

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 7 MARCH 2018 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.55 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Ken Miall (Chairman), Kate Haines (Vice-Chairman), Parry Bath, Laura Blumenthal, John Jarvis, Clive Jones, John Kaiser, Malcolm Richards, Chris Smith and Bill Soane

Others Present

Nicola Strudley, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough
Mike Haines
Madeleine Shopland, Democratic & Electoral Services Specialist
Hayley Rees, Category Manager, Prevention & Early Intervention
Paul Senior, Interim Director People Services
Kim Wilkins, Specialist Strategy & Commissioning (People)
Martin Sloan, Head of Service, WISH
Dr Debbie Milligan, Wokingham CCG

42. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

43. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 January 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillor Jones commented that with regards to the update on the potential impact of the 21st century council programme on health and social care, he had asked whether staff currently in departments such as Highways would be expected to take phone calls relating to matters such as children's services. With regards to the Healthwatch consultation, Councillor Jones felt that the strength of the Committee's objection to the proposal to work in partnership with Reading Borough Council to explore a single commissioning exercise to secure a Healthwatch service across Reading and Wokingham, could be made clearer. Councillor Smith commented that the Minutes were a summary and not a verbatim record of the meeting.

44. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

46. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

47. UPDATE ON GP ALLIANCE

Dr Debbie Milligan, Wokingham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), updated Members on the Wokingham GP Alliance.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Many practices within the Borough had signed up to a GP Alliance to work together in order to achieve a sustainable model of General Practice.
- Members asked who sat on the Wokingham GP Alliance Board and were informed that Dr James Kennedy and Dr Dan Alton (Wargrave Practice), Dr Amit Sharma (Brookside Practice), Dr Husein Hafizji (Wokingham Medical Centre) and Dr Rupa Joshi (Woodley Surgery) formed the Board. In response to a Member question regarding decision making Dr Milligan commented that it was a working Board and that decision making was via the practices.
- The Committee was informed of matters which the GP Alliance were working on including 7 day working, hub working and muscular skeletal services.
- With regards to 7 day working, Councillor Miall questioned whether a GP would be available every day a week. Dr Milligan explained that GPs and other staff would be available at a surgery within each cluster at weekends. It was anticipated that this would rotate around the cluster. Councillor Jones stated that it may be difficult for some people to travel by public transport to other parts of a cluster, for example Woodley to Wargrave, on a Sunday. Dr Milligan commented that in practice it worked well.
- Councillor Miall asked whether a more restricted service would be provided at weekends. Dr Milligan indicated that a mixture of routine and emergency appointments would be offered. Weekend emergency appointments were currently provided via Westcall. It was important to ensure that there was not an overlap in provision.
- Members were informed that the northern cluster was trialling paramedics undertaking home visits. GPs would continue to also undertake home visits, particularly for chronic incidents and where it was important for continuity such as for patients requiring end of life care or who had dementia. Councillor Soane questioned what impact this would have on paramedics' emergency work and was notified that there was a complete separation in Wokingham and that the paramedics were employed directly by the practices.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the update on the GP Alliance be noted;
- 2) Dr Milligan be thanked for her update.

48. UPDATE ON PRIMARY CARE FACILITIES AND ESTATES

Dr Milligan updated the Committee on primary care facilities and estates.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- The extension at the Finchampstead Surgery was now completed and patients from the Arborfield area were starting to register with the surgery. The extension at Swallowfield Surgery was due for completion shortly and the practice was starting to take patients from the Shinfield area.
- With regards to Barkham the CCG had been advised that approximately 1,000 additional homes would be built in the area. Finchampstead and Swallowfield practices felt that they would be able to absorb the resulting new patients. Councillor Kaiser disputed this and emphasised that it would be approximately 3,500 new homes. Clarification was sought on the provision of information about the anticipated number of additional homes in Barkham.
- Dr Milligan stated that patients once registered with a surgery tended not to move to another in the same area.

