

**Wiltshire Council**

**Health Select Committee**

**5 September 2023**

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**Item 5 – Public Participation**

**From Chris Caswill**

**Question (Q23-01):**

For the benefit of the public, the media and members of the Committee, would you confirm that this Committee has its own specific Terms of Reference, titled 'Purpose', which include the following:

*The Health Select Committee will:*

- make reports and recommendations to the Full Council and the Cabinet or relevant Cabinet member and any relevant partner in connection with the discharge of any functions;*
- review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire, including any significant change to service provision and those jointly commissioned or delivered by the council;*
- require the attendance of an officer of a local NHS body to answer questions and provide explanations about the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire;*
- require a local NHS body to provide information about the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire, subject to the exemptions outlined in the Health and Social Care Act 2001;*
- report to the secretary of state for health:*
  - (i) where the committee is concerned that consultation on substantial variation or development of services has been inadequate;*
  - (ii) where the committee considers that the proposal is not in the interests of the local health service;*
- maintain an overview of the council's responsibilities and role in relation to health and wellbeing.*

And would you agree that these extensive powers to act on health and social care issues on behalf of the people of Wiltshire could be used more often and effectively than they have been in recent years?

**Response:**

**It is confirmed that the terms of reference quoted are as set out in Wiltshire Council's Constitution – Part 2 – Articles of the Constitution.**

**The Health Select Committee carries out an extensive programme of work on behalf of Wiltshire residents. Over the past 12 months it has scrutinised overarching strategies of health and social care including the Integrated Care Strategy and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.**

**It has considered reports and presentations from both the Council and NHS bodies. Examples include:**

**In November 2022, the Committee, following a rapid scrutiny, reviewed the new health overview and scrutiny principles introduced by government to support the development of local integrated care systems.**

**In July 2023, the Committee carried out an inquiry into the demands on urgent care, bringing together partners from the health and social care sector to review the current demands, levels of service and the strategies in place or planned to understand the gaps in local services.**

**The Committee welcomes all suggestions from members of the public regarding issues that would benefit from scrutiny. These can be submitted via the Democratic Services Officer or through the Public Participation at a Committee meeting.**

**Question (Q23-02):**

In the aftermath of the Letby trial and the growing public concern about the accountability of NHS managers, and particularly hospital management, could you set out how you see the Wiltshire Health Select Committee contributing to that public accountability now, and going forward?

**Response:**

**On 18 August 2023, the Government announced an independent inquiry would be taking place to look at the circumstances surrounding this case. The Wiltshire Health Select Committee will follow with interest the progress and findings of the inquiry, including whether it leads to changes to health scrutiny's statutory role as set out in legislation and in the guidance recently updated by the Department of Health and Social Care:**

**[www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-overview-and-scrutiny-committee-principles](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-overview-and-scrutiny-committee-principles)**