

Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Sub-Committee

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Present: Councillor J Kirwin (Chair)
Councillors M Fox, L Arkley, T Hallway, J Mudzingwa,
T Mulvenna, T Neira, R O'Keefe, P Richardson,
O Scargill and J Shaw

In attendance:
Councillors A McMullen

Apologies: Councillors J Montague

ASCH7/21 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution, the appointment of the following substitute members were reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor J Montague

ASCH8/21 Declarations of Interest

Councillors J Kirwin, P Richardson and J Shaw declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 5, Beaumont GP Surgery, as ward councillors who provided support to residents who submitted evidence to the consultation on the sale of land at Newsteads Drive.

ASCH9/21 Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ASCH10/21 Cabinet Response to the Home Care Study Group Report

Cllr A McMullen, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, attended the meeting to present the Cabinet Response to the Home Care Study Group Report which had been agreed at the Cabinet meeting on 27 June 2022.

Cllr McMullen confirmed that all recommendations had been accepted by the Cabinet and would be taken forward.

Members noted the response to the recommendations and highlighted that the action plan does not include timescales for when actions will be complete. Cllr McMullen stated he would be happy to bring an update report back to the Sub-committee at a future date once timescales are confirmed. It was noted that some of the recommendations apply to contracts that cover several years and these changes cannot be implemented immediately,

but will be incorporated as future contract arrangements are considered.

In relation to Recommendation 2 and the payment of the Real Living Wage, it was noted that the Authority has agreed to increase rates by a higher percentage from April 2022 to support providers in paying their staff the Real Living Wage of £9.90 per hour, and to help in addressing staffing issues. However, it was noted that this was not an accreditation process linked to contract award or service delivery as any such accreditation process would be overly bureaucratic to implement. It was noted that it was too early to evaluate the impact this increase has had on recruitment and retention. However, the Council continues to monitor the quality of provision through a range of processes and, going forward, will be looking at rates of pay and evidence that payments are going to staff. The Sub-committee were advised that the Authority is unable to impose requirements around rates of pay or terms and conditions on providers.

Members asked about the number of packages currently on the brokerage list. It was noted that at the time of the report the number of packages was around 170 and this has come down to 126. This is due to the commissioning of additional services with extra care, a positive response from providers, and a review of the list to ensure those on the list remain in need of services.

There was some discussion about the impact of petrol costs and other cost of living factors on recruitment and retention of home care workers. It was noted that Covid grants which had been used towards additional costs such as fuel had been discontinued, but the Council continues to be in communication with providers and is monitoring the impact of paying the increased rate from April 2022.

Members asked about any contingency plans going forward if recruitment problems continue. It was noted that work was being taken forward at a regional level via ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services). It was also noted that a workforce strategy is being developed to ensure the pool of care staff is maintained and hopefully increased. Members requested an opportunity to be consulted on an early draft of this strategy.

It was **agreed** that:

- the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care be asked to provide an update to the Sub-committee in a further 6 months setting out progress against actions set out in the report;
- the Sub-committee be consulted on an early draft of the workforce strategy for social care.

ASCH11/21 Briefing Note - Beaumont GP Surgery

The Sub-committee considered the briefing note presented by James Martin, Head of Commissioning (Primary Care), NHS North East and North Cumbria, which set out the recent decision to agree to the closure of the Beaumont Park Surgery list to new patients for a period of six months. This follows a previous closure of the list for a temporary period during 2019/20.

The Sub-committee noted the reasons for the decision which were linked to limitations placed on the practice due to the size and condition of the current building, and staff vacancies. There were concerns that if a solution is not found there will be a risk that the practice will be unable to safely reopen their list within a set timescale. There are also risks to the ongoing viability of the practice going forward which would impact on GP provision in the local area.

There was some discussion about the actions taken to identify an alternative site for the relocation of the practice to allow for a larger and more modern surgery. It was noted that there had been a proposal for the Council to release land at Newsteads Drive to allow a new practice to be built. However, following consultation on the proposals, and objections received from residents and ward councillors in relation to the loss of green space, the Cabinet decided against the sale of the land.

