

Minutes of the Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Shane Ralph (Chair), Victoria Holloway (Vice-Chair), Tony Fish, Terry Piccolo, Georgette Polley, Sue Sammons and Deborah Huelin

Neil Woodbridge, Chief Executive Officer, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions

Apologies: Kim James, HealthWatch

In attendance: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jo Broadbent (Interim Director of Public Health)
Rahul Chaudhari, Director of Primary Care, Clinical Commissioning Group
Tania Sitch, Partnership Director Adults Health and Social Care
Thurrock North East London Foundation Trust
Christopher Smith, Adults Social Care
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website channel.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 March 2021 were approved.

2. Urgent Items

No urgent items were raised.

3. Declarations of Interests

Neil Woodbridge declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 7 on the agenda that Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions were currently leasing Bell House temporarily off the Council.

4. HealthWatch

In the absence of Kim James no HealthWatch items were raised.

5. COVID Update Presentation

Jo Broadbent provided Members with an update on the latest Thurrock COVID-19 Data and Intelligence:

- Current Picture, Rate per 100K Population and Positivity – Thurrock had currently one of the lowest rates per 100K population in comparison with their neighbouring local authorities and not just amongst those neighbouring authorities but in the country where Thurrock was rated 136 out of 149 lowest rates per 100K population. The positivity rate was low and had been very low for some time but had increased slightly in the past couple of weeks with rates around 25 per 100K and was very low when compared to rates back in January 2021.
- Current Picture, Positive Tests by Age Band – That the majority of cases were within the under 40s, either in the cohort who had not been vaccinated or who had only received one vaccination. That around half of the cases were the Delta variant with the other half being the Alpha variant. That in Thurrock the Delta rates had not increased as sharply as it had in other areas in the country.
- BTUH Bed Occupancy – There had been a period where there were no COVID patients in the hospital and there were now still very low numbers.
- Geographical Distribution – The LSOA data showed no infections at all and those that had were between 1 and 9 cases in each unique postcode. Three schools had a live outbreak and one with a single case, no cases reported in care homes. This was really positive and compared favourably when compared to figures from a couple of months ago.
- Current Picture – Vaccinations by Priority Group – That over 90% of over 70s had received two doses of the vaccination, the over 50s now up to 69% having had two doses and this was now being rolled out to over 21s. NHS Colleagues are planning a weekend of vaccinations to get a real push to get as many vaccinations given as possible. There had been a high uptake of vaccinations for those clinical extremely vulnerable patients with 75% of our NHS and social care staff having had two doses of the vaccine.
- Other Cohorts – Continuing work with marginalised groups and three council traveller sites will be visited this week by the mobile vaccination team, work with services was currently being undertaken to support the homeless and asylum seekers. Some analysis of those geographical areas within the borough where the uptake had been lower which the mobile vaccination team will be visiting. Although the mainstream vaccinations were being undertaken through the NHS a lot of targeted work had been undertaken to get the vaccine numbers up.
- Communications – Focus on urging people to continue to follow the current government guidance and to get their vaccination when invited to do so. Planning communications with businesses via the Business Buzz and easy reach social media posts to support vaccine outreach.

Jo Broadbent concluded that:

- Thurrock's overall rate of positive tests had increased slightly in recent weeks but remained towards the lowest levels in the country.
- Test positivity had increased slightly but remained towards the lowest level on record.

- Number of PCR tests taken by Thurrock residents had remained fairly constant.
- LFD tests made up the majority of testing with results for 10,000 tests recorded in the last week.
- Geographic distribution of cases had remained broadly similar in recent days.
- Hospital bed usage due to COVID had remained low with only one COVID bed currently occupied.
- Vaccines continued to be administered in line with COVID vaccination priority groups.
- The Key Priorities were to maximise the vaccine uptake in all age groups and surveillance of the Delta variant and enhanced contact tracing.

Councillor Ralph requested information on the number of wastage or leftover vaccines at this time. Rahul Chaudhari stated that a piece of work had been undertaken about three weeks ago to look at the wastage number of vaccines and the actual wastage was 0.08% in line with the 100,000 dosages delivered so the wastage was very minimal. Some of this wastage could also be attributed in the way that it was delivered but was pleased to announce the numbers were very good.

Councillor Ralph questioned whether more PCR testing would be undertaken in line with the Delta variation now in Thurrock. Jo Broadbent stated there was the capacity of PCR testing in the borough if needed and that the testing sites would remain in situ for the current months.

