

**At a meeting of the SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE  
SUNDERLAND on THURSDAY, 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2015 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor N. Wright in the Chair

Councillors Davison, Howe, T. Martin, David Snowdon, Dianne Snowdon and Waller.

**Also Present:-**

Councillor Fletcher and Mr. D. Tate (observing).

**Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting.

**Minutes of the last Meeting of the Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2015**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2015 (copy circulated), be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

There were no declarations of Interest made.

**Children and Young People's Community Services - Update**

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) which introduced Mr. Mark Knowles, Directorate Manager and Ms. Suzanne Bartram, Service Improvement Manager from Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust who provided Members with a presentation detailing Sunderland's Children and Young People's Community Services (CYPS) Annual Report.

(For copy report and Presentation – see original minutes)

The Chairman thanked Mr. Knowles and Ms. Bartram for their presentation. She stated that the Committee had previously aired the serious concerns brought to it by Councillors Bob Francis and Christine Shattock regarding the performance of the former CAMHS Service especially with regard to the tier 2 and tier 3 waiting times. She welcomed the undoubted improvements that had been made to the Service but added that there could be no room for complacency and advised that members would still have many questions.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor T. Martin as to whether the Trust worked in partnership with local Sunderland organisations, Mr Knowles confirmed that it had a joint contract with Washington Mind and also worked closely with the Sunderland Counselling Service. Such partnerships were important as it enabled the Trust to utilise skills that it may not possess itself.

Councillor Davison referred to the statement on page 29 of the agenda papers that as from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014, 70% of accepted referrals were assessed and in treatment within 12 weeks of the date of referral. She stated that this meant that 30% were not assessed within this timescale and asked what was the longest wait that anyone was likely to experience. Mr. Knowles replied that no one would wait longer than 18 weeks and that the 70% figure had now increased to 73%. Councillor Davison spoke of the increase in referrals during 2014 and asked if any contributory factors had been identified? Mr. Knowles replied that a major contributor had been the fact that the number of 12-18 year olds presenting at Accident and Emergency having self-harmed had quadrupled over the last two years. Councillor Diane Snowdon expressed her concern at the increase in self harming. She believed that the internet and social media seemed to be playing a part in what at times was almost becoming a frenzy.

Councillor Fletcher asked whether there was a seamless transition from Children's services into adult based services? Mr. Knowles replied that he would have to say no. Particular problems occurred in the availability of services in relation to certain conditions such as ADHD.

Councillor Howe asked if the growth in the use of legal highs had created problems. Ms. Bartram replied that it had not helped and the increasing use of illegal highs also exacerbated the problems faced by young people with mental health issues.

Councillor Waller asked if the Trust were promoting preventative measures to reduce the need for its services. Members were advised that a lot of work was being undertaken with schools and the University in this regard. It was not a perfect situation as yet but the emphasis on prevention was growing. In addition specialist help was offered to parents such as the help groups for parents of children who self-harm. One of the main problems was that parents felt isolated and excluded as children tended to disengage from their parents as they entered their teenage years.

The Chairman stated that it was pleasing to see the Trust working in Partnership with the Sunderland Counselling Service as she had been responsible for establishing the service back in 1984. She referred to the recent national performance indicators which showed Sunderland in a favourable light but stated that although this was fantastic, the Committee's concerns remained locally focused. She stated that the presentation had demonstrated that referrals were increasing and plans were being made to reduce specialist services. She asked how the Trust would use the research it had undertaken to prevent these issues impacting on the quality of the service it delivered.

Mr. Knowles and Ms. Bartram informed the Committee that the Trust worked on the principal that if a young person didn't require a service then it shouldn't receive it. The trust would work with other providers to ensure the problem was treated where it was most appropriate. Sunderland didn't have any children who had to travel outside the city for a service. The only occasion when this would occur would be if the

service required was so specialist it was only provided in a particular place. The research into referral trends needed to continue to establish why they differ. Paediatricians were becoming increasingly aware of mental health issues and if the trends continued to be borne out, then the Trust would work with the paediatricians to ensure problems were adequately resourced. Prevention work was more expansive than in the past and would continue to grow. Work with schools needed to increase and self-help groups would continue to be developed and supported. The Trust also worked with looked after children and provided a consultancy service for Social Workers.

