

Healthier & Safer Scrutiny Committee

2013/14 Annual Report

INDEX

Page 3	Introduction
Page 4	13 June 2013
Page 4	18 July 2013
Page 5	5 September 2013
Page 7	17 October 2013
Page 9	21 November 2013
Page 11	9 January 2014
Page 11	27 February 2014
Page 13	1 April 2014
Page 13	10 April 2014
Page 14	Staffordshire County Council Health Select Committee

Introduction

2013/14 has and still is a very busy year for the Borough Council's Healthier & Safer scrutiny committee members.

The continued issue of car parking charges at Sir Robert Peel hospital, the introduction of the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, the downgrading of acute stroke services at Queen's hospital, Burton-upon-Trent, the implications of the Francis Report on locally commissioned health services and the announcement of a full review of services offered at Tamworth's Sir Robert Peel hospital.

At the first meeting of the new electoral year, the committee members initially agreed to scrutinise three important issues that affect many residents of the borough:

- Out of hours service providers
- Domestic Violence
- Teenage Sexual Health
- Review of the Francis Report

The committee agreed to continue with the review of car parking charges at Sir Robert Peel hospital and members were unanimous that other important issues would be added to the committee's work plan for 2013/14 throughout the year, providing sufficient time allowed a thorough review.

13 June 2013

Presentation of the Licensing Policy of the Council with Specific Reference to the Cumulative Impact Policy

A presentation on the Borough Council's licensing policy with specific reference to the cumulative impact policy. After several questions and comments from various committee members, the committee voted unanimously that any future updates to the Cumulative Impact Policy be brought back to the Healthier and Safer Scrutiny Committee.

Car Parking Charges at Sir Robert Peel Hospital

The Chairman gave the committee a copy of the new signage put in place by Burton hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in the Sir Robert Peel hospital car park. It was agreed to adjourn the item to a later meeting when more information is available.

Other Items Agreed for future scrutiny

The committee agreed to scrutinise out of hour's service providers, domestic violence and teenage Sexual Health over the coming year.

18 July 2013

Car Parking Charges at Sir Robert Peel Hospital

The Chairman informed the committee that Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have begun a review of the disabled parking at Sir Robert Peel Hospital. following a discussion, it was resolved that a Member of the Executive from Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust be invited to a future meeting following the completion of their review.

Out of Hours Doctors Service in Tamworth

The committee received an update from Councillor Couchman on the work done so far on the Out of Hours Doctors Service in Tamworth. Once the work has been finished then there will be a full presentation to the Committee.

Tamworth Borough Council Tax and Rent Arrears

Tamworth Borough Council tax rent arrears was raised at the meeting and the committee agreed to forward the following questions to the Borough Council's Head of Revenues for a detailed reply at a future scrutiny committee meeting

- Why is it that only those paying by direct-debit can pay on 18th of the month?
- Why must all non direct-debit payments be made by 5th of the month?

- Following changes in the Localism Act, can council tax now be paid over 12 months rather than 10 months?
- A legal cost of £90 is added if summons issued – does this cover the costs?
- Do we just issue a court summons letter or is there a court number issued as well?
- Could an agreement to pay on a certain date be agreed without having to get to summons stage first as this is very costly to the council?
- What is the current level of council tax arrears and how does it compare with 12 months previous?
- What is the current level of council rent arrears and how does it compare with 12 months previous?
- What is the current average council rent figure and how does it compare with 12 months previous?

5 September 2013

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board Consultation

The Committee reviewed the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board Our Five Year Plan 2013-2018 document and the outcome of the consultation on the strategy undertaken by Tamworth Borough Council's Citizen Panel. several questions and comments followed and it was resolved that the questions below be taken to the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board by the Director of Housing and Health.

- How regularly will the board meet?
- What are the core activities of the board?
- How do they hold the service providers to account?
- What enforcement powers does the board have?
- How were the people selected for completion of the survey conducted by Tamworth Borough Council?
- How was the composition of the board selected?
- How are the board going to report back to Local Authorities?
- What budget do they have and does the board have powers to spend the budget?

Council Tax and Rent Arrears

The Committee considered the detailed information provided by the Borough Council's Head of Revenues on Council Tax and rent arrears and the Leader of the Council, who attended the meeting, was invited to speak to the Committee.

Following further questions from the members, the Leader of the Council agreed to report back to the next committee meeting in response to the questions asked.

