

Outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Work January – June 2018

Report of the Chairman of Corporate Review

Background

This report provides an overview of scrutiny work that has been undertaken since the beginning of January to the end of June 2018, highlighting how the Select Committees have added value to the democratic process and addressed the priorities of the County Council and its partners.

The Chairmanship and individual Membership of the Select Committees was agreed at the Annual General meeting of the County Council on 24 May 2018.

Corporate Review Committee



Councillor David Brookes
Chairman of Corporate Review Committee

At the **25th January 2018** meeting, Corporate Review Committee considered the **Draft Strategic Plan 2018-2022**. The document set out the County Council's vision and priorities for Staffordshire and its people over the next four years and beyond and summarised the Council's political ambitions in regard to Economic Growth, Education and Skills, Housing, Health Care and Wellness and Children and Families (key priorities were given the Plan), and the four enablers that will enable the Council to be successful – Workforce, Digital, People Helping People and Networks.

Members queried the role of the County Council, Borough and District councils in housing development and the role of developers in strategic planning and what levers we have in place to encourage local Borough/District councils to develop more flexible housing options.

Regarding the quality of schools in the County, members were informed that parents should be encouraged to challenge teachers and school governors to continually improve and that there had been improvements in Staffordshire that should be acknowledged e.g. more schools were 'Good' or 'Outstanding' and the extension in child care provision in the county was 'Excellent'. Concern was expressed over the perceived reduction in lines of accountability with some schools and the need to use 'soft' powers to communicate and lobby.

Adult Social Care was discussed and the recent extension in the role of the Secretary of State for Health to include social care. It was felt that this could be an

opportunity for the Council to set out clearly its case for adequate funding for social services.

Members referred to the pace being allocated to Digital given that a budget had not been set aside for this purpose. There were concerns regarding visibility and tracking of progress of this priority in the Strategic Plan if there was no budget. Members asked that the Deputy Leader feed the comments from the Committee to Cabinet and into the draft Plan. They also asked for feedback on the following points: how support for housing development integrated with local borough/district plans could be redressed; how the Council could influence the mix of housing; reconsideration be given to the use of the term 'Newcastle's University Quarter'; that where the term 'must' is used in the Plan that there are detailed business plans sitting behind the document; and that consideration be given to ways in which the Council might address the shortage of school governors on school governing bodies.

At the same meeting, the Review Panel also considered the **MTFS working group, final report**. Attention was drawn to the focus on the link between the four enablers in the Strategic Plan and the MTFS. The recommendations of the Working Group were forwarded to the Cabinet Member for an Executive Response.

Members questioned the 'Preston' model, in terms of procurement and co-operation between the districts and boroughs and the County Council to procure in their local area was being reviewed by the County Council. This is currently carried out on an ad hoc basis and there were more opportunities to jointly procure. The MTFS was again discussed at the following meeting held on **19th February 2018**.

Also at the meeting members discussed the Community and External Relationships All Party Member Groups' (APMG) Investigations. The recommendations of the APMG Community were challenged and it was felt that they had not produced anything new that Members were not already doing and questioned what value the APMG Community had added and that it had not alleviated any of the pressures faced by the Council. Details of practical ways forward in which Councillors could work were requested, for example, with Parish Councils. It was thought that a different relationship with Parish Councils and partners was required and it would have been helpful to have some next steps proposed.

The Chairman of the APMG External Affairs summarised the findings in the work of his Group. He stated that it was a strategic objective to give visibility to Staffordshire within the Brexit debate, to participate in the debate in cities and to access lobbying opportunities and to localise the argument from the national debate. A number of specific events had been arranged.

At the meeting held on **3rd April 2018**, members considered Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Report covering; working age job seekers' allowance claimants, the Gross Value Added in Staffordshire and the number of pupils attaining a Level 5 or above in English and Maths. A partnership with Wolverhampton University to deliver essential skills for more than 100,000 Staffordshire jobs over the next ten years was also discussed.

Members heard that the current MTFS is informed by a focus on four 'enablers': Commercialism; Community Capacity Building; Demand Management and Digital designed to guide commissioning priorities. The Working Group felt that scrutiny in 2017-18 should align itself with these priorities whilst maintaining a focus on financial aspects.

The Proposals for Scrutiny of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), Annual Budget and Council Tax was again discussed and members' capacity and available time to consider issues and where best to focus its efforts. The cross cutting enablers (in the Strategic Plan) remained important, but Members stated that they should not overlook the Council's high spending areas, for example Adult Social Care and the Children's Services Transformation Programme, where there was a significant overspend and where additional money had been allocated for 2018/19, and budget areas where there were concerns regarding performance. Members suggested that there was considerable data available at the Staffordshire Observatory that might be helpful to them along with CiPFA providing useful comparative performance data. The LGA Peer Challenge, Local Government Information Unit and LG Inform may also be useful sources of information and data. The Committee asked for the first meeting of the working Group to be set up.

The **MTFS Working Group** has been appointed and is operating well, holding meetings with Cabinet portfolio holders.

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee



Councillor Ian Parry
Chairman Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee

One of the main items of business at the **18th January** meeting was the **Skills and Employability Self-Assessment and Adult and Community Learning - Quality Improvement Plan**. This Self-Assessment Report is a tool that Ofsted Inspectors used to judge the quality and effectiveness of an organisation in providing education opportunities to young people and adults. The Select Committee considered and commented on the quality and performance of the portfolio, in order to further improve quality, outcomes for learners and in remaining a good learning provider in Staffordshire.

The Committee heard that Community Learning was designed to bring together adults to pursue an interest; address a need; acquire a new skill; become healthier or learn to how support their children and it can support wider government policies on localism, social justice, stronger families, digital inclusion, social mobility and upskilling English and Maths skills and preparing for employment. Members were informed that this move had followed consultation with local stakeholders, community groups and Councillors. Funding came from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as part of a national scheme. In 2015, Community Learning was re-commissioned and a decision was made to reduce the funding allocation of

leisure programmes in order to focus on targeted provision including areas such as family programmes, provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with enduring mental ill health.

The Select Committee was shown a video, in which learners explained how a particular course had been of benefit to them.

Members were informed that prior to moving from a leisure approach to a targeted approach in terms of commissioning for priority outcomes, there had been consultation with local stakeholders, community groups and Councillors about needs and priorities for their area, which was used to help shape and understand the pattern of need.

Questions were raised about the breakdown between courses which provided a practical life skill and those which related to improved quality of life and wellbeing and also on payback on public investment and how we know that people on the courses were not able to afford to fund their own learning. The response to the latter was that it was intended that the courses provided open learning and consequently learners were not means tested.

