



# Scrutiny

## Annual Report to Council 2018/2019



To be considered at the City Council meeting  
**3 September 2019**



Coventry City Council

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## Foreword by Cllr Tariq Khan

**As outgoing Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, I built on the foundations of previous years to ensure we scrutinised topics which were key priorities for the Council and residents of Coventry.**

Key focuses for the year were looking for the opportunities City of Culture 2021 can provide for Coventry and the challenges associated with housing and homelessness. I thank

my colleagues for their support in developing scrutiny during my tenure as Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee and wish the incoming Scrutiny Chairs and Board Members a successful year.



## Foreword by Cllr Richard Brown

**Scrutiny plays a critical role in providing a balanced check on delegated decisions and will continue to drive that process in 2019/20.**

It can also deliver a more forward thinking contribution to tackling some of the challenges that face our city and communities.

Throughout the next 12 months I will be asking Scrutiny to have a more focussed approach that considers its workload much more from the citizen's perspective in the hope that more members of the public will wish to engage in the process.

One item that will be at the forefront for Scrutiny will be how we tackle the serious challenges posed to all of us by climate change. Some great work has already been done on this in Coventry but much more is needed and I hope that members of the public, partner organisations and stakeholders will come together to offer support

# Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

## Remit

In 2018-19 the Committee was responsible for overseeing the Scrutiny function (including call-ins), considering cross-cutting issues and for the portfolios of the Cabinet Member - Policy and Leadership and the Cabinet Member - Policing and Equalities. It was also designated the Board for oversight of crime and community safety.

## Membership

Councillors N Akhtar, Andrews, Clifford (Deputy Chair), Gannon, T Khan (Chair), McNicholas, M Mutton and R Singh

## Activities and outcomes

At the start of the year, Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee (SCRUCO) held a meeting for all Scrutiny Members to hear about the priority issues for the organisation. This included presentations from the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executives (People) and (Place). This enabled Members to identify the priorities for the work programmes of all six scrutiny Boards. Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee reviewed the suggestions received to ensure a balanced scrutiny work programme.

The Committee scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the following. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink on page 6.

## City of Culture

■ **The City of Culture is an exciting opportunity for Coventry, and SCRUCO have received updates throughout the year on the preparations for 2021, with a particular focus on community engagement, governance and risk management arrangements.**

Members scrutinised preparations for the UK City of Culture 2021 and raised a number of issues including: the financial implications for the City Council including the legacy spend; capacity to deliver within the Trust as well as for Partners providing support; the mechanisms for engaging

local communities; how the economic impact would be measured; ensuring the city's industrial and social heritage was highlighted as part of the City of Culture programme; the importance of public health and public safety and use of social media for promotion whilst being mindful of digital exclusion.

Members made a number of recommendations including that there be a legacy from 2021 in each ward, that the draft City narrative be shared when ready and that a further update be received in September 2019.



## Housing and Homelessness

Housing and Homelessness is a significant issue for the City, it's residents and the Council. The Committee considered the Draft Housing and Homeless Strategy 2019 - 2024 Consultation in December 2018. To help SCRUCO with their response to the consultation, representatives from West Midlands Housing Group, West Midlands Combined Authority and the Experts by Experience panel were present at the meeting. The Experts by

Experience group presented feedback on the consultation which was based on their experiences of using housing and homelessness services.

The Committee raised a number of issues for inclusion in the consultation response including: the current support for tenants with multiple complex needs and how would this be improved; levels of support around Housing First and potential impact on the

communities; support for tenants with mental health issues; promotion of the consultation and draft strategy to increase the number of respondents.

Their comments were incorporated in the Cabinet Report when the final Housing and Homelessness Strategy was agreed on the 12th March 2019. The associated action plan will be subject to scrutiny during 2019/20.

