

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 31 October 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Abdeslam Amrani, Paul Bell, Peter Bernards, John Coughlin, Liam Curran, Colin Elliott, Maja Hilton, Simon Hooks, Sue Hordijkeno, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Roy Kennedy, Hilary Moore, Pauline Morrison, John Muldoon, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Joan Reid, Luke Sorba, Eva Stamirowski and James-J Walsh

APOLOGIES: Councillors Gareth Siddorn, Obajimi Adefiranye, Chris Barnham, Andre Bourne, Bill Brown, Suzannah Clarke, Brenda Dacres, Amanda De Ryk, Carl Handley, Mark Ingleby, Stella Jeffrey, Jim Mallory, David Michael, Jonathan Slater, Alan Till and Susan Wise

ALSO PRESENT: Harriet Brown (Local and Regional Government Liaison Officer) (Thames Water), Sarah Hurcomb (General Manager for South London) (Thames Water), Mark Mathews (Local and Regional Government Liaison Manager) (Thames Water), Tim McMahon (Head of Water Networks) (Thames Water), Aileen Buckton (Executive Director for Community Services) (London Borough of Lewisham), Martin Wilkinson (Chief Officer) (Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group), Jacky McLeod (Clinical Director and Primary Care Lead) (Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group), Ashley O'Shaughnessy (Deputy Director of Primary Care) (Lewisham CCG), Ralph Wilkinson (Head of Public Services) and Mole Meade (CWU National Postal Executive Member) (Communication Workers Union)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017

1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017 be agreed as an accurate record.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Alan Hall – *Member of three Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (two relating to the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and one relating to the Our Healthier South East London Programme) and a Governor of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust*

Councillor John Muldoon - *Member of three Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (two relating to the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust and one relating to the Our Healthier South East London Programme) and a Governor of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust*

Councillor Paul Bell - Elected member of the Kings College Hospital Foundation Trust

Councillor John Paschoud – *Member of the Patient Participation Group at the Jenner GP Practice*

Councillor Peter Bernards – *Director of a company that does business with the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust*
Councillor Luke Sorba - *Governor of the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust.*

It was agreed that the agenda order would be varied. Item 5 (Thames Water) would be taken next, followed by Item 4 (post office update) and then Item 3 (local NHS GP Services)

3. NHS Local GP Services

3.1 Martin Wilkinson, Chief Officer; Ashley O'Shaughnessy, Deputy Director of Primary Care; and Dr Jacky McLeod, Clinical Director, Primary Care Lead, (NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group) introduced the item.

3.2 It was noted that:

- The CCG had been responsible for primary care commissioning from 1 April 2017. Certain core services had to be provided but other 'at scale' services could be locally determined.
- There was a focus on prevention, co-ordinated care plans and an integrated care model.
- To reduce the strain on accident and emergency services at the University Hospital Lewisham, streaming and re-direction was being piloted to deliver rapid clinical assessment and appropriate redirection of patients to urgent care, outpatient care, Neighbourhood Care Networks and GP services in addition to A&E.
- There would be a GP Extended access service in a purpose built site at the hospital from 1 November 2017 offering a service from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.
- 35 out of the 39 GP practices located in Lewisham offered extended hours.
- Lewisham was the third best borough in London in terms of the number of patients signed up for online services.

3.3 In response to questions from members of the Committee, it was noted that:

- There were 143 full time equivalent GPs in Lewisham (not including locums and retainers) and the borough fared well in terms of list sizes.
- Practice nurse numbers were more of a concern and it was likely that there would be an increase in retirements over the next 3 to 4 years. A targeted international recruitment campaign would be launched.
- The CCG was working with GPs in terms of incentivising GP trainees to stay in the borough and there had been some successes in terms of nursing recently. The CCG had, for example, appointed the first Nurse Consultant in Primary Care in the country alongside three General Practice Nurse Advisors to support with professional development and recruitment.

