where they think things could be improved. Where possible the committees meet in public but scrutiny members can also hold working group meetings to gather evidence for a review.

How do we monitor the effectiveness of scrutiny?

There are many ways that scrutiny can make a difference – though some are easier to measure than others are. Some of the commonly used measures of effective scrutiny work are listed below, but sometimes scrutiny can make a difference simply by raising an issue for public debate.

- **Holding the Executive to account** - questioning Cabinet members in public about their policies and actions helps ensure decision making is open and transparent. Many people argue this is an end in itself.
- **Recommendations to Cabinet** – a common measure of the impact of scrutiny work is the number of recommendations made to, and accepted by, Cabinet. The majority of scrutiny recommendations in the past have been accepted.
- **Recommendations to external organisations** – there are certain organisations with a statutory duty to respond to scrutiny but they do not have to accept scrutiny recommendations. Our approach is to engage partners positively in scrutiny so that recommendations are relevant, realistic and more likely to be acted on.
- **Policy development** – examples include examining draft policies to consider the implications for local people and suggesting improvements, or giving feedback as part of a consultation on a proposed new policy or policy change.
- **Holding health service commissioners and providers to account**
- **Monitoring performance of health services**

Scrutiny Management Board

Members: Councillors Derek White, Steven Bentley, Nathan England, Thomas Janke, Angela McClements, Gilly Reynolds, Jacqui Seymour, and Chris Turley.

The Scrutiny Management Board has overall responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the delivery of the scrutiny work programme and for allocating resources between the Scrutiny Committees so that the workload is managed effectively.

In recent years, scrutiny work programmes have had an annual focus with some ability for topical items to roll forward.

We also consulted with the Scrutiny Assembly on the structure of scrutiny and invited the Leader and the interim Chief Operating Officer to present the Council's Programme to Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough and answer questions on it. This new approach was designed to help inform our work programming activity and to identify the key priorities which we believed would impact residents the most: housing, mental health and the environment.

Looking ahead, Scrutiny Management Board will be seeking ways to adapt our approach to scrutiny and our work programme to consider the impact of COVID-19 on service delivery.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Angela McClements (Chair), Mark Boylan, Concepta Cassar, Ian Fletcher, Jayne Greenaway, Vanessa Holt, Janice Jones, Hilda Rhodes and Karen Tomlinson
Co-Optees: Mrs S Fikeis, Mrs L Fowler, Mrs C Morgan, and Mrs M Ward

The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee's role is to scrutinise and monitor the planning and performance of the Council's services to children and young people and the Council's Corporate Parenting role.

IThe Committee considered a number of matters relating to the work of the Council in relation to Children and Young People; some highlights are set out below.

Educational Attainment

The Committee received the presentation of the Director for Education and Skills on educational attainment in Telford and Wrekin. Although some questions were raised relating to the relative performance of the Borough's schools compared to national statistics in some areas, overall we were satisfied with the Borough's educational improvement performance having being made in many key areas, in particular those outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Travel Assistance Policy and Transport Review Consultation

The Committee met with the Director for Education and Skills, and relevant senior officers from the Education and Skills service area, to scrutinise the ongoing travel assistance policy and transport review consultation. The Committee received details of the consultation design and implementation. In general, we expressed support for the manner in which the consultation was being undertaken and praised the rationale underpinning the strategy. We made some recommendations on the clarity of some aspects of the policy documentation which were accepted.

The Knife Angel

The Committee reviewed the presence of the Knife Angel in Telford. The Knife Angel is a sculpture made from over 100,000 seized blades, and was created to highlight the negative effects of violent behavior and acted as a memorial for those who have been lost through knife crime. As a Committee, we were very supportive of the Knife Angel initiative and believe that its installation in Telford will be a positively transformative moment. The Knife Angel's presence and the related learning activities are vital to highlighting a national plight to a younger generation.

Ofsted Report and Action Plan 2020

In September 2020, we received the Council's Ofsted report and Action Plan, the Council had been graded as 'Outstanding', the only Authority in the Midlands and North West of England to achieve this grade. It was great to hear about the impressive work the Borough had carried out to achieve such a positive Ofsted result. As a Committee, we were keen to learn more about how the Council planned to keep up the momentum and ensure continuing success. I was pleased to hear how closely the Council had worked with its partners to get to the position we are in today and hope that this collaborative work can continue to be productive.

