

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 27 November 2023

Title: Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group – Emergency Care in North Tyneside

Portfolio(s):	Elected Mayor	Cabinet Member(s):	Dame Norma Redfearn, Elected Mayor
	Public Health and Wellbeing		Councillor Karen Clark
	Adult Social Care		Councillor Janet Hunter

Report from Service Area: Governance

Responsible Officer: Jon Ritchie, Director of Resources (Tel: 0191 643 5720)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

A motion was agreed by full Council on 16 March 2023 regarding emergency healthcare provision in North Tyneside. In response to that motion, the Elected Mayor requested the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee (OSCFC) to consider establishing a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to take forward the matters set out in that motion. This was agreed by the Chair of OSCFC.

This report has an Appendix that sets out the findings and recommendations from the cross-party Scrutiny Task and Finish Group established in Summer 2023 to examine emergency healthcare provision in North Tyneside. The Task and Finish Group has found that:

- (a) An excellent standard of emergency care and urgent treatment is available to North Tyneside residents
- (b) More work could be done to improve public awareness in North Tyneside on the differences between emergency care and urgent treatment – and when, how and where to access each type of care
- (c) Public transport, particularly to the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) site in Cramlington, is likely to impact upon the accessibility of that site for some North Tyneside residents when visiting the hospital for non-emergency purposes (travel for emergency care would be expected to be available by ambulance).

The cross-party Task and Finish Group has made recommendations related to these findings, for Cabinet's consideration, which are set out in the Appendix to this report. The OSFC requests that Cabinet publishes a response to the findings and recommendations of its Task and Finish Group in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

Considers and formulates a response to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Task and Finish Group on the provision of emergency healthcare provision in North Tyneside presented to Cabinet in the Appendix of the report.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty eight days notice of this report has been given and it first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 19 October 2023.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to the following priorities in the 2021/25 Our North Tyneside Plan:

A caring North Tyneside – we will work to reduce inequality

A secure North Tyneside – We will tackle health and socio-economic inequalities across the borough

1.5 Information:

Background

- 1.5.1 On 16 March 2023 full Council considered and agreed a motion regarding access to emergency healthcare for residents of North Tyneside. As part of the motion, Council

agreed that the Elected Mayor should write to the local NHS Foundation Trust, *'asking them to set up a taskforce, with local authority involvement, to improve access to emergency care in North Tyneside'*.

- 1.5.2 The Elected Mayor considered this motion and wrote to Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust as requested. Following discussion with the Authority's Chief Executive and the Chief Executive of Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, the Elected Mayor asked the then Chair of Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee to consider establishing a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to give effect to the 'task force' requested by full Council. This approach had the advantage of allowing the 'task force' to have the statutory rights of scrutiny enjoyed by the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee. It would also provide for a clear route for reporting on the issues and consideration of any recommendations by Cabinet.
- 1.5.3 The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee was subsequently succeeded by the newly created Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee (OSCFC), in May 2023. The Chair of OSCFC considered the proposal for a Task and Finish group and as with the Chair of the former Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee, agreed such a group should be established, to take forward the matters set out in the Council motion.
- 1.5.4 An invitation was extended to all non-Executive members of the Authority for volunteers to participate in the work of the Emergency Care Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. All members who came forward by the set date were invited to participate in this work and the cross-party Task and Finish Group was established in July 2023.

Approach

- 1.5.5 On 12 June 2023 OSCFC agreed the objectives that the Task and Finish Group would seek to achieve through its work scrutinising Emergency Healthcare in North Tyneside, pursuant to the Motion agreed in March 2023. These objectives were:
- a) **Need:** Gain an understanding of the need for emergency care in North Tyneside – particularly the Public Health view of the needs of the population
 - b) **The current offer and performance:** Gain an understanding of the current range of services and how they perform
 - c) **Background:** Gain an understanding of the decisions made to reach this point
 - d) **Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital:** gain an understanding on the reasons for the original decision to develop and deliver the Hospital, how that has worked and how the model has been adjusted through experience

- e) **Battle Hill Walk In Centre:** The reasons for the original decision to establish the centre. How it performed and what changed
- f) **North Tyneside General Hospital:** an overview of the current offer at the Rake Lane site including input from the Director of Adult Social Care on the work done by the Authority's team alongside NHS colleagues at North Tyneside General Hospital
- g) **Community and patient voices:** Understand what is known about community views, and whether residents know how and where to access emergency care
- h) **What could be improved and how would that happen:** Understand and existing plans and develop recommendations on how need is met and how to respond to any community views

1.5.6 The Task and Finish Group then adopted the following methodology in respect of the agreed objectives:

- a) The Task and Finish Group received and considered detailed information on emergency healthcare and urgent treatment prepared by the Director of Public Health and Public Health Team, the Director of Adult Social Care, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and the Integrated Care Board (North East and Cumbria)
- b) The Task and Finish Group hosted an initial evidence gathering and scrutiny session with senior officers from the Authority and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (with information also provided at this session on behalf of the Integrated Care Board)
- c) Site visit for the Task and Finish Group to North Tyneside General Hospital (Rake Lane), North Shields
- d) Site visit for the Task and Finish Group to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH), Cramlington
- e) The Task and Finish Group then held a concluding session (all Task and Finish Group members being invited) for evaluation of evidence and formulation of findings and recommendations.

Key Findings

1.5.7 The full report of the Task and Finish Group, setting out the evidence on which findings and recommendations have been based, is attached as an Appendix to this report. Key findings are summarised below.