## Modernising Domestic Abuse Services and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

■ **Members considered this issue at two of their meetings this year. At their meeting in September 2018, the Committee received the proposals for the commissioning of the contracts for domestic abuse services and sexual violence and abuse services.**

SCRUCO heard that Coventry's Domestic Abuse Strategy 2018–2023 incorporated the city's approach to addressing domestic abuse, including honour-based violence and forced marriage. The commissioning approach was informed by the strategy. Following this meeting, the Committee requested that another report be brought back to a future meeting with details of the outcomes of the commissioning process.

This follow up report was considered in April 2019 and Members heard details about the four commissioning lots and

the organisations that had been awarded them. The lots covered are: Victim and Child Services for information, advice and community-based support; Victim Supported Accommodation; Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service; and Sexual Violence Support Service.

Members were pleased to hear about the details of the contract monitoring, including break clauses. There will also be 2 yearly reviews with a service improvement focus where improvement plans will coincide with reviews. Members asked about training for professionals

and links with schools. Members were particularly pleased to hear about the work being done to support GPs to make referrals and the successful IRIS (Increasing Referrals to Improve Safety), as engagement with health partners had been a previous concern. Members requested that a letter be written to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Clinical Commissioning Group to encourage the allocation of more resources to support an extension to the IRIS project to include all GPs. Members also recommended that Domestic Violence and Abuse training at level 1 be mandatory for all elected members.

## Influencing Policy

■ One of scrutiny's strongest roles is supporting the development Council policy. SCRUCO have done that this year by receiving formal consultation items and have been able to help shape policy and service proposals.

### ***Additional and Selective Licensing Consultation***

The Committee considered consultations on both the proposed Additional and Selective Licensing schemes for the city.

The Committee were provided with the Cabinet Reports from 8 January 2019 setting out proposals for Selective and Additional Licensing Schemes in Coventry, as well as detailed presentations on both schemes.

Members discussed the criteria for both schemes and asked questions about the details including the fee structure, enforcement, how tenants will be informed of their rights and responsibilities and any exemptions for fees.

Members identified several recommendations for the Cabinet Member which were considered as part of the consultation to be included in final schemes. The consultations closed in March and

it is planned that the final report will go to Cabinet early next municipal year.

### ***Other policy development***

Other policies that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee have been involved in are the Hate Crime Strategy, the St. Michael's Public Space Protection Order and the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.



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# Finance and Corporate Services

## Remit

In 2018-19, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member - Strategic Finance and Resources.

## Membership

Councillors Dr Auluck, Bains, Brown, Harvard, Dr Sandhu, Sawdon, R. Singh (Chair), Taylor and Thay.

## Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the following examples. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink below.

## Finance

■ The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board considered a number of items on finance throughout the year. Some have addressed strategic financial issues, such as the 2019-2022 Medium Term Financial Strategy and Council Reserves, whilst others have been on more specific areas including Income Generation and the responses to Local Government Consultations on Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Retention.

The Board recognised that it was still working in a time of unprecedented financial pressure, and uncertainty, leading to further significant reductions in spending levels. Throughout the year it robustly questioned officers to seek assurance that the Council was using its revenue

and capital funding effectively, and generating income in a way which provided the financial foundations required to ensure that Council services are fit for purpose to protect the most vulnerable as well as providing the appropriate level and quality of core services for every citizen

in the city. The Board endorsed the robust wording in the responses to the Government consultations, recognising that the outcomes of these will have a significant impact on the shape of Local Governance Finance for years to come.

## ICT and Digital Strategy

■ The Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board has taken a detailed look into ICT and Digital this year. They have discussed a number of topics to seek assurance that our IT is as resilient and fit for purpose as possible.

Questions have also been asked about working in partnership across the region to share ideas and economies of scale, as well as linking up with existing apps, to avoid reinventing the wheel. The Board also questioned how feedback was sought on the service and how this feedback then informed future practices.