A meeting to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan will be held early in the next municipal year.

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the excellent achievement of our Children Services receiving an 'Outstanding' Ofsted assessment.

School Streets

A motion on the School Streets initiative was referred to the Committee by Full Council in November 2020. At our December 2020 meeting, the Committee received the motion and, after discussion, saw this work as a cross-committee piece of work that needed input from across the Scrutiny Assembly. As a Committee, we elected to set up a working group made up of Members from across the Council's committees to investigate the issue.

The Working Group's first meeting was held on 30 March 2021 and is due to report its findings by July 2021.

Telford & Wrekin Local Safeguarding Children Board

We received the latest annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board in March 2021.

The Committee held a productive session, posing important questions about the state of safeguarding after a year of lockdowns. The Board's Independent Chair has kindly agreed to attend another meeting in the new municipal year to provide further detail on the impact of COVID-19 on safeguarding and to bring the first annual report of the new safeguarding body, Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership.

Members are keen to learn more about the response to and impact of COVID-19 on children and young people in our Borough and look forward to our next meeting with the Safeguarding Partnership.

Young Carers

To finish, I would like to express my support for the Young Carers Initiative and all the incredible work young carers do. As a Committee we have come to understand the immense benefits that having an external support base can have on a carer's day-to-day life; the support of your school, college, or employer can make a world of difference. What young carers need is a supportive and understanding environment, that is exactly what the Young Carers, and Carer Champions initiatives promote.

As the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, I am proud to endorse the Young Carers Initiative and strongly encourage all to get on board. Our young carers need our support.

Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Stephen Reynolds (Chair), Eric Carter, Nathan England, James Lavery, Adrian Lawrence, Kuldip Sahota and Charles Smith
Co-optees: Mrs C Mason-Morris and Mr R Williams

The main role of the Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee is as a consultee for the Cabinet's budget proposals. However, our remit also covers oversight of the service and financial performance of Council services, income generation and how the Council is promoting economic growth in the local economy.

Some of the highlights of our work during the last two years are set out below.

Service & Financial Planning 2020/21 – 2022/23

The scrutiny of the Service and Financial Planning Strategy in 2020 was minimal and the main opposition group did not submit an alternative budget proposal. Although we remain concerned regarding funding clarity for local government in general, overall, we welcomed the budget proposals. After consideration of evidence, we particularly welcomed the proposals to invest in Adult Social Care and Children's Safeguarding and supported proposals to increase Council Tax and the Council's investment plans.

Service & Financial Planning 2021/22 – 2023/24

The Committee received the Service and Financial Planning Strategy 2021/22 – 2023/24 in January 2021. The main opposition group did not submit an alternative budget proposal this year. The Committee was supportive of the Administration's budget proposals, noting particular support for the Council's Hardship Fund, which has helped so many of our residents through this most difficult of years, and for the £1 million investment in initiatives combatting crime and anti-social behaviour. The Council's COVID-19 reserve contingency funding is prudent given the ongoing disruption caused by the pandemic.

Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Update

In February 2020, the Committee received an update on the work of the Marches LEP from the Chief Executive and the Partnership Manager of the LEP, as well as the Council's Programme Executive Lead. This is now a regular feature of our work programme and gives the Committee an excellent opportunity to hear about the LEP's work in our Borough and financing. On the whole, the Committee welcomed the Marches LEP's work to boost the region's economy and was supportive of the opportunities the LEP offered for Councils and local businesses. A second meeting with the LEP was held in December 2020, the meeting was to receive an update on the LEPs position after the disruption of COVID-19. As a result of that meeting, I wrote a letter to the Administration to express the Committee's support for the work of the LEP and to encourage the Council to continue to lobby for financial support for the LEPs from the Government.

Housing Investment Programme Review

The Committee received a presentation from the Director: Prosperity & Investment on the Housing Investment Programme in November 2020. Members were encouraged by the developments related to NuPlace, especially the environmental factors that are being integrated into new properties built by the company. There was also interest in whether NuPlace would pursue an all-

electric policy moving forward, we were pleased to hear that the idea was to be piloted, with the pilot regarded as key to demonstrating that building low carbon homes could be cost effectiveness. Moving forward, the Committee will be glad to review the programme again once it has been implemented to judge the effectiveness of the proposals in action.

