

Annual Report of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Chair – Councillor Chris Bain

Vice Chair – Councillor Rosemary Claymore



Members (2024/25)	Appointed for 2024/25 municipal year
Chris Bain (Chair)	May 2024
Rosemary Claymore (Vice Chair)	May 2024
Marie Bailey	May 2024
Stephen Doyle	May 2024
Helen Hadley	May 2024
Patricia Pallett	May 2024
Natalie Statham	May 2024
Paul Turner	May 2024
Andrew Wells	May 2024
County Councillor Jason Jones	May 2024

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 seven times in the 2024/25 municipal year.

During the past year, the Committee has focussed on activities associated with the Disabled Adaptations Policy, housing damp and mould and changes to Pension Credit and the Winter Fuel Allowance 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

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 Staffordshire County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny 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.

Details of meetings of 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 Committee received their first update in October 2024 and then a further update in March 2025.

The reports included updates on safeguarding statistics, the adult safeguarding board, domestic abuse and community safety, as well as updates on the work of the Tamworth Vulnerability Partnership and the Anti-Social Behaviour Coordination Group.

At the October meeting the Committee were interested in whether safeguarding training was extended to waste collectors and contractors; whether there was sufficient staffing/budget in place for training, whether Members could feed into the ASB coordination groups weekly meetings and whether the borough had an issue with county lines. Questions were asked around reporting safeguarding concerns and whether an increase in referrals was linked to an increase in staff training and clarification was sought over referral lead times and how out of hours referrals were handled.

Update following March meeting.

Housing Strategy Update

Following on from the Councils adoption of its new Housing Strategy in November 2020 the Committee had continued to receive regular updates in this area which since 2024 had been bi-annually.

An update was received in September 2024 confirming that work was being undertaken on the new strategy for 2025 – 2030. Clarification was requested around the importance of the five priorities within the current strategy and whether they were treated equally and how progress was monitored in these areas, before the Committee endorsed the contents of the report.

The second update was delayed due until the new municipal year due to the work being done on the new strategy.

Impact of Changes to Winter Fuel Allowance/Pension Credit

Following a request from Members, at the meeting on the 27th November partners attended with officers to provide the Committee with an update on what the Council and their partners were doing to address the impact of the Winter Fuel Allowance changes and supporting residents to apply for Pension Credit.

The Committee received a presentation which provided data around fuel poverty in Tamworth and support that was available for those affected.

The Committee sought clarification of the deadline for claiming Pension Credit in order to be eligible for this year's Winter Fuel Allowance payment and whether you had to apply separately for Winter Fuel Allowance if you were receiving Pension Credit. The Committee also asked how many residents were eligible and how many claimed Pension Credit.

The Committee asked whether all Council properties contained effective central heating and where residents could find details of the community groups in the community.

The Committee discussed the causes of food insecurity and a recommendation was moved to appoint a food champion to work with the Portfolio Holder to promote food security within the borough.

The Committee also received the following items for scrutiny -

July 2024 - Disabled Adaptations Policy

The Committee received the report to review and consider the proposed draft Housing Assistance Policy (Appendix A) for the delivery of mandatory and discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), prior to submission to Cabinet. The Committee were interested in what expert advice Officers had received when writing the report. The Committee asked for clarification around how the policy would be delivered and what the challenges were, as well as more information around how the moving list of applications was managed. Discussion were held over funding and how it was allocated as well as the size of waiting lists. The Committee acknowledged the effort and work that had gone into the policy since the changeover of the service, and that the Council were providing a much-needed service, before endorsing the recommendations within the report.

July 2024 - Disabled Adaptations Service Development Plan

This was heard as an exempt item when the Committee endorsed 4 of the 5 recommendations.

July 2024 - Armed Forces Covenant Update 2024

The Committee received two updates, the first in July when they received a report on work done to ensure the Council meets its commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and associated plan. The Committee highlighted that the Cabinet Member could not sit as the Armed forces Champion as stated in the action plan as per the Constitution. The Committee asked for more information around budget allocation. The Committee did not endorse the action plan at this meeting, a briefing note was shared with the Committee in September 2024 to address the issues raised in July. Following consideration of the update provided the Committee endorsed the recommendations and made a further recommendation for consideration by Cabinet

February 2025 - Update on housing Damp & Mould

Following on from work carried out by the cross scrutiny working group on housing repairs I the previous municipal year and recommendations made to Cabinet in January 2024, the Committee requested an update on housing damp and mould which was received at the meeting in February 2025.

Discussions were held around whether there were any common trends identified when looking at damp and mould in terms of property types/areas; what horizon planning was being done and whether work was being done to look at green models. Clarification was sought around the stock condition survey and the Committee provided their comments on the quote within the report that; *'consideration is to be given as whether the question of health should be asked of tenants reporting damp and mould'*.

The Committee were interested in what information was available to residents around damp and mould particularly for those who do not have access to the internet. It was confirmed that there was literature available. This prompted a discuss around whether the literature was suitable for those who are visually impaired. The Officer confirmed that they were not aware if the literature was suitable. As a result of the discussion a recommendation was moved to ask Cabinet to review the literature around damp and mould to ensure it was accessible to the visually impaired.

Tamworth Community Grants and Funding Options 2025 Onwards

To update following March meeting

Honest Conversations Community Cohesion Report and Workplan

To update following March meeting

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 item recommendations	Cabinet Response
17th September 2024 Consider the appointment of a nonpolitical role for an Armed Forces Champion whilst there are serving Members who are veterans.	10th October 2024 Agreed the appointment of a nonpolitical role for an Armed Forces Champion whilst there are serving Members who are veterans.
17th November 2024 The appointment of a food champion to work with the Portfolio Holder to look at the food insecurities data and promote food security across Tamworth.	12th December 2024 Cabinet approved the recommendation from the Health and Wellbeing Committee and; Agreed that the Council contact other Local authorities, including Staffordshire County Council, to ascertain what work is underway and encourage them to work with Tamworth Borough Council.
11th February 2025 The literature around damp and mould is reviewed to make it more accessible to people with a visual impairment	6th March 2025 *To be updated*

Members Attendance

Member	Number of meetings attended
Chris Bain (Chair)	
Rosemary Claymore (Vice Chair)	
Marie Bailey	
Stephen Doyle	
Helen Hadley	
Patrica Pallett	
Natalie Statham	
Paul Turner	
Andrew Wells	
County Councillor Jason Jones	

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