The Board also discussed Digital First which set out long term plans to improve digital across the Council. They scrutinised plans for cyber safety and associated issues including compliance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) regulations and data captured by apps and explored opportunities

in respect of third-party apps and integrating them into the City Council's existing systems and business processes. The Board are endeavouring to ensure that ICT is at the heart of the Council's services to improve experiences for citizen's and efficiencies for the Authority.



## Customer Service Improvement

Finance and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board continued their scrutiny of Customer Service Improvement during this municipal year. The Customer Service Centre has seen a

significant improvement in its performance and the Board made a number of recommendations to help further improve the service – these recommendations included increased use of social

media and public broadcasting to promote issues with service delivery to reduce the number of calls coming through; and to use existing platforms to improve customer service.



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# Education and Children's Services

## Remit

In 2018-19, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolios of the Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) and the Cabinet Member, (Education and Skills).

## Membership

Councillors **Bigham, Kaur, Kelly, Kershaw, Lepoidevin, Lucas, Male, M Mutton** (Chair) and **Thomas**.

Co-opted members for education matters: **Mrs. S. Hanson** (Church of England), **Ms. Kellie Jones** (Parent Governor) and 3 vacancies (Primary Parent Governors, Roman Catholic Church and Other Faiths).

## Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the following examples. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink below. The Board continued to receive regular progress reports from the Children's Improvement Board.

## Improving Children's Services

■ This year the Board received update reports from the Children's Services Improvement Board.

As a result of positive feedback from Ofsted and the removal of the improvement notice, the Improvement Board reduced the frequency of their meetings. Reports focussed on Workforce, Looked After Children Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and performance data.

As a result of the removal of the improvement notice, the Children's Services Improvement Board will be replaced by an Executive Group to retain political and corporate oversight of Children's Services continuous improvement beyond the current improvement plan. Therefore,

at their meeting on 14 February Members received a final summary of performance for the life of the Improvement Board, including details of progress against the plan.

Members agreed to continue receiving reports on the progress towards a "Good" Children's Services.



## One strategic plan

■ **The Board contributed to the consultation on the Schools One Strategic Plan and the in-principle proposals for increased Special Educational Needs and Disability places at the former Woodlands site.**

They heard about the proposals to increase school places across the city and The Cabinet Member (Education and Skills) reassured the Board regarding the partnership in Coventry between schools, the single plan was a testament to their commitment to work collectively and that they were accountable to each other.

The Council were responsible for delivering something which it had limited control over. Officers recognised that the trust boards and governors were also involved in the memorandum of understanding between schools and there was an investment into expansions.

Members supported the proposals but requested that the consultation include the views of parents and students at Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) schools and the schools that are planning to permanently increase numbers.



## Mental Health in Schools Task and Finish Group

■ **The Task and Finish group was established by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board at the beginning of the municipal year to look at Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) from a school's perspective.**

The topic was chosen as Members reported concerns about the help available to young people and wanted to support Headteachers across the City who were desperate to see a better service to support pupils with SEMH issues, as without it, vulnerable young people are at risk not achieving their full potential.

The Task and Finish Group met with representatives from Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (NHS), who were responsible for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) in Coventry. They heard about the application (an app) which was being rolled out, called the Dimensions Tool. This tool was designed to help

parents and schools identify needs early and signpost to the support available, including self-help for young people who may not yet reach the threshold for CAMHS support.

Members recommended that the existing good practice be recognised and that a sharing event be arranged so all schools can benefit from the excellent practice in the city.

## Library Services

■ The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board held their meeting on the 29 November 2018 at the Central Library.

Members considered an item on Libraries and a presentation which enabled members to view the activities and new developments in libraries via YouTube videos. The Board welcomed several library volunteers who had kindly agreed to contribute to the meeting. The Board also celebrated the success of libraries in the city and in particular new developments such as the introduction of a café and externally funded Visa scheme.

Members expressed concerns regarding the lone working proposal. Officers gave reassurance that since 2017, when lone working had begun, risk assessments were carried out, unions had been consulted and there were safe working procedures in place.