- GPs were considering whether reception and healthcare assistant staff could take on a broader range of responsibilities.
- The incorporation of public health into the local authority had resulted in a number of positive outcomes including influencing the thinking of a wider range of officers. The provision of the flu jab to all staff (if they wanted it) was one such example.
- The Better Care Fund had brought additional funding into the Council although it had not totally resolved the funding crisis in adult social care. Officers were working on plans to sustain the improvements.
- Free flu jabs would be offered to all residents in care homes and all domiciliary care workers. School pupils in years reception, 1, 2, 3 and 4 were receiving the flu jab and schools were also being encouraged to offer the vaccination to staff.
- High house prices were a factor in the recruitment and retention of A&E, GP and nursing staff.
- Technology was improving primary care with video consultations, online booking of appointments, better transfer of calls via the 111 number etc.

3.4 In relation to the proposed closure of the Walk In Centre at New Cross, the Committee heard from Jane Mandlik of the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign. She felt that the proposals to fill the gap that the closure of the centre would create were insufficient. In the discussion that followed the points below were noted:

- The equalities impact needed to be fully considered. The centre served, amongst others, a large homeless population, people who found it difficult to get appointments with their GP, patients who had not registered with a GP for a variety of reasons, and those with ill children who needed an urgent appointment.
- The CCG was open to the idea of delaying a decision to allow extra time to fully consider the results of the consultation and how any gap in provision caused by the closure might be addressed.

3.5 The Committee agreed to make a referral to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in relation to the proposed closure of the New Cross Walk In Centre. The Committee also agreed that the matter should be referred to Full Council.

3.6 **RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to

(A) Make the following comments to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in relation to the proposed closure of the Walk In Centre at New Cross:

1. We have heard a number of concerns about the proposed closure.
2. We appreciate that the NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is likely to need more time to consider the responses received during the conclusion and we welcome that.
3. We would welcome the final response from the CCG on this matter being provided to all councillors as the walk-in centre is a borough-wide service.

4. We would welcome further details on GP recruitment and nurse retention bearing in mind Lewisham's population increase and Our Healthier South East London (OHSEL) / the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) primary care requirements.
5. Current A&E performance figures for local trusts (Lewisham, King's and Guys and St Thomas') were discussed at our meeting and we question how this proposal will help improve performance.

(B) Refer this issue to Full Council.

4. Post Office Update

- 4.1 The Chair welcomed Mole Meade, Communication Workers Union (CWU) to the meeting.
- 4.2 Ralph Wilkinson gave a brief update on the New Cross and Sydenham Crown Post Offices. It was noted that:
 - The Mayor had written to Ellie Reeves MP, the Chief Executive of the Post Office and the Government minister responsible for Post Offices, opposing the changes to the Sydenham Post Office. The Post Office Chief Executive had also been asked for further information about their strategy to preserve the full range of Post Office services for Lewisham residents.
 - Sydenham - the timetable had been to complete the consultation by 26 May 2017 and to make the changes in August 2017. However, the Post Office have not yet made a decision on the future of the branch. Terms for the temporary lease renewal (pending a decision) had been agreed and solicitors instructed to draw up the new lease.
 - New Cross – the timetable was to complete the consultation by 18 October 2017 and implement the changes in February 2018. The Post Office was currently making its decision.
- 4.3 Mole Meade introduced the CASS Business school report on proposals for a Post Bank. It was felt that the establishment of a Post Bank would enable the Post Office to be sustainable in the long term, by diversifying its portfolio of activities and increasing revenues. A state-owned Post Bank would also provide better access to finance for Small and Medium Enterprises, improved financial inclusion, a rebalancing of the UK economy away from London and other major urban centres and align the Post Office with the successful strategy of other postal operators around the world.
- 4.4 In response to questions from members of the committee the following points were noted:
 - The CWU wanted the Post Bank to be state run, rather than mutually owned.
 - Members could help the CWU realise their ambition by applying pressure to ministers.
- 4.5 **RESOLVED:** That

- (A) The Chair would write, on behalf of the Committee, to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility, Margot James MP, in relation to the future of New Cross and Sydenham Crown Post Offices.
- (B) The CASS Business School report *Making the Case for a Post Bank*, (prepared for the Communications Workers Union, September 2017), would be provided to Mayor and Cabinet to inform policy development in this area.