Communities Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Chris Turley (Chair), Eric Carter, Graham Cook, Thomas Janke, Terry Kiernan, Raj Mehta, John Thompson

The role of the Communities Scrutiny Committee is wide ranging, covering a number of key areas relating to the development of Telford & Wrekin as a Co-operative Council, the planning, delivery and performance of services provided to local communities, issues relating to how the Council works with partner organisations, housing, homelessness, transport and highways, regeneration, waste and recycling, customer services, community engagement, welfare reform, and enforcement. The Committee is also the designated body for scrutiny of the Safer, Stronger Communities Partnership.

At our November 2020 meeting, the Committee elected to set up a working group so that we could scrutinise the draft Local Plan proposals in detail. The multi-committee, cross-party, working group, co-chaired by Councillor Gilly Reynolds and myself, held five meetings throughout February and March 2021 to review specific environmental policies in the Local Plan. The group demonstrated the value of cross-party scrutiny, working collaboratively to produce a unanimously supported recommendation report to Cabinet based on our findings.

Review of Housing and Homelessness

In line with the Scrutiny Management Board's key priorities for the year, we agreed to prioritise a review on the housing and homelessness. After receiving initial evidence from Senior Officers and the relevant Cabinet Member, we were able to identify two areas of particular importance: Youth Homelessness and Housing for People with a Physical Disability and Older People. In order to progress these two aspects of our review, during lockdown we have been researching best practice examples to address youth homelessness including early intervention for those at risk of homelessness, reviewing the Housing Assistance Policy and researching best practice to secure delivery of housing for older people and people with a physical disability.

The Committee hopes to be able to meet remotely early in the new municipal year to consider our next steps on this vitally important issue. It is certain that we will now need to consider the impacts on service delivery as a result of the pandemic and the year of lockdowns.

Review of the Local Plan

The Committee received a presentation from officers on the Local Plan proposals that were going to consultation. Officers were keen for scrutiny's input in the relatively new policy areas of biodiversity net gain and urban greening. The Committee recognised the cross-cutting nature of the topics and the need for a multi-committee review. In light of this, Members decided to delegate the review to a working group to carry out the review on behalf of the Committee. The Working Group, made up of six Members from across the Council's scrutiny committees, met five times to examine the Local Plan's bio-diversity net gain and urban greening policies. Members conducted independent research and heard from external speakers on the policy areas in question before deliberating and drafting a set of recommendation. The review resulted in a series of recommendations to Cabinet regarding the form the policies should take in the Local Plan.

Environment Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Gilly Reynolds (Chair), Mark Boylan, Concepta Cassar, Vanessa Holt, Thomas Janke, Tim Nelson, and Gemma Offland

The role of the Environment Scrutiny Committee is to scrutinise and monitor the Council's environmental impact and policies. The Committee is also the designated body for scrutiny of Flood and Water Management.

During 2019/20 and 2020/21 the Committee was involved in the Local Plan Scrutiny Working Group and the School Streets Working Group. Beginning April 2021, the Committee has held a series of informal workshops with the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

As Co-Chair of the Local Plan Working Group, I would like to reiterate Councillor Turley's praise for the collaborative manner in which the review was carried out. The Group has produced an excellent report that highlights the important work scrutiny performs.

There were a number of intriguing topics put forward for our work programme and, as a Committee, we were conscious that we have an exceptionally wide remit. In order to add the greatest value, we decided to receive initial evidence on two key topics before scoping a tighter focus for our work.

Review of Single-Use Plastics

Our initial evidence gathering session focused on the council's single-use plastics policy, covering the actions taken by the Council thus far to reduce the Borough's single-use plastic usage. We heard about the schemes that had already been rolled out in council offices, such as a milk vending machine, as well as the ongoing work that was being done to green the council's contracts with external parties. We approached the matter according to the Council's declared climate emergency; scrutinising what work had been done to ensure this was practically applied to day-to-day operations. After the meeting we were invited to make our own #SustainableTelfordandWrekin pledges. Councillor Nelson (pictured above) took the opportunity to remind us all that the Earth is our only home, while Councillor Boylan and I (pictured below) pledged not to rely on single use cups and make use of our new reusable cups from the Council's Café Go.