Members questioned the robustness of the self-assessment process. They were informed that the authority was an Ofsted regulated learning and skills provider so were regulated under the same framework for self-evaluation as that seen in schools and colleges, against a common inspection framework. This was also supported by an annual review and peer reviews. There was also a re-inspection in March. In relation to the Family English, Maths and Language programme it was queried whether the objectives had changed around this, as there had been a 12.5% reduction in the target achievement figure. Members were informed that there had been a specific issue last year in that the two biggest providers, Stafford College and South Staffordshire College, who had withdrawn from the programme. This was a reflection of a wider issue around Colleges not wanting to deliver teaching in Maths and English. However, other providers were being sought and it was hoped to increase this figure.

It was suggested that, given that the County Council is moving forward as a paperless organisation and much more was being done on-line, it was important to focus on IT training and increasing confidence in the use of IT. The Cabinet Support Member agreed that every effort would be made to encourage learners to engage in Maths, English and IT.

Concern was expressed over the disparity between male and female learners, with 71% being female and less than a third male. It was confirmed that work was being undertaken to balance this out more, and whilst the percentage reflected some women preparing to return to work after maternity leave this did not account for such a significant difference.

The Committee felt that there were gaps in the report. Figures were activity based, and there was not enough evidence to support outcomes. With a £2.4m budget, the Select Committee was tasked with ensuring value for money. They asked how many learners achieved employment in six months, and how many were still in

employment in twelve months. They were informed that learning outcome questionnaires were carried out to measure the effectiveness of programmes against targets. The Committee asked for future reports on this matter.

At the same meeting, members considered the **School Attainment and Improvement** report. The report showed that Staffordshire had a positive direction of travel in terms of the percentage of schools judged as Good or Outstanding (and the percentage of all pupils that attended these schools). As at 1 September 2017 89% of Staffordshire schools were judged as good or outstanding, an increase of three percentage points since the same point in 2016 and the fourth highest year-on-year improvement of their statistical neighbour local authorities. The 2017 target of 92% was not met, however Staffordshire improved at a faster rate than the national average during 2016/17. The percentage of pupils attending schools graded good or outstanding had increased from 82% in August 2016 to 85% in August 2017. The report also gave information on the level of attainment for Key stage 4 and 5, Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2. Further improvements were required to gain ground in the rates of attainment and progress achieved by their statistical neighbours and nationally, particularly at KS4 and KS5 and those eligible for Free School Meals or Disadvantaged pupils.

The Committee also questioned School attendance, the work being undertaken around Childrens emotional and mental wellbeing, the Government Green Paper Transforming Children and Young Peoples Mental Health and possible additional funding bids.

The Cabinet Member responded that there had been improvement in Early Years for the past three to four years and pupils at KS1 also achieved a good level of development, as a result of the improvement at the Early Years stage. However, attainment then tailed off, which had been a general trend for a number of years. This was a cause for concern, particularly in the secondary phase such as the end of sixth form.

Also at the meeting, the committee considered a briefing note on the **School Funding Formula**.

On the 4th April 2018, members received a report on the **Review of Charging for Non-Household Waste at Staffordshire household waste and recycling centres**. Councillor Mary Bond of South Staffordshire District Council, who had been invited to attend the meeting in her capacity as Chairman of the Joint Waste Management Board (JWMB) The Committee were informed that initially there had been some disagreement with the principle of charging owing to concerns that it would lead to an increase in fly tipping. The Committee were informed that in May 2016 changes had been made to the way in which these incidents were recorded, and consequently the evidence was inconclusive as to whether there had been an increase. However there was no evidence of an increase in residual waste collections. In summary, it was felt that earlier consultation and better communication with the refuse collection agencies would have prepared everyone much more effectively. It had been recognised that at first people were not clear about how to pay and what to recycle and that this information had not been sufficiently publicised.

Concern was expressed over operators who deliberately collected waste and then dumped it. Members agreed that they would like to see the criminality of waste management being addressed.

A commitment was made to review the charging scheme when new Government guidance on what could be charged for was issued. The HWRC service contributed to the authority's strategic ambition to achieve zero-waste to landfill. The current landfill rate in Staffordshire stood at approximately 2%, whereas nationally 16% of all waste handled by local authorities was landfilled in 2016/17.

13 complaints had been received in the period November 2016 – October 2017. The overall customer satisfaction score in 2015/16, prior to the charges being introduced, was 89.5%. In 2016/17, the customer satisfaction score was 88.8%. In 2017/18 this had raised to 94.5%.

Members suggested that it may be helpful to advise District and Borough Councils on the recording of the data which was supplied by them to the authority, in order to ensure consistency and comparability. They also felt that there was more to be done around publicising what waste was free to recycle and MyStaffs App could be used to publicise the details of the scheme.

The Committee asked for additional measures to be taken to improve communications and publicise the charging policy.

At the same meeting members considered a Briefing on **EU Funding Case Studies**. The Select Committee had previously received a report at their meeting on 15 December 2017 which highlighted the contribution being made to the County Council's economic growth programme by the current round of EU funding programmes. The briefing paper and presentation covered: Keele University (the Smart Innovation Hub); the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Growth Hub; and the Low Carbon Business Evolution Programme.

The Committee met on the **20 June** to consider a report on **Improving Attendance and Participation in our Schools and Settings**

Members were informed that Staffordshire continued to have below national average absence rates in its primary, secondary and special schools. Primary and secondary schools were 0.2% lower than the national average of 4.7%, and this was the fourth consecutive year in which the County had maintained lower than the national average absence rates. Special schools had achieved 1.8% below the national average for their overall absence rates.

It was a cause for concern that Staffordshire Pupil Referral Unit schools (PRUs) were 13.5% above the national average for overall absence, however there were some signs of improvement with a narrowing of the gap between the national and Staffordshire figures for persistent absences. The local authority was working with the PRU head teachers to explore ways to improve attendance, and an independent review had been commissioned of the entire PRU estate. It was suggested that, given the significantly better performance of PRUs elsewhere in the Country, it may

be helpful to look into their arrangements and practices. Members were informed that it was important to change the culture around PRUs to encourage them to recognise their role as being one of a quick turn around, and that attitudes towards more challenging children needed to be changed. The direction of travel was towards more accountability.

In relation to permanent exclusion from schools, invalidated data for the current academic year was indicating a notable reduction in the year on year increase previously experienced. Work around children missing education continued to perform a vital task of identifying children in Staffordshire who were without education, and then ensuring that they were provided with an opportunity to receive education. In the current academic year 729 cases had been processed, with a positive outcome rate of 97.5%.

