

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
29 FEBRUARY 2024  
6.30-8.57**



**Present:**

Councillors Pickering (Chair), Barnard, C Eberle, Egglestone, M Forster, Haffegge, McKenzie-Boyle, C Thompson, Watts, Webb, Penfold (Substitute), Virgo (Substitute), Victoria Hill, Parent Governor Representative

**Also Present:**

Councillor Wright, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing

**Also in Attendance:**

Chief Executive, Susan Halliwell

Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration

Kevin Gibbs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Ann Moore: Assistant Director: Democratic and Registration Services

Carol Deans, Executive Director of Communications and Engagement, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Nigel Foster, Executive Director of Finance and Estates, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Emma Boswell, Director for NHS Partnerships and Engagement, Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB)

**44. Minutes of previous meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 11 January 2024 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

Responses to all of the queries and requests for information raised in the meeting had been received or formed part of the agenda.

**45. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

Councillor Christoph Eberle declared a personal interest in Thames Water as the company he worked for meant he carried out projects for Thames Water occasionally.

**46. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**47. Public Participation**

No submissions had been made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

48. **Strategic Health Update - Frimley Park Hospital**

Cllr Wright, Executive Member: Adult Services, Health and Housing and Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration were in attendance. Cllr Wright began by setting out the role of the Council in the rebuild of Frimley Park Hospital and confirmed the Council's support for any improvement in the quality of care for residents of Bracknell Forest Council. It was noted the Deputy Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board was a Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB) Director and Cllr Wright confirmed the Council had been part of the hospital consultation already and would continue to be involved.

Carol Deans, Director of Communications and Engagement at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust, Nigel Foster, Executive Director of Finance and Estates, Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust and Emma Boswell, Director for NHS Partnerships and Engagement at Frimley ICB introduced themselves and gave a presentation about the rebuild of Frimley Park Hospital. A presentation outlining the main issues were contained in a presentation which is attached as a supplement.

A discussion took place which included questions about the cost and timing of building a new hospital; plans for the interim period, utilising partner organisations and strengthening the Sandhurst Military Academy partnership, the environmental impact of an increase in the number of single beds; potential staffing concerns; parking, accessibility, new equipment, and the use of IT.

Carol Deans, Director of Communications and Engagement at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust offered to circulate the document analysing consultation responses to Commissioners following the meeting and thanked officers for their assistance with the project so far.

49. **Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair of the Health and Care O&S Panel introduced a report proposing a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) across Bracknell Forest Council, Surrey County Council and Hampshire County Council. The aim of the JHOSC would be to allow the Council to scrutinise the rebuild of Frimley Park Hospital. It was explained the Council had a legal requirement to set up a JHOSC if a material change to health services, in particularly a geographical change, was set to take place.

Commissioners discussed the number of seats on the JHOSC for Bracknell Forest Council and a proposal was put forward for one Labour and one Conservative representative, taking into account political proportionality. Cllr Egglestone was nominated as the Labour representative. Cllr Virgo was proposed as the Conservative representative.

**RESOLVED** that it be recommended to Council the establishment of a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, jointly with Hampshire County Council and Surrey County Council, to scrutinise the relocation of Frimley Park Hospital. Also, that the JHOSC draft Terms of Reference be agreed, and that Council agrees Cllr Egglestone and Cllr Virgo as the JHOSC representatives.

50. **Council Plan Overview Report**

The Chief Executive presented the Quarter 3 report for of the Council Plan Overview Report. Achievements delivered this quarter included the adoption of the new Council Plan 2024-27; maintaining an 'Outstanding' rating for the Children in Care Service;

submitting a draft proposal for the Safety Valve programme to the Department of Education; running several public consultations (i.e. on the budget); running public events and holding the first meeting of the Climate Change Action Group.

Commissioner's attention was drawn to continued challenges around financial pressures which remained in Quarter 3 and it was noted the Corporate Management Team were putting measures in place to drive down spending. Challenges also remained around recruiting officers to certain roles, specifically social workers, IT officers and building surveyors and engineering roles.

**Questions were as follows:**

Q - Page 60 – What has been done to address the rising number of absences in the workforce attributed to stress?

A – This data was directly related to the People Directorate, with staff in client facing roles, who work in a challenging environment. A number of support mechanisms were open to staff, such as free counselling and return to work support for individuals, which had been taken up by staff.

Q - How were the Council consulting with the public about updates to the SEND service?

A – The Council recently agreed a new SEND Strategy which was out to consultation. The Council was also consulting with the Parent/Carer Forum and listening to the children who used the service.

Q – How was the council supporting Welfare Officers to assist parents in getting children to school?

A – The Council could support and steer, but schools were at the forefront of working with parents regarding children's school attendance.

Q – Does the Council, and its partners, have a strong and resilient staff cohort to meet the 20-week timescale for completing Education, Health and Care Plans?

A – The directorate was in the process of restructuring to maintain permanent staff and there was a need to work closely with partners.

Q – What was the capacity in undertaking consultation on SEND activity?

A – Consultation required capacity and the Council were drawing in other mechanisms, such as IT, to assist with consultation and number of co-production opportunities were being increased.

Q – Page 51, indicator L139 – Why were 50% of maintained schools not good or better?

A – There were two maintained secondary schools in the borough, one of which was the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and was rated inadequate. It was noted the PRU was in the process of closing.

Q – Page 51, indicator L402 - Why was the percentage of care leavers NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) RAG rated red?

A – Out of 26 care leavers considered NEET, 14 were unable to be in education, employment or training due to illness or disability. Three others were due to pregnancy or parenting responsibilities. In the last quarter the number of NEET were 18 and this quarter it was reduced to nine. It was also noted indicator L405 registered 95% of care leavers were in touch with the Council, which was thought to be positive.

Q – Page 65, section 5 under section 'Community Health' How was the Average Happiness Rating gauged?

A – This indicator was drawn from Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, collected nationally and officers were unaware how it was gauged.

Commissioners thanked the Chief Executive and noted it had been a solid performance during Quarter 3.

**RESOLVED** - To request the Executive to consider the following recommendation: 'The Executive to consider how partners ensure there is sufficient capacity and timeliness in keeping to the 20-week timescale for agreeing Education, Health and Care Plans.'

51. **Thames Water Review Report**

The Chair of the Environment and Communities O&S Panel presented the Thames Water Scrutiny Review Report to the O&S Commission. This was followed by the Statutory Scrutiny Officer report which included a revised set of recommendations, proposed by the Executive Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration. The huge amount of work undertaken during the review was acknowledged which was followed by a discussion around the costs associated with some of the Panel review report's recommendations and the Council's responsibilities.

**RESOLVED:** The Environment & Communities Panel to hold a further meeting to consider recommendations in light of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer report.

52. **2023-2027 Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan**

The Statutory Scrutiny Officer presented a report outlining the process for selecting topics for the Overview and Scrutiny Commission Work Programme. It was noted the work programme needed to align to the recently approved Council plan.

It was also noted there had been fewer O&S commission meetings last year, as it was a transition year, but there would be nine O&S Commission meetings in 2024-25. This number of meetings was required in order to allow for panel chair update reports and reviews, budgets consultation and to theme meetings so Commissioners could scrutinise a wide variety of topics.

Only two scrutiny reviews would be conducted simultaneously to make best use of officer support but there was flexibility in the programme to allow for urgent reviews.

A discussion took place about how topics had been selected and the reasons for prioritising one topic over another. Quarterly updates to the Commission on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) would be provided by the Chair of the Education, Skills & Growth O&S Panel Chair and JHOSC quarterly updates would be fed back by the Health and Care O&S Panel Chair.

**RESOLVED:** The O&S Commission agreed the O&S Panels would be commissioned to carry out the following scrutiny reviews:

**Education, Skills and Growth Panel**

Transition  
Skills Gap  
Looked After Children (LAC)

**Health and Care Panel**

Sexual Health  
Access to Brant's Bridge Urgent Care Centre  
Sufficiency and availability of services within the Adult Social Care marketplace.

**Environment and Communities Panel**

Continuation of the Thames Water Scrutiny Review  
Housing

53. **Sexual Health Review Scope**

The Chair of the Health and Care O&S Panel introduced the Sexual Health Review Scope and requested Commissioners agree the review test if sexual health service provision was sufficient to meet the needs of young people in the borough, with a particular focus on how people access services. Following a discussion it was agreed two additional areas to focus on:

- The panel assess value for money for services delivered to residents and compare with other authorities which commission the service, and
- access for the hardest to reach service user group.

**RESOLVED:** Commissioners agreed the Health and Care O&S Panel should undertake the Sexual Health Review as set out in the scope and to incorporate two additional areas of focus as set out above.