Councillor Fish stated that in September last year the picture was similar to now in that we were in a pretty good position but in December/January the picture had changed and was horrendous. Even though the trends were going upwards and the number of vaccines administered had increased he questioned whether we could expect a similar situation to happen again. Jo Broadbent agreed with Councillor Fish's comments and stated the vaccination programme had put Thurrock in a very different position and the data available had stated that the protection after two doses was quite high and the delayed final stage of the roadmap would be to roll out the vaccine to another nine million people across England so there would be fewer small cohorts that would be susceptible to the infection going forward.

Councillor Polley questioned whether the current vaccine was adaptable if the Delta variant started to escalate in numbers. Jo Broadbent stated that work was ongoing across the pharmaceutical industry to develop and modify strains of the vaccine and eventually may have a mixture of strains in one vaccine. Councillor Polley continued to thank all the volunteers for their hard work at the vaccination centres.

Neil Woodbridge thanked the CCG colleagues for helping to ensure that disabled people and the most vulnerable groups had been supported but questioned whether there was a strategy in place that focused on those people from the black or minority ethnic community who were still resisting to have the vaccination. Jo Broadbent stated that it was hard to generalise

across different ethnic groups and some analysis had been undertaken to pinpoint those geographical areas and to look at those cohorts on the basis of ethnicity vulnerability to try and reach as many people as possible. There had been some hesitancy about how the vaccine was rapidly developed and information needed to be provided to ensure residents that safety had not been compromised it had been done in a different way. Questions around fertility had been raised and there had also been a lot of misinformation on social media. These concerns could be targeted through social media messaging and through face to face communications to try and understand people's concerns.

6. Adult Social Care - Provider Services Transformation

Ian Wake presented the report that set out the proposals to transform the adult social care provider services division and stressed that these were proposals and that no decisions had been made. This would be a Cabinet decision that had invited overview and scrutiny members to comment on the proposals as part of the normal consultation process. Ian Wake referred Members to the three proposals contained within the report which were (1) Restructure and transform the way that we provide care to create self-directed teams that he firmly believed would improve outcomes for residents and staff (2) Transformation of the day care services and (3) Proposal to decommission the meals on wheels service and action to provide this service through other mechanisms.

Councillor Ralph stated that this was the first time this report had been presented to this committee for members to review and to comment on.

Councillor Ralph welcomed Councillor Huelin, Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities, to the meeting to add any additional comments. Councillor Huelin stated that the report was very positive that would allow people who were receiving care to have much better control and to have a better understanding of individual needs who they could connect to in smaller groups locally. This in turn would connect them to other people and have the ability within their line of management to make changes rather than undertake a full very lengthy referral system. Councillor Huelin stated the day care provision was not disappearing it was being improved and stated the proposals would improve outcomes and health and wellbeing.

Councillor Ralph referred to the options of whether respite would be extending at Cromwell Road to which Ian Wake stated that by offering bespoke acceptable services and by rationalising the care on one site, money could be saved on buildings and more comprehensive services in terms of day care and respite would be available.

Councillor Ralph questioned the maximum distances that service users would have to travel to which Dawn Shepherd referred Councillor Ralph to Appendix 2 of the report that detailed the mileages in more detail. That an impact assessment would be undertaken on every service user to look at their distance of travel to Cromwell Road.

Councillor Ralph asked for reassurance again that no services were closing down and the services were being relocated to a better location which would offer extended hours to which Ian Wake agreed.

Councillor Ralph noted that this industry was low paid, low valued and had a high turnaround of staff and questioned what could be done.

Councillor Holloway was upset to read the meals on wheels service was a nice to have service rather than an essential one, and continued to state that this was more than just a delivery service. Councillor Holloway was concerned that no proper consultation had been undertaken and there needed to be one.

Councillor Holloway questioned what “much higher” meant in paragraph 3.6.3 of the report; paragraph 5.1 referred to the consultation and questioned what consideration had been given to the other 34% service users who did not have alternative options should the service no longer be available. Councillor Holloway stated this report focused on the elderly and the Council needed to make sure they were all ok. Councillor Holloway also stated there appeared to be no service in place yet to replace it and although she understood we had to be efficient but something needed to be in place and not just waiting for a service to pop up; paragraph 3.7.2 referred to the savings of £554,000 and questioned whether this would be reinvested back into the service to make sure that overall adult social care had that investment to provide the best services for those people that need it. Ian Wake replied in order to Councillor Holloway questions by stating that once all the £4 incomes had been tallied up alongside the cost to run the service, the cost to the Council would be £190K. In regards to timings this would be a fair challenge as development on those services could not start before a decision had been made to close this and that conversations had taken place with the service manager to look at the wider range of alternatives that were available. In regards to the final question the budget for next year would go to Cabinet for approval and could not give any guarantee that the £554,000 would go back to adult social care.