Stroke Facilities at Queens Hospital Burton-Upon-Trent

The Chairman informed the committee that, at the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee accountability session with Burton Foundation hospital Trust held on Monday 12 August in Stafford, the Trust announced that discussions were taking place between them and Health Commissioners to downgrade the Queens Hospital's Acute Stroke services and end all submissions of stroke patients within the first 72 hours of the initial diagnosis of a stroke.

During the accountability session the Trust stated that the Queen's hospital does not have the capacity to continue offering Acute Stroke services and as Derby hospital does have the facility and is within a reasonably short distance of Burton-upon-Trent acute stroke patients will be directed to Derby during the first 72 hours of diagnosis of a stroke.

The committee was told that if the downgrading of services were implemented, Tamworth residents would in future be directed to Heartlands hospital in Birmingham, the George Elliot hospital in Nuneaton, Walsall Manor hospital or hospitals further afield, such as ones in Derby, Leicester, Wolverhampton of the north of Staffordshire.

This was because of a similar downgrading of Acute Stroke services at Good Hope hospital occur on April 1 2013 when acute services were transferred to Heartlands hospital in Birmingham.

It was agreed for the Chairman to ask the below questions, raised by the committee, at future Healthy Staffordshire public accountability meetings along with South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula CCG and report back to the committee in due course.

- What has changed since last year's press release?
- What future plans do the CCG for Tamworth have in place?
- Is the removal of the stroke unit a clinical decision or a cost cutting exercise?

- What is the effect on the long-term recovery following the extra journey time?
- How genuine is the 'discussion'? Has the decision already been made?
- If this is a genuine discussion then how will this be fed back?

Out of Hours Doctors Service in Tamworth

Councillor Couchman updated the Committee on the work done on the Out of Hours Doctors Service in Tamworth. She advised that she has received no negative feedback and is happy with what is in place in Tamworth. The community thanked Councillor Couchman for the work she has done in researching the Out of Hours Doctors Service in Tamworth.

17 October 2013

Implications of the Francis Report on Locally Commissioned Health Services

The Accountable Officer and Chief Operating Officer from the South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula Clinical Commissioning Group gave a presentation on The NHS in response to the following question.

Now that CCG's commission acute services, what are the local CCG doing to ensure that the recommendations of the Francis Report are met?

Several questions and comments followed the presentation at the Accountable Officer and Chief Operating Officer were thanked for their presentation and attendance.

Council Tax and Rent Arrears Update

In response to the questions raised with the Leader of the Council at the last Healthier & Safer meeting, the following reply was given to members

Why are there 2 collection dates for Council Tax, 5th for cash and 18th for Direct Debit?

- 1) Why is it that only those paying by direct-debit can pay on 18th of the month?

The Council has an approved payment date of the 5th of each month (approved a number of years ago) and in line with statutory Council Tax provisions, collection/recovery procedures are based around this date. We have given those who pay by direct debit an alternative payment date to encourage its take up. It is far cheaper and more

efficient to collect Council Tax by direct debit thus reducing our costs. Also we are making the claim to the person's bank account as opposed to us relying on a charge payer to make a payment. Only a small percentage of direct debits are rejected and so we are guaranteed payment in most cases. Should we alter these collection/recovery activities the collection rates/cash flow of the Authority would suffer and ultimately this would affect council income and its associated budgets and therefore the provision of the services we provide for the people of Tamworth.

- 2) Council Tax – why can those that pay by cash not be offered a payment date of 18th monthly? Those who pay by direct debit very rarely fail to honour their payments. We control when the direct debit claim is made and indeed how much we will be taking from their bank account. So that is why we offer a second date. A non DD payer makes the payment themselves. They will determine when and how much is paid. If indeed they do pay us. The vast majority of non payment comes from those non DD payers. The mere fact that they will not commit to a direct debit on the 18th of the month with us tells us that they are not able to guarantee that they can pay us on this date. If they won't go via DD they are not going to pay us by cash. Offering a cash payment date while delay the recovery process. I can only again state that if we go down this road that it would have serious effects on our collection, cash flow and associated budgets.

Why are rent arrears higher this year than last year?