- In response to Member comments regarding primary care facilities to serve Arborfield, Section 106 funding and the need for communication between the Council and health colleagues, the Interim Director People Services commented that the Wokingham Integrated Strategic Partnership were having discussions around the integration of health and social care.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the update on primary care facilities and estates be noted;
- 2) Dr Milligan be thanked for her update.

49. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN - PUBLIC REPORT

It was agreed that this report would be considered in Part 2 session as it contained sufficient narrative for individuals to be identified.

50. LOCAL HEALTHWATCH FOR READING AND WOKINGHAM

The Committee received a report regarding Healthwatch services for Reading and Wokingham.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 local authorities were required to establish a Local Healthwatch (LHW) in their areas as a consumer champion for healthcare and social care services.
- Reading Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council had undertaken a public consultation between 19 December 2017 and 6 February 2018 on a proposal to commission a LHW service for both areas at a cost of £173,000. 109 responses had been received as well as a number of letters. Overall 58% of consultation respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the proposal to bring together the Reading and Wokingham Healthwatch Services as a single service. Consultation feedback highlighted that many people were keen to stress the importance and value of a Local Healthwatch having a very local identity.
- Hayley Rees, Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention outlined the two main options proposed post consultation:
 - Option 1: To continue to work in partnership with Reading Borough Council on a single commissioning exercise to secure a Local Healthwatch service across Reading and Wokingham;
 - Option 2: Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) to undertake a commissioning exercise to secure a Local Healthwatch service across Wokingham – with a local contract and local contract monitoring.
- The Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention commented that should Option 2 proceed the Council would need to do more work with the current Healthwatch provider regarding costings of elements of the service.
- Alternative options which had been considered and which were less supported were highlighted including:
 - Recommissioning Local Healthwatch services for Reading and for Wokingham as a completely unified service;
 - Working in partnership with Reading Borough Council to commission a Healthwatch function through a single framework for services to be delivered in both areas. Under this option, two 'lots' could be specified and potential

providers would be invited to bid to deliver a Local Healthwatch service for Wokingham or a Local Healthwatch service for Reading or both;

- Each Council to re-commission its own Local Healthwatch service, offering contracts for 80% of the current price to secure savings. This would result in two very small contracts with providers having less resilience to changes such as staff absence or turnover.

- Members were asked for their views on the two main options.
- Councillor Smith commented that he felt that Option 1 should not be proceeded with. He went on to question why the consultation had finished in February when the current contract ceased on 31 March. The Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention stated that a wider review of the voluntary sector, including Healthwatch services, had begun in March 2017. This had covered 35 services and had taken place over two phases. A report had been taken to Executive and it had been agreed that transitional arrangements could be put in place to secure procurement arrangements if required, on the outcome of the review. Some of the recommendations regarding the Local Healthwatch had been delayed due to changes in senior management. The Interim Director People Services assured the Committee that as accountable officer he was ensuring that this was being progressed.
- Councillor Blumenthal asked who had proposed the joint commissioning of the Reading and Wokingham Healthwatch services. The Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention indicated that the Berkshire councils met regularly to discuss joint commissioning. Initial proposals had included West Berkshire Council who had not wished to proceed with this option. Discussions had continued with Reading Borough Council.
- The Committee felt that Members should have been informed earlier in the process. It was noted that a paper had been circulated to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2017.
- Councillor Blumenthal questioned who would take the decision regarding how to proceed and was informed that it would be the Interim Director of People Services in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.
- Councillor Soane asked about the turnout at the meetings with the public and providers regarding proposals. Kim Wilkins, Specialist Strategy & Commissioning (People) indicated that attendance had been very low. Members asked for information such as a breakdown of the demographics of those who had responded.
- Councillor Jones commented that he felt that the current provider should be continued with and the budget increased. He asked when the Healthwatch funding budget had last been increased. The Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention commented that the contract had begun in 2013 and that the budget had not been increased since. Nationally, Healthwatch funding had reduced by 19.9%. In addition funding for many other voluntary sector organisations had reduced.
- Members asked what procurement regulations meant that the contract could not simply be renewed. The Category Manager Prevention & Early Intervention stated that the Council's Constitution stated that contracts over £50,000 must be put out to market and tested. This reflected current procurement legislation. The Committee requested updates on the procurement process.
- The direct award of a 6 month block contract to the current service provider was noted. Some Members felt that a longer period of time should be agreed. The Interim Director of People Services indicated that 6 months was in line with formal due process and was proportionate.
- Councillor Richards asked whether there had been complaints regarding service quality and was informed that there had not.

