

Annual Report of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Chair – Councillor Chris Bain



Vice Chair – Councillor Daniel Maycock



Members (2022/23)	Appointed for 2023/24 municipal year	Retirement from Committee
Chris Bain (Chair)	May 2023	
Daniel Maycock (Vice Chair)	May 2023	
Marie Bailey	January 2024	
Tina Clements	May 2023	Retired November 2023
Daniel Cook	May 2023	
Rosemary Claymore	May 2023	
Sarah Daniels	May 2023	
Carol Dean	May 2023	
Stephen Doyle	January 2024	
Jason Jones	May 2023	
Jeremy Oates	May 2023	Retired December 2023
County Councillor Thomas Jay	May 2023	

Committee's remit and function (Terms of Reference)

The Constitution sets out the Committee's remit which can be summarised as to provide effective scrutiny of the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities by scrutinising the performance of the Executive and external providers in securing a safe environment in which local people can reach their full potential and live longer, healthier lives :-

- Statutory Health Obligation
- Leisure
- Voluntary Sector
- Non HRA Housing
- Disability Service
- Social Care
- Elderly and Vulnerable People Services

To undertake such other scrutiny activities relevant to the committee's scope, as may be required in relation to the performance of the Council, governance, financial management and discharge of statutory functions.

Under the joint working arrangements in place between Staffordshire County Council and District and Borough Council's within Staffordshire, the Chair of this Committee is also a member of the County Health and Social Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and a county representative is appointed as a member of Tamworth Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. These joint working arrangements are designed to assist in knowledge sharing and to aid efficient working to avoid duplicating the scrutiny of health-related matters. Such that the County scrutiny committee focusses on health matters at a county wide/ multi - district level, with individual district & borough council's focussing on activities affecting health & wellbeing within that district / borough.

Chair's Overview

Welcome to the annual report of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, who met 8 times in the 2023/34 municipal year.

During this year there have been some changes to the Committee's membership. As well as my appointment as the new Chair in May 2023, a new Vice-Chair Councillor Daniel Maycock was appointed in May 2023.

In 2024, Councillors M Bailey and S Doyle joined the Committee. I would like to thank those members who retired from this Committee during the year: Councillors Tina Clements and Jerney Oates.

During the past year, the Committee has focussed on activities associated with mental wellbeing as well as housing and homelessness matters, as it relates to residents' health & wellbeing.

Cabinet members and officers were invited to attend meetings of the Committee to provide information and to answer items. Guests were also invited from partner organisations.

The Committee has used the Council's Forward Plan to focus its work and to help identify areas which would either require pre decision scrutiny and /or post implementation scrutiny.

I would like to thank all members of the Committee, Portfolio Holders, Officers and other stakeholders who took part in these meetings for their valuable contributions during the year.

Chair Councillor Chris Bain

Housing Strategy Quarterly Update

Following on from the Councils adoption of its new Housing Strategy in November 2020 the Committee has continued to receive regular updates in this area and since February 2023 these updates have been received quarterly, continuing in the current municipal year. Updates were received in June 2023, October 2023 and January 2024.

Updates focussed on the 5 priorities identified within the strategy.

The Committee were provided with several updates around; affordable housing including the approval of the Councils first two, First Homes properties; energy saving schemes including ECO4 and the work being done by charity, Beat The Cold; private sector inspections and updates on HMO's; an update on housing stock and repairs service; the homeless strategy including the introduction of the new homelessness hub; updates on Disabled facilities grants and adaptations and the Wellbeing Strategy including the identification of two areas of need based on health inequalities to understand what improvements could be made in these areas.

The committee sought clarifications in areas, such as, whether there was any process to move a family from an adapted property where it was no longer required and what form HMO inspections took?

The Committee asked questions around whether there was any data on health issues with damp and mould, and for data around outcomes for ECO4Flex referrals which was provided at a later meeting.

The Committee raised concerns on the Councils damp and mould figures, the distribution of Government funding for DFG and the time it appeared to turnaround an empty home to get it back in to circulation.