5. Thames Water Strategic Review and response to scrutiny recommendations

5.1 The Chair welcomed Mark Mathews, Local and Regional Government Liaison Manager; Sarah Hurcomb, General Manager for South London; Tim McMahon, Head of Water Networks; and Harriet Brown, Local and Regional Government Liaison Officer (Thames Water) to the meeting.

5.2 Tim McMahon introduced the item and the following was noted:

- A number of capital investments had been made since the two major bursts in Lee High Road and Lee Road at the end of 2016; including £10m of capital investment for Lee High Road to improve the infrastructure.
- 90 metres of pipework on Eltham Road had been replaced with cross connections for strengthening purposes and chambers for monitoring.
- The independent Cuthill report considered why the major bursts across London in 2016 had happened, the impact of the bursts, the response provided and the role of network configuration. As a result, Thames Water had improved its approach to monitoring its trunk mains and by 2025 aimed for 25% of its network to be covered by monitoring. Customer response had also been improved with 24 newly trained customer representatives now responsible for managing cases for customers from the day of the burst to resolution.
- Thames Water's recently published Strategic Review built on the findings of the Cuthill report, and included 15 commitments to improving performance. Key aspects of this were recruiting extra night time resource and improving assurance processes for customers.

5.3 In response to questions from Members of the Committee, it was noted that:

- A new shift pattern had been introduced to improve the response available in the case of an out of hours event, especially between 2am to 8am, and a night time complex manager had been appointed.
- Thames Water was working more closely with Transport for London. This included coordinating work so there would be a single excavation on key roads (e.g. Deptford High Street).
- The recent Rushey Green Road incident would be looked into and a response provided to the councillor who had raised the issue.

- Training for operators of Syrinix monitoring units involved a refresher every quarter and full training once a year to ensure that they were correctly and consistently using and acting upon the resulting monitoring unit data.
- Thames Water reported that the volume of investment in the network was four times higher now than pre-privatisation levels.
- Of the two fines recently imposed on Thames Water, one was self-imposed, a penalty agreed with customers, the other related to an incident five years ago that Thames Water were certain would not be repeated.
- 0.7 to 1km of repairs were being carried out daily to the pipe network.

5.4 The Committee noted that Thames Water’s Business Plan (2020 – 2025) would be released for consultation in early 2018 and would include options for a comprehensive long term programme of pipe replacement. The Committee noted that it might ask Thames Water to attend a future meeting, following the publication of this document.

5.5 It was noted that one of the recommendations the Committee had made as a result of its scrutiny into this issue, was that “The Mayor of London, GLA and London boroughs support the campaign of the Fire Brigade Union to become the statutory Emergency Response Service for flooding”. The Council’s Highways Team would not have any objection to this happening.

5.6 **RESOLVED:** That full Council be asked to endorse the Committee’s recommendation that: “*The Mayor of London, GLA and London boroughs support the campaign of the Fire Brigade Union to become the statutory Emergency Response Service for flooding*”, and write to the Home Office to voice the borough’s support.

6. Items to be referred to Mayor and Cabinet

6.1 **RESOLVED:** That a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet in relation to item 4 (Post Office Update), referring the CASS Business School report *Making the Case for a Post Bank*, (prepared for the Communications Workers Union, September 2017), to that body.

In addition, it was agreed that a referral be made to the Healthier Communities Select Committee in relation to item 3 (Local NHS GP Services) and the report on the proposed closure of the Walk In Centre referred to full Council; and that a further referral be made to full Council, asking it to endorse one of the Committee’s recommendations in relation to item 5 (Thames Water).

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chair:

Date:
