

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Municipal
Buildings, Earle Street, Crewe CW1 2BJ

PRESENT

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)
Councillor C Bulman (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, S Corcoran, N Cook, B Drake, J Pearson, H Seddon,
M Sewart, M Simon and D Edwardes

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

David Tesse – Probation Service
Rebecca Lane – Probation Service
Richard Burgess – Cheshire East Place, NHS
Jill Broomhall - Director of Adult Social Care Operations
Sandra Murphy – Head of Service, Adult Safeguarding
Richard Christopherson – Localities Manager, Safer Communities
Katie Small - Democratic Services Manager
Jennifer Ashley - Democratic Services Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lata Anderson.

Councillor David Edwardes attended as a substitute.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no registered public speakers.

5 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Liz Wardlaw and Councillor Carol Bulman be appointed to the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

6 EARLY RELEASE FROM PRISON

The committee received a presentation from Rebecca Lane and Davie Tesse from the Probation Service which provided details of the Prison Early Release Scheme.

Members were informed of the support those released from prison were provided with, along with details of housing offers, employment opportunities and health related services, including mental health support. It was highlighted that pre-release multi agency meetings are held to ensure that an appropriate accommodation plan is in place to ensure no one released is homeless.

It was confirmed that Cheshire East Council works closely with the Probation Service to ensure the impact on services and the community is minimal however, if necessary, Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements are implemented.

RESOLVED:

Members that representatives for their attendance and noted the presentation.

7 CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE NHS PROPOSALS FOR HARMONISED FERTILITY TREATMENT POLICY

The committee received a report from the NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB) that informed the Committee that at the ICB meeting on 29 May 2025, the ICB approved the recommendation that the ICB commences a period of public consultation regarding the proposal to harmonise the existing 10 Fertility Policies in place across the nine Local Authority Place areas in Cheshire and Merseyside into a single policy for Cheshire.

The ICB had a duty to engage with Local Authority Health and Overview Scrutiny Committees (HOSC) to seek confirmation as to whether the HOSC believed the proposals constituted a substantial change to NHS services, known as a Substantial Development of Variation of Services (SDV).

The committee were informed that proposals included changes to:

- the number of NHS funded IVF cycles available to patients, with proposals resulting in no change for people registered with a GP Practice in Cheshire East
- changes to eligibility with regards Body Mass Index and Smoking, with proposals resulting in no change for people registered with a GP Practice in Cheshire East
- changes to definition of childlessness, which would result in a change for patients registered with a GP Practice in Cheshire East
- changes to Intra Uterine Insemination commissioning, which would not be a change to patients registered with a GP Practice in Cheshire East
- wording on the lower and upper ages for fertility treatment, which would result in a change to Cheshire East, however, would bring policy in line with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance.

Following discussions, Councillor Seddon proposed that the proposals did constitute a Substantial Development of Variation of Service. Councillor Pearson seconded the motion. The committee voted 4 for the proposal, 6 against. Therefore the motion was lost.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee AGREED that the proposals did not represent a substantial development or variation to services in relation to Cheshire East and would therefore not be part of further discussions on the matter with the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

In addition, the Committee AGREED that an item be added to the work programme for September relating to the process of presenting any future SDV proposals to the Scrutiny Committee.

8 REVIEW OF PREVENT AND CHANNEL GUIDANCE - STATUTORY DUTIES

The committee received a report on the changing landscape and statutory responsibilities in relation to PREVENT.

The committee were updated that Local Authorities, alongside partner agencies listed in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, have a statutory responsibility to comply with the Prevent Duties. The Local Authority is also responsible for delivering the multi-agency Channel Panel Programme.

As a result of missed opportunities prior to recent events, such as the Southport killings in 2024 and the death of David Ames MP in 2021, significant changes had been made to the Channel Panel and PREVENT, and local strategies and policies had been updated to reflect national changes.

It was noted that Cheshire East Council was subject to an annual assessment by the Home Office on their PREVENT duties, and Cheshire East had exceeded or met every assessment level.

Cheshire East Council was to submit a funding bid to Home Office to allow for the provision of training in schools and colleges to make students more aware of the risks of accessing extreme content online, and would extend this training to older individuals with learning difficulties in higher educational establishments.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the report and presentation be noted.

9 DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW

The committee received a Domestic Homicide Review report that had been commissioned by the Safer Cheshire East Partnership in 2021 following the murder and suicide of Mr and Mrs S.

Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to establish what lessons could be learnt from the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard victims.

Although the Domestic Homicide Review did include areas of good practice and projects that were initiated during and post COVID, the review also made several multi agency recommendations which included:

- Carers identification and recording by all agencies
- Completion of Carers Assessments
- Dementia Awareness Training
- Legal literacy – particularly using the Mental Capacity Act
- Suicide Awareness – including its impact
- Assertive interventions by Professionals, rather than leaving people alone
- Recognition of Domestic Abuse in the context of Dementia or other longer term conditions vs Carer Stress

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report be noted;
- (2) That a letter be sent on behalf of the committee to the Home Office to raise concerns of the length of time it is taking for Home Office Quality Assurance processes to be concluded.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

The committee considered the work programme.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted and the following items be added:

- Safer Cheshire East Partnership Action Plan / Annual Report
- Leighton Hospital Expansion Programme – update relating to implementation of new systems at A & E

In addition, it was agreed that Officers would seek further information relating to the commissioning of services detailed in the Commercial Determinants of Health paper that was recently presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board to determine if it appropriate for the Scrutiny Committee to consider.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.00 pm

Councillor L Wardlaw (Chair)