A member commented that the statistics on exclusions did not show trends in the type of establishments, and questioned whether schools were adopting more of a zero tolerance approach towards challenging children. The Committee were informed that different schools took different approaches in relation to their Behaviour Policies. It was suggested that it would be helpful for schools to have a level playing field, and agreed that more guidance could be provided to them around this issue.

The Committee resolved that their comments and feedback from the Select Committee be used to shape future developments in the work around improving attendance and participation in Staffordshire schools and settings.

The **Staffordshire's Libraries Strategy** was considered at the same meeting.

The Committee considered a summary of the outcome of the Public Consultation that took place between 8 January and 1 April 2018, which would inform the Strategy for Staffordshire Libraries offer 2018/21. The Committee considered details of the numbers of people engaging with the Library Service, and of how library use in Staffordshire had changed between 2014/18, together with a comparison with national trends. Detailed analysis of the public consultation outcomes, around Self Service Proposals, Community Managed Library Proposals, and the Mobile and Travelling Library Service were reported.

The Committee agreed that:

- a) The consultation response to the self-service proposal be noted and the introduction of a self-service pilot with Staffordshire be endorsed;
- b) It be agreed that the evaluation and selection process to procure Community Managed Library organisations was still valid;
- c) The existing support package and service specification for Community Managed Libraries be endorsed; and
- d) The application of the principles that had been consulted on to inform the Mobile and Travelling Library Service review be endorsed

An update on the **Final Report and Recommendations of the Working Together to Address the Impact of HGVs/HCVs on Roads in Staffordshire**, briefing note was circulated to the Committee

The briefing informed Members that since 2016 resources had been allocated to progress further work focusing on the A515 through Staffordshire, updating the Staffordshire Freight Strategy, engaging with local communities and businesses, and lobbying Members of Parliament regarding the county's HGV concerns. Members considered these areas in more detail, and commented that they were pleased to see the recommendations were moving forward. They also commented that the issue was about the whole of the County, not just the A515.

There was also a briefing note on **Public Rights of Way Review**.

Members noted that Staffordshire had one of the longest PRoW networks, spanning 4,510kms. The Review commenced in August 2016 and sought to: manage the demand placed upon it from users and landowners; reduce operating costs to meet the service's MTFS commitment, £290K by 20/21; and introduce more affordable ways of making a positive difference to Staffordshire's residents, landowners and visitors. They were informed of a range of outputs which had arisen from the nine work-streams within the Review, intended to provide the best solution to deliver in the safest way within the resources available. A member commented that this was a pragmatic way forward, but emphasised the importance of complaints being dealt with in a timely manner. Members welcomed the fact that some progress was being made, but agreed that they wished to scrutinise the issue of the backlog with Section 53 applications at their next meeting in July.

Also at the 20 June meeting the Committee considered a report on consultation on **Midlands Connect Proposal to become a Sub-National Transport Body**

The Committee considered the Midlands Connect proposal to become a formal statutory Sub-National Transport Body (STB) and whether this would benefit the County Council in its delivery of its long term strategic transport infrastructure ambitions. They also considered whether Midlands Connect could continue under existing arrangements as a voluntary partnership. The Committee were also asked for their views as to whether the County Council in its response to this consultation should support the Midlands Connect proposal in principle, subject to further detailed consideration, to ensure the form of the STB followed its required function, and that Midlands Connect would have clear roles and responsibilities that were compatible with those of its Constituent Members and West Midlands Rail Ltd. These would be used to form the basis of the County Council's response to the consultation.

The Committee supported the proposal for Midlands Connect to become a statutory Sub-National Transport Body, with limited powers, rather than continuing under existing voluntary partnership arrangements and; Staffordshire County Council can support, in principle, Midlands Connect becoming a Sub-National Transport Body with associated powers and functions. It was also noted that support in principle would allow for Midlands Connect to prepare an outline Sub-National Transport Body proposal to Government during autumn 2018.

Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee



Councillor John Francis
Chairman Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee

On the **15th January** the Committee considered a report on **Domestic Abuse (DA)**. They were informed that whilst DA services went out to tender in January 2017, no contract had been awarded as the bids received had not fully met the service specification. A retendering process was underway, with services expected to be in place by October 2018. Funding Agreements had been extended with three commissioned Staffordshire DA Support Service providers to continue with existing provision until the new services were in place in 2018.

The Select Committee queried why the initial tendering process had been unsuccessful and what had been changed in readiness for the second tendering process. The initial bids hadn't met the service specification and officers had felt they were not strong enough for them to commit public money.

Members noted that the total Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) demand for April 2016-March 2017 was 2247 and there had been 447 MARAC cases within the first quarter of 2017-2018. Data indicated an upward trend in respect of repeat cases. They also raised the issue of stalking. More detailed figures were requested to enable the Committee to see the extent of the upward trend.

The Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), had undertaken a piece of work on DA. Members requested a copy of the findings. Much work had been undertaken to improve the governance and communication around this issue, including the establishment of the Domestic Violence Commissioning and Development Board which had been running for 9 months and aimed to look at a more holistic approach to the issue, including education through the healthy relationship programme delivered through PHSE (Personal, Health, Social & Economic) in schools.

The Committee asked for further figures and information on; repeat cases of DA; the figures of stalking incidents in Staffordshire; the full business case following the Tamworth Pilot Project once this became available; details of Police technology challenges and how these are addressed.

The meeting also considered the **Staffordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board (SSCB) Annual Report 2016-17**. The SSCB must report annually on progress made to provide a transparent, public account of its work.

Members received details of the key priorities and actions that would drive the Board activity over the next twelve months around early help, neglect and child sexual abuse. On querying whether the Board was satisfied that Staffordshire's safeguarding thresholds for services and intervention were fit for purpose the SSCB

Chairman felt that they were and referred Members to the Ofsted rating of the services which was 'good'.

The report noted that the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Coordinator post had been reviewed and extended to January 2018 with funding provided by the Staffordshire PCC. Members were now informed that a further 18 months funding had been made available by the OPCC.

Members had a number of questions covering: the number of children in local authority care system; schools and their role in safeguarding and unregistered schools. They were informed that there was no intelligence to suggest there were any un-registered schools in Staffordshire. However there may be some Staffordshire young people who attended un-registered schools in other counties.

Members raised concerns regarding the number of private children's homes in Staffordshire Moorlands and were assured that these must be registered with Ofsted as fit for purpose. Members also asked if there was a robust system in place for dealing with children missing out on education and were assured that this was the case although Members were concerned at the level of resources committed to this area of work.

Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Adult Safeguarding Partnership Board - Annual Report 2016/17 was also discussed at the meeting.

