

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Thursday 11 November 2021** at **5.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

Chair Ian Shipp
Vice Chair Stephen Frost

Simon Brown
Mike Chester
Patrick Chung
Diane Hind
Paul Hopfensperger

Margaret Marks
Joe Mason
Sarah Pugh
Marion Rushbrook
Julia Wakelam

In attendance

Sara Mildmay-White, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health

139. **Substitutes**

No substitutions were declared.

140. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Trevor Beckwith and Tony Brown.

Councillor Michael Anderson was also unable to attend the meeting.

141. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2021 were confirmed as correct record and signed by the Chair.

142. **Declarations of interest**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

143. **Announcements from the Chair regarding responses from the Cabinet to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair informed members he attended Cabinet on 21 September 2021 and presented the Committee's report from its meeting held on 2 September 2021. As per the minutes confirmed above, the Chair updated Cabinet on the Committee's consideration of the Councillor Call for Action and

recommendations made to Suffolk County Council; the update from Councillor Margaret Marks on the Health Scrutiny meeting held on 7 July 2021 and the Committee's forward work programme and the consideration of two suggestions for scrutiny, which were noted by Cabinet.

144. **Public participation**

There were no members of the public in attendance on this occasion.

145. **Health - Portfolio Holder Overview**

[Councillor Diane Hind declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Havebury Scrutiny Panel]

The Committee, at its meeting held on 2 September 2021 requested further information in relation to the role of the Cabinet Member for Housing in relation to health. This followed the changes made to Cabinet Member responsibilities announced by the Leader of the Council in July 2021.

Report number OAS/WS/21/020 set out the role and responsibility held by the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities in relation to health. For a number of years, the council had been working alongside partners in health and the care sector. Work was wide ranging but fell largely into two broad areas:

- Prevention and early intervention; and
- Effective partnerships.

The close co-operation between health providers and the council was accelerated during the Covid pandemic and would remain important during the recovery phase.

Recognising there were a number of significant projects and initiatives to support and/or deliver over the next few years the Cabinet Member for Housing was asked by the Leader of the Council to take a more strategic leadership perspective in relation to health and would be responsible for the following areas of focus:

- Future system programme;
- Health and care governance.

The Cabinet Member for Housing's role in health was in addition to that of the Cabinet Member for Families and Communities. This was in response to the growing workload associated with health and the council's role in the pandemic recovery and reducing health inequalities.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked a number of questions to which comprehensive responses were provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health. In particular discussions were held on linking health with housing; the need for more health hubs locally for people to access; keeping people well in their own homes; planning for unintentional consequences; fragmented health care; more money needed for health; the West Suffolk Hospital public consultation events; and the restart of

community groups following the pandemic, to which responses were provided.

In response to a question raised relating to the future system programme and whether there was a vision for the future, the Cabinet Member explained the need for more thinking ahead and building health capacity into the local plan as well as being more ambitious with the local plan.

The Committee welcomed linking health with housing and that health should be built more into the planning process.

In response to a question raised about community groups not meeting as much in person, and more online, officers explained that a number of community groups did move online due to the pandemic. In some cases, participants preferred this. However, there were more face-to-face groups restarting and the Council had helped by supporting with funding which currently totalled £120,000 to support groups and sports clubs to meet again in person. In many cases, the main barrier to restarting services was the lack of volunteers.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the report.

146. **Air Quality and Anti-Idling Campaign Update**

At its meeting on the 2 September 2021, the Committee considered a work programme suggestion on anti-idling and asked officers to consider using the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO) to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) under the 2002 traffic regulations. Officers advised that they did not consider issuing FPN was appropriate but agreed that CEO would undertake informal action and record the findings of interactions with idling drivers.

Report number OAS/WS/21/021 updated the Committee on the anti-idling campaigns, other air quality improvement work and an initial update on the work of the CEOs approaching idling drivers as part of their day-to-day activities by asking drivers to switch off their engines.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which comprehensive responses were provided.

In particular discussions were held on getting back into schools to spread the anti-idling message and the possibility of a poster competition for schools; the *Suffolk Air Quality Summit being held on 26 November 2021; more engagement with businesses on anti-idling; and whether literature could be included within Council Tax bills, to which responses were provided.

** [Following the meeting it was confirmed that the Suffolk County Council Air Quality Summit date had been delayed to 28 January 2022].*

During the detailed discussions, the Committee made the following suggestions:

- Including the anti-idling figures where CEOs had approached drivers in the monthly report members already received which listed all Civil Parking Enforcement figures.
- Using online videos in schools on anti-idling until officers were able to enter schools again, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Whether there was any scope in talking with Suffolk County Council Highways in having signage behind roadworks to remind drivers about anti-idling.
- The need for more social media posts on the health consequences of unnecessary idling, especially with winter approaching.

Officers agreed to looking into the above suggestions.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the report, subject to comments made during the meeting.

147. **Suffolk County Council: Health Scrutiny Committee - 13 October 2021**

[Councillor Paul Hopfensperger left the meeting at 6.10pm, prior to discussions taking place on this report.]

[Councillor Sarah Pugh left the meeting at 6.20pm during the consideration of this report.]

Councillor Margaret Marks, the Council's appointed representative on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee presented report number OAS/WS/21/022.

The report, prepared by Councillor Margaret Marks, set out what was considered at its meeting held on 13 October 2021. The focus of the meeting was:

- considering the impact and current challenges in delivering Primary Care services, had on patients;
- the provision of GP services in Suffolk; and
- the recent Healthwatch report.

Councillor Marks informed the Committee that secondary care was causing issues for primary care, and GP contracts were no longer fit for purpose.

The Committee considered the report in detail and asked questions to which Councillor Marks provided comprehensive responses. Detailed discussions were held on GP vacancies in West Suffolk; the lack of NHS dentists and questioned what was planned to resolve the issue and the draft recommendations made by the Health Scrutiny Committee, in particular in relation to the Riverside Clinic in Ipswich which was suggested as an example of good practice.

In response to a question raised regarding monies for dentistry, this went directly to the Clinical Commissioning Group who then allocated the money down to local commissioning groups. Dentistry was being transferred to clinical commissioning, but there was no plan for any more money. There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the report on the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 October 2021 from Councillor Margaret Marks.

148. Cabinet Decisions Plan: 1 November 2021 to 31 May 2022

The Committee received report number: OAS/WS/21/023, which informed members on forthcoming decisions to be considered by the Cabinet for the period 1 November 2021 to 31 May 2022.

Councillor Mike Chester referred to the "Applications for Community Chest 2022 to 2023" and asked how the process worked. In response, Councillors Ian Shipp, Margaret Marks and Diane Hind, who also sat on the West Suffolk Grant Working Party agreed to discuss the process with Councillor Chester following the meeting.

The Committee did not request any further information on items contained in the Plan.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the contents of the 1 November 2021 to 31 May 2022 Decisions Plan.

149. Work programme update 2022

The Committee received report number: OAS/WS/21/024, which updated members on the current status of its rolling work programme of items for scrutiny during 2020-2021 (Appendix 1).

The Chair informed members he would be writing to Suffolk County Council seeking an update report for its 13 January 2022 meeting relating to the Councillor Call for Action Hearing held on 2 September 2021 and the recommendations made by the Committee.

Councillor Diane Hind referred to Appendix 1, and the list of items carried forward and not yet scheduled and suggested that the item on "Homes for Life" be programmed for a future meeting of the Committee, which the Democratic Services Officers (Scrutiny) agreed to progress with officers.

There being no decision required, the Committee **noted** the update.

The meeting concluded at 6.46pm

Signed by:

Chair