

Wiltshire Council

Health Select Committee - 11 January 2022

Agenda Item 5 – Public Participation

From Mr Chris Caswill

Question 1 - (Q22-01)

At the last meeting of this Committee, I drew attention to the chronic state of primary and secondary NHS care in Wiltshire, as in the rest of the country. I contrasted this with the Committee's blinkered agenda and inadequate Forward Work Programme. I have subsequently discovered that the Patford House GP practice in Calne had been rated Inadequate by the Care Quality Commission and is in Special Measures – with the next step explicitly stated to be closure if the required improvements are not delivered. It is frankly astonishing that neither the Committee as a whole, nor any individual member knew about this or, if they did know, chose not to mention it. Over two months later and this does still not appear either on your Agenda or the Work Programme set out at Agenda item 11. This is a critical health service issue for literally thousands of Wiltshire residents in Calne and the surrounding community area, and yet it is not even on your radar. Can I remind you that your remit includes the opportunity to

- review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire, including any significant change to service provision and those jointly commissioned or delivered by the council;
- require the attendance of an officer of a local NHS body to answer questions and provide explanations about the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire;
- require a local NHS body to provide information about the planning, provision and operation of health services in Wiltshire, subject to the exemptions outlined in the Health and Social Care Act 2001;

It is all too clear that there is a significant change in the provision of primary care in Calne. And that this is in part at least the responsibility of the current BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG. The remit above clearly provides for the Committee to require the relevant NHS people from primary care and the CCG to explain how this has come about, and what is being done to ensure the Patford practice is not closed.

Can you please advise me, and the Wiltshire public (a) who decides on which items are included on the Health Select Agenda and (b) which are included on the Committee's Work Programme, and (c) why this issue is not on your Agenda and/or Work Programme now?

Response:

A/B)

The Chair and Vice Chair of the committee decide which items are included on the agenda.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC) has overarching responsibility for the council's Overview and Scrutiny (OS) Forward Work Programme (FWP). There is also opportunity for Health Select Committee members to request items be included on the FWP at each meeting, via the FWP standing item. The Executive and Full Council may also request scrutiny activity, which typically is the 'overview' policy development element of (OS). The committee had also included items on its FWP requested by the public, under public participation, for example the recent item which considered the impact of the pandemic on carers.

- C) OS welcomes public participation within its activities. Thank you for raising concerns relating to Patford House, GP Practice. The committee works closely with partners from the Clinical Commissioning Group when developing its FWP and will include this information in discussions relating to future scrutiny of Primary Care within Wiltshire.

Question 2 – (Q22-02)

At the last meeting of this Committee, there was a presentation on "Shaping a Healthier Future BSW Health and Care Model". In the accompanying slides was one (after the inevitable one on 'the development journey') on "How we are going to make this happen?". One of the four pillars of these actions was proposed to be **"Using digital by default"**. Not a single member of the committee even commented on this. As I understand the English language this presages an NHS policy in this region whereby telephone and Zoom (or similar) calls are the normal first preference for GPs and hospital consultants. If I have understood this right, I am sure the public has not yet got wind of this intended shift in medical care, and when they do, they will be horrified by it. It goes entirely against the public's wish for more face to face GP appointments and gives credibility to the concern that some GP practices at least are now turning the virtual communication tools used in the COVID lockdown into the new normal. My question is – does this *Scrutiny* Committee really agree that this is the correct default policy for the NHS, not even worth discussing, and that it is not even worth scrutinising it, let alone challenging it? And if so, why are you here?

Response:

The committee has explored the impact of consultations being online rather than in person on a number of occasions. For example, please see Item 17 - Clinical Commissioning Group Update on Elective Care from the [September Select Committee](#) meeting. Bullet point 1 from the minutes document the scrutiny members' concerns and subsequent response from health colleagues.

Ends