

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 September 2024 at 7.00 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Neil Speight (Chair), Ngozi Alike, John Cecil, Tony Fish, Lynda Heath, Srikanth Panjala, Elizabeth Rigby and Barry Johnson

Georgina Bonsu, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions  
Kim James, Chief Operating Officer, HealthWatch Thurrock

**Apologies:** Councillors Roy Jones (Vice-Chair) and Cranch- Parent Representative  
Sharon Stoltz- Public Health Director  
Sheila Murphy- Executive Director- Children's Services  
Janet Simon- Assistant Director- Children's Services  
Michele Lucas- Assistant Director- Education and Children's Commissioning  
Ian Wake- Executive Director- Adults and Health

**In attendance:** Carly Parker- Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Lucy Tricker- Overview and Scrutiny Officer

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Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded

### **11. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received for Nicola Cranch, Sharon Stoltz, Ian Wake, Sheila Murphy, Janet Simon, Michele Lucas, Councillor Deborah Arnold, Councillor Jones (Vice Chair) and Portfolio Holder- Councillor Hartstean.

The Chair added that Councillor Hartstean is not a member but sent her apologies. He proceeded to explain that Ian wake was on annual leave and Sharon Stoltz was unwell.

The Chair informed the committee that Councillor Jones has stepped down from the Vice- Chair role, therefore that leaves one vacancy that will be resolved during the next Full Council meeting.

### **12. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25 July 2024 were approved subject to minor amendments.

Including adding the updates around the removal of young people's services like Duke of Edinburgh and the Princes Trust. Funding for these projects were considered as part of budget cuts. The funding is related to staff salaries of and costs to deliver both programmes. The Chair advised the committee that this is part of the political arena and not part of scrutiny that the committee could have any impact on.

The Chair advised of another amendment. Advising the committee that he asked officers to make sure the task and finish group would have the appropriate officer support either in-house or on-site visits. They were advised this would be investigated and the Director of Public Health reassured the Chair the task and finish group would have full support from officers.

### **13. Items of Urgent Business**

The Chair referenced the pre-brief proposal that was sent out prior to the meeting. It proposes an all-committee pre-brief meeting, that would take place an hour before the formal People and Overview and Scrutiny Meeting and last for approximately 45 minutes. It will be trialled at the Place Overview and Scrutiny Meeting in October. The Chair argued he didn't feel it was necessary and members questioned whether the microphones would be accessible for the pre-brief due to the acoustics in the chamber as it won't be recorded. The Chair advised that he pass this on too democratic services and pass on to the Chair of Place Over and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The Chair raised that the Director of Adult Social Services is leaving Thurrock Council in November 2024. The Chair expressed his admiration for him and his work. Advising the committee the job is a statutory post and there will be an Interim Director in place. The Council is also planning its long-term management for this department that will run in tandem.

The Home-to-School transport scheme was also raised. The Chair advised the committee that several complaints/issues regarding the scheme had been raised by residents and operating providers. Thurrock has joined an Essex-wide collective for provision of contracts for 'Home to School'. Therefore, this sits with Essex County Council who have contracted out to a third party. The Committee were advised that parents were concerned about the provision for children to get to treetops, and the children are unfamiliar with the new staff. The providers are planning on running a 'get to know you' session, however this won't commence until the beginning of the school term. This has been raised with Children's Services.

The Committee were advised of the great work being carried out by Youth Cabinet -Thurrock Voices they hosted an amazing event and the Chair has asked that they come and provide a presentation People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **14. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

**15. Better Care Together Thurrock Integrated Care Strategy - End of Year Report 2023/24**

The Head of Adult Social Care Transformation and Strategic Commissioning introduced herself to the Committee advising them of her role, and that she also has oversight of forthcoming Care Quality Commission (CQC) Adult Social Care assessments.

She continued by presenting The Better Care Together Thurrock end of year report to the committee and summarised the key points. Advising the committee that Better Care Together Thurrock (BCTT) is the Partnership through which the local (borough-wide) health and care system is being redesigned – ensuring that it is person-led, locally organised where it makes sense to do so and focused on preventing, reducing, and delaying the need for health and care support.

The Committee were advised that they have a focus on early intervention. This has been delivered around Thurrock's four Primary Care Networks (PCN). They are making the most of community assets and providing a holistic and jointed up approach, to reduce the number of times people come through a revolving door and to improve outcomes.

Work has been undertaken to build clinical leadership in Primary Care provision in the Borough, focusing on the development of Integrated Locality Teams (ILTs). This sits in each of the four Primary Care Network geographical areas. The anticipated impact is to improve outcomes for residents by integrating the approach and solutions across primary care, community health, adult social care, children's services, the community and voluntary sector, housing, and mental health.

The Committee were informed of a pilot Community Investment Board, that aims to include key stakeholders from the local community within the area covered by the Board, on how money is spent and identifying priorities which help to decide and influence how money is spent in that area.

In addition to this they were advised that the micro enterprise scheme allows bespoke offers of care and support. This could be anything from gardening, podiatry or dog sitting. With the aim to provide those out of work with employment issues and deliver a broader offer for people requiring care and support. The team are always evaluating and trying to improve the way they work and there is still work to be done.

