



Committee and Date

Health Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

19 October 2026

HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2026

**In the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ
10.00 am**

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

Email: ashley.kendrick@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250893

Present

Councillor Bernie Bentick (Chair), Dawn Husemann (Vice-Chair), Neil Bentley, Andy Davis, Susan Eden, Adam Fejfer, Rhys Gratton, Christopher Lemon, Colin Stanford and Beverley Waite

5 Apologies for Absence

No apologies had been received.

6 Disclosable Interests

No declarations were received.

7 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 20 April 2026 and 14 May 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

8 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

9 Members Question Time

There were no members' questions.

10 0-19 Healthy Child Programme

The Committee received an update on the Public Health Nursing Service, including health visiting, school nursing and the Family Nurse Partnership. Members were advised that the service is a statutory public health function funded through the Public Health Grant and provides universal, targeted and specialist support to children, young people and families across Shropshire.

Officers outlined the recommissioning process undertaken following a strategic review and options appraisal. The Committee noted that a Provider Selection Regime assessment

had supported a direct award to Shropshire Community Health Trust, with an 18-month contract awarded due to updated procurement guidance.

During discussion, Members sought further information regarding the independent review undertaken as part of the recommissioning process and questioned whether it could be made available to Scrutiny. Officers explained that the review contained commercially sensitive information and was therefore not published, but agreed to provide a summary of the findings where possible.

Members discussed market engagement and the limited number of organisations capable of delivering a county-wide integrated service. Concerns were raised regarding barriers to market entry, including workforce transfer requirements, funding pressures, rurality and the availability of suitable premises. Members suggested that opportunities to utilise Council assets should be considered as part of the recommissioning process.

Members discussed national and local workforce pressures affecting health visiting and school nursing services. Members requested information on current staffing levels, vacancies and recruitment. Officers advised that the service was fully recruited to its established posts and agreed to provide further information on workforce numbers. Concerns were also raised regarding national challenges in recruiting specialist community public health nurses. The Chair indicated that these concerns would be raised through the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a view to raising the issue nationally.

Members considered how vulnerable children and families are identified and supported, including through developmental reviews, targeted pathways and partnership working. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of early intervention and the role of nurseries, schools and other services in identifying developmental concerns at an early stage.

Discussion also focused on the visibility of school nursing services and schools' understanding of the support available. Officers advised that engagement with schools had recently been undertaken as part of a service review and that feedback from schools and other stakeholders would inform the future recommissioning process.

In response to questions about service performance, officers outlined the national and local indicators used to monitor delivery and outcomes. Members requested greater visibility of performance information, and officers agreed to circulate relevant performance measures and signpost Members to available Public Health Outcomes Framework data.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the future development of the service and emphasised the importance of ensuring that future commissioning arrangements reflect local need and improve outcomes for children and families.

11 Update on the future of Healthwatch

Members received an update from Healthwatch Shropshire on the future of Healthwatch and the potential implications of proposed national legislative changes. Members heard that Healthwatch provides an independent patient voice, information and signposting

services, advocacy support and volunteer-led Enter and View activity across health and social care settings.

Concerns were raised regarding proposals that could result in the loss of Healthwatch's independent role and the potential impact on patient representation, public engagement and scrutiny of health and care services. The Committee heard that Healthwatch and partner organisations had expressed these concerns to Government and were continuing to seek amendments to the legislation.

Members discussed the importance of maintaining an independent mechanism through which residents could raise concerns and influence service improvement. It was noted that the Health and Wellbeing Board had established a working group to consider the implications of the proposals and identify any gaps that could emerge should Healthwatch cease to operate in its current form.

The Committee requested that the outcomes of the Health and Wellbeing Board's deliberations be reported to Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee before any final arrangements are implemented. Members also requested access to information on themes emerging from Healthwatch activity and complaints advocacy work to assist future scrutiny.

12 Update from the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Members noted that discussions had focused on winter planning across the health and care system, community health provision and the performance of West Midlands Ambulance Service.

The Chair highlighted improvements in system-wide winter planning, including greater coordination between partners and additional capacity within the health system. Members had also considered issues relating to vaccination delivery, delayed discharges, infection control and the role of community pharmacy, with requests made for more detailed performance information to support effective scrutiny.

The Committee noted ongoing work to develop a community health strategy, including neighbourhood teams, urgent community response services and district nursing provision. It was reported that further information had been requested on community service modelling and hospital transformation proposals.

Members also noted improvements in ambulance handover times and productivity, whilst recognising the need for continued monitoring. The Joint Committee had requested additional performance data to support future scrutiny.

13 Update from the Health and Wellbeing Board

Members noted that no Health and Wellbeing Board meeting had taken place since the previous meeting of the Committee, as the scheduled meeting had been postponed and the agenda items rolled forward.

The Committee was advised that the next Health and Wellbeing Board meeting would include consideration of neighbourhood health and care arrangements, Healthwatch

updates, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment chapters relating to maternity services and drug and alcohol services, the Better Care Fund year-end position, and the Integrated Care Board's five-year strategic commissioning plan.

During discussion, Members noted ongoing work to consider the future of the independent patient voice following proposed changes affecting Healthwatch and requested that developments be reported back to the Committee. Reference was also made to correspondence received regarding alcohol dependency training and the importance of continued partnership working across health and care services.

14 Work Programme

Members focused on the importance of neighbourhood health and care arrangements, the future development of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, children and young people's mental health, the future of the independent patient voice, and community drug and alcohol services.

Members emphasised the importance of being involved in policy development and commissioning activity at an early stage and requested timely access to information to support effective scrutiny.

Members also highlighted the need for clear action tracking arising from Committee discussions and the importance of ensuring that scrutiny activity is focused on areas where it can add the greatest value.

The Committee agreed that a dedicated work programming session should be held to review priorities, consider capacity and identify the most appropriate scrutiny approach for future topics.

Members also supported joint working with the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on matters relating to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

15 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Monday 19 October 2026.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: