

Minutes of the Meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 January 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillors Mark Hooper (Chair), Georgette Polley (Vice-Chair), Tony Fish, Terry Piccolo, Neil Speight and James Thandi

Kim James, Healthwatch Thurrock Representative

In attendance: Ian Wake, Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Nicki Abbott, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Ceri Armstrong, Head of Transformation and Commissioning
Andrea Clement, Assistant Director and Consultant in Public Health
Mark Graver, Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
Alexandra Green, Interim Executive Chief Operating Officer, EPUT
Aleksandra Mekan, NHS Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Lynsey Rowe, Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
Fiona Ryan, Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Paul Scott
Rita Thakaria, Partnership Director Adult Community Health Services
Claire Dixon, Scrutiny Officer
Jenny Shade, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

30. Minutes

The minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

31. Urgent Items

There were no urgent items of business.

32. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest made.

33. HealthWatch

Kim James stated that a specific service had been commissioned for those patients trying to access gender realignment medications. Those patients would still receive their primary care service at their own general practitioners surgery but would go to this specific service for their medication.

34. Updates from Mid and South Essex Trust

An update report was provided to members on operational data from Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust.

Members received an update on phlebotomy service, estate and capital works and an update on the maternity improvement plan following the CQC inspection.

The following points were raised:

Phlebotomy

- The chair stated he was pleased that the waiting times had been reduced from 6 to 8 weeks to 2 to 3 weeks but stated this still seemed a long time for a resident to have to wait. The chair questioned what the plans were to move to this to 1 day or next day appointment.
- The chair questioned why more general practitioners were not carrying out blood testing in local surgeries.
- The chair also questioned how much a general practitioner would be paid to carry out blood tests compared to private contractor.
- The chair questioned why general practitioners were not attracted to undertaking this service.
- Member questioned whether any progress had been made on community and volunteer blood testing service. Member also questioned who had been contacted so far as part of this initiative.
- Member stated with the increase in the borough's population the increased demand for blood testing should not have come as a surprise. The Trust should have been aware and preparation in regard to the planning of additional staff and facilities should have been ongoing.
- Member asked what qualifications were required for someone to be permitted to take blood.
- The chair stated he was pleased with the improvement in waiting times but there was still some way to go.
- The chair asked for this item to remain on the work programme with an update at the March meeting.

Estates and Capital Works

- The chair questioned why there was a maintenance backlog at Orsett Hospital.
- The chair raised his concerns with Basildon and Orsett Hospitals where people in Thurrock mostly attended and questioned what the time was to get those buildings up to a good standard.

- The chair questioned whether the Trust was applying for more government funding to address issues.
- The chair raised his concern on whether this was a lack of government funding or a bad management issue in terms of the local trust managing their estates.
- Member questioned what the Trust had applied for in the last five years, whether this had been successful or not and if not, why had it been refused.
- Member stated he wanted to see local politicians putting the pressure on and getting the results the residents of Thurrock deserved.
- Member referred to the critical repairs at Orsett Hospital and questioned whether the strategy was for Orsett Hospital to fall down before anything was undertaken.
- The chair asked for reassurance that Orsett Hospital building would not get in such a state that it would have to close.
- The chair agreed to keep this item on the work programme with an update to be provided at the March committee.
- The chair stated the council would work together with the Trust, apply political pressure to ensure the Trust received fundings.

Maternity

- The chair questioned when the next CQC inspection would take place.
- The chair commented that it was good to hear improvements were being made and moving in the right direction.
- Member also commented on the good progress being made and members had acknowledged that.
- Healthwatch stated that a piece of work was being undertaken with service users that had used the maternity unit to gauge experiences and thoughts, this piece of work also included Dads. A report would be shared with members.
- Member referred to a safeguarding matter and the chair agreed a report could have been brought to committee for discussion but was keen that lessons had been learnt, actions had been undertaken and to ensure that this did not happen again.
- The chair referred to “cancer care” and questioned what actions had been taken to improve those waiting times and for an update on the current situation.
- Member asked for some clarification on the topics to be discussed at next week’s Public Board meeting.

Action

Action 9 - Update on backlog maintenance, phlebotomy services and community care beds to be provided at the next meeting. The update to include:

- a. Costing information of phlebotomy services provided by GP practices and external providers;

- b. Funding the Trust has applied for in the last five years (with a focus on backlog maintenance), how much funding has been successfully received and the reasons for any funding refusals.
- c. Options / locations of community care beds.

35. EPUT Update - PowerPoint Presentation

A presentation was provided on EPUT to members, this presentation be viewed from the following link:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/public-pack/item-7-eput-presentation-agenda-supplement-for-health-and-wellbeing-overview-and-scrutiny-committee-11/01/2024-18:30>

The following points were raised:

- Members thanked officers for the very informative and well-presented presentation.
- Member stated the report had not mentioned finances and questioned whether there were any significant pressures being faced.
- Member stated there were a lot of good will in Thurrock who would support good causes and urged that members are contacted to help in any way that they could.
- Member referred to self-harming and questioned whether the main focus had been around ligature.
- Member referred to the unbelievable facility of the walk-in centre at Basildon mental health crisis unit.
- Member noted that the joint response ambulance may not be staffed completely as intended and questioned the figures on usage.
- Member questioned whether the joint response ambulance replaced the Police street cars following the change in the Police criteria around responding to mental health calls.
- Member noted that sharing of information was not working well and could be very frustrating for users. Member questioned whether there were any plans for a new system.
- Member asked for reassurance that every practicality had been looked into.
- Member referred to “access to services” and questioned what the details were in regard to the different ways of undertaking this.
- Member also questioned whether the increasing demand was being met.
- Member questioned what challenges would be faced in developing the data for the framework for that period of time, from 2000 to 2023.
- The Chair thanked officers for the presentation and stated he would email EPUT colleagues directly regarding specific questions as these were not covered due to meeting time constraints. **Action 10**

At 8.31pm the Chair paused the meeting to allow guest presenters to leave.

At 8.31pm, Jamie Andrews, Matt Auckburally, James Currell, Paul Scott, Nicki Abbot, Lynsey Rowe and Alex Green left the meeting.

At 8.37pm the meeting reconvened.

Action

Action 10 - Councillor Hooper to email EPUT colleagues directly regarding specific questions as these were not covered due to meeting time constraints.

36. Integrated Health and Wellbeing Centres (IMWCs) and co-location opportunities across Thurrock

A report was provided to members with an update on the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Centres (IMWCs) Programme and the opportunities for co-location in Thurrock. A correction was made to the paper that Corringham IMWC had 97% of the premises utilised with the space being used well.

The following points were raised:

- The chair stated his disappointment of the report and questioned why seven years since the start of the project NHS England had only now confirmed that this was not a workable plan.
- The chair asked for some clarification on the Gray's site as to why the works were not going ahead and questioned whether this was reliant on the sale of other assets.
- The chair was bewildered that there was this plan but no money in place to deliver it.
- The chair assumed and questioned that as there would now not be any centres, Orsett Hospital would remain open to a high standard which had been part of the original plan.
- The chair asked for assurances that Orsett Hospital would remain maintained.
- Member raised her concern that the ICB were being under challenged and that a further closer investigation needed to be undertaken.
- Member raised her concerns that she had no confidence that Orsett Hospital would remain open.
- Member referred to the void primary care space in the section of the report and stated that buildings referred to in Stifford Clays and Ockenden were not fit for purpose.
- Member raised his anger and frustrations but had confidence that Ian Wake's team would succeed in their plans to provide a decent service. The team would have members support and discussed how this would be communicated to communities.
- Member stated the situation now required a public inquiry to take place, to identify what, why and how this had happened and demand answers.
- Member questioned why the Corringham IMWC did not offer evening appointments.
- Member stated his disappointment but had not been surprised and questioned why the portfolio holder was not working to get results.