Some concerns were raised about the scale of the consultation exercise, with a suggestion that the consultation could be repeated with more consultation with current patients. It was also suggested that further consideration should be given to alternative sites identified for relocation, although it was noted that none of the alternative sites had been deemed suitable for a range of reasons including potential planning issues, location for current patients and build viability. Members requested information on the full list of sites that had been identified and considered as part of the process in 2019.

It was stressed that it was in the interests of the borough to resolve the issue which would allow the practice to be increased in size and modernised, would allow extra resources to be included in the practice, and would safeguard future provision.

Members emphasised their support for a solution to be found and agreed that a recommendation should be submitted to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Sub-committee highlighting the issue and requesting that the Cabinet Member work the NHS Northeast and North Cumbria and the practice to consider possible solutions.

It was **agreed** that:

- the Sub-committee recommend to the Cabinet Member that they meet with representatives of NHS Northeast and North Cumbria, as a matter of urgency, to consider the issues set out in the briefing note in relation to the potential loss of Beaumont Park Surgery and to work to find a solution;
- the sub-committee be provided with a list of alternative sites considered in 2019 in relation to the relocation of Beaumont Park Surgery.

ASCH12/21 Introduction To Healthwatch

The Sub-committee received a presentation from Paul Jones of Healthwatch North Tyneside which provided an introduction to the work of Healthwatch and an update on current priorities and projects. Copies of the Healthwatch North Tyneside Annual Report 2021-22 and the Living Well North Tyneside magazine were circulated to members.

Members noted the current priorities for Healthwatch including women's health – women's health clinics in primary care and breast screening, audiology services, long term conditions and outpatient support, transport, digital inclusion and support for carers.

Members welcomed the focus on local pharmacies and raised an issue in relation to dose boxes. It was noted that the future role of pharmacies was under consideration and that Healthwatch would be highlighting the importance of local pharmacy services and that community services need to be funded to retain human contact.

The Sub-committee thanked Paul Jones for his presentation.

ASCH13/21 Autism Strategy

The Sub-committee received a presentation on the Autism Strategy.

It was noted that consultation on the Autism Strategy had begun 2 years ago, and the strategy had been developed with the support of Healthwatch, Inclusion North, and the North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum. The Sub-committee had received a number of reports on the development of the Strategy at this time.

The Strategy reflects the NHS Local 3 Year Plan and the National Autism Strategy and includes 6 high-level priorities. The Strategy was approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Board in Sept 2021.

Members raised a number of questions in response to the presentation. It was highlighted that the 'puzzle piece' illustration reflected a dated view of Autism and members asked whether there were plans to move away from this. It was noted that this replicated the older persons strategy but that consideration would be given to moving away from this in future.

Members asked about the waiting times for autism diagnosis for older people and for this information to be provided after the meeting if available.

A Member highlighted the needs of home-schooled children with Autism and stressed the need to identify these children and incorporate specific support for them. It was noted that organisations in the charity sector can help to identify such children who the Council may not be aware of.

Members welcomed plans to work towards an 'Autism Friendly Borough'.

Members thanked officers for the presentation.

ASCH14/21 Joint OSC for the NE&NC ICS and North and Central ICPs'

Cllr Kirwin provided an update from the recent meeting of the regional health scrutiny committee which was held on 4 July 2022.

It was noted that the structure of the scrutiny arrangements may need to be reviewed with consideration of whether a regional body is still fit for purpose or whether sub-integrated

partnerships would allow for more place-based decision making.

The meeting considered a report on Oncology Services in the region. It had been reported that due to staff shortages patients would be required to travel outside of the borough in some areas for a one-year period.

It had been reported that NHS waiting lists were at an all-time high with 300,000 cases which represents 10% of the region.

It was **agreed** that the papers from the meeting be circulated to members of the sub-committee.