At the October meeting the Committee welcomed the Development Manager from the charity, Beat the Cold, who provided an update on the work that the Charity were doing on behalf of the Council to support people with Fuel Poverty; to look at how to become more energy efficient; help with billing, tariffs and meters; helping with energy debt and supporting the Council with the process for eco/home energy schemes

It was agreed at the meeting in January 2024 that now that the policy was embedded in, that the Committee would receive its next update in 6 months in a 12 monthly format at which point a decision would be made on how regularly they would continue to receive the updates.

Update on Health-Related Matters Considered by Staffordshire County Council

The Committee receives a regular update to each of its meetings on relevant matters considered by the County Scrutiny Health Committee. This includes a regular written update, the Staffordshire County Council Digest, as well as verbal updates to the Committee by the Chair and County Council representative.

Items considered at the County Scrutiny Committee and of particular interest to this Committee included:

- Integrated Care System and Integrated Care Board establishment and updates.
- Primary care access
- Inpatient mental health services for adults in Southeast Staffordshire
- Developing healthier communities' work

Details of meetings of meetings of the Staffordshire Health and care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board and other relevant meetings were shared with Members.

Safeguarding Updates

The Committee's workplan includes twice yearly Safeguarding updates.

The first update was received in October 2023 and a further update was received in March 2024.

The reports included updates on safeguarding statistics, training, taxi driver training, the Adult safeguarding board, modern slavery, community safety, contextual safeguarding, Prevent, Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership and the anti-social behaviour coordination group.

At the October 2023 meeting, the Committee sought clarification on the data presented and whether it reflected pre-pandemic years, the levels of Safeguarding training and suicide prevention training. Information was also sought on modern slavery in Staffordshire which was not available at this time.

Following consideration of this item, the committee requested clarification around the policing of Modern day Slavery and children who had missed out on socialisation at school due to Covid. The Committee acknowledged that it is essential that safeguarding is always a top priority to protect vulnerable residents.

A further update was received in March 2024 where the Committee asked clarification around figures that did not meet the safeguarding threshold, as well as about how they engage with school on County Lines – specifically academies and they asked how cyber bullying/crime was addressed in particular with regards to children.

The Committee moved the recommendation within the report.

The Committee also received the following items for scrutiny -

Armed forces Covenant – July 2023

The Committee were asked to review the report to reaffirm the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant before it was presented to Cabinet. The Committee sought clarification around how the Council manages, meeting its Commitment to give to provide extra weighting for Armed Forces personnel with reduced housing stock and around employment recognitions. One of the recommendations was that a progress report be brought to the Committee annually, and the Committee asked for examples/evidence of positive actions when it returned. The Committee endorsed the recommendations with the report.

Homelessness Hub – July 2023

The Committee were provided with a presentation by Officers, with an update on the Homeless Hub being introduced by the Council to support those facing homelessness.

The Committee asked questions around how Officers would like to be working with other local authorities, how evictions from supported housing were dealt with (recognising that these are using vulnerable residents), the condition of temporary accommodation units and how they were going to improve access and support of affordable and supported housing. It was recognised that Tamworth runs their out of house service in house and Officers were asked how they challenge those that approach from other areas. There were no recommendations, but the Committee acknowledged that they were happy with the report.

Wellbeing Strategy Baseline and Priorities – November 2023

At the November meeting the Committee received the report to provide an update on the Tamworth Wellbeing Strategy Baseline and Priorities, produced for the UK shared prosperity fund. The Committee were also updated that the Council had an allocation of £255000 from the Covid 19 Contain Outbreak Management Fund (Comf) which needs to be spent by September 2024.

The Committee commented on and sought clarification around the two areas identified through the health inequalities data as having a 'high' level of need. The Committee felt that by labelling these areas it could have a negative impact on those living there and for people considering moving to the area. The Committee also felt that this approach may mean that other areas needing support may not be addressed. The Committee felt that work should be done within the borough itself to identify areas of need rather than rely on data from the County. The Officer agreed to feedback the Committee's comments to the Health Inequalities Directors Group.

The Committee endorsed the recommendations set out within the report.

Disabled Adaptations Policy – January 2024 and March 2024.

The Committee received item to consider the proposed draft Housing Assistance Policy (for the delivery of Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants) prior

to submission to Cabinet for full approval and adoption. The Committee were update that in the absence of a policy the Council has delivered grants through the mandatory grant process which places a cap on grants with no option to offer discretionary grants or provide alternatives.

The Committee sought clarification in a number of areas, including why some grants may not go through, third party grant applications and whether any other funding was available in this area. The Committee also asked questions around the timescales of the process and the staffing.

The Committee were concern over the timescales and what support was in place whilst residents were waiting for grants/adaptations, as well the prioritisation process. It was requested that the report return to the March meeting with more information around this.

The Committee received an update on the Housing Assistance Policy in March where the Committee asked questions and concerns were raised around the capacity to address the current backlog, the decision not to prioritise ex-service personnel and the current prioritisation system. The Committee did not endorse the report and made two recommendations to Cabinet.

Exempt Items

Anker Valley Sports Complex – July 2023

The Committee received the report to detail the work to date and the decisions required in order to progress the grant claim in order to deliver the proposed Football Foundation/Football Association project.

Following scrutiny of the report the Committee endorsed the contents of the report and the five recommendations for Cabinet

Leisure Strategy Update – November 2023

The Committee received the report to give an update on the leisure strategies currently being undertaken by external leisure consultants, Knight, Kavanagh & Page, with additional bespoke Facility Planning Modelling via Sport England.

Following scrutiny the Committee endorsed the contents of the report and the three recommendations.

Homelessness Statutory On-Call and Out- of- Hours arrangements – November 2023

The Committee received the a presentation to provide an update on the Councils Statutory on-call and out of hours arrangements.

Following consideration the committee endorsed the recommendations from the report with a view to reviewing this in late 2023

Procurement of the Councils 24-hour Community Alarm Service

The Committee received an update from the Head of Housing management on the procurement of the Council 24 hour Community alarm system

Following consideration of the item the Committee endorsed the approach to the re-procurement of the service.

Consideration of Matters referred to the Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee from Cabinet or Council

Loneliness and Isolation

At the meeting on the 26th March 2024 the Committee considered an item that had been referred to them from Full Council, following consideration of the referral and an update on what work had been done in the area the Committee agreed that the Council were already addressing this issue and that an item did not need adding to the Work Plan.

Work Planning

The Committee asked for an item to be added to the Forward Plan around Damp and Mould Housing Issues, however it was identified that this had been picked up via Corporate Scrutiny and a working group had been established which contained Members from all Scrutiny Committee

Working Group

Following consideration of the housing assistance Policy the Committee established a working group - Review of the Implementation of the Service to bring Disabled Adaptations In-House

Recommendations made to and Responses received from Cabinet

Recommendations were made to Cabinet on the following Reports and Cabinet's response is highlighted:

Scrutiny meeting recommendations	item	Cabinet Response
Housing Strategy 17th October 2023		9th November 2023
Recommended to Cabinet to continue to Lobby Government to have funding for DFG to be allocated on the need of the district rather than the current calculation		Resolved That Cabinet Continue to Lobby Government to have funding for DFG to be allocated on the need of the district rather than the current calculation.
Update on Housing Assistance Policy 4th March 2024		14th March 2024
Resolved that the Committee 1, Reviewed and considered the proposed assistance provided by the Council under		Resolved that Cabinet agreed : 1.to look at a proposal for providing extra resource to assist the Assistant

<p>the draft Housing Assistance Policy (Appendix A).</p> <p>2. Commented on the inclusion of various 'Discretionary Schemes' proposed.</p> <p>3. to look at a proposal for providing extra resource to assist the Assistant Director with the backlog and a review of the process (Moved by Councillor M Bailey and seconded by Council S Doyle)</p> <p>4. That page 7 includes a priority of those that have been medically discharged from the armed forces.</p>	<p>Director with the backlog and a review of the process.</p> <p>An amendment to the second recommendation</p> <p>2. to look at a proposal for providing extra resource to assist the Assistant Director with the backlog and a review of the process.</p>
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Members Attendance

Member	Number of meetings attended
Chris Bain (Chair)	8 out of 8
Daniel Maycock (Vice Chair)	7 out of 8
Marie Bailey	1 out of 2
Tina Clements	3 out of 4
Daniel Cook	5 out of 8
Rosemary Claymore	7 out of 8
Sarah Daniels	7 out of 8
Carol Dean	8 out of 8
Stephen Doyle	1 out of 2
Jason Jones	1 out of 8
Jeremy Oates	3 out of 5
County Councillor Thomas Jay	4 out of 6