

Health Select Committee

MINUTES OF THE HEALTH SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2021 AT ONLINE MEETING.

Present:

Powell, Cllr Chuck Berry (Chairman), Cllr Gordon King (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Christine Crisp, Cllr Clare Cape, Cllr Mary Champion, Cllr Gavin Grant, Cllr Howard Greenman, Cllr Mollie Groom, Cllr Andy Phillips, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Tom Rounds, Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Cllr Graham Wright, Edgar, Legg, Diane Gooch, Irene Kohler, Denmark, Elizabeth Disney, Kate Blackburn and Cllr Simon Jacobs

Also Present:

Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cllr Simon Jacobs, Cllr Trevor Carbin, Cllr Alan Hill, Lindsey Burke, Edward Rendell, Helen Robertson, Michael Dooley, Elizabeth Disney, Kate Blackburn, Lucy Townsend and Emma Legg

1 **Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

It was noted that the previous minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021 would be amended to record Diane Gooch as an attendee.

Resolved:

To approve and sign the minutes of the public meeting held on 12 January 2021.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from members of the Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

The Chairman provided the following announcement in relation to the announced closure of the Furlong Close facility in Rowde by the Home Farm Trust. The chairman stated that at the meeting of Full Council on Tuesday 23 February, it was noted that the Leader of the council had asked Overview and Scrutiny to undertake a rapid scrutiny exercise in response to the announced closure of the Furlong Close facility in Rowde. This facility provides day-care and residential provision for adults with learning disabilities and is run by Home

Farm Trust. The Chairman raised this as a matter for discussion under Urgent Items, which was brought forward to be the first substantive agenda item.

5 **Public Participation**

There were no questions or statements raised by members of the Public to be answered at this meeting.

6 **COVID-19 Update**

- a) Emma Legg, Director for Access and Reablement, provided an update regarding the current position for adult social care.

Work has continued to take place closely with system partners in order to support discharge and flow. There has been an increase of people returning home from hospital, with referrals into the Home First Pathway having significantly increased since last year. Additionally, an increased number of beds in local care homes have been commissioned to meet demand over the past months. The focus is now on de-escalation following some challenges in January and February to get into a stable position.

A new service has launched with Carer Support Wiltshire, which is a hospital liaison service, working with hospital staff and others to support carers through and after discharge. This has the aim of reducing stress for carers and is available at all three of the local hospitals.

There has been an increased demand in front door services for adult social care, with contact numbers higher than previous years; these increases are being monitored to determine longer term impacts. Mental health services continue to support people and Wiltshire Health Space is accommodating individuals from both BaNES and Swindon, in order to reduce pressure across the wider mental health system. However, the number of Mental Capacity Act assessments that are being completed remains significant.

Residential and nursing care homes in Wiltshire have seen an improved picture with staff and patient numbers falling, for example there was a 66% reduction in cases for the week ending 21 February. However there has sadly been an increase in deaths in care homes with 30 new deaths reported in 7 days in the period up to the 16 February.

The Chairman invited comments and questions which included the percentage completion for care home vaccinations and where case rate breakdowns could be found for Wiltshire. In response to questions, it was noted that numbers and percentages are information which can't be provided as it is NHS data which is carefully released. Additionally, it was clarified that case rate breakdowns can be located on gov.uk website.

- b) Elizabeth Disney, Wiltshire Chief Operating Officer at the Bath, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG, provided a presentation from the CCG on COVID-19.

The presentation outlined the current context of the pandemic for both Adult and Children's services; with admissions for Covid reducing for adults, whilst still seeing internal infection issues and being aware of the risk surrounding future variants. Additionally, during January, commissioned capacity was increased across Wiltshire to support the Covid surge seen in hospitals. The Health services have not seen significant numbers of children requiring medical treatment for Covid related symptoms and the focus of the response has been to minimise the impact of restrictions rather than of Covid itself.

Data was provided for the Salisbury Foundation Trust Hospital, Great Western Hospital and Royal United Hospital from 19 February 2021. This data was used to monitor hospital capacity and to prepare for best, middle and worst-case scenario projections. The data suggested an improved position from January.

The update provided an overview of the current situation regarding the issues faced by both Acute and Community Services. Such issues for Acute Services included significant pressure from staff sickness; a large outbreak experienced by Avon & Wiltshire Partnership (AWP) adult mental health provider which caused an impact on service due to inpatient bed closures. Regarding the issues faced by Community Services; minor injury units have now re-opened with a bookable service after closure due to redeployment; all community services are operating but with some at a reduced level due to staffing; after an initial decrease in referrals to CAMHS this has now reversed with referrals via Single Point of Access being very high.

The current outlook was reported that health and social care services have continued to offer health and wellbeing support to staff and services are currently awaiting national planning guidance on the direction for recovery, where it is expected that areas of focus will be outlined.

Following the cancellation of elective surgery, a clear Patient Tracking List (PTL) tool is now accessible in order to determine and prioritise the demand and level of need for surgery across the broader population. This prioritisation system features 4 categories, with priority 1 and 2 surgery continuing to go ahead. Additionally, the Elective Care Board has work planned with includes understanding the harm that may have been caused by delays.

The presentation shared data on the current recovery performance, with percentages of completion against what was planned. A notes column was used to provide context to why the percentages were at the level that they were at. The percentages were as follows; Day case and inpatient elective performance 71%; Outpatients firsts 85% and follow ups 80%; Diagnostics 123%.

The officer provided a BSW vaccination summary, which reported that all BSW care homes had been visited by 24 January and additionally it is planned that there will be half a million vaccinations by Easter.

In summary, there has been a change in the picture for demand, with there being a need to manage the impact and level of Covid, but also a requirement

to turn attention towards preserving capacity for health service needs that are not directly associated with Covid-19.

