

Minutes



To: All Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee, Chief Executive, Chief Officers, All officers named for 'actions'

From: Legal, Democratic & Statutory Services
Ask for: Michelle Diprose
Ext: 25566

JOINT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY & HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 16 JULY 2020 & TUESDAY 11 AUGUST 2020
M I N U T E S

ATTENDANCE

COUNTY COUNCILLORS

D Andrews (*Chairman*), F Button, S Brown, L Chesterman, H K Crofton, M A Eames-Petersen, L J Greensmyth, F Guest, D Hart, M S Hearn, D J Hewitt, T Howard, J S Kaye, R Mills (*Independent*), I M Reay, S Quilty, N Quinton (*Vice-Chairman*), R A C Thake, R G Tindall, S Walkington, C J White (*Vice-Chairman*)

DISTRICT/BOROUGH COUNCILLORS (10)

P Cousin (St Albans), B Fitzsimon (Welwyn Hatfield), A Grimston (Watford), D Lambert (Hertsmere), M McKay (Stevenage), G Nicholson (Broxbourne), S Ngwala (North Herts), A Scarth (3 Rivers)

Parent Governor Representatives (2)

*J Cameron

Church Representatives (2)

J Sloan

* denotes members appointed for education scrutiny matters only.

Note: R Mills made a declaration of interest, this is recorded at 3.1

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Upon consideration of the agenda for the Joint Overview & Scrutiny & Health Scrutiny Committee meeting on 16 July 2020 as circulated, copy annexed, conclusions were reached and are recorded below. The Webcast of this meeting can be found [here](#).

PART 1 ('OPEN') BUSINESS

1. MINUTES

1.1 The Joint Committee agreed that the Minutes from previous Committees held in January 2020 and March 2020 would be considered at their separate meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9 October 2020 and Health Scrutiny Committee on 30 September 2020.

2. PUBLIC PETITIONS

None received.

3. COVID-19 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

[Officer Contact: Natalie Rotherham, Head of Scrutiny Tel: (01992) 588485

3.1 R Mills declared an interest as she has been invited to and attended two meetings of the Mental Health & Learning Disabilities Partnership in relation to her employment and that Partnership is referenced in the report paperwork.

3.2 The Joint Committee received a report which proposed an effective and proportionate approach to delivering the Council's statutory scrutiny function and adding value during the Covid-19 recovery phase and return to business as usual.

3.3 The purpose of the meeting was to enable the members of the Overview & Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny Committees to understand the impact of Covid-19 on Hertfordshire County Council and NHS services. The meeting provided members with evidence which determined which items the respective Committees wished to take forward for further consideration. The full [Webcast of the meeting can be viewed here](#).

3.4 The Joint Committee heard from the Director of Public Health. Members heard most service relating to Public Health were accessible online. Members heard there was an outbreak plan for Hertfordshire to prevent and control infection in various environments. Questions in relation to social distancing; assessment on inequalities; testing; school nurses; shielding and

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voluntary sector were asked and responded to. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Public Health 11:25](#).

- 3.5 The Joint Committee heard from the Operational Director Services for Young People, and Operations Director Children & Families respectively. Members heard how the pandemic had impacted safeguarding; a drop in social care referrals to social care; domestic abuse; SEND; schools and children's mental health. Members also heard the positive news of the continuation of children looked visits through virtual visits and by doing so the County Council had maintained its statutory timeframes. It was noted the County Council had maintained the adoption panel function by virtual meetings and therefore did not need to use the guidance which Government issued in April. Questions were asked and responded to in relation to these items. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Children's Services 33:32](#).
- 3.6 The Joint Committee heard from the Director of Adult Care Services. Members heard how the impact of Covid-19 impacted on the contacts for assessment at the beginning but had now started to increase. Questions were asked and answered in relation to waiting lists for care homes; deaths in care homes due to Covid-19; bank and agency staff working in care homes; volunteers used through Covid-19; opening of day centres and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board commissioned report to set out Terms of Reference in relation to a second wave of Covid-19. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Adult Care Services 1:06:00](#).
- 3.7 The Joint Committee heard from the Director of Resources. Members heard of the challenges that the Resources Directorate faced through Covid-19 such as the introduction of a redeployment hub for employees that could not carry out their normal duties; the successful technology roll-out; additional money to Members for locality budgets; operation Hypnoss which related to mortuary capacity; operation shielding and volunteering network; communications campaigns; virtual Member meetings and Herts catering. Questions were asked and responded to in relation to staff support; council tax income precepts; Resilience Forum; draft Sustainable Strategy Recovery Plan and the IP process. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Resources 1:46:18](#).

