



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 December 2022 to February 2023 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 and Health Select Committee

At its 6 December 2022 public meeting, as part of the wider process of budget scrutiny, the Committee reviewed the *2023/24 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2027/28*. The Committee recommended that sufficient budgetary resources are allocated to support Discharge-to-Assess processes and for the Delivery of Extra-Care and Supported Independent living Facilities. The Committee also joined other Select Committees in the Council in calling for Equalities Impacts Assessments to be incorporated into future budget planning, The Committee also reviewed *Adult Safeguarding* in Surrey, making recommendations for raising increased awareness for Safeguarding, and for Safeguarding training provision to be implemented and adequately monitored. *Adult Social Care Complaints* were also reviewed, and the Committee recommended an increased timeliness for assessment processes as well as a more accurate way of recording and addressing Issues of Concern, as opposed to formal complaints only.

The Committee also held a public meeting on 16 February 2023, during which it reviewed *Access to NHS Dentistry* within Surrey. The Committee examined the recent delegation of dentistry commissioning from NHS England to Surrey's Integrated Care Boards, and the ways in which access to NHS dentistry can be enhanced at a time when residents are struggling to afford private dental care in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis.

During its 16 February 2023 public meeting, in collaboration with the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee, the Committee also held an item on *Children's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health*. The item examined the nature and performance of Children's Mental Health services in the context of the MindWorks alliance and contract, with a focus on three key priority areas; prevention, early intervention, and transitions.

The Committee is also scrutinising *Changes to Children's Cancer Services* as per new service specifications from NHS England, which constitute a *Substantial Variation of Service*. The Committee held an informal meeting on this with NHS England on 14 February 2023, and participated in collectively scrutinising these changes in the context of the South-West London and Surrey Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee. In both contexts, the Committee recommended that Equalities Impacts Assessments are conducted by NHS England when making decisions on these changes, and that access and transportation challenges for Surrey residents are considered at every level of this transformation.

The Committee held an informal meeting on 19 December 2022 on *Discharge-To-Assess processes*, where the Committee recommended sustainable sources of funding for this. The Committee also held four informal meetings in 2023: on *SECAMB's CQC improvement journey*, where the Committee recommended closer collaboration with other partners in the Surrey System; on improvements to the *CRM system*, where the Committee recommended improvements to how Issues of Concern are recorded and dealt with in Adult Social Care; on *Raising Awareness of Autism amongst Ethnic Minorities* in Surrey; and on the work underway with *Employability and the Preparation for the Adulthood Board Activities*, where it was recommended that the complexity and diversity of the Autism Spectrum is taken into account in the provision of employability support.

The Committee also held site visits to the Recovery College in Camberley as well as the Mental Health Safe Haven in Woking as part of the *Mental Health Improvement Plan Item*; to examine the effectiveness and use of Safe Havens for Mental Health Crises, as well as the uptake and effectiveness of Courses for Mental Health Recovery. Committee Members also attended the Surrey Heartland's expo conference on 1 February as part of the *Integrated Care Strategy Item*, to examine the inauguration of the Strategy by Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System. Site Visits will also be held in March to the University of Surrey and Newland's Corner as part of the *All-Age Autism Strategy Item*; these are to examine work underway to improve employment prospects for residents with Learning Disabilities and Autism.

As part of efforts to increase co-production and effective oversight, the Committee Chair and Scrutiny Officer attended the Surrey Heartland's Involvement and Participation Group on 26 January 2023, which convenes monthly to increase Co-Production in Healthcare Provision. The Chair also engaged in other activities to improve Co-production and oversight including: sitting on a recruitment Panel for the Ambulance Trust's appointment of a new

Chief Executive on 17 February; attending sessions on the Co-Production and Insight Group for Mental Health on 27 January and 24 February, and attending a meeting on 19 January with senior members of the Mental Health Investment Fund Allocation Panel to discuss the first round of bids for Mental Health Funding.

The Committee Chair, Vice-Chairs, and Scrutiny Officer have also held discussions with senior commissioners and providers for Wheelchair Services, as well as Healthwatch and Surrey Coalition of Disabled People as part of efforts to improve the timely provision and repairs of Wheelchair services, in light of reports of substantial waiting times for the provision and repair service of wheelchair equipment in Surrey. A briefing on this was held on 22 February, where it was also recommended that commissioning arrangements address any supply challenges and for greater coordination between organisations to reduce substantial delays in the provision and repairs of wheelchairs.

In light of plans for Interim Redevelopments of Frimley Park Hospital, the Committee's Chair, Vice-Chairs reviewed detailed reports on, and received a briefing regarding these changes. As part of the formal business case, the Trust required a confirmation from the Committee that these interim redevelopments did not constitute a Reconfiguration of Service.

The Committee's Health Inequalities Task Group continues its focus on the following themes 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 sixteen witness sessions to date, now entering its final stages and will imminently submit its findings and recommendations.

Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee

The Children, Families and Learning Directorate has agreed to share data at every formal meeting to ensure all Members have an overview of performance. This comprises key indicators measuring progress against Ofsted ILACS recommendations, external assessment ratings and turnover of social workers and foster carers.

Cabinet agreed to incorporate several recommendations made by the Committee in December into the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy 2023 – 2026, including producing an easy-read version and a series of webinars for parent carers.

Many of the Committee's recommended amendments to the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy were also agreed by Cabinet. These include a commitment that all parent carers in receipt of a mileage allowance are, as a general rule, paid for a return rather than one-way journey to the child's

setting, as well as backdating this policy to September 2022 and reimbursing recipients.

Committee Members met with service managers and social workers from two quadrants to discuss ways of stabilising the children's social care workforce, which was the primary focus of the March meeting. The 2023/24 budget included an additional £1.6m funding for recruitment and retention following the Committee's recommendation that these should be prioritised in budget expenditure.

Members collaborated with the Adults and Health Select Committee to review the children's emotional wellbeing and mental health services provided by Mindworks Surrey.

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee

The Communities, Environment & Highways (CEH) Select Committee and its subgroups – including the Greener Futures, Highways, and Electric Vehicles (EV) Reference Groups – have met six times since the last report to the County Council. These meetings took place on 5 and 15 December 2022; 24 and 25 January; 6 and 8 February 2023.

During its public meeting on 5 December, the Select Committee scrutinised the progress of Your Fund Surrey (YFS); Surrey County Council's Draft Budget for 2023-24 along with Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28, and the Council's Strategy for Accommodation, Housing, and Homes focussing on key priorities and action through a partnership-based and collaborative deliberation programme. On 8 February, the Select Committee reviewed the progress of Delivering in Partnership: Towns - The Next Phase, and the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service Progress. The Select Committee made evidence-based recommendations on each item.

During the Reference Group meetings in December 2022, January and February 2023, Members reviewed the progress on significant matters relating to a range of Greener Future initiatives. The Highways and EV Reference Groups held informal sessions to monitor progress and performance, including confidential matters relating to the Highways contract – mobilisation of Ringway and demobilisation of Kier contract.

Resources and Performance Select Committee

The Resources and Performance Select Committee (R&PSC) and Budget Task Group have held six meetings since December 2022, including performance monitoring and briefing sessions. The meetings took place on 9 December; 14 December 2022; 13 January; 20 January; 2 February; and 9 February 2023.

During its formal public meetings on 9 December 2022 and 2 February 2023, the Select Committee scrutinised the County Council's Draft Budget for 2023-

24 with Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28; the Strategic Investment Board and forecast update; and the Surrey County Council's Data Strategy Transformation Programme, making recommendations on each item. The Select Committee also attended a training session on Treasury management, and reviewed the Capital Investment and Treasury Management Strategy. On 9 February 2023, the Select Committee arranged an informal facilities management briefing to keep abreast of key developments.

On 14 December, the Select Committee held a performance monitoring session, reviewing key performance indicators to monitor the services under its remit. The Budget Task Group meetings took place on 3 and 7 November 2022, reviewing the financial positions of all directorates, and receiving updates on the diagnostic process, as well as the Special Educational Needs and Disability Safety Valve. A formal report of the activity of the Budget Task Group was presented to the Select Committee at its December meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That Council review the work summarised in this report providing feedback to Scrutiny Chairs as appropriate.
2. That the next scrutiny report to Council will be the annual report.

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Sources/background papers:

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

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