

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
29 AUGUST 2024
6.31 - 7.58 PM**



Present:

Councillors Pickering (Chair), Egglestone, M Forster, Frost, Haffegge, McLean (Vice-Chair), Webb and Brown (Substitute), Victoria Hill, Parent Governor Representative

Present Virtually:

Councillor Watts

Also Present:

Councillor Wright, Executive Member Adults and Public Health
Susan Halliwell, Chief Executive
Kevin Gibbs, Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place

Also Present Virtually:

Councillor Cochrane
Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Barnard, C Eberle, Ejaz and McKenzie-Boyle

1. Minutes of previous meeting

The Chair requested the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 23 May 2024 be amended to reflect that Cllr McLean chaired the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 23 May 2024 be approved as a correct record, following the amendment as set out above, and signed by the Chairman.

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

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no indications that members would be participating while under the party whip.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5. Public Participation

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

6. Relocation of Mount Vernon Cancer Centre

Jessamy Bridghorn, Head of Partnerships & Engagement, NHS England (East of England) provided an overview on the relocation of Mount Vernon Cancer Centre (MVCC) in Northwood in Middlesex. The Centre provided non-surgical specialist cancer care for patients across Hertfordshire, North London, Bedfordshire and parts of Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire. The main services it provided were radiotherapy, including brachytherapy and Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapies (SACT) which was mainly chemotherapy and immunotherapy.

It was explained relocation from the current site was necessary due to an ageing building and lack of critical care onsite. An independent review had been carried out and Watford was the only site which met all the criteria required. It was recognised the timelines in the presentation were ambitious and that a formal consultation on the relocation would be launched in November. It was unclear where Capital funding was being obtained for this project as yet. 24 patients were referred from Bracknell Forest GP surgeries in 2023/24 out of a total 12,972 patients that year. The Watford site would be further away from Bracknell than the current site. However, the project considered ways to mitigate issues for patients, such as use of Frimley Park Hospital which already carried out a lot of chemotherapy and improving the use of digital options. An updated presentation was provided and would be published as a supplement.

Hertfordshire County Council were leading on setting up a Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee on behalf of all local authorities approached by NHS England as Hertfordshire accounted for over 5,000 patient referrals per year. Three options were being offered in terms of membership of the JHOSC:

- OPTION A: To be involved in the full joint committee and take the necessary steps to formalise this.
- OPTION B: To attend joint committee meetings as an interested party, participating in discussions affecting the Bracknell Forest population but not undertaking a formal scrutiny role on the joint committee.
- OPTION C: To not participate in the joint committee but to receive formal communication as part of the public consultation along with local authorities with small patient flows to MVCC.

During discussions a number of questions were raised including the frequency and variance over a number of years of Bracknell residents attending MVCC; modelling of future patient numbers; increased transport costs for residents, how many other authorities had been approached and consultation with staff and patients. Jessamy Bridghorn, Head of Partnerships & Engagement, NHS England confirmed there was little variance in numbers year on year and that modelling of future patient numbers was in the project plan. There had been a suggestion the JHOSC could include themed working groups looking at issues such as the affect on local authorities with smaller patient numbers. Consultations had already taken place with staff and residents but there were plans to begin additional consultations in November. All Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) with at least 100 patients referred to MVCC, covering 13 local authorities, had been offered the opportunity to be part of the JHOSC.

It was agreed an amendment be made to 2.1 of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer's report that formal communications be provided to the Chair of the Health and Care Panel, rather than the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED to agree Option C and to include the amendment as outlined above.

7. **Executive Member Update - Adults and Public Health**

The Executive Member for Adults and Public Health, Councillor Megan Wright, provided an update on current issues within the adult and public health portfolio.

Public Health

It was noted the key areas of focus were child health, promoting mental health, promoting community connections, protecting residents against infectious diseases, promoting healthy life expectancies and structures to support those key areas. Alongside these areas the priorities for the Public Health team included the relocation of Frimley Park Hospital, ensuring health in all policies, integrating a new Director of Public Health and developing relationships with residents and partner organisations.

Adult social care

Councillor Wright highlighted slide 4 which gave an overview of the directorate and slides 6 & 8 which showed strengths/weaknesses of the department and a new model of assessment. Commissioners were informed the results of the CQC inspection into Adult Social Care had been published on 16 August and the Council received a 'good' judgment. Areas of strength included the new model of working, the 'adult social care hub' as a single point of access since October last year and a decreased number of people were transferred from hospital into nursing care.

Questions focused on relationships with GP surgeries and relationships with partner agencies. Councillor Wright, explained she had a strong relationship with Nicola Airey, Director of Commissioning and Assurance, NHS Frimley ICB, and they discussed issues relating to GP practices regularly. In relation to Ringmead Practice specifically, conversations were ongoing and that she would be visiting the practice on 6 September. Commissioners informed Cllr Wright a community engagement event was also being organised in Crowthorne with a representative from Ringmead Practice and an invitation was extended to Cllr Wright to attend. It was noted the Ringmead Practice CQC report would be presented at a future O&S Commission meeting. Cllr Wright explained she kept an overview of her portfolio by reviewing outcomes and targets with partners at meetings such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Place Committee and visited local sites, such as dementia care cafes. Regular catch ups took place between Cllr Wright and Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People to look at budgets and talk to departmental leads, such as Forest Care, etc. It was confirmed CAMHS was not part of the Adult and Social Care portfolio.