On Street Waste and Recycling Briefing

I am proud as Chair to be able to say that the Committee had a recommendation to Cabinet adopted in March 2021. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of the Committee there will be a trial installation of dual-use recycling bins in our Borough parks with a view to expanding to the Borough towns' high streets in the future.

The recommendation stemmed from a presentation we received from the Director: Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services in October 2020. The Committee heard about the Council's on-street waste and recycling provision as it stood at the time and were keen to expand recycling provision so that residents could recycle on the go. There was consensus among the Committee that it was key that where there was high footfall in the Borough, environmentally positive actions, such as recycling, should be supported.

Grounds and Cleansing Contract

At our final meeting of the 2020/21 municipal year, we received a briefing on the Council's grounds and cleansing contract with Idverde. It was encouraging to hear the environmental standards and provisions that were provided for in the Council's contract. Members were pleased, in particular, with the selective verge cutting and the bio-diversity elements catered for in the contract but we were keen to stress the importance of education so that residents understood the reasoning that underpinned such decisions.

It was pleasing to hear about the work that was being done by both the Council and its partners to institute greener ways of working, especially the transition to electric vehicles.

Health Scrutiny Committee

Members: Counciillors Derek White, Mark Boylan, Stephen Burrell, Veronica Fletcher, Jackie Loveridge, Leon Murray, Jacqui Seymour, John Thompson.
Co-optees: Mrs J Gulliver, Mrs. J O'Loughlin, Mrs H Knight and Mr D Saunders

The Health Scrutiny Committee scrutinises and monitors the planning and performance of the Council's adult social care services and health service matters distinctly related to the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. Some Members of the Committee are also appointed to work jointly with colleagues from Shropshire Council on the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

During the period 2019 – 2021, we held a number of meetings and working group meetings Some of the items discussed are set out below.

TELDOC Proposed Site Reconfiguration

The Committee considered the proposed Site Reconfiguration of TELDOC which aimed to streamline the number of practices it operated, transforming the remaining surgeries non-clinical administrative rooms into clinical room and opening a centralized communication hub. Therefore, offering more appointments to patients. Members welcomed the positive customer experience this reconfiguration hoped to gain, but were hesitant regarding the choices of the surgeries that were scheduled to close, as well as the timeline in which the reconfiguration would take place. Members recommended that the centralized administrative hub was operational before any other site reconfigurations occurred. The Committee continue to monitor TELDOC, and following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, look to invite representatives back to answer further questions on progress.

General Health and Adult Social Care Update.

Spaced over two meetings, the Committee received an all-encompassing update from Officers across the Health and Adult Social Care departments in the Council. The Committee heard about the Council's response to COVID-19, how services had changed to reflect restrictions, what learning had been taken away from the pandemic, and issues to consider looking forward. The Committee were delighted to hear about the innovative and technological solutions Officers had come up with to ensure the best possible delivery of services for members of the public during the COVID-19 pandemic and the learning taken from it to create more flexible options in the future. This update provided the Committee with a good grounding of the health and adult social care landscape in Telford and Wrekin to inform future items in the next municipal year.

Learning Disability Strategy.

At the final meeting for the 2020-2021 municipal year, the Committee received the draft Learning Disability Strategy and consultation proposals from the Adult Social Care department at Telford & Wrekin Council. Members largely welcomed the draft strategy but requested that they receive the Action Strategy Plan along with baseline figures so that they could accurately measure the effectiveness of the strategy in a future meeting.

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members: Councillors Derek White (Co-Chair), Stephen Burrell and Kelly Middleton.
Co-Optees: Mrs H Knight, Mrs. J O'Loughlin and Mr D Saunders

The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) is appointed where a relevant NHS body consults more than one local authority about substantial reconfiguration proposals. Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council have delegated the health scrutiny power to this committee for health issues which cross boundaries for both authorities. This means they work in collaboration to scrutinize decisions on the wider healthcare economy which affect both local authorities.