The report highlighted a 25% increase in reports of safeguarding concerns in Staffordshire, from 4393 to 5529. Members were informed that this was in part due to raised awareness of what constituted abuse and neglect and how to report incidents, whilst there remained a belief that safeguarding was still under reported. The majority of individuals for whom concerns were raised were aged 65 years and over (66%) with physical support needs. 28% of concerns reported were in connection with those aged 85 years and above. Evidence showed that when abuse or neglect occurred it most frequently took place in the person's own home or residential care home, with the perpetrator being an individual who was known to them. Approximately one in four reported safeguarding concerns related to people in positions of trust. 26% of concerns were about neglect, 26% were in relation to physical abuse, 20% financial abuse, 14% psychological or emotional abuse, 8% domestic abuse and 3% sexual abuse.

Members queried the recruitment practices of some larger care companies, citing alleged examples of inadequate and rushed training. Members felt strongly that those receiving care deserved to be treated with dignity and respect and they queried whether the Board had similar concerns over the training of care providers. If there were any safeguarding concerns these would be challenged and where companies were found to have practices that were problematic this information was shared with the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

At the same meeting an exempt item on **Home care** was discussed.

At the **5th March 2018** meeting, **Children and Families System Transformation** items were considered. The report was the seventh update to the Committee. The

Children and Families System Transformation Programme continues to address the challenges identified within the children's social care system and the broader children's system. The Programme represents a new way of working that has been developed with partners, which recognises the importance of system leadership, commissioning in partnership and empowering communities and families to help each other and themselves.

The report detailed the progress that had been made since the last update to the Committee in July 2017.

In regard to the aspiration to bring specialist drug and alcohol into the Integrated Child and Family Hubs, Member asked if the hubs would be supported by specialist or generalist staff, and questioned if they would have the capacity to deal with the identified needs. The County Commissioner for Community Safety and Children stated that they would be looking for specialist staff.

A close working relationship with Boroughs and Districts was being developed around services such as housing.

An application for £3m funding had been made to central government. Part of this funding stream will resource the secondment of a Department of Work and Pensions worker who can work across families who are in temporary accommodation or who have a private landlord in Cannock and Newcastle. The reason for working with these families is that it is in this area that private landlords do not sit within a structure where they have social responsibility and have access to wider support. Work is taking place with the Jobs Centre to ensure employment needs are met efficiently. It can take 6-8 weeks for benefit processes to be completed. The Project Worker will be able to redirect benefits or get benefits into those families quickly. The DWP budget has a budget that is deployed to each district and borough councils to support budgeting and money matters for our most vulnerable families. In Staffordshire the DWP budget is underspent and it was felt that it is important to ensure that this money is spent and directed to support families in crisis.

The report also referred to the fact that the County Council would act as a broker for the Direct Schools Grant, acting on behalf of the schools to offer earliest and early help provision through commissioning arrangements based on the needs in each of the eight districts and asked if a progress report on this could be brought to the Committee. The Cabinet Member agreed to bring this as part of a fuller report to the Committee in September/October 2018.

The Committee also considered a separate report on **Children's and Families System Transformation & Update on Pilot Projects**.

Members asked for further information on how the Girl Power project in Newcastle is monitored.

Members referred to the impact of school exclusion and asked how this was being managed. It was explained that we work closely with schools in Staffordshire but we need to work more closely with them and children before they are excluded.

Elected Members raised the issue of children who were home educated and stated that the Working Group on Elective Home Education were trying to identify how many of them were excluded from school in Staffordshire.

Members asked how referrals would be made to voluntary providers and were informed that some referrals that come through the One Front Door do not meet the threshold for intervention. Voluntary organisations and other networks of support will be able to help in these cases.

Following a lengthy debate, the Committee asked for the following information: a breakdown of the figures of families supported; detail on the Ready Steady Library project through to the local Member; Local Members were urged to engage with their District Advisory Boards to understand the issues and the impact that school readiness could have in the medium to long term and it was also agreed to bring a further update on the Children and Families Transformation Programme to a future meeting.

On the **8 June** meeting the Committee considered a report updating them on **Staffordshire Children's Centre's**.

The report explained that every Local Authority in England was required to deliver Children's Centre's. Staffordshire currently had 11 with a unique delivery model, with the County Council operating the buildings themselves but the fundamental model of working through integrated delivery around the family, with greater collaboration across partnerships to meet the needs of families and their young children more effectively. Over the last three years significant improvements had been achieved under this model of working, in particular that there were more families accessing children's centres and services available from the centre, within the community and in the family home. Good levels of development continued to rise, being above the national average, with the majority of children starting school now being ready to learn and with 75% achieving a good level of development.

In 2014 the Select Committee had considered the Best Start in Life programme which examined the approach to Early Years, including a stakeholder engagement exercise and had made a number of recommendations. The Committee decided to establish a working group to consider the current work of the Children's Centres in comparison with the findings of the 2014 Select Committee Review, and the impact of the significant changes made as a result of the 2014/15 Best Start in Life consultation. They agreed to revisit the Children's Centres and report back to the Committee. This work will commence in September 2018.

At the same meeting, the committee considered a report of a working group set up to look at **Elective Home Education**.

The review followed a referral from the Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) to both the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee and the Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee in respect of their concerns over potential vulnerability of Elective Home Education (EHE) pupils in Staffordshire.

The Joint Review Group had been impressed by the time, resource, level of commitment and dedication shown by the parents they met who had elected to home educate their children. However they noted that those choosing to home educate for lifestyle/cultural/philosophical reasons, such as the parents that attended the inquiry, had reduced over the last three years. At the same time the number home educating to avoid risk of prosecution as a result of poor attendance had increased significantly, seeing a 27.4% rise over the last five years. There had also been a rise in the number home educating as a result of near exclusion (1.2% increase) and from emotional or behavioural difficulties (1.6%).

The Select Committee congratulated the Review Group on their report and endorsed the recommendations for submitting to the appropriate Cabinet Member. As this was a joint review the report needed to be considered by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee prior to being submitted to the Cabinet Member for his response.

The Select Committee endorse the final report and recommendations of the Elective Home Education Review and agree its submission to the appropriate Cabinet Member.

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee



Cllr Johnny McMahon
Chairman Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

On the **8th January 2018** the Select Committee considered a report updating on **Sexual Health Services**, the direction of travel and the challenges faced.

Members raised a number of questions concerning: the provision of sexual health services at Keele University, the online offer being developed and piloted in South Staffordshire; the change that had resulted in the drop in testing and the reduction in positive chlamydia diagnoses over the same period; why services were unbalanced across the county; hard to reach groups; communication; how services were targeting late HIV diagnosis groups to come forward; why the teenage pregnancy rate in Newcastle did not reflect the national trend.