In relation to Councillor Holloway question, Councillor Huelin stated that calculation would be £190,000 divided by the 29 service users which totalled just under a £18 per meal.

Councillor Ralph referred to another proposal which had set up a micro enterprise to provide an alternative option and questioned how much they would be charging per meal to which Ian Wake stated the programme had not been set up yet and therefore this figure could not be calculated at this time.

Councillor Holloway stated that the calculation provided by Councillor Huelin did not present value for the service that was being provided and recognised that the service should be run in a better way. Her concern was the reduction of the service not supporting the user and there being no plans in place and that there was no safety net to ensure there would be a service for those people who would be impacted. Councillor Holloway recommended the service should not be cut until a consultation had taken place and a

replacement service was in place for those that needed it, this will ensure that no one would be forgotten or missed.

Councillor Ralph agreed that it was part of this committee to scrutiny and comment on the report before it goes to Cabinet and was also concerned that in theory those 29 service users could be left without a meal.

Councillor Fish stated the report referred to independence which he understood as giving people the choice and control over what happened to them, the support they actually needed and would like to see the service developed alongside service users. Ian Wake stated that the Council, under the Care Act 2014, had a legal duty to ensure every service user had a package of care and support and reassured Members that every service user would be assessed to ensure the correct care package was in place.

Councillor Polley agreed that micro enterprises could offer more specific meals to individuals and could offer a self-centred approach that would focus on the elderly residents and agreed that there needed to be a safety net with a service in place before services were closed. Councillor Polley had concerns on the quality of the consultation and questioned how day care would work at Cromwell Road when it was opened to all. Councillor Polley welcomed the report which had lots of positives as a starting point but conversations should commence that would offer the potentials to service user care and more people friendly services.

Councillor Piccolo questioned whether transport would be available to Cromwell Road as required; if a service user cannot source a meal would this be provided at Cromwell Road until something was in place and agreed that small teams were a good system with massive benefits for both the service user and carers. Ian Wake stated that residents would be offered much more choice of how service users got to Cromwell Road with a bespoke service and an available constant flow of traffic. Councillor Piccolo questioned whether the transport service would cope with the influx of service users to Cromwell Road to which Dawn Shepherd stated there would be an increase in drivers with 85% of service users arriving by mini bus.

Councillor Ralph questioned how those service users would receive a meal if they were not able to use the mini bus to get to Cromwell Road to which Dawn Shepherd stated that assessments would be carried out on all service users to identify those and put safety nets in place to ensure that every service user received a meal.

Neil Woodbridge stated that in regards to meals on wheels he reassured members that in the community there were solutions available for individuals that received meals from family members, from a pub or local café and these solutions could be worked on through the health and wellbeing teams. In regards to the day care centre Neil Woodbridge stated it could be seen as a consolidation rather than a closure and that transport required some careful solutions put in place. In regards to the consultation his comments were that the voice of the elderly and also carers, especially family carers, should be

heard. Also Neil Woodbridge asked how future proof were the proposals in regards to future capacity in terms of population in Thurrock with more vulnerable people who may need this service. Ian Wake stated that was a challenge with the growing elderly population and that a range and bespoke provision was required to best future proof provisions rather than having a single model and trying to expand as one size provision would not suit all.

Councillor Ralph questioned whether Cromwell Road had the opportunity for expansion to which Dawn Shepherd stated the plan would be to change the rooms currently used by staff and for storage into rooms for activities which would offer a menu of activities such as arts, crafts and cooking. Residents would have a choice of what activities they would like to do either as a group or individually. That there was also an outside area with the opportunity to undertaken garden activities.

Councillor Sammons commented that the journey for some residents was part of their day and encouraged the interaction on board. Councillor Sammons stated the opportunity to offer varied entertainment activities was good but support must be encouraged around meal times but concluded that the report had some very positive and promising recommendations.

Councillor Holloway suggested the recommendation be amended to reflect the comments made this evening and that a consultation be undertaken. Following some discussion on the recommendation it was agreed that democratic services would take this away and look at the recommendation wording and send to Members for approval.