For the 2019/2020 to 2020/2021 period, there have been several formal meetings and numerous workshop meetings.

Future Fit Programme and Hospital Transformation Plan

The Committee has monitored the progress of the Future Fit programme from its inception, including providing feedback and on the structural and accountability mechanism within it such as the Future Fit Implementation and Oversight Group. The Chairs maintain an involvement having been invited to attend their meetings as observers. The Committee has invited Future Fit representatives numerous times to answer questions, most recently on Monday 16 December 2019 when it was confirmed that Future Fit had become a capital programme, therefore becoming the Hospital Transformation Plan. Members have raised inquiries into other aspects such as the Travel and Transport policy in relation to the Hospital Transformation Plan. It continues to be on the Committee's radar.

Single Clinical Commissioner

The Committee have received regular updates on the progress of the dissolution of NHS Trust Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Trust Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group to form a Single Strategic Commissioner across the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin footprint. The Committee has consulted on the Communications and Engagement Plan on the transition to the Single Strategic Commissioner as well as question the governance and accountability mechanisms of the new organisation. Members have been keen to emphasize that services need to be fit for purpose in reflecting the needs of respective populations, ensuring a level of locality. The Committee await to see further reports to scrutinise the financial implications of the creation of a new Single Strategic Commissioner and predicted savings.

Sustainability and Transformation Plan Long Term Plan

The Committee have received two updates on the Sustainability and Transformation Long Term Plan (STP LTP). The latter update consisted of a presentation on a summary of each of the 12 chapter of the STP LTP. Members have raised particular concern on the rate of maturity and reliance on Primary Care Networks the plan has, as it was the experience by members of the Committee that the level of optimisation the STP LTP wanted for the Primary Care Networks, may not be viable. Members have requested further information on certain sections such as the Communication and Engagement Strategy, and will be requesting additional information for scrutiny in due course.

Transforming Midwifery Care

The Committee have held numerous question and answer sessions with staff representing Transforming Midwifery Care (TMC) in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin. The Committee have received a range of documents including pre-consultation engagement report, Seldom Heard Groups Pre-Consultation Engagement Report, Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as well as a variety of presentations which outline a number of potential models for TMC. At the time of writing, the

Committee await the NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE/I) assurance process to conclude as to whether the proposals made by TMC are acceptable to go out for consultation, which the Committee will have the opportunity to provide feedback on.

Other

Alongside the items that have been outlined above, which have been reoccurring items through the municipal year, a number of items with a less longitudinal time frame have also been heard. The Committee have heard updates on the following items;

- Reconfiguration of Ophthalmology Services
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital's progress update against the Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital – Winter Pressure Planning
- Mental Health – Update on the BeeU (0-25 year old) Emotional Health and Wellbeing Service
- Preparedness for COVID-19 in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

The JHOSC formally met five times during the 2020-2021 municipal year. At various points through the year, the Co-Chairs agreed to suspend official meetings while the system responded to COVID-19. These were March 2020- August 2020 and December 2020-March 2021.

COVID-19 Restoration and Recovery.

System Priorities.

Members received a presentation outlining what Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin health system was doing following the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic to establish a timely return to normality. The presentation also included the proposed system governance to oversee the transformation to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan reset ambitions. Members noted the presentation and asked a range of questions on topics such as support for the domiciliary care sector, NHS worker burnout, the Phase Three letter that was sent to all NHS System leaders, the use of digital consultations in primary care and the use of these in the future, the system winter plan and additional bedding capacity at Nuffield Hospital, following the reduction of beds available at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust due to infection prevention control measures.

Communications and engagement

Members received a report which covered the communications and engagement the system had undertaken to inform the public as well as NHS staff on the restoration and recovery of services following on from COVID-19. Members were keen to hear about the techniques that had been used to target the age group 16-30 year olds as well as members of the BAME community. Members heard how various social media channels were being used to reach younger age groups, and working with faith groups to spread the message among minority groups. Members were also advised the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups had appointed a lay member for inclusion, diversity and equality.

