

MINUTES of the meeting of the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 April 2013 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Wendy Curtis (Chair), Sue Gray, Joy Redsell (substituting for Councillor Coxshall), Tony Fish and Charlie Key

Kim James

Apologies: Councillors Coxshall and Healy

In attendance: R. Harris – Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning
A. Pike – Director, Essex Area Team of NHS England
J. Hall- Sensory Development Worker, Adult Social Care
W. Smith – Communications Manager, NHS Midlands and East
W. Guy – Head of Commissioning, Thurrock NHS CCG
M. Ansell – Chief Operating Officer, Thurrock NHS CCG
H. Sparks – Healthwatch Thurrock Young Persons' Ambassador
J. Sweeney – Chair, Healthwatch Thurrock
D. Meads- Essex General Manager, East of England Ambulance Service
M. Boulter – Principal Democratic Services Officer

49. MINUTES

The minutes of the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 March 2013 were approved as a correct record.

50. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a) Interests

Councillor Redsell declared an interest in relation to Item 5 by virtue that she was involved in Treetops School and a conflict may arise.

Councillor Fish declared an interest in relation to item 5 by virtue that he was the chair of governors for Beacon Hill School.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

51. EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Manager for Essex attended and although in post for less than three weeks, gave a commitment to attend the Committee when requested and

answer questions as best he could. He confirmed that the service did face challenges with staff and vehicle numbers at certain periods of the day but a turnaround plan had been drafted and would be operational by the end of May. It identified peak times and planned resources around this.

The Members learnt that the new 111 non-emergency number had caused a greater demand on ambulances but as this bedded down, the call for ambulances would decrease. Ambulances were also delayed at hospitals for an average of one hour to hand over patients. It was added that the 111 number had been soft launched and until the whole country had a 111 service in place, there would not be a national advertisement for the service.

The Committee was informed that the service performed well in south Essex and stroke and heart attack patients were attended to and conveyed in the prescribed target times. Those requiring less urgent assistance were of a lesser priority and response times for these patients could vary.

The Committee discussed response times in relation to traveller communities and it was stated that there was no policy for ambulances to be attended by police officers although police presence would be called if there had been previous violence or threat of violence at certain sites.

The General Manager confirmed that the service did not use motorbikes but there were paramedic cars and if injuries were minor, then the car could convey patients to the hospital.

RESOLVED That the Committee thank the general manager for his attendance and look forward to his future attendance when requested.

52. THURROCK AUTISM STRATEGY

The Council were required to have this strategy in place and it focussed on adults as young people were catered for in many other policies. There was a range of autism and autism needs and the strategy identified those services that were available and those services that were still needed. It was estimated that there were 992 people on the autistic spectrum suffering from autism in Thurrock. The majority were males but it was likely that there was a significant under-diagnosis amongst women and that more females would be diagnosed in the future. One of the key aims of the strategy was to raise awareness and training in front line organisations and working with the community.

A number of members welcomed the use of the South Ockendon Community Hub to raise awareness in the community. The Committee also discussed the importance of transition and how young people could be best served when becoming adults. Officers felt the council had a good transition team to aid this process. Officers also felt that the co-ordination of resources would be improved by the awareness raising that would go on.

Officers highlighted, in response to a question, that a gap in current service was to provide local residential placements and they were currently discussing options with neighbouring councils.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

53. PATHOLOGY SERVICES DEVELOPMENT

The proposal of concentrating pathology services outside of Essex into Bedfordshire and elsewhere was to modernise the pathology service and make it more efficient. The change in service was reliant on the support of the CCGs, who had raised concerns about the service, namely that the service would continue in adverse weather conditions, that there was local contingency plans in place and that there would be direct contact with clinicians at the service. There was an associated saving with the change but this was not the primary aim of the project. Officers also highlighted that the Evening Echo had provided a petition against the change of 16,000 signatures, which included Thurrock residents.

During the debate, the Committee clarified that the new service would have to declare all outsourcing. It was also raised that LINKs (now HealthWatch Thurrock) felt they had not been properly consulted in the first instance.

The Committee recognised that the service would be agreed through a consortium of all CCGs in the East of England and that they would need to agree unanimously if the service was to change. Members highlighted that evidence from residents showed that people wanted local blood services.

The Committee was informed that Southend Council was seeing this change as a substantial variation in service and were currently opposing the change.

RESOLVED that the Committee hear further evidence on how resident and CCG concerns are being addressed on this issue and to make a decision whether to oppose the change or not in May 2013.

54 ESSEX STROKE REVIEW – UPDATE

The aim of the review was to improve the entire Stroke pathway and to provide three hyper acute services in Essex, namely Southend, Romford and Chelmsford. These centres would provide 24 hour consultant care. To become a hyper acute centre, there was a requirement for at least 1200 patients per year. Basildon was currently receiving 500-600 patients. Non-hyper acute centres would have and currently had stroke provision but not full time consultant care.

Members understood that the service would be enhanced and that patients suffering strokes would be conveyed to a hyper acute service for the best possible care before going home or being transferred to their local hospital. Members raised concerns that there would be spare bed capacity and they

were assured that this was being facilitated. The project was clinically led and there was a possibility it would cost more money in the long run.

Officers clarified that Basildon Hospital had been keen to provide the hyper acute service but were being cooperative with the current proposals.

Healthwatch representatives highlighted that Basildon did have 24 hour provision for stroke patients and that the proposals needed clear communication so that patients had faith in the changes and that they would be for the benefit of patients. Staff would need to be rotated between Basildon and Southend hospitals to provide experience for the specialists but this would not see a reduction in service at Basildon to what it currently had.

During the discussion it was noted that this item plus the two previous items showed the need to have closer links with the Essex and Southend Scrutiny processes. This could involve a more regular joint meeting and closer liaison between officers. Officers were asked to discuss this further to take this forward.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The report is noted.**
- ii) The Committee liaise with officers to clarify how they would like the consultation to be.**

The meeting was finished at 8.59 pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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or alternatively e-mail mboulter@thurrock.gov.uk**