8. **Council Plan Overview Report**

Having reviewed the report, the Commission did not make any recommendations to the Executive but did make the following observations:

- **Page 51, 1.13 KR -Percentage of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (5-16 years) with school placement in borough**

It was queried if the percentage of children with a placement at 69%, rather than the target 75% was an improving trajectory? Commissioners were informed the number was unlikely to deteriorate as the majority of children had already been allocated a school place in September.

- **Page 52, 1.1.3 PI – Number of visits to the Lookout Discovery Centre**

Commissioners were concerned the number of visitors to the Centre appeared to be decreasing but were reassured it was an accounting issue as the figures did not include tickets bought by large groups. Reassurance was given the site was well used and the budget remained static in terms of income.

- **Page 52, 1.2.1.KR – Percentage of care leavers (19-21 years) Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

Concerns were raised that SILVA Homes were no longer providing apprenticeship places and, if this was the case, the negative impact it would have on NEET care leavers. The Chief Executive agreed to look into this matter and would have discussions with housing provider, Abri, and the Local Enterprise Partnership, to ensure alternative opportunities were sought.

- **Page 53, 1.6.1.KR – Additional affordable homes completed (affordable rented and shared ownership)**

It was noted the Registered Provider market was not taking up some of the sites the Council had secured through planning. The impact of this was the Council had to take commuted sums which impacted on the figures. Officers were talking to existing and new providers to request they take on new builds. One issue was that flatted developments required two staircases since the Grenfell disaster, so some registered providers were not keen to take on builds without two staircases in place. It was considered an issue affecting a number of Councils and would need to be addressed by national government.

An additional question was raised in relation to the above item about the cost of keeping families in temporary accommodation because sufficient affordable housing was not available, and if that had been factored into the budget? Figures were not available about the impact on temporary accommodation if the Council was unable to find affordable housing for families although numbers on the waiting list were available. It was agreed officers would provide a written answer on that specific point.

- **Page 53 ECN 2.03 – Implementation of a meanwhile use on the previous Bentalls site**

Commissioners queried if there was a time period for how long the project would be halted and were informed there were no immediate plans but that the Council was still talking to the developers.

- **Page 55, ENV 1.08 - Review approach to climate change, social value, funding routes and holistic policy**

It was queried why the RAG status was amber? Commissioners were informed the policy had only been introduced in April so the policy had just not been used much.

- **Page 58 ORG 2.07 – Ensure spending is within approved budget, monitored through monthly reporting to DMTs/CMTs**

Commissioners asked how concerned they should be about budget pressures and the Chief Executive stated all Councils were feeling significant budget pressures currently and that pressures could not be easily mitigated. However, the Council would remain solution focused. For example, CMT had strong control over recruitment and continuously reviewed risks and challenges to make in year decisions. Commissioners also queried if national Government had approached the Council about reducing the Berkshire authorities down from six, but the Chief Executive confirmed no such approach had been made.

9. **Sexual Health Scrutiny Review**

Councillor Caroline Egglestone, Chair of the Health and Care Overview & Scrutiny Panel began by thanking officers, panel members and contributors for their input into the Sexual Health review.

It was explained the review was undertaken because Councillors had been made aware of an issue around access to the service. The review found the service was excellent, but a number of recommendations were being requested to help strengthen the service further including:

1. Advise schools to change website restrictions to allow young people to access

services including NHS Choices, Brook and Safe Sex Berkshire.

2. Make sure the OxWell student survey includes questions to obtain the views of young people regarding sex education they receive. This will be fed back to individual schools to be taken into consideration when reviewing policies.

3. Make sure young people's views of the services are sought by public health as part of the service development improvement plan with Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust (BHFT).

4. Request Garden Clinic attendance data from BHFT that is specific to Bracknell residents for review by the Executive member.

5. Improve promotion and awareness of sexual health services for young people.

A discussion took place, and a recommendation was agreed with regards to recommendation number 3 to specifically obtain the views of vulnerable young people, not just young people.

RESOLVED: The Commission endorsed the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel's recommendations to the Executive, as set out in the Panel report (attached as Appendix A) and paragraph 5.5 of this report, taking into account the comments of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer. In addition, reference would be made specifically to include 'vulnerable' young people's views.

10. **Work Programme Update**

Each Panel Chair/Vice Panel Chair in attendance provided a verbal update on work programme progress.

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- The Sexual Health review had been completed.
- A review of recommendations from previous reviews was being undertaken.
- The two representatives on the Frimley Park JHOSC were due to attend a meeting in September.
- Ringmead GP practice would be invited to an O&S Commission meeting in October.

Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- The scope for the review into transition was being drawn up and would begin shortly.
- The Panel would also review the recommendations from previous reviews.

Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- The Panel would review recommendations from previous reviews to ensure they had been completed.
- The next review topic for this Panel was housing although the scope had not yet been agreed.