In response to the points raised the Commissioning Manager stated that there was confidence in the service provided to students at Keele University and that it was better than elsewhere in the county. The GP surgery provided Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARCs), the pharmacy provided emergency contraception and there was access to sexual health services in Newcastle-under-Lyme. The provider in the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) were working with a provider called SH24 who provided online sexual health services. It was being trialed in the South Staffordshire area first to understand the risk of an online offer increasing demand significantly which the County Council could not afford to meet.

Communication and how to get GPs on board in a different way was a big challenge. There were however a significant number of GPs contracted by Public Health to provide LARCs and there could be work with them to promote this further.

The Committee requested more information on the engagement with hard to reach communities in Burton: a future update and that the comments made by the Committee be considered by Cabinet.

At its meeting on the **30th January 2018**, the **Commissioning Intentions of Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups** was considered.

The Accountable Officer set out the background to the commissioning intentions, the budget and some of the challenges ahead. Through the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP), the CCGs were attempting to invest more money in community services and primary care to get people home from hospital and by working with local authorities to provide an integrated offer which would blur the distinction between health and social care needs and meet the needs of the population.

East Staffordshire CCG contract for urgent care services with Virgin, for long term conditions and elderly care services was proving successful.

The failed tendering exercise undertaken by four CCGs for cancer and end of life care was raised along with a wide range of issues were discussed including Ambulance service and their impact on the in the STP; GP capacity, their aging populations and the difficulty in recruitment; over the counter drugs, how accessible patient records were; county boundaries; key prevention areas; Housing; Education: infant mortality; smoking cessation.

The Committee agreed the following work areas for their work programme: emergency care, mental health and enhancing community and primary care.

At the same meeting, the Committee also looked at the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP). The STP document had been published around fifteen months previously and set out a number of ambitions for the future for health and social care but did not go into detail. Plans would be developed to make health and social care clinically and financially sustainable. The Chairman proposed that the Select Committee took a thematic approach to scrutinising the STP, with the senior clinicians for each work stream coming before the Committee.

The STP Accountable Officer who was present at the meeting referred to the STP as a footprint for developing an accountable care system throughout the County whilst recognising that the way in which care was delivered in the north, south and east of the county would need to reflect the local population and need. The CCGs having one accountable officer, management team and executive team, instead of six should be in place by 1 May 2018 and would enable the CCGs to speak with one voice whilst recognising that the individual Boards were still in charge, delegating responsibility to the single commissioning function.

The Select Committee hoped that this would provide much greater clarity about what was being commissioned. There would be one set of commissioning intentions based on the individual needs of the local populations. Better joined up and more integrated care was what the CCGs were trying to achieve. There was not a great deal of disconnect between the local authorities and NHS aspirations. There would be suggestions going to the Board, including a three to six month extension to the timeline to give people a better chance to be fully engaged in the process and give their views. Before any fundamental changes, there had to be a strong and resilient out of hospital offer in the system.

The committee asked for a meeting for all members to discuss community bed provision in the south of the county and an update on the Virgin contract within the next twelve months.

At its meeting on **7th March 2018** the Committee considered the '**All Age Disability Strategy**' which built on the approaches included in the previous strategy "Living my Life My Way" and reflected the many changes which had occurred both locally and nationally e.g. a reduction in budgets; the Care Act 2014 and; the Children and Families Act 2014 the new Strategy was to set out the Authority's vision for disabled people of all ages from 2018 onwards.

The guiding principles of the new strategy was; person centred approaches; an understanding that disabled people were able to access and participate fully in family and community life; disabled people receive the right support, in the right place at the right cost in order to maximise their independence; continued development of a market that provided choice, control and diversity ; and, good financial stewardship. Extensive engagement with Staffordshire residents had been undertaken. In the full and wide ranging discussion which took place at the meeting, Members gave detailed pre-decision scrutiny to the County Council's intentions with regard to the new Strategy. The Chairman sought clarification of the financial context surrounding the strategy in terms of the Authority's budget and savings identified in their Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder said that the aim was to ensure that services were both financial sustainable and fit for purpose having regard to the needs of residents with disabilities. Staffordshire's expenditure on adult learning disability services was currently significantly higher per capita than the national average. The new strategy sought to promote greater independence amongst service users as opposed to encouraging dependency.

At its meeting on the **11th June 2018** the Select Committee received a further **update on the STP.**

There was increasing clarity around the process of implementation of the STP and the vision to create a centre of excellence for integrated health and social care provision across Staffordshire and Stoke- on Trent based around local communities and delivered by strong integrated community teams. The STP was preparing its pre-consultation business case and would continue to update the Select Committee as a key stakeholder. A Member asked how wide reaching the consultation would

be. The STP had identified four potential areas for consideration under engagement and consultations and these were:

- Simplifying urgent and emergency care
- Improving community hospitals
- New vision for health and care in Stafford and Stoke on Trent
- Addressing the low numbers of births at County Hospital.

The timetable for engagement was set out with eight weeks of pre-engagement consultation commencing in July 2018. It was explained that the community model would use the expertise of GPs to support the delivery of care in a different way: to directly support long term and complex conditions while other issues could be dealt with by integrated care teams which are multi-disciplinary and wrapped around the GP service. There was concern raised around challenges in the workforce which underpinned the strategy e.g. the national shortage of GPs was widely acknowledged but this impacted.

The Committee requested the following reports on STP work streams to be programmed into their work programme:

- Work force
- Intermediate care
- Mental Health services
- The engagement process, and,
- Members requested a visit to a Locality Hub.

At the same meeting, the committee considered the first STP work stream report covering **Urgent and Emergency Care**.

The programme had been developed with clinicians and would be part of the public facing discussions to be held as part of the wider STP consultation process. The key deliverables were aligned to the Department of Health and NHS England (NHSE) vision for integrated, easily accessible and responsive services which deliver the right level of care to meet local need. The three guiding principles are:

- Self-care and prevention
- Right care, first time
- Easy to navigate with consistent offer

The programme was underpinned by the Enhanced Primary Care offer (EPCC) whose approach was holistic with multi-disciplinary teams working collaboratively and building trust. One call centre would service the whole STP area. Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) would be made available across Staffordshire, each to provide diagnostics, be open a minimum of 12 hours each day and support 'walk-in' presentation. The Programme had set clear targets, the outcome of which would be to release monies back into the health economy. In particular, A&E attendance should be reduced by 30%; emergency admission by 23%; emergency admission by frail or elderly with long term conditions by 30% and the four hour wait in A&E to be achieved in four hours.

Winter planning formed a key part of the overarching Urgent and Emergency Care (UEC) operational plan, which covered all actions required to deliver the vision. The

Ambulance Service was a key partner and actively involved in supporting and integral to delivery of winter planning. They needed to be responsive and fully integrated and paramedics need to be highly skilled and aware of all options.