The Scrutiny Board recognised the financial constraints but remained concerned about the compromise to the safety of staff and members of the public. The Board recommended to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, that when making decisions about library service budget reduction, the safety of the public, staff and volunteers, should be prioritised, especially in areas that suffer from anti-social behaviour; to consider carefully the importance of thorough risk assessments when making decisions about lone working and to note that the Board felt



there should not be one person working in a building, particularly in areas with high levels of anti-social behaviour.

The recommendations were considered by the Cabinet Member at his meeting on 17 January 2019 and it was agreed that a review be undertaken 3 months after implementation of the proposals. The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board has requested that they also receive this report for comment.



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# Business, Economy and Enterprise

## Remit

In 2018-9, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolio of the Cabinet Member - Jobs and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member - Public Health and Sport.

## Membership

Councillors Dr Auluck, Birdi, Crookes, Lancaster, McNicholas (Chair), Miks, B Singh, Skipper and Taylor.

## Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the examples below. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink below.

### St Mary's Guildhall and Council House

■ Following several meetings last municipal year on the Guildhall and the Council House, the Board requested progress on recommendations as well as an update on The Wheelhouse.

The Wheelhouse had opened at the Council House as a means of generating an income from otherwise underutilised space within the building.

The Wheelhouse (Coventry) opened in late April 2018, on the ground floor of the Council House and offers dedicated desk spaces,

co-working desk spaces, relaxed working spaces and meeting room spaces. Member received two reports which gave progress against the business plan, including projections and income for the Council.

The Board also considered an item on the use of the Council

House as a Democratic Centre. Members heard that the use of the building had changed since Council staff had moved to Friargate. Members recommended that the Cabinet Member consider a review of the use of the Council House including public access and security.

### Coventry Innovation – visit to WMG

On 5 December, the Board held their meeting at WMG at the University of Warwick. Members had a presentation and tour from Programme Manager Dr Nick Mallinson, as well as a presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive (Place). Members heard about

the innovative developments happening in Coventry and the surrounding areas, included the Battery Development Plant, progress on Very Light Rail, autonomous vehicles, as well as the infrastructure and partnership work required to deliver such large-scale projects.

Members recommended that the presentation be delivered as an all Members briefing so the information could be shared. This was arranged for the 27 February when over 30 Members attended.

## Coventry Canal and Basin

■ The Board were delighted to hear from the Canals and Rivers Trust about work that had been taking place along the five and a half miles of canal in the city.

Recommendations from a task and finish group, which had run the previous municipal year, had been presented to and accepted by Cabinet at their meeting on the 17 July. The purpose of the task and finish group was to identify ways to increase footfall at the basin and along the five and a half miles.

They heard about the Community Roots project which had been running in Coventry and that

there are three phases to the project engaging with communities and volunteers. The main focus has been to clear and tidy the canal and towpaths to increase access for people. The Canals and Rivers Trust have become a well-being focussed organisation and want to increase the use of the canal and canal basin to improve the health and well-being of communities along the canal side.

Members welcomed the progress made but recognised that this was an on-going project. Members requested that the Council prioritise tenants at the Canal Basin that will enhance the canal usage when letting the business space and that the Canals and Rivers Trust work to organise a Friends of group to bring together partners and communities to deliver improvements.



## Policy Development

The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board have also had opportunity to comment on proposed Council policy, including the Air Quality Strategy and the pilot for 5G as part of the Digital Strategy.



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# Communities and Neighbourhoods

## Remit

In 2018-19, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of the portfolios of the Cabinet Member - Community Development and the Cabinet Member – City Services including issues relating to energy, the environment, street services, waste management, highways and lighting.

## Membership

Councillors N Akhtar (Chair), Ali, Bailey, T Khan, Dr Sandhu, Sawdon, Sweet, Thay and Walsh.

## Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the following examples. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink below.

