

Appendix 1 – Update from Cllr Taiba Yasseen, Chair of Health Select Commission

As Chair of the Health Select Commission (HSC), I have been invited to provide an update to Council highlighting the activities and achievements over the past six months by Health Select Commission and, with Cllr Clark, by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Health Select Commission

It is important to recognise the commitment and contributions of the sixteen Health Select Commission members, who have all brought their own experiences and insight to help achieve better health outcomes for local people. Recent events within the Health and Care sector nationally and locally have made the role of Health Scrutiny even more relevant and important than ever. Health Select Commission works with key partners like hospital trusts and wider regional partners to provide critical discourse analysis to improve policies and delivery of health and social care services.

Recommendations from scrutiny seek to make health and social care services fair, safe, and accessible for everyone at the point of need. Health Select Commission has achieved significant outcomes in the last six months in line with agreed priorities to reduce health inequalities by improving access to services and promoting prevention and early intervention approaches. The Health Select Commission seeks as part of its role to monitor changes in how health and social care services are delivered locally.

The organisation and commissioning of health services has undergone a major transformation this year. The Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) governed by the ICB (Integrated Care Board) was formed on 1 July 2022, replacing the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which previously was the contracting arm of the NHS that commissioned key partners to provide health and social care services in Rotherham. Since then, Health Select Commission has monitored the relationship and collaborative processes between Council services and the newly formed ICP/ICB, also known as NHS South Yorkshire. Throughout the process, a key aim has been to ensure that Rotherham receives due regard in the formation and decision-making of the ICB and in the allocation of resources. The strategic priorities of the ICB are still in development, and HSC has been invited to provide continued examination and review. HSC will continue to appraise progress of the ICB in delivering on its priorities for Rotherham Communities.

The long-awaited decision by the Central Government regarding funding for social care has been postponed until 2025. This delay spells continued challenges for service delivery locally, especially in building a resilient and effective workforce in social care, and ensuring ready, safe discharge paths from hospitals which are crucial to releasing hospital capacity. As part of its review findings on COVID-19 Care Home Safety, HSC will make recommendations to Cabinet regarding workforce challenges in social care in January. Furthermore, the Commission will examine intermediate care and reablement in March. As the local social care contract nears its end, HSC will ask the Service to reflect on learning from the evolution of service delivery during the current contract, including the transformation of learning disability provision.

Amid this changing landscape, HSC continues its focus on efforts by all partners to reduce health inequalities by improving access to services and promoting prevention and early intervention.

Improving Access to Services

- In June 2022, HSC received a formal response from Cabinet on recommendations made as part of a spotlight review on Rotherham Community Hub. The spotlight focussed on the impact of the befriending service. The result has been a continuation of the befriending service by Rotherham Federation of Communities after the cessation of Outbreak Management Funds. The Service has reached through to all communities in an inclusive way, improving access to services. People who are vulnerable have responded profoundly to the efforts of their caring neighbours and peers.
- A consideration of Access to Dental Care delivered several recommendations to NHS England to strengthen links with schools and partnerships. HSC will continue to monitor reforms in dental care provision including regional flexible commissioning by NHS England.
- HSC received an annual update from The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust (TRFT) in September 2022, and a further update was requested in January on steps taken to respond to pressures in the emergency department.
- Adult Mental Health Services were recommended to clear waiting lists in the memory clinic and formulation clinic to improve access to these services. Subsequently, an ambitious programme for working through these waiting lists has been implemented. Health Select Commission members know that achieving this requires diverting resources from elsewhere, so this will be monitored in the next update in January.
- Adult Mental Health Services were also recommended to improve access to their online resources by making them more accessible and reader friendly. This has prompted work to develop more inclusive resources by collaborating with Rotherham Speak Up for Autism.
- An update on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) received recommendations to ensure clear, accessible information about the offer provided to parents and carers of young people with special educational needs and disabilities.
- HSC will be making recommendations to Cabinet in March following a spotlight on Access to Primary Care.

Promoting Prevention and Early Intervention

- HSC will make recommendations to Cabinet in January from a spotlight review on COVID-19 Care Home Safety. The review sought assurances that learning from the pandemic had been captured and that care home residents and workers are now safer. The review found that although robust procedures were in place, a resilient workforce is needed to optimise care home safety for residents and workers.
- An examination of Suicide Prevention services found interventions providing bereavement support for families to be highly effective. However, early intervention work was identified as an area where improved understanding could help reduce the risk of suicide.