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- 3.8 The Joint Committee heard from the NHS and Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust (HPFT) in relation to Integrated Care System and Mental Health Services ICP (Integrated Care Partnership. Members heard of the incredible work of all NHS staff and how they have adapted to working practices, such as being redeployed and the wearing of PPE. Members were updated on the general health changes across the social care sector; discharge to access; primary and community care; Covid-19 testing levels; longer term impact on staff and support from community and voluntary groups. Members noted there had been a plethora of new guidance which had to be integrated into health care. In relation to mental health it was noted there had been a significant impact on those experiencing emotional and physical problems. Members were informed that although the mental health referral services were closed at the beginning of Covid-19 as a number of staff were redeployed, services were assessed on a weekly basis and all services were now restored. The NHS and HPFT advised there were a programme to re-shape services currently underway. It was also noted that some pathways in for treatments were switched off but are now being re-opened virtually. Questions were asked and responded to in relation to the public's perception of GP's being closed and not being able to access; Dentistry; NHS data on specific caseloads; mental health referrals; multi-agency discharge cells; concerns of patients not coming forward for assessments; staff capacity and resilience; pressures on economic and services long term and impact on social isolation and increased anxiety. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - NHS and HPFT 2:08:56](#).
- 3.9 Further questions were asked at the meeting and responded to by officers and the NHS, these are appended to these minutes.
- 3.10 The Joint Committee agreed to reconvene the meeting at a later date to agree items for the work programme. The Webcast of the [reconvened meeting 11 August 2020 can be found here](#).

Conclusion

- 3.11 The Joint Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting and reconvene at a later date to agree items for the work programme.

4. COVID-19 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

- 4.1 The Committee reconvened on Tuesday, 11 August 2020 to enable the members of the Overview & Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny Committees to build on the work gathered from the 16

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July 2020 meeting and agree, prioritise and plan the work programmes of both Committees, considering the impact of covid-19 on current services; and decide upon the method of work to be covered i.e. bulletin; committee; seminar; site visit; or topic group. The full [webcast of the meeting can be viewed here](#).

4.2 The Scrutiny Committee was made aware that an interagency working group was in the process of being set up. The working group, which included Public Health, was undertaking in-depth engagement with BAME and vulnerable communities to gain their insights. Materials in community languages had already been produced, and Human Resources officers of the authority had taken action to ensure risk assessments were in place to protect county council staff. It was suggested and agreed that the Director of Public Health would be invited to the September and December HSC meetings for an update regarding the findings of that group. It was proposed that a topic group take place utilising the outcomes of the working group.

Scrutiny officers

4.3 The Scrutiny Committee was referred to the Work Programme at Appendix 1 of the agenda and came to the following conclusions:

4.3.1 **Children & Young People (OSC)** – The Committee were keen for an autumn Seminar, however, there were a number of requests for bulletins to be circulated prior to the seminar to help members dealing with anxious parents. It was proposed and agreed that officers would approach the department for updates to be incorporated in the regular members covid bulletin. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Children & Young People 10:49](#).