### Housing Action Plan

■ The Board considered a Briefing Note which reviewed the Draft Housing and Homelessness Action Plan following the consultation in December 2018, which provided a summary of the current financial position, governance arrangements and key activities planned for the next few months.

The Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2019-24 focusses on the following four main themes: - Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households; New housing development; Improving the use of existing homes and Support for people and communities. The accompanying action plan supports the delivery of these themes.

The Board scrutinised a number of areas within the action plan including; waiting times for housing assessments; ways of bringing unused property into use (for example empty properties); whether a gendered approach was being adopted in relation of homelessness; how data is

collected and how this can be used more effectively in terms of targeting those most in need; current figures in relation to the use of Bed and Breakfast, particularly in relation to families and the need to ensure there are effective Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in place, which are monitored regularly. The Board recommended that they regularly receive updates on relevant KPI's and formal quarterly updates be provided at the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board.



## Fly-tipping and Littering

■ The Board were informed that fly tipping has increased in the City in the last 12 months, in the context of a rising trend nationally.

The increase in fly tipping and the ability of the Council to respond had been exacerbated by the following factors - changes in legislation and the cost of waste disposal and savings made on waste collection, street cleaning and enforcement.

The briefing note outlined measures taken to address the increase including, a restructure of the Street Enforcement Team in February 2018 to better align the service to tackle fly tipping,

the introduction of the Clean Streets Programme, designed to deal with parts of the City where there is poor compliance with the Council's waste collection rules, projects such as "Hot Streets" which involves early intervention and an education initiative with residents in specific areas, the introduction of new surveillance equipment which will be deployed at areas that are frequently fly tipped on and engaging residents with the

aim of recruiting them as Street Champions.

The Board welcomed the actions and programmes in place to tackle fly tipping and expressed their support to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities for a bid for additional resources to support the work of the Street Enforcement Team during Coventry's year as UK City of Culture 2021.

## Road Safety

At their meeting on the 27 March, the Board considered an item on Safer Speed City. Members heard that Coventry City Council is committed to improving safety for all road users and to reducing the number of casualties on our roads. Coventry has developed its road safety priorities in line with the West Midlands Road Safety Policy. It is envisaged that the policy will enhance collaborative working with our road safety

partners, including West Midlands Police and West Midlands Fire Service.

Members heard that there will be a policy and toolkit which will provide important information to elected members and residents. Increasing transparency about how the criteria the Council uses to prioritise road safety interventions which will ensure finite resources are allocated and

focused at locations where the accident reduction potential is the greatest.

Members supported the recommended priorities and requested that the final policy and toolkit comes to scrutiny before it goes to the Cabinet Member.



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# Health and Social Care

## Remit

In 2018-19, the Scrutiny Board was responsible for the scrutiny of health, adult social care and health inequalities, including the portfolio of the Cabinet Member - Adult Services and a significant part of Cabinet Member – Public Health and Sport's portfolio. The Board is also the designated committee under the Health and Social Care Act 2001 for scrutiny of local NHS services.

## Membership

Councillors **Clifford, Gannon** (Chair), **Hetheron** (part year), **Innes** (part year), **Kershaw, Lancaster, Lakha, Mayer, Miks** and **Skinner**.

Co-opted Member: **Mr. D Spurgeon** (Healthwatch)

## Activities and outcomes

The Board scrutinised and sought assurance on a range of issues under its remit including the following examples. Papers from their meetings are available via the weblink below.

## Suicide Prevention

■ The Board considered a report on progress with the Suicide Prevention Strategy. Coventry has adopted a zero suicide goal based on the understanding that suicide was preventable in an overwhelming number of cases.

The Board scrutinised a number of issues including; concerns that there is a crisis in mental health within the health service; Support for the MIND bus which goes out into local communities; opportunities for the identification of individuals at risk of suicide, including social media and the possible use of paid on-line search campaigns to

raise awareness and signposting of where help can be accessed; the potential to work with the Advice Centre teams who are often dealing with people in crisis as well as suggesting Community Champions; the importance of working with local faith groups; The also heard from Alex Cotton about the innovative It Takes Balls to Talk campaign to encourage men to discuss their mental health.

