



OFFICER REPORT TO COUNCIL

SELECT COMMITTEES' REPORT TO COUNCIL

KEY ISSUE/DECISION:

For Members to note the headline activity of the Council's overview and scrutiny function in the period September to November 2022 asking questions of Scrutiny Chairs as necessary.

BACKGROUND:

As part of the ongoing process to raise standards in the Council's overview and scrutiny function and to raise the profile of the work of Select Committees more generally, Chairs agreed to regularly report activity to Council.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY:

Adults & Health Select Committee

During its 5 October 2022 public meeting, the Committee reviewed the Surrey's Integrated Care Systems preparations for the *pressures of the Winter Months* ahead, the timing of which was crucial given both the cost-of-living as well as the energy crisis. The Committee recommended the rollout of Cloud-Based Telephony Systems throughout Surrey's GP practices to enhance patient access, and recommended improvements to *Discharge-to-Assess* processes and to address the funding issues therewithin. The Committee also reviewed progress made in delivering the *Mental Health Improvement Plan* and made recommendations for greater data utilisation to swiftly to determine the priorities of the Plan and the sources and amounts of funding required. The *Enabling You with Technology Programme* was also reviewed, and the Committee recommended that more sustainable funding is secured for the programme.

The Committee convened an extraordinary meeting in November to coincide with the launch of the *Mental Health Investment Fund*, which is being implemented as part of the Council's No One Left Behind agenda and being financed by Council Tax increases. The Committee reviewed the amount of funding available and the scope of this fund, making recommendations for

clear decision-making, and for greater coordination and shared priorities between the *Mental Health Improvement Plan* and the *Investment Fund*.

The Committee also reviewed the *Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy* recommending that the programme's accommodation facilities are affordable in line with welfare benefits.

The Committee held three informal meetings in this period: progress made on delivering the *Weybetter Weybridge Programme*; on the formation of the *Adult's Mental Health Alliance*, during which the committee recommended a fair distribution of influence amongst alliance members to improve partnership working and co-production in mental health services; and on a Budget Briefing from the Council's Adult Social Care and Public Services Reform Directorates.

The Committee's *Health Inequalities Task Group* has agreed to three areas of focus for the final phase of its review: Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities; those experiencing Homelessness, Drug and Alcohol Abuse; and those suffering Domestic Abuse using the Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy as a framework for scrutiny. The task group has conducted several witness sessions thus far.

The Committee also held site visits as part of two scrutiny items including; visits to GP practices as part of the *Access to Primary Care* item to examine measures taken to improve patient access; and visits to Farnham Road Hospital to assess improvements to mental health services as part of the *Mental Health Improvement Plan* item. Further site visits to Extra Care and Supported Independent Living Accommodation sites are being planned as part of the *Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy* item to assess the nature of these accommodation facilities and the extent of the delivery of this programme.

The Committee has also been involved in the reconvened *South West London and Surrey Joint Health and Overview Select Committee* in November, during which it participated in two items; the *Future Hospitals Programme* which outlined the redesigning of the St George's, Epsom, and St Helier Hospital Sites, and the *Renal Services Update* which outlined plans for the closure and transfer of renal services units. The Committee made recommendations to address patient transportation and access issues generated by the transfer of renal services.

The Committee has also remained in contact with key stakeholders and organisations having several meetings with the Chief Executives of Surrey Heartlands and Frimley Integrated Care Systems and key associated NHS providers, with Healthwatch Surrey, as well as with Voluntary Sector Organisations commissioned by or affiliated with the Council.

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning Select Committee

The Committee met formally once in October. The Committee reviewed and endorsed the Council's strategic approach to growing capacity in children's homes with the aim that 80 per cent of Surrey's Looked After Children live in the county.

Following a request by the Committee, in recognition of the challenge of recruiting social care staff, Members met with service managers in order to better understand the issues they face. It has also arranged to meet social workers to give them an opportunity to talk frankly about their work pressures and what would encourage staff retention. These visits will form the basis of future recommendations.

The Committee is taking part in a pilot training offer from the Local Government Association to help improve the effectiveness of its scrutiny. It has embarked on this journey by conducting a self-evaluation in order to identify its needs.

Members have had briefings in the *Opportunity For All* white paper on schools, Dedicated Schools Grant and Surrey's School Organisation Plan.

Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee

The Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee and its Greener Futures Reference Group met four times during this period: 7 September; 20 September; 6 October and 13 October 2022.

A special informal meeting of the Select Committee took place on 7 September to receive updates on draft Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) prioritisation; parking enforcement and waste contract, building on the work undertaken by the Select Committee previously.

On 6 October, the Select Committee held its formal public meeting that considered five important topics: A Skills Plan for Surrey; A County Deal Update; Assessment of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan; Public Right of Way and Healthy Streets making recommendations on each item. Following the meeting, an informal budget scrutiny briefing took place for the areas under the Select Committee's remit.

The Select Committee's Greener Future Reference Group met on 20 September and 13 October to review the Climate Change Delivery Plan (whole programme assessment) following the recommendations made by the Select Committee and the role of Greener Future Member Reference Group in the forward delivery. The Group also discussed the Environment Action Committees and the Council's response to cost-of-living crisis: warm hubs; digital energy tool; energy tips campaign; and sustainable warmth programme.

Resources and Performance Select Committee

There were six meetings held by the Resources and Performance Select Committee and Budget Task Group since September. These were held on 8 September, 7 October, 12 October, 14 October, 3 November, and 7 November 2022.

The Select Committee's formal public meeting took place on 7 October considering reports on People and Change Workforce; Agile Office; and Responsible Tax Conduct motion referred by the full to the Select Committee. After careful consideration, the Committee made recommendations on each report, including a formal feedback report to the full council on responsible tax conduct.

The Select Committee also held a performance monitoring session on 14 October to monitor the services under its remit.

The Budget Task Group meetings and briefings took place on 8 September, 12 October, 3 November, and 7 November reviewing the financial positions of all directorates and receiving updates on diagnostic the process as well as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Safety Valve.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Council review the work summarised in this report providing feedback to Scrutiny Chairs as appropriate.
2. That the Select Committees will report to Council three times again next calendar year.

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Sources/background papers:

Select Committee Agenda and Minutes:
[Committee structure - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)