Councillor Ralph referred Members to the three proposals contained within the agenda and agreed and commended the work undertaken under proposal one to restructure and transform the way that we provide care to create self-directed teams that he firmly believed would improve outcomes for residents and staff; ensure that the transportation had to be the right transport and the most suitable transport in regards to the second proposal on transformation of the day care services. In regards to third proposal to decommission the meals on wheels service and action to provide this service through other mechanisms it was agreed that a new recommendation be added as shown below as recommendation 2.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Health and Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee commented on the proposals to transform and improve Provider Services set out in this paper.**
- 2. That the service should not be cut until a consultation has been held and individual plans for those currently receiving the meals on wheels service are designed in a collaborative approach with service users, service user families and their carers.**

Councillor Huelin left the Council Chamber at 8.33pm.

7. Orsett Hospital and the Integrated Medical Centres - Update Report

The Council and NHS partners had been working together to develop a new model of care that would provide integrated health and social care services, delivered from modern, high quality premises and able to attract the best staff. Four new Integrated Medical Centres would locate the new model of integrated care in the heart of the communities they served, bringing a greater range of health, social care and third sector services under one roof, and improving and simplifying care pathways for residents and patients. That despite the impact of the pandemic, particularly on acute services provided by Basildon University Hospital, good progress had been made with planning, financing and service transformation for all four Integrated Medical Centres, and dedicated programme management continued in place. Christopher Smith provided members with a very detailed update on the progress of the Integrated Medical Centre programme and the proposed closure of Orsett Hospital.

Councillor Ralph thanked officers for the report and although understood that Orsett Hospital was due to close in 2025 he questioned and asked for reassurance that Orsett Hospital would not close if these target dates were extended past the 2025 date.

Councillor Ralph referred to the 2000 patient spaces at the Corringham Integrated Medical Centre and questioned whether this was a completely new surgery being built or was this existing doctors in that area taking over those spaces.

Councillor Polley also asked the same question for the Purfleet Integrated Medical Centre.

Rahul Chaudhari stated that in response to the Corringham Integrated Medical Centre it would be existing doctor surgeries from Stanford Le Hope that would be taking up those spaces. That consultation was being undertaken with GP partners in Corringham and that there were two interested surgeries who would be interested into moving into that new Integrated Medical Centre. Councillor Ralph stated that it was rubbish that these were not additional 2000 extra appointments and that Corringham critically needed extra spaces for doctor appointments and would not be fit for purpose in Corringham nor in Purfleet if those were the plans. That extra spaces and new doctors were needed not existing doctors moving into new premises. Ian Wake stated that this was not about buildings it was more about workforce and at the Integrated Care Partnership meeting today a presentation had been given that highlighted the growing pressure on primary care in terms of demand. Ian Wake continued to state that the concept of the Integrated Medical Centres was to create fantastic spaces that would be appealing for new GPs that were coming through training and in the future be able to attract more GPs into Thurrock. That it also had to be recognised that we were in a very competitive market for GPs against a national shortage and

that the recruitment of workforce continued to be an enormous challenge. Ian Wake also stated that primary care was much broader than just GPs and that Rural Chaudhari had undertaken a brilliant piece of work on mixed skills workforce with the use of pharmacies, paramedics and physios and reminded Members this was not just about doctors.

Councillor Ralph stated although he took on board Ian Wake's points he suggested we looked at the number of houses being built in Thurrock if we cannot get the doctors to serve the patients that already live in Thurrock. Councillor Ralph continued to say it was unacceptable that new spaces in the new Integrated Medical Centres were not being generated for new doctors. That it had been promised from the beginning that these were to be new doctor practices.

Councillor Holloway stated that initial ideas were for additional health centres to be built to increase capacity within the primary care field and although understood workforce was an issue but the plan initially was to increase capacity. Councillor Holloway referred to the Purfleet Integrated Medical Centre where it was now understood that the GP practice would actually close when the Integrated Medical Centre opened and this was not the understanding and that nobody believed that this was going to happen. That the Integrated Medical Centres were not just serving the communities that they will be placed in they would be serving borough wide therefore the reassurances of increased capacity in the health system was really concerning. Ian Wake stated that nobody had ever promised additional capacity and what had been stated was that there was a national workforce challenge and that Thurrock was in a competitive market to recruit GPs. That Thurrock would need to create a work space where GPs could manage complex patients, giving them access to a whole range of services which would then become an attractive offer that would put Thurrock in a prime position to attract primary care staff. That nobody could force GPs to work in Thurrock, there was a competitive market and that needed to be recognised.

