SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held at South Norfolk House, Long Stratton on 6 April 2016 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: L Neal (Chairman), B Bernard, B Duffin, D Fulcher, C Gould, K Kiddie, T Lewis, G Minshull and J Wilby

Cabinet Members in Attendance: Councillor: Y Bendle

Other Members in attendance: Councillor: N Legg

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Growth and Localism (T Horspole) and the Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer (E Goddard)

1167 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held on 2 and 17 February 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
The Chairman advised members that she had been made aware of potential issues involving the SN CCG and had subsequently raised these with the Council’s representative on the NHOSC, Cllr Nigel Legg. It had been agreed that he attend Scrutiny Committee to brief all members on potential issues and to advise on what steps were being taken to rectify them. The Chairman reminded members that they needed to consider whether any further input from the Scrutiny Committee was required in relation to this item.

Cllr Legg advised members of the purpose of NHOSC and explained that although it was no longer a statutory requirement, Norfolk County Council had retained the Committee due to its worthwhile contribution in this area. Members noted that although the NHOSC considered major changes to health provision and service delivery, it had no involvement in minor issues, such as doctor surgery appointment waiting times. Cllr Legg outlined the involvement of NHOSC in scrutinising the intentions of the SN CCG with regard to proposed changes to service provision, and members noted that the SN CCG had advised the NHOSC of its intentions to reduce service provision in relation to intermediate care beds, second cataract operations, hearing aids for mild hearing loss, IVF and prescription gluten-free products. The Committee was advised that the SN CCG had since reconsidered its position on cataract operations and provision of hearing aids, however was implementing changes to IVF provision, as it considered that the difference in provision across the different CCGs in Norfolk in relation to IVF was justified due to the difference in the demographic across the various CCG areas. Members also noted possible further impacts on future budgets as a result in changes to fund Cambridge University’s academic placements, and that this would be monitored.

Concern was raised with regard to the provision of intermediate care beds, particularly that patients could be placed in intermediate care in unsuitable locations in other parts of the county or region, miles away from their home and families. Members also noted that the SN CCG was proposing to fund 18 days of care instead of the 33 days that it currently provided and were concerned that the cost of care beyond 18 days might be regarded as the responsibility of the patient. Members questioned what would happen if the patient was unable to pay and were advised that it was likely that the state would settle any bill accrued.

Members discussed the success of the CCGs more generally since they were first introduced, noting that although they had replaced Primary Care Trusts and had been introduced to make the system more efficient, in practice, many of the CCGs were experiencing issues and most had financial difficulties. In relation to the SN CCG’s financial deficit, members were advised that out of an approximate £234m budget, there was currently a £6.6m shortfall. In terms of efficiencies, members questioned the benefits of cuts in services and highlighted the potential for costs being incurred by the NHS and other public bodies, for instance as a result of the need for more aids and adaptations.
Cllr Y Bendle, Cabinet Member for Wellbeing and Early Intervention, addressed the Committee with regard to her involvement with the SN CCG. She outlined her role on the Health and Wellbeing Board, which all Norfolk CCG Chief Executives attended, along with members from each District Council, Norfolk County Council, and representatives from the voluntary sector. Members noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board was an overseeing body that did not have decision-making powers. Cllr Bendle also advised the Committee of the work of the Joint Partnership which covered North Norfolk, South Norfolk and Norwich and the newly formed Joint Co-Commissioning Scheme, which was currently a pilot. Members noted that the main problems facing the CCGs were:

1. Large increases from providers;
2. Large growth in East Anglia and Norfolk; and
3. Large number of unplanned admissions to hospitals.

Cllr Bendle advised members that the next meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board was to be held at South Norfolk House on 26 April 2016 at 9:30 am in the Council Chamber and that members were welcome to attend.

In response to a member’s query regarding the Council’s potential involvement moving forward, the Committee was reminded that money was already available, as part of the Forget Me Not funding and funding for aids and adaptations, to assist individuals to remain independent and in their own homes for longer, reducing the pressure on other public services. The Committee was advised that difficulties had been experienced with regard to health professional coordinating aids and adaptations for patients leaving hospital. It was reported that although officers had attempted to enter into dialogue with relevant individuals at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital this had not proved successful. Members discussed the demand for more homes to be built with disabled access and highlighted the need for CCGs to evidence this, and also to comment on planning applications when required.

Members discussed whether they considered further input was required from the Scrutiny Committee and it was RESOLVED to:

1. Invite the Chief Executive of the SN CCG to the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2016 to outline developments at the CCG and future work; and
2. Invite Cllr Legg to attend meetings of the Scrutiny Committee every 6 months to update members on the work of the NHOSC.
1169 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Members were pleased to note the Annual Review of the Scrutiny Committee 2015-16. It was noted that all recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet, Council, officers or outside organisations, which was a great achievement for the Committee. Cllr Gould requested further details on the current situation regarding the recommendations arising from the Market Town Initiative item considered in November. The Scrutiny Officer advised that the report detailed the current progress and that she would liaise with the Senior Economic Growth Coordinator to request that relevant local members were well informed of future developments.

1170 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND TRACKER, AND CABINET CORE AGENDA

The Scrutiny and Information Rights Officer informed members that a number of new items had been suggested for inclusion on the Work Programme. In response to a suggestion by Cllr Lewis that the Committee investigate the possibility of the Council joining the new formed debt recovery partnership comprising of Breckland District Council and a Suffolk Council, the Director of Growth and Localism advised that the Council was currently awaiting a proposal regarding joining the partnership and that the Committee could consider this if it so wished.

(The meeting concluded at 10:30 am)

Chairman