

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 22 January 2024

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

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|---------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 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: Chief Executive

Responsible Officer: Paul Hanson, Chief Executive

(Tel: 0191 643 7001)

Wards affected: All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

On 27 November 2023 Cabinet received a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside. This Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was specifically established to take forward the matters set out in a motion regarding Emergency Healthcare, which had been agreed by full Council on 16 March 2023.

This report sets out a proposed response from Cabinet to the findings and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) Agrees the proposed responses to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside, as set out in the Appendix to this report; and
- (b) Authorises the Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Social Care and Director of Regeneration and Economic Development to take all necessary steps to deliver the proposed actions set out in the Appendix to this report as soon as reasonably practicable.

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 6 December 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 in accordance with the motion approved by Council 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 that such a group should be established, to take forward the matters set out in the motion put to Council.
- 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.

Work Undertaken

- 1.5.5 At its meeting on 12 June 2023 the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee agreed specific Terms of Reference for the work of the Task and Finish Group. These Terms of Reference set out the detailed objectives which the Task and Finish Group would seek to achieve through its work in scrutinising Emergency Healthcare in North Tyneside, pursuant to the motion passed by full Council in March 2023.
- 1.5.6 In detailed preparatory and fieldwork sessions undertaken during September and October 2023, as described in the Task and Finish Group's report received by Cabinet on 27 November 2023, the Task and Finish Group:
- a) 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) 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) undertook a site visit for the Task and Finish Group to North Tyneside General Hospital (Rake Lane), North Shields
 - d) undertook a site visit for the Task and Finish Group to Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH), Cramlington
 - e) 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 its findings and recommendations were based was presented to Cabinet on 27 November 2023. The findings and recommendations from the Task and Finish Group as set out in that report are as follows:

| Findings of the Task and Finish Group | Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Finding 1</i> <i>An excellent standard of Emergency Care is available to North Tyneside residents.</i></p> <p>The Task and Finish Group found that there is an excellent standard of emergency care and urgent treatment available to residents of North Tyneside. The Task and Finish Group hoped that this finding, based on the evidence set out in section 3.2 of the Task and Finish Group report presented to Cabinet on 27 November 2023 would be reassuring to residents and members of the Council alike.</p> | <p>The agreed performance standards for emergency healthcare provision covering North Tyneside should be regularly communicated to North Tyneside residents, by the local authority working with partner organisations.</p> <p>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.</p> |

| Findings of the Task and Finish Group | Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group |
|---|---|
| <p><i>Finding 2</i> <i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p> | <p>A communication campaign should be developed within the borough, involving North Tyneside Council and partner organisations, highlighting the distinction between 'emergency care' and 'urgent treatment' and when, where and how to access each type of care.</p> <p>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.</p> |

| Findings of the Task and Finish Group | Recommendations of the Task and Finish Group |
|--|---|
| <p><i>Finding 3</i> <i>Transport, particularly to the non-emergency departments based at the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital (NSECH) site in Cramlington, or when visiting loved ones in NSECH, is likely to impact upon the accessibility of that site for some North Tyneside residents.</i></p> <p>The Task and Finish Group found that public transport from North Tyneside to the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital 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.</p> | <p>Further specific work should be undertaken by North Tyneside Council 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.</p> <p>The Task and Finish Group hopes that a solution to this accessibility issue can be found and that the matter of journey times for North Tyneside residents to the NSECH site is thereafter regularly monitored by the Authority and by Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.</p> |

Cabinet's Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside

- 1.5.8 At the meeting of Cabinet on 27 November 2023 the Deputy Mayor (who chaired the meeting) thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee, and specifically the Task and Finish Group, for their work in progressing the matters set out in the motion agreed by full Council on 16 March 2023.
- 1.5.9 Having considered the findings summarised at 1.5.6 above, and the evidence base on which the Task and Finish Group has prepared its recommendations, Cabinet has indicated that it is minded to agree all recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group. Accordingly, Cabinet is recommended to formally agree the proposed responses to the recommendations, as set out in the Appendix to this report; and to authorise the Assistant Chief Executive, Director of Public Health, Director of Adult Social Care and Director of Regeneration and Economic Development to deliver the proposed actions set out in the Appendix to this report as soon as reasonably practicable.

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:

This will allow the Authority to progress the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, based on the evidence set out in the Task and Finish Group's report, in accordance with Cabinet's wishes. This will also fulfil Cabinet's responsibility to formulate a response to the Task and Finish Group's report, in accordance with requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.

1.8 Appendices:

Appendix: Proposed responses from Cabinet to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside (received by Cabinet on 27 November 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 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1000/contents/made))

The Local Government Act 2000, Section 9FE ([Local Government Act 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/22/section/9FE))

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee's Scrutiny Task and Finish Group on Emergency Care in North Tyneside, included within the agenda for Cabinet on 27 November 2023

(<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s15728/Report%20of%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20Emergency%20Care%20in%20North%20Tyneside.pdf> and

<https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s15729/Appendix%20-%20Report%20of%20Overview%20Scrutiny%20Task%20and%20Finish%20Group%20Emergency%20Care%20in%20North%20Tyneside.pdf>)

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.

The proposed responses set out in the Appendix to this report ensure that Cabinet discharges these requirements.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Cabinet notes that the Task and Finish Group invited the participation of all non-Executive elected members who volunteered to participate in the cross party Task and Finish Group, in addition to engaging 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

Cabinet notes that 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, Cabinet notes that 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.

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