

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
17 OCTOBER 2024
6.30 – 7.49 PM**



Present:

Councillors Allen, Pickering (Chair), Barnard, M Forster, Haffegge, McKenzie-Boyle, Watts and Webb

Present Virtually:

Councillors Barnard, M Forster, McKenzie-Boyle
Victoria Hill, Parent Governor Representative

Also Present:

Dr Sachdev, Executive Partner and GP at Ringmead Surgery
Sarah Ballards, ICB Chief Nursing Officer
Councillor Bidwell
Ann Moore: Assistant Director: Democratic and Registration Services
Andrew Hunter, Executive Director: Place

Also Present Virtually:

Jen Lawson, Head of Corporate Complaints

Visiting Councillors

Councillor Hayes

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors C Eberle, Frost and McLean

18. Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 19 September 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.

19. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Councillors Forster, McKenzie-Boyle, Penfold, Watts and Webb all declared a personal interest in Ringmead medical practice as they were registered patients.

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

20. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

21. Public Participation

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

22. **Ringmead GP Surgery**

The Executive Partner at Ringmead surgery gave a presentation covering an introduction to Ringmead Medical Group and general practice challenges, the CQC findings and progress to date.

A discussion took place and the following answers were provided:

- Following a meeting on 9 August 2024 with ICB Frimley and the MP for Bracknell Dr Sachdev agreed to schedule a further public meeting with Cllr M Forster to discuss residents concerns.
- It was confirmed that house calls were actively taking place, especially for housebound patients with multiple needs. The slides provided included statistics to illustrate numbers of weekly and monthly house visits.
- It was explained that there are usually 7 members of staff managing workflow, the processing of correspondence received by the practice. Whilst the average number of correspondences received was around 200 items per day when this amount rose the number of staff working on it increased in response to prevent a backlog.
- It was confirmed that a breakdown of workload including monthly data on phone calls received, appointments made and no shows for appointments was presented to the Patient Participation Group, PPG. However, due to a lack of work resources this wasn't something that had been published on their website, but it was felt this would be beneficial to help reduce DNA rates. It was acknowledged that the Ringmead group had the highest appointment DNA rate in the Southeast region for primary care.
- It was noted that stock issues for certain medications such as ADHD, HRT and weight loss injections have caused issues for patients and these were being addressed by working with the pharmacists and where possible developing processes to make repeat prescriptions automatically dispensed.
- Six to eight months ago the turnaround time for repeat prescriptions was ten days to two weeks. Improvement in this area through investment in staff had reduced this time to three to five days.
- Clinic, an online consultation tool, which could also be completed by a receptionist on behalf of a patient if they called, provided a quick turnaround time for patients as illustrated in the presentation slides. This way of working was a form of triage that prioritised patients and ensured demand was managed appropriately. The clinic times stopped at 3pm to ensure a manageable volume of work for GP's.

Following discussions, a recommendation was agreed that Dr Sachdev and the team at Ringmead explore options, beyond the PPG, of public engagement, taking on board public opinions when continuing to take forward improvements.

23. **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual letter**

The council's corporate head of complaints provided some context around the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual letter 2023-2024 and report. The letter provided details of the LGSCO final decisions that were published in the financial year 2023/24. The LGSCO investigated 13 of the complaints that were raised with them and 12 of those were upheld giving an uphold rate of 92% which was above similar organisations with 79% and above the national average which was 80%.

It was noted that the council had introduced a revised corporate complaints process at the end of September 2024, in line with the ombudsman's new complaint handling code.

The following answers were provided to questions:

- Complaints from 2021 were dated within the financial year 2023/24 because that was when the ombudsman had provided their decision on the complaint.
- It was confirmed that a way of measuring satisfaction was that the council looked at the overall complaints performance on a quarterly basis which included a report on volume of complaints and provided a summary of themes, learning points and actions.
- The pattern of complaints followed the national picture where a large proportion was related to education and SEND, although this was actually higher in Bracknell than the national average.
- It was confirmed that the LGSCO report didn't provide individual experience or feedback of complaints but the new complaints system could be used to look at understanding how effectively the process was working.

24. **Cabinet Member Update - Economy and Regeneration**

The Cabinet Member for Economy and Regeneration gave a presentation which provided an update on key milestones and current issues within his portfolio.

A discussion took place and the following answers to questions were provided:

- A request to provide a bank on Crowthorne high street had been investigated with one option being to appeal the block on the creation of a post office on the high street.
- The Skills Hub was in place to help improve uptake of apprenticeships and the council was also working with Bracknell and Wokingham college to increase the number of level 4 NVQ's as these weren't as high as neighbouring local authorities.
- With reference to the London Road/Strong's heath project it was confirmed that the council were seeking clarity over the pricing of the solar farm and a report was due to be presented to Cabinet in 4-5 months. Once this was confirmed they would be in a position to decide what approach would be taken to discuss the project with other authorities.
- It was confirmed that whilst there was strong interest in the solar farm for climate related reasons it also needed to be backed by an economic argument. If one outweighed the other then it would be a political decision, once the report and options were provided.

A recommendation was proposed that when the report is provided it frames the solar panel farm in the context of the council's climate strategy to support clarity and transparency in the decision-making process.

25. **Transition Review Scope**

RESOLVED: Commissioners agreed the Education, Skills and Growth O&S Panel should undertake the transition review - from education to employment as set out in the scope attached in the agenda.

26. **Work Programme Update**

Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- The chair met with the Cabinet member for children and young people where the needs of Not in Education Employment or Training, NEET, children were discussed. More details on statistics in this area would be provided which would feed into the transition review.

Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- The panel met with the Assistant Director: Highways and Transport and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Countryside and produced recommendations in response to the Local Transport Plan 4.
- The next review into social housing will begin in January 2025 and the scope for this is due at the commission meeting in December 2024.

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel

- Confirmation was received that Frimley Park hospital rebuild is taking place.
- The next meeting of the JHOSC is 22 November 2024.
- The next review the panel would be doing was around adult social care.

CHAIR