

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY AND MEMBERS' SUPPORT COORDINATOR**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To approve the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall scrutiny annual report 2019/20 that is to be presented to Council.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 As in the previous 2018/19 municipal year the annual report will be a single combined report of all seven scrutiny committees. The annual report will outline the development in the scrutiny function and provide snapshots of the outcomes achieved during the last 12 months.

**3. Current position**

- 3.1 The proposed Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee report is attached at **appendix 1** for member's consideration. The report provides a very brief snapshot of some of the main work undertaken by the committee during 2018/19. It should be noted that the report is written from the perspective of the Chair of the Committee reflecting over the year.
- 3.2 Some of the main themes covered in the annual report revolve around the following issues:
- Oral Health
  - Maternity Services
  - All Together Better Alliance
  - GP Commissioning Strategy
  - Urgent Care Mobilisation.

**4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Committee has delivered another ambitious work programme in 2019/20, which is reflected in the annual report. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has worked well with Council Directorates, stakeholders and partner organisations to deliver the work programme and the committee has tackled a number of key issues throughout the year and looked to work with officers and stakeholders to provide solutions and improvements to services delivered across the city.

## **5 Recommendation**

- 5.1 That Members approve the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee report for inclusion in the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20.

## **6. Glossary**

n/a

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## APPENDIX 1: ANNUAL REPORT

### HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Chair: Cllr Darryl Dixon**

**Vice-Chair: Cllr Jack Cunningham**

**Committee Members: Councillors Michael Butler, Ronny Davison, Michael Essl, Juliana Heron, Shirley Leadbitter, Neil MacKnight, Pam Mann, Barbara McClennan, Dominic McDonough and Stephen O'Brien.**

I am very pleased to be able to report on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee following another very busy year. The Committee have delivered an ambitious work programme that has seen discussion and challenge on a range of topics and issues.

One of the major pieces of work undertaken by the Committee was in relation to oral health in Sunderland. The review aimed to look at the state of oral health in Sunderland and the current interventions available to improve oral health in the local population. The review was conducted over an extensive 6-month period and involved over 20 witnesses giving evidence to the committee. This included representatives from Public Health England, Health Education England, British Fluoridation Society, UK Freedom From Fluoride Alliance and local and regional dental professionals.

The Committee acknowledged that oral health was extremely important in terms of eating, talking and being an influencing factor in our social lives, careers and relationships. Members also identified poor oral health being linked to gum disease, heart disease, premature birth and even knee arthritis. Sunderland continues to perform poorly compared with neighbouring authority areas. The Committee's review recognised that an oral health strategy for the city was key in determining interventions and the promotion of clear and concise oral health messages.

As part of the review we looked at several interventions including water fluoridation, where there were arguments fully supporting the use of Community Water Fluoridation Schemes as a way of addressing the inequalities in oral health. The Committee also recognised a number of conflicting arguments against its use on grounds of safety and the removal of choice for the population.

The Committee have put forward a series of recommendations from this review that aim to help support the improvement and promotion of oral health across Sunderland.

Following the changes to maternity services at Sunderland Royal Hospital, as part of the Path to Excellence programme, Members were interested to see how services were being delivered since the implementation of the revised service model. The Committee invited staff from the obstetrics and gynaecology department of the South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust to provide this update.

The committee heard that the scale of the change had been challenging but induction processes, staff forums and external assessments had helped staff adapt to the changes. Members also looked at birth rates in both hospitals and the benefits of the new maternity hub. An important aspect of the scrutiny function is its monitoring role on service developments, particularly those that they have been actively involved in scrutinising. The Committee are clear on the importance of the continued monitoring of revised services to ensure that services changes are performing as expected and any issues are being addressed.

The Committee has continued to receive regular progress updates on the care and support provider market, providing a clear picture of current and on-going issues within the care home market in Sunderland. Members have discussed issues ranging from domestic abuse services, future service demands and independent advocacy service. As Members, we continue to build our knowledge and understanding of the key issues facing the sector and continue to seek assurances on how the Council works with partners and providers to tackle key challenges.

The previous annual report centred on the revision of urgent care services and the committee have continued to monitor the mobilisation phase throughout the year. Members have received updates on the recovery at home service, the extended access service and the urgent treatment centre implementation. Members raised issues around car parking, travel and transport and the operation of the 111 service. In particular, concerns were raised around minor illness and GP slots not being made available at Houghton and that patients were being referred elsewhere. The Committee is waiting for an update on urgent care services where this issue will be addressed in detail.

With any service reconfiguration or development that scrutiny becomes involved with it is a vital aspect that Members remain committed to the monitoring of the implementation of the proposed changes. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee has a history of providing robust monitoring and providing the requisite challenge where appropriate to ensure that services are delivered as expected. Urgent care will remain a focus of the committee's work programme as we move forward into 2020/21.

The All Together Better Alliance remains a key focus for the Committee since coming into operation on 1 April 2019. While this alliance is not an organisation, but a new way of working together and is responsible for Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) £240 million 'Out of Hospital' contracts. Members raised questions on a number of issues including access to mental health services, pharmacy access, medical optimisation and the recruitment and retention of GPs. The Committee continues to monitor the performance of the All Together Better Alliance as part of its ongoing work programme arrangements.

Sunderland CCG also refreshed their General Practice Commissioning Strategy during the year this was to reflect changes both locally and nationally in the healthcare system. Members discussed the recruitment and retention of GP's in Sunderland and the relative success of the 'Golden Hello' package. Members also acknowledged the improvement in patient satisfaction levels in relation to getting appointments and the overall patient experience. Initiatives such as Primary Care Networks and social prescribing were also identified as important in helping to relieve the pressure on GP practices. Members of the Committee welcomed the refresh to the GP Commissioning Strategy and its importance to maintaining and developing General Practice within Sunderland.

The variety of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee work programme has again been evident through this report. Further challenges lie ahead and the impacts of Integrated Care Systems, Integrated Care Partnerships and the Path to Excellence Phase 2 means that change and service development will continue to be at the forefront of the Committee's work.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is committed to developing relationships and working in collaboration with all major health partners across the region. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the members, officers and partners who have contributed to the work of the committee over the year. It is only

through this continued commitment that the Committee can look at issues in such detail, and the Committee will ensure that this is maintained in the coming year.

**Councillor Darryl Dixon**  
**Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

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