The Chairman referred to the fact that Sunderland had the highest number of referrals in the region and asked in such cases how resources would be allocated. Mr. Knowles replied that resources would be directed towards areas of need. In this case additional resources had been put into the Sunderland element of the service. The data collected from the performance indicators allowed resources to be targeted in an evidence based manner.

The Chairman stated that the presentation contained some excellent information and some really good news. Things had certainly moved on since the Committee had raised its initial concerns. She thanked Mr. Knowles and Ms. Bartram for their attendance and invited them to return to address the Committee in 12 months time.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) The report and presentation be received and noted and;
- ii) The annual report in respect of Sunderland's CYPS be referred to the committee in 12 months time.

## **BID Annual Update**

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated), which introduced a presentation by Ken Dunbar, Chief Executive of Sunderland's Business Improvement District (BID) highlighting for Members' information, some of the BID's key achievements in delivering its priorities during its first year of operation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In response to an enquiry from the Chairman, Mr Dunbar advised that he was employed by the BID which was a Ltd Company with a board comprising different sector representatives such as retail, local businesses, the University, the Football Club, Gentoo, the Voluntary Sector and including local councillors.

Councillor Howe welcomed the progress made by the BID to date in delivering its priorities.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor T. Martin, Mr Dunbar advised that the Area Forums had been established to replace the original BID Action Teams that had provided the initial impetus for the BID. The Forums were designed to reflect specific quarters of the city that already had an identity – the Cultural Quarter, the Park Lane and Holmeside Quarter, the Sunnyside Quarter and the Central Retail Core Quarter.

It was envisaged that the Forums would meet on a quarterly basis with the aim of bringing together businesses within the quarter to discuss the challenges and opportunities most relevant to them.

Councillor David Snowdon believed that the key to the generation of a night time economy would be the successful delivery of more hotel accommodation. He asked if the BID knew how many people were employed within its area, both residents of Sunderland and those residing elsewhere. Mr. Dunbar replied that he did not have that information currently, however a survey of businesses was to be undertaken which would provide this amongst other data. Councillor David Snowdon stated that he had been at the BID's launch and couldn't believe how quickly the intervening 12 months had passed. He remembered the launch had centred around a desire to encourage people to stay in the city longer and spend more and asked how this could be measured. Mr. Dunbar replied that the number of people and length of stay could be judged from the Council's footfall cameras and data from the Bridges. The level of spend however was more difficult to calculate.

Councillor Davison commended the audit being undertaken with Age UK regarding accessibility. Making the city accessible for the elderly would also enhance the access for parents with young children and the disabled.

In drawing the debate to a close the Chairman asked Mr. Dunbar to sum up the impact of the BID over its first year and outline any obstacles it faced. Mr. Dunbar replied that the BID was a work in progress but it was ahead of where he believed it would be at this stage. Challenges revolved around infrastructure and the BID's ability to access funding allocated to the city. Day to day challenges existed in the collection of accurate data however this would be greatly assisted by the development of the Intelligence Hub. The 'golden egg' would be ensuring the ability of the Vaux site to generate core, high paid employment.

The Chairman having thanked Mr. Dunbar for his presentation and having asked him to convey the Committee's best wishes to the staff at the BID and its congratulations on the work delivered to date, it was:-

3. RESOLVED that the report and presentation be received and noted.

### **Scrutiny Policy Reviews 2014/15**

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided the Committee with the draft recommendations from the following Scrutiny Policy Reviews undertaken by the Lead Scrutiny Members and their supporting panels as detailed in appendices A to F of the Report.

| <b>Scrutiny Panel</b>             | <b>Policy Review</b>                                   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Health Housing and Adult Services | Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation<br>(Report A) |
|                                   |  |

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| City Services                         | Cemetery Regulations and the Introduction of a Medical Examiners Service (Report B)                   |
| Responsive Services and Customer Care | i) Impact of Welfare Reform on Sunderland<br>ii) Operation of Food Banks in Sunderland<br>(Report C)  |
| Skills Economy and Regeneration       | Future Proofing Skills (Report D)   |
| Public Health, Wellness and Culture   | i) Strategies for the Prevention of Suicide<br>ii) Tackling New Psychoactive Substances<br>(Report E) |
| Children's Services                   | Tackling Child Poverty in Sunderland (Report F)   |

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Scrutiny Lead Members then briefly introduced the reports of the Panels within their purview and consideration was given thereto.

