

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 30th November, 2021

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Suite

Present: Councillor L Salter (Chair)
Councillors H Boyd (Vice-Chair), B Beggs, M Berry, J Courtenay, T Cowdrey, A Dear, K Evans, D Garne, B Hooper, J Lamb, A Line, K Mitchell, I Shead, M Stafford and A Thompson

In Attendance: Councillors L Burton, C Nevin (Cabinet Members), T Watts (Southend Carers Forum (Co-opted Member)), S Kebbell (Southend Youth Council (Observer)), L Coyle (Mid & South Essex Clinical Commissioning Group), DCS A Packer (Essex Police), J Wilson, A Vowles (Mid & South Essex Community Collaborative), T D'orsi (South East Essex Alliance Director), Dr S Zaidi (Clinical Lead), C Hankey (Mid & South Essex Health & Care Partnership) S Baker, J Burr, P Hill, M Marks, S Tautz and J Williams

Start/End Time: 6.30 pm - 8.15 pm

495 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from O. Richards (Healthwatch Southend (Co-opted Member)).

496 Declarations of Interest

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) Councillors L Burton and C Nevin (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the called-in item; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (b) Councillors L Burton and C Nevin (Cabinet Members) - Interest in the referred item; attended pursuant to the dispensation agreed at Council on 19 July 2012, under S.33 of the Localism Act 2011.
- (c) Councillor L Salter - Minute No. 500 (Community Inpatient Beds in Mid and South Essex) - Husband is a consultant surgeon at Southend Hospital - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (d) Councillor B Beggs - Minute No. 502 (Home to School and Vulnerable Adult Transport Services) - Family member has Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and is in receipt of Educational Health Care Plan - Non-pecuniary interest.
- (e) Councillor B Hooper - Minute No. 499 (Annual Safeguarding Report) and Minute No. 502 (Home to School and Vulnerable Adult Transport Services) - Director of a not-for-profit company that works with SEND children; Acquainted with the learning Disabilities Mortality Review Manager - Non-pecuniary interests.

- (f) Councillor L Burton - Minute No. 502 (Home to School and Vulnerable Adult Transport Services) - Employed as a teacher at a school outside the Borough - Non-pecuniary interests.
- (g) Councillor C Nevin - Minute No. 499 (Annual Safeguarding Report) and Minute No. 501 (Annual Report - Comments, Complaints and Compliments 2020/21) - Employed at external National Health Service Trust; Family members employed at Mid and South-Essex Trust hospitals - Non-pecuniary interests.

497 Questions from Members of the Public

There were no questions from members of the public relating to the responsibilities of the Committee.

498 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 October 2021

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

499 Annual Safeguarding Report

The Committee considered Minute 425 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 November 2021, which had been called-in to the People Scrutiny Committee, together with a joint report of the Executive Director (Adults and Communities) and the Executive Director (Children and Public Health) presenting the report of the Southend Strategic Safeguarding Partnership for 2020/21 on the annual assurance assessment for the Council in respect of its responsibilities for safeguarding adults and children.

The Executive Director (Children and Public Health) undertook to provide written responses to questions raised by members of the Committee with regard to:

- Improvement activity around the provision of training for managers and front-line officers to ensure that supervision arrangements are robust and effective.
- The background to the reported increase in the number of individuals and overall numbers of adult safeguarding concerns raised during 2020/21.
- Current delays being experienced in the processing of applications and the hearing of family court cases as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Resolved:

“That the following decision of the Cabinet be noted:

That the annual report from the Southend Strategic Safeguarding Partnership, be noted.”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Members: Councillors L Burton and C Nevin

500 Community Inpatient Beds in Mid and South Essex

The Committee considered a report of the Transformation Director for the Mid and South Essex Community Collaborative, that provided an update on the current provision of community inpatient beds across Mid and South Essex following changes that had been implemented as a result of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The report also advised the Committee of the intention of the Collaborative to commence a period of targeted engagement on the future function and location of community inpatient beds and set out the outline programme for the proposed engagement and consultation process. The Committee welcomed the intention of the Collaborative to work with the Council on the development of a plan and timetable for appropriate public and stakeholder consultation following the finalisation of the business case identifying the main issues and options arising from the commencement of the targeted engagement activity in December 2021.

Resolved:

- (1) That the plans set out in the report for the commencement of engagement on the future focus and location of community inpatient beds in Mid and South Essex, be noted.
- (2) That regular updates on this matter be made to the Committee by the Mid and South Essex Health and Care Partnership.
- (3) That the possible future request for the establishment of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Essex County Council and Thurrock Borough Council to consider the future focus and location of community inpatient beds in Mid and South Essex, be noted.

501 Annual Report - Comments, Complaints and Compliments 2020/21

The Committee considered Minute 424 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 November 2021, which had been referred directly to each of the three scrutiny committees, together with a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services that provided performance information about comments, complaints and compliments received across the Council for 2020/21.

The Executive Director (Children and Public Health) undertook to provide a written response to questions raised by members of the Committee, with regard to the provision of advocacy support for young people that had made a formal service complaint.

Resolved:

That the following decisions of the Cabinet be noted:

“1. That the Council’s performance in respect of comments, complaints, and compliments and Ombudsman investigations for 2020/21, be noted.

2. That the matter be referred to all three Scrutiny Committees (Sections 4 and 5 of the submitted report referred to the People Scrutiny Committee only).”

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Members: Councillor P Collins (Overarching), Councillor C Nevin (Section 4) and Councillor L Burton (Section 5).

502 Home to School & Vulnerable Adult Transport Services

The Committee received an update from the Interim Director of Highways, on the current position with regard to the provision of transport services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) children and vulnerable adults.

The Committee was advised that a detailed improvement plan for the transport service had been developed and that the delivery of the service had improved, although some issues

remained. It was reported that PricewaterhouseCoopers had been commissioned to undertake an independent investigation into the delivery of the transport contract and that Internal Audit were investigating issues relating to the award of the contract, and that the reports of both investigations would be considered by the Audit Committee in the first instance, alongside a 'lessons learnt' report that was currently being prepared by the Interim Director of Highways.

The Executive Director (Children and Public Health) undertook to provide a written response to questions raised by members of the Committee, with regard to the number (if any) of children that had transferred to a model of elective home education as a result of difficulties experienced with the provision of home to school transport services since the commencement of the new contract arrangements.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

503 Independent SEND Peer Review

The Committee received a further update on the progress of the independent peer review of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service provision, which had recently been completed.

The Committee was advised that it was anticipated that the formal report and recommendations arising from the peer review would be issued during the week commencing 13 December 2021, in order that it could be considered by the Cabinet in January 2022.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

504 Joint In-Depth Scrutiny Project 2021/22

The Committee received a report of the Executive Director (Legal and Democratic Services) on progress with regard to the joint in-depth scrutiny project for 2021/22.

It was reported that work on the in-depth scrutiny project had been delayed as a result of recent events and that the next meeting of the Project Team was due to be held on 15 December 2021 when members would receive presentations around the improvement of the 'My Southend' platform and the Council's website. The Committee was advised that it might also be necessary for the Project Team to review the timescale for the delivery of the scrutiny project.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

Note: This is a Scrutiny function

Chair: _____