



Mayor and Cabinet

Resolution from Forest Hill Assembly regarding GP provision in the ward

Date: 1 November 2023

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: Forest Hill

Contributors: James Lee, Director of Communities, Partnership and Leisure

Outline and recommendations

This report notes the concern expressed by the Forest Hill Assembly at the lack of a GP Surgery within the ward boundaries, and their request for Mayor and Cabinet to ask Lewisham Health & Wellbeing Board to consider carrying out an up to date study of health needs in the ward with a view to increasing GP capacity.

Recommendation: We are asking Mayor and Cabinet to note the motion and pass the request to the relevant body for a direct response.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

13 May 2013 – The provision of primary care services was discussed at the Forest Hill Assembly: Southwark CCG attended to speak about a consultation on changes to service provision, with options including: increased community capacity, or expanding provision at Dulwich Hospital. Questions were asked by residents about GP provision in the context of the distance they would have to travel to get to a GP surgery.

October 2013 Assembly – It was reported that Southwark CCG had closed the consultation and the decision was to expand provision at Dulwich Hospital. No reason was given during the meeting for this decision.

March 2014 Assembly – Healthwatch spoke at the Assembly and a question was raised about the role of Healthwatch in addressing the lack of GPs in the ward. The Healthwatch representative promised to look into this issue.

Autumn 2013 – Spring 2014 community consultation led by SEE3 and local amenity societies on change of designation for Willow Way revealed support for inclusion of a health facility at this site. A health facility is specifically mentioned in the report as a desirable element of the proposed new uses.

July 2014 - a GP Surgery was specifically mentioned as part of a presentation to Forest Hill Assembly on the SEE3 Kirkdale project.

September 2014 The SEE3 Kirkdale proposals were brought to the September 2014 assembly for further discussion, during which the need for a GP Surgery was again mentioned: SEE3 Kirkdale Triangle Proposal.

2015-present: Forest Hill councillors have endeavoured to air this issue in a range of fora including Healthier Communities Select Committee, Full Council and community events, as well as raising it directly with the cabinet member.

14 June 2023 Assembly: Forest Hill Assembly passes motion to Mayor & Cabinet on GP Surgery provision in the ward

1. Summary

- 1.1. The following resolution, brought by a ward resident, was passed by overwhelming majority at Forest Hill Assembly (online) held on 14 June 2023: “The Forest Hill Assembly expresses concern regarding GP capacity for the 10th year in succession and requests that this matter is placed on the Lewisham Health & Wellbeing Board agenda with a request for a proper study.”

- 1.2. This report notes the concern expressed by the Forest Hill Assembly at the lack of a GP Surgery within the ward boundaries, and their request for Mayor and Cabinet to ask Lewisham Health & Wellbeing Board to consider carrying out an up to date study of health needs in the ward with a view to increasing GP capacity.
- 1.3. Mayor and Cabinet are asked to note the motion and pass the request to the relevant body for a direct response.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Mayor and Cabinet to note the motion from Forest Hill Assembly and pass the request for a review of GP capacity to the relevant body for a direct response.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. This report aligns with Lewisham's Corporate Priorities, as set out in the Council's [Corporate Strategy \(2022-2026\)](#):
 - Cleaner and Greener
 - A Strong Local Economy
 - Quality Housing
 - Children and Young People
 - Safer Communities
 - Open Lewisham
 - Health and Wellbeing
- 3.2. In particular, this report is closely aligned to priority Health and Wellbeing because it concerns access to primary care and reducing health inequalities for the whole population; and especially those for whom walking or travelling any distance may be challenging – older people, disabled people, those who are pregnant or with small children, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions where they may be lacking confidence to travel or face other barriers, etc.
- 3.3. The motion aligns with the Cleaner and Greener priority by potentially supporting and enabling people to use active travel for their health appointments: residents will be less likely to use the car to get to a GP appointment if the GP surgery is nearer to their home.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Council Constitution provides for each local Ward Assembly to have the

- opportunity to submit up to one motion per year to Mayor and Cabinet.
- 4.2. As detailed in the timeline above, Forest Hill Assembly, together with councillors and other community members, have raised the issue of in-ward GP capacity on a number of occasions and in different fora over the last ten years or more.
 - 4.3. At the Forest Hill Assembly on 14 June 2023, a presentation on GP surgery provision in the ward was delivered by Ashley O'Shaunessy (Associate Director of Primary Care (Lewisham)).
 - 4.4. Following this presentation, the discussion focussed on the concern that had been consistently expressed by residents and councillors at the lack of a GP surgery in the ward; and on resident perceptions that quality of provision at some of their nearest surgeries has deteriorated.
 - 4.5. It is not known whether any review similar to that requested by residents has been carried out previously. It is not thought that any review of GP capacity has been carried out for Forest Hill specifically in this century.
 - 4.6. We are unable to find any evidence for similar requests from Assemblies for reviews of health provision in the last six years.
 - 4.7. Forest Hill ward is currently undergoing and has undergone considerable new housing development, which will increase the population, thereby increasing demand for healthcare.
 - 4.8. Currently, 60 units have been recently completed, a further 200+ are envisaged in the 2020-21 Housing Trajectory, and there are proposed developments at Taymount Grange (29 units) and Willow Way (number of units n/k.) Based on information provided by Angela Steward, Interim Principal Policy Officer, Strategic Planning Team.
 - 4.9. Average health and wellbeing data for Forest Hill appear to show health as similar or better than the national average. See <https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Forest-Hill-digital.pdf>
 - 4.10. However, there appear to be some significant differences between the north and south of the ward. For example, women's life expectancy in the part of the ward which lies south of the South Circular, is approximately 3 years below national average; and for men life expectancy is around 2.5 years below national average.
 - 4.11. It is not suggested that lower life expectancy is caused by distance from the GP

surgery. It is recognised that this is related to a range of social determinants and health inequalities. However it is suggested that these statistics might provide the basis for reviewing whether current access to a GP is adequate to meet the primary healthcare needs of this very local population.

5. Financial implications

5.1. There are no financial implications contained in this report.

6. Legal implications

6.1. There are no legal implications contained in this report.

7. Equalities implications

7.1. This report in itself has no equalities implications.

7.2. It is possible that, should any review be eventually carried out following on from this report, this may uncover equalities implications in terms of health inequalities.

7.3. The report may be seen to demonstrate Lewisham's commitment to the social model of disability, in that should any study of the primary healthcare needs of Forest Hill ward be carried out, this would potentially enable investigation of whether the current level of access to primary care in that ward is having any disabling effects on the community.

8. Climate change and environmental implications

8.1. There are no climate change or environmental implications in this report.

9. Crime and disorder implications

9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications in this report.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

10.1. This report speaks to Health and Wellbeing and is about easier access to primary healthcare services close to where residents of Forest Hill live. The motion to Mayor and Cabinet and this report in themselves do not have any direct implications for health and wellbeing in the ward or borough. Should any study of primary healthcare needs be carried out, as requested by residents, and should this eventually lead to a change in local GP capacity, it is possible that this would result in a change in access to primary care in the ward. This cannot be established without carrying out the suggested study.

11. Background papers

11.1. GP provision in Forest Hill ward – 23 – 24 (002) Presentation Ashley

O'Shaunessy.

11.2. SEE3 Kirkdale Triangle Proposal.

12. Glossary

12.1.

Term	Definition
Social determinants of health	The conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

13. Report author(s) and contact

13.1. James Lee, Director of Communities, Partnership and Leisure,
james.lee@lewisham.gov.uk 020 8314 6548 07876 794262

14. Appendices

14.1. Appendix A: GP provision in Forest Hill ward – 23 24 (002) Presentation Ashley
O'Shaunessy.

14.2. Appendix B: Forest Hill Observatory Ward Profile:

<https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Forest-Hill-digital.pdf>