- Member stated there was no public confidence that these services would be there in the future.
- Member stated the committee should hear from those that had been involved and accountable.
- Member stated that with no money to maintain Orsett Hospital would this close and asked for reassurances that this should not be the case, that Orsett Hospital would maintain in a safe manner until it closed.
- Member stated in hindsight, details and the financial viability should have been carried out before the project started.
- Kim James stated that feedback received was that promises to residents had not been kept, a lot of money had been spent but nothing to show for it, it was clear residents need those services. Also that the blame was being put on the council rather than the NHS. The expectation from residents was that Thurrock residents never got anything.

At 9.20pm, the chair extended standing orders to 10pm.

At 9.21pm, Fiona Ryan left the meeting.

- Member referred to capital funding and questioned how much was received in previous years.
- Member stated that Orsett Hospital was a centre piece of health care in Thurrock and residents did not deserve to be put in a high-risk situation.
- Member stated an apology was due and consideration of NHS England paying compensation.
- Member thanked officers for the work that had been undertaken and appreciated those efforts.
- Member questioned whether the committee had powers to call in witnesses, those NHS staff who had signed off on business cases who needed to be responsive to the committee's questions. It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Char would liaise with the portfolio holder. **Action 12**
- Member raised her concern that those parcels of land set aside for the centres could be lost.
- Member questioned what monies had been ringfenced.
- Member stated all the uncertainties were unfair for staff delivering services at Orsett Hospital.
- Member stated this could have an impact on the fellowship program.
- Member stated this required the help and support from the portfolio holder.

At 9.33pm, Mark Graver left the meeting.

- The chair made a statement to which members commented on.

Actions

Action 11 - Update on the alternative provisions for the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Centres (IMWCs), Orsett Hospital risk stratification and the occupancy and opening hours of the Corringham IMWC to be provided at the next meeting.

Action 12 – The chair and vice chair to liaise with the Cabinet Member for Health, Adults Health and Community regarding holding NHS England to account for its decisions on the IMWC programme (potential call for witnesses at the next meeting, in line with the scrutiny procedures).

37. The Mid and South Essex Primary Care Access Recovery Plan

An update report was provided to members with an overview of the Mid and South Essex ICB Primary Care Access Recovery Plan and specific developments that were being progressed within Thurrock.

The following points were raised:

- The Chair thanked officer for the report.
- Member referred to the proposed Modern General Practice Model and questioned whether the use of the on-line tool would be seen as being problematic and specifically problematic in Thurrock.
- Member raised concerns on communication, how messages were handled and stated it appeared to make it harder for residents to get appointments.
- Member questioned how the new tool would change those previous experiences that residents had encountered in the past.
- Member questioned who decided on what type of appointments should each practice offer.

At 10.00pm, the chair extended standing orders to 10.30pm.

38. Commissioning Report - Domiciliary Care

The report presented outlined the current contracting arrangements for domiciliary care which was due to come to an end on 31 March 2025, the report sought the view of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then subsequently Cabinet, on the proposed recommendation that the procurement of these services commenced in February 2024 for a contract start date of 1 April 2025.

The following points were raised:

- Members agreed this was a good report and thanked officers.
- Member questioned the funding in relation to the “Transfer of Care Hub” which was currently being developed.

RESOLVED

- 1. That HOSC supported the tender of domiciliary care services to meet our statutory requirements under the Care Act (2014). This includes both the core domiciliary care service, reablement and the Out of Hours service.**

2. That HOSC supported the recommendation to delegate the award of the contract to the Executive Director for Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult's Health, Community and Public Protection.

39. Work Programme

Members agreed to discuss the work programme outside of the meeting

The full recording of this meeting can be viewed from the following link:

[Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Thursday 11 January 2024, 6:30pm - Thurrock Council committee meeting webcasts \(public-i.tv\)](#)

The meeting finished at 10.13 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