Members made a number of recommendations as a result of the item which included supporting funding bids, the use of Council infrastructure to publicise mental health support services as well as closer working with faith groups and paid search campaigns.



## NHS Prescription Ordering Direct

■ The Board considered twice the development of the NHS Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service, following feedback from patients and Healthwatch regarding the service.

The Board considered twice the development of the NHS Prescription Ordering Direct (POD) service, following feedback from patients and Healthwatch regarding the service. The NHS POD was introduced in Coventry in June 2015 to support a reduction in medication waste. Additional benefits included convenience for patients from reduced visits or telephone calls to their GP surgery and the reduced demand on GP reception staff and GP time. The service was a telephone/ online service which took orders for repeat medication from patients registered with participating GP practices. The repeat orders were transmitted to the GP Practice for approval, electronically, and then sent on to a community

pharmacist of the patient's choice for dispensing. The Board were informed that the service operated 5 days a week managing an average of 1,800 calls a day from patients. Members scrutinised a number of issues at the first meeting, and when dissatisfied with the responses received, invited Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group back to a subsequent meeting to address the Board's concerns.

The main areas for scrutiny included; inconsistent information being provided about the option of electronic requests rather than patients having to rely on making telephone calls to the service; information about the costs of providing the service and

the cost savings for GP surgeries; concerns about language barriers which could result in patients not getting their correct medication; the challenge for patients of having to ring up within a five day window on several occasions if their medicines need to be ordered out of sync and whether there had been an increase in emergency prescriptions as a result of the service. The Board recommended that future developments were co-designed with Healthwatch to ensure the patient voice is heard and for further information to be provided on whether NHS111 calls had increased since the introduction of the POD and on patient satisfaction figures.

## Student Mental Health Task and Finish Group

At their meeting on 25 July 2018, following an item on Suicide Prevention, the Board established a task and finish group looking at the mental health support available to students in the city, as with two major universities, the combined student population is over 58,000 students.

Members invited representatives from partner agencies, including Coventry University, the University of Warwick, Coventry and Warwick Students Unions, the Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG), Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT), GP provision at Warwick University

and Public Health.

Following these meetings a number of key themes were identified: There are no specific mental health services for students from commissioners and providers; within a generic 18-25 NHS cohort it is difficult to identify students; students do have specific mental health needs, often being away from home, their support networks and being under stress to perform well on their course; individual universities provide support, but this is not necessarily joined up with mainstream provision; pathways are not clear and need seamless service to help people

access the right service faster; a need for better co-ordination of stakeholders; there is no data set specifically for students so there needs to be an agreement by organisations that student presentations to services are collected; use of crisis when other services are full, puts additional pressure on these services; issues of continuity of service between home and Coventry, where treatment has started before coming to university.

As a result of these findings, a number of recommendations have been made to partners to help support the mental health needs of students better.

## Coventry and Warwickshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

■ The JHOSC met formally for the first time in March to request a formal update in regard to the Stroke Services review.

The JHOSC met formally for the first time in March to request a formal update in regard to the Stroke Services review. It had been expected that the new service would be operational by now. The JHOSC sought

to understand why there had been difficulties in gaining NHS England assurance for the redesigned service. It was hoped that the formal consultation period would begin in Summer 2019, but CRCCG representatives

explained that the merger of NHS England and NHS Improvement, as well as a wider scope for the review to include prevention as well as treatment at hospital and rehabilitation, meant no guarantees could be given with regards to timescales.

## Visit to UHCW Improvement Hub

■ Members of the Board spent an informative session at UHCW's Improvement Hub, finding out about the work the hospital is doing with the Virginia Mason Institute and how it is using Kaizen methodology to improve services.

Members visiting UHCW's improvement hub with Chief Executive, Andy Hardy



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