1.5.8 The Task and Finish Group found that there is an **excellent standard of emergency care available to residents of North Tyneside**. The Task and Finish Group hopes that this finding, based on the evidence set out in section 3.2 of their report attached as an Appendix, will be reassuring to residents and members of the Authority alike.

- 1.5.9 The Task and Finish Group through the OSCFC recommends to Cabinet that the agreed performance standards for emergency healthcare provision covering North Tyneside should be regularly communicated to North Tyneside residents, by the Authority working with partner organisations. This will help inform North Tyneside residents that at whichever site emergency care is accessed by them, national statistics demonstrate that performance is currently of a very high standard. Providing such performance information may help to alleviate any concerns or misperception around the quality of emergency healthcare available to residents of the borough.
- 1.5.10 The Task and Finish Group also found that **more work could be done to improve public awareness in North Tyneside on the differences between 'emergency care' and 'urgent treatment'** – and when, how and where to access each type of care. The Task and Finish Group found that the terminology used to describe these different types of care, and consequently when and where to access the right type of care, may not be widely understood by those of us outside of a healthcare environment. It is important that there is a wide public understanding on this matter and that all residents have this essential information ahead of a time when either route into care might be needed – so that we know where to go for help and when.
- 1.5.11 The Task and Finish Group, through the OSCFC therefore recommends that a communication campaign should be developed within the borough, involving the Authority and partner organisations, highlighting the distinction between 'emergency care' and 'urgent treatment' and when, where and how to access each type of care. If this message could be shown simply (on a flowchart or similar) and regularly re-emphasised it will help residents access the right care path at the right time, and lead to a better experience and better outcomes for residents.
- 1.5.12 Finally, the Task and Finish Group found that **public transport from North Tyneside to the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) in Cramlington, in particular, could be problematic**. Given the serious and life-threatening nature of conditions which are treated via emergency care, any journey to NSECH to access such care would be expected to take place by ambulance or with the patient as a passenger in a private car (rather than by public transport). However, for non-emergency care the matter of public transport is something likely to be material to the experience of our residents accessing other types of healthcare at this site, or when visiting loved ones at the hospital. Evidence demonstrated that journey times for some North Tyneside residents attending out of borough healthcare sites on public transport in 2022/23 had increased significantly when compared with journey times from 2014/15. For those reliant on public transport when travelling to the NSECH site, this trend is of concern.
- 1.5.13 Accordingly, the Task and Finish Group through the OSCFC recommends that further specific work should be undertaken by the Authority and Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, working with partner organisations as required, to explore transport

options that might be implemented to improve accessibility to the NSECH site for non-emergency care for North Tyneside residents.

1.6 Decision options:

The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet:

Option 1

To agree the recommendation set out at section 1.2 above.

Option 2

Not to agree the recommendation set out at section 1.2 above.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

1.7 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

As the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee has given notice that Cabinet is required to provide a response to the findings of its Task and Finish Group's report, Cabinet is obliged to accept the report and to formulate a response in accordance with requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix: *Emergency Care in North Tyneside: Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group, October 2023*

1.9 Contact officers:

Allison Mitchell, Head of Governance, tel. (0191) 643 5720

David Mason, Head of Finance, tel. (0191) 643 3293

1.10 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

Motion 4 passed by full Council on 16 March 2023:

(<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/g779/Public%20reports%20pack%2016th-Mar-2023%2018.00%20Council.pdf?T=10>)

The Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 ([The Local Authority \(Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#))

The Local Government Act 2000, Section 9FE ([Local Government Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#))

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

It is expected that there will be no financial implications to the Authority arising directly from the recommendations set out in this report:

- The recommendations regarding communications are anticipated to be capable of delivery via existing communications methods used by the Authority (e.g. the Our North Tyneside residents' newsletter, and social media channels) at no additional cost
- The recommendation relating to transport is intended to influence external agencies who may be able to address the matter of improved public transport from North Tyneside to the NSECH site at Cramlington. As such, it is not expected that there will be direct costs to the Authority from this recommendation.

2.2 Legal

In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Cabinet is required to provide a response to the recommendations of the Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee within two months. When providing such a response Cabinet is required to state whether or not it accepts each recommendation and the reasons for its decision. Cabinet must also indicate what action, if any, it proposes to take.

Cabinet will therefore need to provide its response to the OSCFC's Task and Finish Group Report in January 2024.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

The Task and Finish Group has invited the participation of all non-Executive elected members who volunteered to participate in the cross party Task and Finish Group, in addition to engagement with North Tyneside Council's Chief Executive, Director of Adult Social Care, Director of Public Health, the Authority's Public Health Team and North Tyneside Council staff based in North Tyneside General Hospital (Rake Lane).

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

The Task and Finish Group has engaged directly with the Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer, Business Unit Director for Emergency Surgery and Elective Care, and Director of Nursing at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, in addition to Trust staff based at

North Tyneside General Hospital (Rake Lane) and Northumbria Specialist and Emergency Hospital (NSECH).

In addition, the Task and Finish Group has engaged directly with the Director of Place (North Tyneside) of the Integrated Care Board (North East and Cumbria).

2.4 Human rights

There are no direct human rights implications arising from this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The Emergency Care Task and Finish Group did however examine the impact of deprivation on the health needs of the borough, and data on age and gender. This evidence helped to inform the findings and recommendations set out in the Appendix to the report which are summarised in this Cabinet report.

2.6 Risk management

There are no specific risks arising from the recommendations in this report. Should any risks be identified as work progresses, these will be managed in accordance with the Authority's agreed risk management framework.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising directly from this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

There are no environment and sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

PART 3 – SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive
- Director(s) of Service
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s)
- Chief Finance Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Assistant Chief Executive