- On the Carers Strategy and Young Carers Strategy, HSC members recommended improving co-production and access to respite as the best way to support Carers to continue their crucial prevention work through the “Borough that Cares.”
- In June 2022, HSC received a formal response from Cabinet to recommendations from the spotlight review on Support for Young Carers. The result was the formation of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Service, and greater collaboration with local colleges and universities to help ensure young carers attain their educational goals. A holistic plan is being developed to support the transition from young carer to adult carer.
- HSC sought assurances that Services delivering diagnostic screenings for cancers had eliminated their backlog and were back to normal after the pandemic. Recommendations promoted effective communications/messaging around screening and the importance of understanding the cohorts.
- Medicine Management received consideration for its role in admission avoidance and to receive assurances on local pharmaceutical supply chains. Recommendations prompted an update of Rotherham’s Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment which is publicly available.
- In early 2023, the Commission is undertaking a Review of Oral Health. The review will span all ages with the aim of identifying areas where improvements can be made to address and prevent poor oral health.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

As Chair of Health Select Commission, I am also a Member of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) which is the scrutiny committee responsible for budget and financial scrutiny as well as monitoring performance against key strategic plans. OSMB considers key emerging issues that are of importance to the community. The Board also performs the important function of pre-decision scrutiny of a selection of decisions of Cabinet before these are agreed. In the past six months, OSMB has considered several key pre-decision items, as well as items meriting monitoring and review. A summary of its work programme is provided at Appendix 2.

Pre-decision Scrutiny

As can be seen, the pre-decision activity ranges from consideration of progress on the delivery of the Council Plan to implementation of specific initiatives such as the Household Support Fund. Arising from its scrutiny of the Council Plan (and other reports such as the Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan), the Board has agreed to undertake a spotlight review of engagement and consultation. Other issues examined include measures to improve Foster Carers’ retention with a recommendation that an annual report is submitted to monitor outcomes. Progress to deliver the flagship Forge Island development was also considered, including scrutiny of treasury management approaches and risk mitigation. Unsurprisingly given the financial volatility over the previous 12 months, the Board has received frequent updates on the budget situation and any potential impact on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. This work will continue as OSMB scrutinises Cabinet’s future budget proposals in the forthcoming weeks.

Review Work

In respect of its review activity, following consideration of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report, the Board also agreed to undertake a spotlight review of the effectiveness of partnership arrangements to address modern slavery in Rotherham. By its very nature, this was an overview rather than in-depth analysis of the issues. Nonetheless, OSMB members had the opportunity to discuss with partners the key challenges faced, explore what was working well and exchange ideas on areas for improvement. Recommendations will be submitted to Cabinet shortly.

Work is also underway by OSMB to examine the cost-of-living crisis as part of its work programme activity. OSMB members met with officers in late 2022 to understand the work the Council and its partners were co-ordinating or undertaking to support people facing hardship. OSMB will undertake a series of focussed scrutiny spotlight reviews, visits and meetings, with activity spread out over the year.

Council has referred several items to OSMB over the course of the municipal year, most recently a motion on bye-laws. Work has started to consider how this can be addressed alongside other priorities identified by the Board.

Equalities and Inclusion

In my role as Chair of HSC and as a member of OSMB, I have seen how scrutiny can bring equalities and inclusion into focus across the work of the Council and partners, to ensure accountability. This is especially important in consultations and engagement with BAME communities, disabled people and other equality groups within Rotherham. I note the progress made by the RotherFed befriending service to tackle health inequalities and prevent loneliness. This is an example of how an inclusive approach can improve services and create opportunities for more people. In an upcoming spotlight, OSMB will be considering how consultation and engagement efforts could be more inclusive and better reflect the diverse perspectives of Rotherham residents. I continue to encourage Rotherham's decision makers to be bold and unwavering in their willingness to innovate and work with local communities to develop solutions to the challenges we face. I look forward to pursuing and progressing scrutiny and facilitating the involvement of local communities in the outcomes from scrutiny in 2023.

Councillor Taiba Yasseen