The approach to integrated support in the home includes blended roles. The first step is enabling care staff to administer insulin. This enables continuity, releases capacity for Health, and reduces the number of people attending to an individual in their home. A new approach to supported accommodation is being considered following a review. This includes enabling some people to live in their own homes with outreach support.

The strategy is overseen by Thurrock Integrated Care Alliance, which is a committee of the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board. The Strategy's implementation plan includes work plans and milestones.

Members questioned whether there were risks around the external marketplace. The Committee were reassured that whilst the care market is fragile, the work taking place aims to provide greater stability around the marketplace. Teams are working closely with providers to ensure they are providing quality care.

Members questioned the make-up of the Community Investment Board and what the membership would look like. They were advised that membership would be considered and evolve as part of developing plans for CIBs. Members wanted further clarity on if it would include representatives from organisations such as Age Concern or people with lived experience. It was confirmed that a wide range of stakeholders would be included, and a combination of skills would be considered for the Board.

*Councillor Hooper (Portfolio Holder) arrived at 19.54.*

Members questioned how GPs are involved in the single point access and who leads this work, does it sit with social care or health. It was confirmed it was split amongst the four localities, and they work closely together in the primary care network. The Head of Adult Social Care Transformation added that GP attendance does not always need clinical intervention, instead it may need a review of the root causes and being linked in with the appropriate service.

Members questioned the performance of new telephony in GP surgeries along with which GPs were involved and what languages were they able to support people with. The Head of Adult Social Care Transformation advised that she did not have the complete figures and would have to report back to the committee. One member was able to confirm knowledge of one GP surgery that was involved 'Purfleet Care Centre'. They trialled the service, and had teething problems, however by May 2024 they were auditing the impact. The Healthwatch Representative commented that there has been an improvement and Healthwatch are getting positive feedback about access their GP surgery and social prescribing. GPs have more awareness of what services are available in the community, and the improvement is visible. The Chair thanks the Healthwatch representative and the champions in all constituents.

**Action: Head of Adult Social Care Transformation to bring the figures around performance of telephony, which GPs are involved in the scheme and the languages used to support patients which English is not the first language.**

The Chair questioned how we cope with Tilbury, East Tilbury and Bulphan who may not see themselves as part of the four localities. The Head of Adult Social Care Transformation advised that it should be relayed to residents that

if they live in these areas and are grouped together then work will reflect what they require and provide services and support that cover their respective communities.

Members argued the budget is projected and wanted confirmation the strategy would be a priority going forward. The Portfolio Holder reassured the committee the strategy is working, they do not want to put this at risk. Currently it is saving money by using the current methods of work. Further news about funding will be a cross party approach.

Recommendations were supported by The Chair and seconded by Councillor Coxshall.

## **16. Children and Young People Referral to Treatment- to follow**

The Committee were provided of an overview of referral to treatment (RTT) waiting times for Children and Young People (CYP) who are receiving their elective care across Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust's (MSEFT) Hospitals and in addition a focus on those CYP patients who reside in Thurrock households.

The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children advised the committee that the 18-week referral to treatment times existed prior to COVID-19. Since COVID-19 all waiting times have gone up significantly, however they aim to achieve a 26-week waiting time by March 2025.

The Committee were advised that across Basildon the numbers are significantly higher, and they are working to drastically reduce this by the end of the month. In efforts to improve this out-patient clinics have been added, with additional operating services on the weekends to get through large volumes of children. They will be able to utilise the whole space on the weekends as there will be no access to adult services during this time. In addition to this they are proposing to redevelop neonatal unit to assess best use of resources.

Members questioned whether the target was a reasonable one and how close the team were to reaching it. The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children advised that they had to reapply for elective process funding which was granted in June 2024. Since August 2024 they have 1000 children already waiting over 52 weeks. Realistically she believes that they are more likely to achieve 40 weeks waiting time by the end of March 2025.

Members questioned whether offers to attend other hospitals had been provided. It was confirmed that this doesn't happen often, and they are still viewed as three separate hospitals. Bromfield Hospital has different capacity, however at this stage they have no option but to offer this, but they are also unsure of what the uptake will be. The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children argued that some families are reluctant to go elsewhere, even if there is a shorter waiting list elsewhere. The Healthwatch representative

added that single mothers in deprived areas may struggle to travel to other areas.

The Portfolio Holder questioned what would make things better and what support was needed from the council. The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children stated that priority needs to be addressed and reimagined. Often Children and adult services are pitted against each other, and priority is needed for children. Prevention and demand are also key. The team often see children with respiratory illnesses. Therefore smoking, housing and pollution need to be addressed to prevent children from developing these health issues.

**Action: The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children to write a briefing note to Portfolio Holder Councillor Hooper about what the council can do to support reducing the waiting times.**

**Action: The Interim Managing Director, Women & Children to return to the committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March to provide an update on the progress.**

## **17. Work Programme**

The Chair went through the work programme and requested a brief update from the chair of the childhood obesity task and finish group.

The committee were advised that an initial meeting has taken place with the Director of Public Health. Four stakeholder meetings have been arranged with youth school representatives.

No members requested anything else be added to the work programme, however the Chair suggested the estates review report that was due in November be brought forward to the next meeting in October. It was also suggested that a briefing regarding the home to school transport scheme be brought to the next meeting.

**The meeting finished at 8.57 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**