The Committee requested the Winter Care plan, information on the role of the Ambulance Service in the UEC, and evidence that an increased dependence on technology would not marginalise or disenfranchise some vulnerable members of a community.

During the period the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee also held three **Joint Accountability Sessions**.

The first was on the **16th April 2018** with the **University Hospital North Midlands NHS Trust**.

The Trusts Chief Executive, delivered a presentation in which she acknowledged that the entire NHS had been under severe pressure during the 2017-18 winter which had resulted in high levels of ambulance conveyances; high levels of acuity, overcrowding and delayed discharge. Despite the significant pressures, University Hospital North Midlands (UHNM) had continued to manage patient safety. 'Medically fit for discharge' was a whole system problem and a better system for winter 2018-19 was already being prepared.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) had inspected UHNM between 3-11 October 2017. The Trust was judged as to be requiring improvement overall but were recognised as outstanding in the care domain. UHNM had now been put in Financial Special Measures. They had managed to deliver £50m of savings in the current year despite the winter pressures and would need to find a further £50m in 2018-19 (with £10m contingency savings). They had closed the year with a £69m deficit. £25m had been received for transition from county hospital to UHNM.

A number of issues were discussed during the meeting concerning:

- Waiting time for A and E. The four hour target waiting time in A&E was holding up well at Royal Stoke for children at over 90% - this had been maintained due to additional resource put in.
- Changes to Childrens A&E and lack of communication. Members were informed that temporary changes to the service had been communicated via social media, in letters to schools and in local press and again when the Minor Injuries Unit was first introduced at County Hospital.
- When a child received treatment in Stoke, could any follow up care be received at Stafford? The response was that it depended on the nature of the follow up – if this is specialist then it would require attendance at Stoke but if it was more minor then it could be administered by Community nurses or GPs.
- A Member asked for explanation around a graph of monthly surplus/deficit as there seemed to be significant movement in March. £25m had been accounted for from the Department of Health and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in February 2018 but it had actually been received in March.
- 'Medically Fit for Discharge' numbers were questioned. 'Stranded' patients (those with over a 7 day delay) had peaked at 66% (about 600 patients which included the 200 medically fit to discharge). The Trust was working with national

NHS Improvement to identify issues and improve pathways so that elderly people do not become de-conditioned. The Trust continued to work actively with its partners to increase capacity in the community. During the winter crisis they had had to re-open mothballed beds and had to reduce elective capacity. Flu levels had been unprecedented at 3 times the previous year's level.

- Early winter planning would reduce the need for agency staff as the Trust could be more accurate on staffing levels required and were actively recruiting to a sustainable clinical workforce. The agency rate in nursing was currently less than 1%.
- Where fines had been imposed on the Trust through the escalation process? In response the £69m deficit did not include fines which, if levied by the CCG, would increase the deficit position by an additional £10m. Over the winter period a further £5m had been lost through closing elective beds and so the Trust were actively arguing their case for no levy with the CCGs.
- The percentage of re-admissions. The Chief Executive said that the readmission rate was 25% from patients discharged home.
- There was concern over services tendered out by CCGs which had the effect of leaving the Trust with expensive specialist services and less routine work. If the Trust was to be able to offer viable NHS services then all partners must work towards a strategic plan making best use of public money.
- Regarding Cancer and End of Life programmes in UHNM, the CE was confident that they would hit the final target of 62 days by June. They had built links with the Christie Hospital in Manchester to assist research and recruitment into cancer services.
- The CE believed that through the STP partners were working together proactively and they did corporately see a future for community beds. Following the winter crisis, the CCGs were looking at community capacity in the context of the whole pathway and trying to ensure the correct capacity is available at each point.
- The Chairman asked about the referral times of suspected cancer, noting the 62 day target (including screening) had not been met in February (lung cancer was at 46%). The Chief Executive explained that the lung cancer pathway is complex and the Trust had struggled to improve on this figure. They had engaged specialist help to try and shorten that pathway and were confident it would improve. Unfortunately they had lost some cancer pathway due to the winter crisis as they had had to cancel some cancer patients treatment. There had been unprecedented demand on critical care which had increased the dependency level of 45 (usually 30) which meant that some planned surgery. A high impact action plan was in place to drive up cancer performance to the required 85% against the 62 day standard.
- A Member, noting the CQC inspection ratings, asked about patient safety: in quarter 3 there had been a significant increase in reported adverse medication incidents. The Chief Nurse offered some context and said that reported falls included even the slightest trip or slip and that these reported incidents happened at a time when an increased number of people were in the Trusts care.

The Committee resolved that the County Council address how they can discharge their responsibility to ensure schools are kept informed about changes in health care provision locally and particularly emergency care for children,

They also asked the UHNM to note the following matters which require further response:

1. Where routine services are increasingly tendered out by CCGs having the effect of leaving the Trust with expensive specialist services which can prove not to be sustainable, all health and care partners should be encouraged to work strategically to ensure the best use of public money.
2. That accurate waiting times should be displayed in A&E waiting rooms rather than the current display which states when the waiting time would be longer than 4 hours.
3. Given the implementation of a high impact action plan to drive up cancer performance to the required 85% against the 62 day standard, the Trust agreed to look at individual pathways and offer a trajectory for all specialities.
4. The Trust agreed to identify numbers of patients at UHNM who come from outside the county and information around their discharge and repatriation and report back to the Committee.

The second Accountability Session was on **10th May** with the **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership and South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**.

The main points raised during the presentation were:

- CQC 2017 Survey of People who use Community Mental Health Services had found the Trust was performing at the same level as other Trusts and for a number of questions linked to health and social care, the Trust performed better.
- In terms of serious incidents, despite some peaks and troughs, the level of reporting was well below the upper control limit. Ongoing had identified no clusters or trends. In terms of finances, the Trust had concluded its year end ahead of schedule and achieved against each of its performance targets.
- Turnover of staff had fluctuated and age profile and historical data suggested that retirements would continue to affect the turnover rate.
- When asked what work was being done to support people with mild mental health issues to access work, members were informed that there was a specific apprenticeship project in Wheaton Aston and the Wellbeing and Recovery College where people with mild to moderate illness could learn to manage themselves alongside professionals which was now in its third year and was making a real difference. The Trust also employed people in 'protected groups' such as those recovering from mental illness.
- There had been a number of unexpected deaths from cardiovascular disease and the Trust now had protocols being implemented with pharmacists including base line blood tests repeated every six months for patients on medication.

Specific issues to Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership Trust were that the Trust provided over 1.6 million patient interactions each year, employed 4,745 staff and achieved an annual turnover of just over £200m and a CQC rating of 'requires improvement'. The Trust had implemented over 180 targeted improvement actions from its Quality Improvement Plan, devised following the CQC inspection in 2015.