The Chairman having thanked the members of the Scrutiny Panels and all the Officers who had supported the Committee and its meetings throughout 2014/15 it was:-

4. RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Policy Reviews as detailed in appendices A to F of the report be endorsed and that the Review Reports be referred as follows:-

- (i) 4 Policy Review Reports to Cabinet at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and;
- (ii) 4 Policy Review Reports to Cabinet at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015.

### **Annual report 2014/2015**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing the Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to consider the draft Scrutiny Annual Report for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, advised that at this stage, as the report was still in draft form, if members had any further comments for inclusion there would be time to include them if they contacted him as soon as possible.

The Chairman advised that she had already spoken with the Scrutiny Officers and asked that the report be amended to include reference to the Budget Workshops, the extraordinary meeting in respect of City Hospitals and the Committee's scrutiny of the Council's Safeguarding and Drugs and Alcohol Misuse services.

Consideration having been given to the Annual Report, it was:-

5. RESOLVED that the report be endorsed for submission to the first meeting of the Council in the new Municipal Year and for subsequent circulation to key stakeholders.

### **Monitoring the Delivery of Agreed Scrutiny Recommendations**

The Head of Scrutiny and Area Arrangements submitted a report (copy circulated) providing the Scrutiny Committee with progress in relation to the implementation of agreed scrutiny recommendations from fifteen policy reviews conducted by the relevant scrutiny panels during 2012/13 and 2013/14.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that the progress towards completion of the actions detailed within the Action Plans as set out in Appendices A-O of the report be noted.

### **Notice of Key Decisions**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Notice of Key Decisions for the 28 day period from 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2015.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chairman asked that Members having any issues to raise or requiring further detail on any of the items included in the notice, contact Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer, for initial assistance.

7. RESOLVED that the Notice of Key Decisions be received and noted.

### **Annual Work Programme 2014/15**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) attaching for Members' information, the final work programme for the Committee's work undertaken during the 2014/15 council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Nigel Cummings, Scrutiny Officer advised that the work load had been heavy over the course of the year with the Committee considering 74 reports during its 12 meetings

8. RESOLVED that the information contained in the work programme be received and noted.

### **Member Development Opportunity**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) which provided details of the CfPS Annual Conference and which sought approval for the attendance of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, one Scrutiny Officer and one other delegate at the conference to be held in Westminster on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Karen Brown, Scrutiny Officer advised that Cllr N. Wright had been asked to Chair the Conference Panel Debate in relation to the 'Role of Scrutiny in the Face of Austerity'. It was hoped therefore that this may entitle the Council to a further conference delegate however this had yet to be confirmed.

9. RESOLVED that approval be given to the attendance of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, one Scrutiny Officer and one other delegate at the Annual CfPS conference to be held in Westminster on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2015.

### **Lead Scrutiny Member Update**

The Lead Scrutiny Members submitted a joint report (copy circulated) providing an update to the Scrutiny Committee regarding the work of each of the six Lead Scrutiny Members and supporting Panels.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Committee received an update from those Lead Scrutiny Members present on the issues that had arisen following the publication of the agenda and therefore not included in the report before the Committee.

10. RESOLVED that the update of the Lead Scrutiny Members be received and noted.

### **Councillor Tom Martin**

The Chairman informed the meeting that this would be Councillor Martin's final meeting of the Committee as he would be retiring at the forthcoming local elections. She paid tribute to his advocacy on behalf of the Scrutiny function and the support he had provided for her in his role of Committee Vice Chair, attending every meeting both formal and informal. She stated that she would miss his 'repartee' and wished him a long and happy retirement. Councillor Martin responded suitably.

At this juncture, Councillor Dianne Snowdon, on behalf of her fellow members offered her thanks to Councillor Wright for her stewardship of the Committee over the past year. The Chairman then closed the meeting having thanked Members and Officers for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.

(Signed) N. WRIGHT,  
Chairman.