Scrutiny Officers

Conclusion

4.3.2 The OSC Committee agreed to an Autumn Seminar.

4.3.3 **Backlog / increased demands** – Members discussed the backlog and considered that social care restoration of services including day activities and advice for family carers wishing to visit care homes should be included within the input by Adult Care Services (ACS) at the next OSC. Members discussed the inclusion of the effect the pandemic had had on people with learning disabilities. It was agreed that should be covered at the September HSC meeting. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - backlog/increased demands 26:44](#).

Scrutiny Officers

Conclusion

4.3.4 The Scrutiny Committee agreed for updates to go to their

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individual Committee meetings.

- 4.3.5 **Inequalities (OSC & HSC)** – The Committee went straight to vote on this item of business.

Conclusion

- 4.3.6 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to an Inequalities Topic Group.

- 4.3.7 **Second wave & Recovery (HSC & OSC)** – The Scrutiny Committee agreed with the suggestion of a topic group, however, considered there should be more emphasis on the ‘track and trace’ element; focus on how the national programme links with the work of HCC; and on lessons learned from the first wave to be better equipped if and when a second wave occurs. Members also expressed the importance of including external groups, the public and carer organisations. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Second wave & Recovery 38:46](#).

Conclusion

- 4.3.8 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to a Second Wave & Recovery Topic Group to be entitled Covid Step Back Review.

- 4.3.9 **Care Homes (OSC)** – Committee members considered a topic group to be appropriate following the outcomes of the HSAB review taking place during the summer and autumn 2020. It was mentioned that the Care Homes topic group could replace the annual HSAB on this occasion. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here – Care homes 51:50](#).

Conclusion

- 4.3.10 The OSC agreed to a Care Homes Topic Group.

4.4 Existing items refocused

- 4.4.1 **Substance misuse (HSC)** – It was suggested to the Committee that this could be a seminar rather than a topic group which would cover the issues experienced during the lockdown period which may have exacerbated substance misuse. Members noted that substance misuse was an area that the Care Partnership Board were looking into which officers could include. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Substance misuse 56:18](#).

Conclusion

- 4.4.2 The Scrutiny Committee agreed to a seminar on Substance

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misuse.

- 4.4.3 **Public Health Outcomes (HSC)** - The Committee agreed that a topic group should take place, however suggested this could take place during 2021/22 in order to avoid areas of duplication. It was agreed that a bulletin covering: Supporting HCC services; Working with schools; NHS (*communication of public health messages, GP response*); and work with districts and boroughs would be commissioned. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Public Health Outcomes - 1:00](#).

Conclusion

- 4.4.4 The Health Scrutiny Committee agreed to a future Public Health Outcomes Topic Group, subject to a Bulletin being issued as soon as possible.
- 4.4.5 **People Strategy / Staffing Concerns (OSC/HSC)** – The Scrutiny Committee agreed that updates should go to individual OSC and HSC Committee meetings with stress and anxiety being a top priority. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - People Strategy & Staffing Concerns 1:11](#).

Conclusion

- 4.4.6 The Scrutiny Committee agreed for updates to go to their individual Committee meetings.
- 4.4.7 **Economy covid impacts and recovery (OSC)** – Members considered it important for residents to see HCC scrutinising the economic impact covid has had across Hertfordshire; the effect on businesses; loss of jobs and the effects on residents. It was also considered that this should include the impact of unemployment and redundancy, the loss of earnings and the impact this has had on mental health. The full debate on this item can be viewed [here - Economy covid impacts - 1:13](#).

Conclusion

- 4.4.8 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed to an Economy covid impacts and recovery topic group.

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5 OTHER PART 1 BUSINESS

5.1 There was no other Part I business.

6. ITEMS FOR REPORT TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL (STANDING ORDER SC. 7(2))

6.1 To agree items for inclusion in the Committee's report to County Council. In the absence of a decision, a summary of all items will be reported to the County Council at its meeting on 20 October 2020.

**QUENTIN BAKER
CHIEF LEGAL OFFICER**

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