Winter Planning

The Committee often receive this item from the system to ensure that previous learning has been taken into consideration and all areas are covered ahead of the winter season. The Winter Plan for 2020/21 was part of the wider restoration and recovery plans in response to COVID-19. Members heard how the planning had been based on 5 key themes: Discharge, Hospital Front Door, Community, Primary Care and Acute Services with an overall focus on demand management to ensure the system didn't become overloaded while ensuring quality care for all.

End of Life Care Review.

The Committee have received this item three times in the last year, initially in August 2020, with an update in October 2020 and then April 2021. Members felt it was necessary to highlight this item following anecdotal concerns shared with them by the public and with experiences from members of the Committee on where end of life care had gone wrong. Phase one of the review asked for stakeholders to provide feedback to help establish four key areas that would lead to the greatest improvement to the delivery of service across the system. Phase two of the review aimed to establish task and finish groups drawn from across the system with key stakeholders to implement the identified four areas of improvement. The Committee welcomed the approach taken in the review with material actions taken to create improvements in the delivery of care, and are keen to have regular updates on this item, with the next likely to be in September 2021.

Children and Young People Mental Health Services Review

In conjunction with the respective scrutiny committees for children and young people at both Local Authorities, the JHOSC began a review of mental health services in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, starting with children and young people. Over the space of two formal meetings and one workshop session, the Committee heard about the commissioning arrangements from the Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups and the experience of the main provider for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHs), Midlands Partnership Foundation NHS Trust (MPFT). Members heard how initial arrangements hadn't received the proper due diligence, which had led to complications on delivery of services, especially in regards to the neurodevelopmental pathway. However, improvements across the service had been made as more funding had been made available. At both meetings, Parent and Carer Council Shropshire (PACC Shropshire) and Telford Parents Opening Doors (Telford PODS), the parent-care groups, were present and shared their member's experience navigating the CAMHs service and engaging with the relevant NHS bodies. The review continues in the municipal year.

Development of the Integrated Care System in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

In the last meeting of the 2020/2021 municipal year, the Committee received a presentation on the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS) in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. ICS's were first introduced as part of the NHS Long Term Plan and then expanded upon in the *"Integration and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all*" policy paper published by the Department for Health and Social Care on 11th February 2021. Following the approval of the appropriate legislation, these are likely to come into formal existence in April 2022, operating in shadow form until then. ICSs intend to replace Clinical Commissioning Groups and inherit their statutory commissioning powers while bringing providers of care, Local Authorities and the voluntary sector closer together to improve healthcare overall. Following on from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Committee welcomed closer collaboration between providers with a more unified action taken at an executive level but wanted to ensure the correct assurance and accountability structures were in place, with the JHOSC included in this and that Local Authorities had the appropriate influence in the ICS. Members will monitor the development of the ICS and hope to work closely with the organisation in the future.

Looking Ahead

The speed and intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly had a profound effect on the lives of millions of people around the world. The threat of the disease and mounting numbers of casualties has impacted communities across the globe and restrictions to daily life in the UK have forced us to quickly adopt different ways of working, learning and connecting with each other.

Whilst this crisis has brought unprecedented challenges both for people and society, it has been humbling to see the growing tide of inspiring new ideas developed in response. Local Authorities are at the heart of our communities and have been doing remarkable work to address the challenges brought by COVID-19. It is anticipated that the disease will have long-lasting effects on our finances and the way we deliver services. Innovation is more important now than ever before.

The current situation is too fast-moving to allow for the effective prioritisation of scrutiny work in the usual manner. It is imperative that Scrutiny quickly gains an understanding of the scale of the problem in our Borough - the critical points of pressure and concern in relation to finance and service provision - and how this can be incorporated into a revised work programme.

Undoubtedly, it is important that Scrutiny embraces and takes full advantage of remote meeting technology. It may well be that this will lead to permanent changes in the way we work as opportunities to engage in Scrutiny widen and develop.

For the moment though, the real questions for Scrutiny have to be about how we can support the Council's reset and recovery and how we can ensure that Scrutiny results in positive, tangible outcomes for the borough's residents in a timely fashion.

Contacts

To find out more about Scrutiny visit: www.telford.gov.uk/scrutiny

To find meeting dates and agendas for scrutiny meetings visit: www.telford.gov.uk/meetings.

The Democratic & Scrutiny Services Team can be contacted at scrutiny@telford.gov.uk.