- Members emphasised that the delivery of the Healthwatch service relied greatly on the support of volunteers.
- The Interim Director of People Services emphasised that Wokingham was a small unitary council and the worst funded local authority in the country. The public sector landscape was changing and the Council had to be sure that it received the best return on its investments and the best outcome for its residents.
- Councillor Kaiser asked why joint commissioning with the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council had not been considered. Officers indicated that there had been discussions 18 months previously regarding a cross Berkshire Healthwatch service but this was not considered consistent with the Sustainable Transformation Plan footprint. Bracknell Forest Council and Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead Council had worked together.
- Councillor Jarvis commented that Reading and Wokingham had very different demographics and questioned the viability of bringing together the Reading and Wokingham Healthwatch Services as a single service.
- The Specialist Strategy & Commissioning (People) emphasised that the functions of the Healthwatch service were mandatory but that the model of delivery would vary between areas.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Option one for the commissioning of the statutory LHW for Wokingham be noted and that it be noted that the Committee did not support this option;
- 2) Option two for the commissioning of the statutory LHW for Wokingham be noted;
- 3) the direct award of a 6 month block contract to the current service provider, Healthwatch Wokingham Borough CIC, to ensure that Wokingham Borough Council can continue to deliver the Healthwatch Service - which is a statutory duty under the Care Act, be noted;
- 4) Hayley Rees and Kim Wilkins be thanked for their presentation.

51. HEALTHWATCH UPDATE

Nicola Strudley presented a summary of the Healthwatch report regarding the multi Healthwatch visit to Prospect Park, the recommendations and the response from providers.

During the discussion of this item the following points were made:

- Healthwatch Wokingham Borough had coordinated all six Berkshire Healthwatches to undertake a set of eleven visits to Bluebell, Daisy, Rose and Snowdrop wards at Prospect Park over a week in October 2017. 41 adults in total had been spoken to.
- Members were informed of a CQC inspection which had taken place previously and recommendations for improvement which had come out of it.
- Volunteers who had visited Prospect Park had received training prior to the visit and familiarisation visits had also taken place.
- Patients that spoke to Healthwatch had been highly complementary of staff. However, resources were stretched.
- Many patients had said that they felt that Prospect Park was a safe space. However, Nicola Strudley commented that there was less of a sense of a therapeutic input.

- It was felt that continuation of care once patients left the hospital and used community services, could be improved.
- Councillor Miall questioned whether older and younger patients were placed in the same wards. Nicola Strudley commented that Rowan Ward was specifically for dementia patients and Campion Ward was specifically for those with learning difficulties. Otherwise adult patients of all age groups were in the same wards.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the update on the work of Healthwatch Wokingham Borough be noted;
- 2) Nicola Strudley be thanked for her presentation.

52. HEALTH CONSULTATIONS

Members were informed of a consultation regarding the Care Quality Commission's next phase of regulation – independent healthcare providers. Councillor Blumenthal requested a definition of independent healthcare providers.

RESOLVED: That the health consultation be noted.

53. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) as appropriate.

54. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN'S REPORT

Martin Sloan, Head of WISH, updated the Committee on a report issued by the Local Government Ombudsman.

RESOLVED: That the Local Government Ombudsman Report be noted.