The Chairman invited comments and questions and it was clarified in regards to the adult care purchasing exercise that the other three local councils were liaised with in regard to the nature of additional capacity and how this might be acquired and shared as no single locality could manage this on its own.

Clarification was sought regarding the outbreak experienced by AWP. It was noted that the outbreak took place at predominantly at Fountain Way, Salisbury and the impact was felt not only in South Wiltshire, but also on Salisbury Foundation Trust Hospital and other parts of service as there was a knock-on effect in terms of beds that were closed and staff redeployment internally.

Regarding the recovery of service providers, it is anticipated that the next financial year of April 2021 to March 2022 will be a different year in terms of immediate health priorities and the changing nature of people's health needs. The next year is being sighted as an opportunity to treat as many people as possible and with ring-fenced funds available, decisions need to be made on how to use these funds to make a difference to both those who need services now whilst also being sustainable.

Expansion of the number of vaccination facilities was queried, and it was clarified that there are 2 large vaccination sites, with 27 sites in total meaning that residents are no more than 10 miles away from a vaccination site. The conversation regarding vaccination facilities is of a shifting nature and conversations are on-going about working in different settings as in summer venues could require the use of their sites.

It was acknowledged that the management of allowing health service staff to recover is a difficult situation to balance, in regard to allowing individuals periods of rest whilst there is a demand to deliver. Currently a lot of strategic work force planning is taking place on a national and regional level is taking place to determine what is needed in order to meet expectations and demand.

In conclusion, it was;

Resolved:

To note the update provided from the Council and CCG.

7 Review of the work of the Health Select Committee 2017-2021

The Chairman referred to a report, available in Agenda Supplement 2, which highlights key aspects of the work undertaken by this Committee during the 2017-21 council and recommending topics to the Management Committee for possible inclusion in a new overview and scrutiny work programme after the elections in May.

The Chairman stated that the list of suggested future work priorities within the report was formed by Cllr Gordon King, the vice-chairman and himself, having also discussed it with Executive members and senior officers from Wiltshire Council, as well as Elizabeth Disney and Clare O'Farrell from the CCG. Written input was also invited from all committee members.

The Chairman acknowledged that after the elections in May, there would be further opportunities for the new committee to shape its work programme. Cllr Berry suggested it engages again with the Executive officers and the CCG to discuss the most effective approach to Health scrutiny in light of the direction of increasing integration. It will vital that the committee understands the structure of health and care in Wiltshire, current health and wellbeing outcomes, and helps to drive real improvements for residents.

In conclusion, it was;

Resolved:

- 1. To agree that the topics listed in the report be recommended to the Management Committee as requiring further work in the new Council.**
- 2. To note the next steps described in paragraph 7.**

8 Urgent Items

The Chairman stated that Overview and Scrutiny has received a request from the Leader of the Council for a rapid scrutiny exercise regarding the Furlong Close facility in Rowde, the closure of which has been announced by its owner, Home Farm Trust (HFT).

Cllr Berry provided an overview to the Committee that Furlong Close provides day and residential support for adults with learning disabilities. The Leader's request for a rapid scrutiny was noted at a meeting of Full Council on 23rd February, as was a petition with over 42,000 signatures titled "Stop the Closure of HFT in Rowde." A request was made in February for Full Council to debate this petition. However, at the time, an application was in process to judicially review HFT's decision to close Furlong Close. The Council was identified as an interested party in these proceedings (not a defendant) and it had not been appropriate for Full Council to debate the petition. Following the Court's refusal of permission to apply for judicial review, the Council made the lead petitioner aware that it could debate the petition, but the petitioner asked the council not to do so at this time.

The matter of Furlong Close was the subject of briefing notes to councillors dated 10 and 19 February 2021 and the committee may be aware of some media coverage of the situation.

The Chairman invited comments and questions which included the importance of Overview and Scrutiny seeking legal advice in order to not to conflict with any ongoing legal process involving the council as an interested party.

An explanation of the current legal situation was provided, noting the importance of appropriate confidentiality being maintained throughout the review. Additionally, the contractual arrangements in place were clarified, with an overarching GLA contract, plus spot purchase contracts also purchased for each individual.

It was clarified that part 1 of the process would be a rapid scrutiny exercise, followed by part 2 which would be a task group, reviewing the work conducted by the exercise in part 1 and potentially reviewing the wider Wiltshire market for residential and supported living. A concern regarding the officer resources required for this latter piece of work was discussed.

It was clarified that task review groups and scrutiny exercises can co-opt members on to their memberships. The following members of the Health Select Committee expressed an interest in being involved in the rapid scrutiny exercise; Cllr Chuck Berry, Cllr Gordon King and Cllr Pip Ridout, as well as the stakeholders, Irene Kohler and Diane Gooch.

In conclusion, it was;

Agreed to establish a rapid scrutiny exercise, having taken appropriate legal advice on process, to review and make constructive recommendations regarding:

- 1. The actions taken by the council in regard to the Furlong Close facility, which the owner, Home Farm Trust, has announced its intention to close, covering:
 - a) The timetable of events;**
 - b) Contract arrangements;**
 - c) Lessons learned and;**
 - d) A way forward.****

- 2. The remit of a potential task group under the next council reviewing
 - a) The outcomes and latest position following the exercise outlined under 1 above; and**
 - b) The application of any lessons learned relevant to the wider Wiltshire market for residential and supported living to ensure that it best meets the needs of adults with learning disabilities.****

9 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was to be 8 June 2021.

(Duration of meeting: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Ben Fielding of Democratic Services, direct line 01225 718259, e-mail Benjamin.fielding@wiltshire.gov.uk
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