Councillor Ralph stated his confusion that new GPs would not be attracted to the new Corringham Integrated Medical Centre as there would be no space for them as the existing 2000 patients would have been relocated there.

Councillor Fish referred to the Primary Care Strategy and questioned how the recruitment of GPs for the Integrated Medical Centres was going. Rahul Chaudhari stated the Primary Care Strategy not only looked at recruitment of GPs but also attracted a wider mix of workforce within primary care. That this had been a challenge but some positive moves had been made but the focus had to be to recruit more GPs partners within the batch with a more balanced workforce and a long term commitment within Thurrock.

Councillor Polley stated the recruitment of GPs was not a new issue in Thurrock and her understanding was that the Integrated Medical Centres were to improve services and to free up Basildon Hospital. Councillor Polley stated that for no further provision of new GPs into the Purfleet Integrated Medical Centre was a real concern. Councillor Polley also stated her concern

with this transition as she had been unaware that the new buildings would be for existing GP surgeries. Councillor Polley also questioned the design of the building and whether they were designed for unwell persons and had the emergency services been made aware that they might have to visit these sites. Councillor Polley then asked for some clarification on the meaning of Net Zero Carbon as mentioned in the report. Ian Wake stated he thought Net Zero Carbon was a new requirement of NHS buildings under NHS substantiality rules but since the report had been written the situation had moved on. That no definite answer could be provided as the guidance had not been published and was not expected to be received until December. Ian Wake stated there had been some discussions as to whether the Integrated Medical Centres would need to meet this guidance and following meetings with senior members of NHS England, Thurrock may be offered some dispensation.

Councillor Piccolo referred to the atrocious plans for Grays Integrated Medical Centre to reuse 19 old buildings which would no way near be approaching the net zero carbon efficiency. That Councillor Piccolo could not accept the proposal that 30 to 40 year buildings, spread over one site would be used for the main centre. That the cost of updating the existing buildings would be absolutely atrocious and should not be used for the flag-ship of those medical centres and stated this needed to be undertaken properly with a new building. Councillor Ralph stated that when Members attended the site visit they were shown plans for new buildings. Councillor Holloway stated she believed it was to be a mixture of both new and reused buildings.

Councillor Holloway stated her concerns on the continuing changes to plans which in turn would be difficult and upsetting for residents. Councillor Holloway stated that for new Members this report would have been informative but she had seen this report so many times and did not want to see this report again but wanted to see a more detailed report such as what was happening and what was going into each Integrated Medical Centre.

Members agreed that Ian Wake would provide a regular update in the form of a briefing note with key timescales and milestones following the monthly Programme Board Meeting.

Councillor Holloway suggested that a letter from the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Mayes, as Portfolio Holder for Health be sent to NHS England asking them to formalise the timescales and when decisions would be put into place. Councillor Ralph agreed and that he would liaise with Councillor Mayes. Councillor Polley suggested in the letter it was reinforced the Council's position on the Memorandum of Understanding that the facilities at Orsett Hospital do not close or be removed until all of the Integrated Medical Centres were up, running and staffed.

Neil Woodbridge provided a prospective from the disabled people's point of view on the proposed Integrated Medical Centres. That the longer term medical provision of those using the buildings needed to be looked at; was

having more GPs the answer or could there be another answer such as a different model of working; patients having power to control their own medication; design of the buildings should include changing spaces built into them and that good acoustic and signage would be ideal.

RESOLVED

That the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and noted this report.

8. Work Programme

Councillor Ralph briefed Members on the proposed Scrutiny Review and asked for Members input into selecting a potentially topic to investigate and develop across the year so that it can be used to demonstrate measurable outcomes after a year's work. He also stated that as part of this review we will be looking to reduce the number of "to note" reports and will be introducing a new briefing note system where directors would decide if a full report was needed or simply a briefing note. These briefing notes would be shared with members outside the meeting and members would have the opportunity to ask questions at the meeting which can be done under a new standing agenda item entitled Agreement of Briefing Notes.

Councillor Ralph suggested the topic could focus on Mental Health, face to face doctor appointments, long waiting times with NHS 101. Members agreed to discuss topics outside of the meeting.

Councillor Holloway welcomed the scrutiny review and how this could measure outcomes but identified that HOSC was different to other overview and security committees as reports to note were received from the CCG and NHS England and it was still very important for members to receive them.

Members agreed to add a report on Sexual Violence Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to the work programme.

Members agreed to add a report on Primary Care to the work programme.

The meeting finished at 9.28 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**