The CQC had revisited the Trust in April 2018 and they were waiting for the outcome report.

2016-17 had been a challenging year financially when the Trust had incurred a deficit of about £36m. The Financial Recovery Plan which had been initiated as a result remained on target. The draft annual accounts had recently been completed and reported a deficit position of £10m in line with the 2017/18 plan.

The Trust have entered into Section 75 agreement with the County Council and were one year into a three year plan. The agreement made them the largest provider of integrated social care services in the country. They had continued to perform well against national Key Performance Indicators throughout this period.

In terms of staff turnover, rates were high throughout 2017 against previous years. This was due to decommissioning decisions which had required the Trust to reduce staff levels. Recruitment in 2018 had been focussed on filling vacancies for registered nurses and support workers.

The Trust had been commissioned to provide a Home First service which supported a timely and safe discharge from hospital for those patients who required support in their home. This had required the recruitment of in excess of 60 Full Time Equivalent staff.

The Chief Executive confirmed that Bradwell Community Hospital had been part of the winter pressure funding. While SSOTP owned the facility, commissioners were responsible for commissioning beds and UHNM currently provided the service. A final decision on Bradwell Hospital's future had not yet been made.

The Chairman maintained the importance of the Home First policy; that 'Discharge to Assess' would prevent people waiting needlessly in hospital beds when they could receive an assessment in their homes. The national policy was to return people to their homes for assessment and the Home First model implemented by SSOTP was based on a partnership approach where people receive a fully integrated package of care. The Committee accepted that this model would be more complex in the south of the county as there were significantly more partners with whom to engage.

In response to a question about numbers of patients coming into hospital through A&E, the Chief Executive accepted there was a need to do more to manage people in the community and keep them from the 'front door' of A&E. Equally, hospitals need to be clear about diverting people who do not need to be there and to work harder to get people returned home from hospital expeditiously. The Trust was looking at capacity through the system. They hoped to stabilise the offer of primary care accepting some GPs were struggling.

Director of Business and Commercial Development (SSOTP) explained that in the model moving forward there would be twenty three community hubs proposed for the merged Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and 3 pilots or 'early implementers' (two in the north and one in Cannock) were underway. The reality of a fully integrated care system was that the Trust could implement pilots and accelerate change. GPs would be much better supported by integrated care teams.

SSSFT were currently seeking approval from NHSI for the acquisition of SSOTP. Both organisations believed that one larger organisation with a single clear strategic vision would have greater influence in ensuring that mental health and community services become an intrinsic element and catalyst for the changes needed to deliver the STP. The new Trust will be fully aligned with the new commissioning arrangements currently being implemented within Staffordshire including the needs of the local authority.

If successful, the merged organisation would be known as Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust from 1 June 2018.

The Chairman asked whether there was a risk register specifically related to the amalgamation. The Chief Executive confirmed that the merger was subject to strict programme management. The top three identified risks were around:

- the financial position of the merged organisation - and there was due diligence around that risk to militate against any impact.
- risk around how the new organisation would contribute to managing winter pressures - managed by introducing stability and deploying resources as necessary.
- risk around IT.

In response to a query, it was acknowledged that the estate should be kept under review and that there would be consolidation.

The Committee supported the proposal for a fully integrated health and care system in Staffordshire and Shropshire and the approach to develop strong links with housing associations to assist in a healthy, quality life. Also given that changes to local NHS arrangements locally can cause some residents to be anxious, the Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust should have a clear communication strategy which is comprehensive and timely.

The third was on the **4th June** with the **North Staffordshire Combined NHS Trust**.

The North Staffordshire Combined NHS Trust provides core mental health and learning disability services to the population of North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. Whilst the Trust supported people in hospitals, more often it provided care in outpatients, community resource settings and in people's homes. It also provided specialist mental health services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In 2017, the CQC had found the Trust to have made significant improvement since their last inspections (2015 and 2016) with an overall culture which was patient centred and staff who were dedicated, positive and kind. In 2017 the Trust had been assessed as Good or Outstanding in all eleven core services.

A Member asked how could waiting times for CAMHS be reduced and was concerned that children were not getting the help they needed and that the current national waiting time target of 18 weeks was considered too long. The Chief Executive agreed this was a real challenge for the Trust. In 2015, the CQC had found Children's Community Services to be inadequate due in part to significant underfunding and some practices of teams and clinicians. Since that time, the Trust had worked hard with staff to raise standards and could now evidence significant

improvement particularly around really personalised care plans. Waiting times and 24/7 services for older people were priority.

The Medical Director, explained that in terms of dementia the Trust was focused on early diagnosis and outreach teams trying to work with people in their community rather than in a ward setting. It was known that keeping older people in hospital long term leads to a deterioration of their condition. The Trust could only achieve better outcomes by working collaboratively with Social Care.

A Member asked about the relationship between the Trust and the STP. The Chief Executive strongly believed in integration and maintained the Trust had invested much time and energy in developing a model of prevention which they see as the foundation of the STP. The Trust was leading on several work streams and had picked up learning from elsewhere in the county and delivered some projects jointly with other organisations – for example a Primary Care workshop. Similarly, a Care Home Scheme had proved really positive.

22A Member asked about the changes to funding of mental health services for looked after children. Members had been assured that looked after children would be prioritised through the CAMHs system. The Chief Executive offered to bring that detail to Members but said that priority was allocated according to severity of need rather than Looked After status.

Asked to identify the greatest challenge currently, the Chief Executive accepted children and young people's mental health service which reflected the national picture. While there has been some additional funding this year from local commissioners, it was not enough to provide 7 day services to Children and Young People. The response for adult services was good but less so for children and young people. This cohort of young people must be supported better in schools. Growth in funding this year from CCGs had helped but was not enough.

The Committee asked for further detail on the patient journey of looked after children through the services provided by the Trust.

On the 30th May 2018 a Joint Healthy Staffordshire, Safe and Strong and Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committees was held to look at the Whole Life Disability Strategy.

Members were informed that the County Council was facing an unprecedented financial challenge with an ageing population, rising costs and a budget which was falling in real terms. This meant that the approach to the provision of services and support for all residents, including people with disabilities, needed to balance meeting need with affordability. It was acknowledged that change was a difficult thing to achieve, and that there was a wide variety in the support provided. What was needed was an equitable strategy and for changes to be communicated well. This meeting was an opportunity to reflect on potential changes and for members' views to help shape the future. The philosophy of "choice at any cost" could no longer be followed, whilst recognising the gravity and impact on people's lives of any changes to provision.

Concern was expressed over difficulties in accessing support around mental health issues. The pathway was clear if a diagnosis had been obtained, but if that was not the case often parents did not know where to access support. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People assured members that he believed that dealing with children with mental health problems was a really important issue. Feedback had been given to the Government on its Green Paper and discussions had taken place with the Department for Education on the possibility of the County Council becoming a trailblazer in some areas of mental health. Work would need to be undertaken with officers involved with the commissioning of wellbeing services. It was suggested that the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, approved in 2014 and due for a review in 2019, would be a useful point of reference.

It was queried why the document was so narrowly focused on learning disability. Within the headline information relating to people with disabilities in Staffordshire, of 100 adults: 3 had a learning disability, 11 had a physical disability, and 17 had a mental health condition. Furthermore, people with a mental illness died on average 20 years earlier than those without. The document only focused on the mental health of carers.

Concern was also expressed that there was not enough reference to early years and early diagnosis.

In relation to costs, members were informed that the Council's overall spend on adults with learning disabilities had risen by 22% over the last five years, and based on current forecasts could rise by a further 25% over the next five years if different ways of working were not implemented. It was queried whether this correlated with increased demand or with the way costs behaved and the efficiency of the organisation in managing this. Officers responded that the numbers of people with learning disability that were offered long term support by the County Council had remained relatively stable. However the price that was used to obtain services in Staffordshire was a little higher than in comparative authorities and this needed to be controlled as there was quite a significant variation in price for the same sorts of service in the County. There was also a shift in the complexity of the needs people were presenting with which affected costs. Plans were being made to develop specialist services. One of the reasons for a Whole Age Disability Strategy was that the best way of reducing costs later in life was to do work early, in childhood and with parents, to ensure that good and consistent patterns of intervention happened.

A Member expressed concern about support for children with special needs in mainstream schools.

In relation to joint schemes of work it was queried whether the CCGs would be asked for additional funding or whether this would continue within the boundaries of the existing monies. Members were informed that Staffordshire had struggled perhaps compared to other authorities in terms of realising the income for jointly funded packages of care from its CCG partners. This was an area where more work was needed to gain an appropriate level of income and financial support for joint packages where there were dual presenting needs, social care and health needs. The intention was, with the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board to

develop the Strategy into one which represented a joint vision that both the Authority and the CCGs could sign up to over the course of summer 2018.

In terms of funding, the NHS faced the same problems as the County Council in purchasing services in the community, i.e. a range of price for the same sort of services. It was anticipated that there would be a number of agreements with the CCGs about having a lead arrangement or a lead authority to arrange the purchasing of services to try to gain increased control in the market, with appropriate clinical oversight. It was hoped that as progress was made with the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership this would present a golden opportunity, well timed with the rolling out of the Strategy, to see the long held ambition to jointly commission services come to fruition.

Members stressed the importance of communication and of taking the people, already the most vulnerable who were already in the system, along with the changes. The Cabinet Member for Health, Care and Wellbeing informed members that he had been involved in difficult conversations with elderly parents with caring responsibilities for middle-aged children with learning disabilities, who had serious concerns about the future.

The Chairman summarised the main points as; However it is done, through the Strategy document or otherwise, there had to be a clear understanding there was parity of esteem with mental health; Early intervention and early difficult conversations were particularly important in this regard and saved a lot of anxiety, difficulty and money in the future; The issue of pricing and cost and challenging the 25% uplift in the future and in doing that working with partners, particularly the CCGs through the STP; The issue of elderly carers, their concerns, what happens when they die; Consultation and how it was managed, particularly with different language and different culture; Employment of people with learning disabilities (this issue to be taken up with the Chairman of the LEP); and the transformation from primary to Secondary schools should be seamless.

Corporate Parenting Panel



Cllr Mark Sutton
Chairman Corporate Parenting Panel

Although Corporate Parenting Panel is not an Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is the means by which the County Council fulfils its responsibilities as a corporate parent. The Panel brings together councillors, senior officers in children's social care and partner agencies to consider key issues which affect looked after children and on occasion refers matters to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny.

On 23 January the panel considered the Health and Wellbeing of Looked after Children. The service commissioned a partnership approach to supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs, against a context of what is a very complex and changing scene locally and nationally. At its meeting on 28 March the Panel considered these changes in more depth.

Panel were updated on the Children and Young People Advocacy Service which had been delivered by NYAS since 2015. The service had not reached its target in terms of referral numbers. The service had conducted a need analysis and it was felt the number of anticipated referrals had been overestimated.

At its meeting on 20 February the Panel considered Adoption and Kinship and specifically, progress towards the Regional Permanency Partnership. Panel were introduced to the Looked After Children's Nurse who explained her role.

At the meeting held on 14 March, the Panel considered a report on meeting the health needs of Looked after children and the new delivery model. They also received an overview of the Fostering Service including the re structure of the Fostering agency. The panel received assurance that there is a robust assessment process in place and that potential foster carers have the requisite skills and aptitude.

At the 17 April meeting the Breathing space project was presented which offered intensive family support and aims to work with women who have had one or more children removed and who are pregnant with a risk of that child becoming looked after.

In May Panel received a briefing on the Family and Friends team who offered a full range of Fostering Services to Family & Friends Carers. It promoted permanence through special guardianship or long term fostering and assessed & supported private foster carers.

The 18 June an update on the Virtual School was provided. Attendance and Exclusions were a key focus of the Virtual School. There was strong evidence that unauthorised absence lead directly to poor grades and the Virtual School worked closely with Social Workers to reduce absences to a minimum.

Panel received a presentation on the Virtual School: attendance and exclusions. Members who are school governors will champion looked after children and challenge attitudes and practices in their schools on behalf of looked after children.

Looking Ahead

1. It is clear that each of the Select Committees have continued a full work programme of activity with positive, effective outcomes, aided by the ongoing engagement with the Cabinet Members on service reviews and developments.

To be effective Select Committees need to continue to be:

- Rigorous in identifying issues in a timely way for which it has a genuine opportunity to feed in new insight into the development of services for the communities of Staffordshire and for which it has the time and capacity to have

an impact. Members are reminded of the existence of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions as a useful tool in identifying forthcoming decisions for which the Select Committees may have an interest in investigating further.

- Consider wide ranging evidence, where appropriate, not solely relying on information presented by Directors but also evidence from the wider engagement of frontline staff, service users and the public to help inform the evidence base of scrutiny investigations.

Link to Strategic Plan

2. The Select Committee work programmes have produced recommendations that have directly contributed to the Council's strategic priorities.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

3. This is a summary of the work programmes of all of the Select Committees from January – June 2018. Full details of the work of the Select Committees' work including their work programmes and previous Outcomes of Overview and Scrutiny Work are published on the County Council's website.

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