- 1) Cabinet have received several reports and member presentations on Welfare reform and the arrears increase is as predicted and as set out to members previously. Those predictions are built into the MTFS & bad debt forecasts and are subject to tight controls in terms of prevention, recovery and enforcement. There is a detailed action plan to manage this including the development of a corporate debt policy, investment in the landlord service with the introduction of 2 income maximisation officers, added investment in the third sector and greater involvement with the court user group on targeted intervention.
- 2) The arrears are following a similar trend to last year and eviction rates are similar, 4 to-date.
- 3) Arrears compared this year, with the same time last year, stand at **£110,791.02 higher** (as at 8/9/13) reasons include;-
 - Rents this year are higher than last year - £4.00 on average in line with normal rent restructuring guidelines

- 53 week rent year this year therefore one week extra wks debit of c £342,000 to collect
- 4 free weeks so the effect on arrears recovery is cumulative and is difficult to assess mid year – in other words it will get better by year end
- As predicted in terms of the Spare Room Subsidy (aka bedroom tax) 72% were paying in May 2013 and this has dropped to 31% as at the end of August 2013 which accounts for £85,945.18 of the £110,791.02 increase or 77.5%. Whilst 69% are not clearing their rent account or this charge in full, there have been no evictions as a result of this in Tamworth at the moment.
- Tenants of workable age and on benefits have to pay Council Tax for the first time; they may be paying this while leaving rent to slip??????

Domestic Violence in Tamworth

Councillor Clarke updated the committee on the work she has been doing on gathering information on domestic violence in Tamworth.

21 November 2013

Domestic Violence / Serious Violent Crime and Less Serious Violent Crime

In response to the following questions on domestic violence, serious violent crime and less serious violent crime, Tamworth's new Chief Inspector, the Director Communities, Planning and Partnership and the Head of Community Safety gave a presentation on Domestic Violence and Serious Violent Crime and Less Serious Violent Crime in Tamworth.

- the level of domestic violence and abuse prevalent in Tamworth
- what is being done to reduce the number of serious violent crimes in Tamworth (Quarter 1 2013/14 Performance Report to Cabinet shows the current figure of 10 is getting worse)
- what is being done to reduce the number of serious violent crimes in Tamworth (Although, Quarter 1 2013/14 Performance Report to Cabinet shows the current figure of 110 is getting improving, the report shows this as a RED LIGHT issue)

Following the presentation, questions and comments from members, thanks were given for the update, and the committee resolved the following recommendation be presented to Cabinet on 12 December 2013:

- The Healthier and Safer Scrutiny Committee discussed violence and domestic violence at its last meeting, following that discussion the committee would like to ask the Cabinet to liaise directly with the relevant County Council Portfolio Holder in order to understand what services are currently available to tackle alcohol misuse in Tamworth and what services are currently being commissioned. This will support and enhance the recent request made by Borough Council officers to the County Council following the committee meeting.

Private Landowners

The question of what powers does Tamworth Borough Council have to force private landowners within the Borough of Tamworth to release land suitable for house building in relation of land blocking by private landowners was raised and the below subsequent response from the Head of Planning and Regeneration was forwarded onto committee members

- There are compulsory purchase order powers under planning legislation that Councils can use.

Compulsory purchase powers are provided to enable acquiring authorities to compulsorily purchase land to carry out a function, which Parliament has decided, is in the public interest.

Anyone who has land acquired is generally entitled to compensation.

CPO powers are generally used by local authorities to assemble land in order to bring forward highway schemes or regeneration schemes. For example, if there was a small piece of land in the Tinkers Green area that was in 3rd party ownership but could contribute to a better regeneration scheme, the Council would seek to buy the land and if negotiations failed then they could fall back on CPO powers to acquire the land.

The issue of land banking and land hoarding has been discussed in the press recently. What can be seen as land banking or hoarding, which is slightly different, may often be the time taken by a developer to discharge planning conditions, get in place the land, finance, and construction firm to start on site, which can, particularly on large sites, take several years from the grant of planning permission.

CPO is usually seen as a last resort because it can be a lengthy and costly process (in terms of legal costs) and the Council still has to pay the market rate for the land.

9 January 2014

Healthier Tamworth

Mr Robert Barnes, Director Housing and Health, and Mr Tim Leese, District Public Health Commissioning Lead, gave a presentation on the Healthy Tamworth project.

Mr Barnes and Mr Leese were thanked for their update.

Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board

County Councillor Robert Marshall, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and Chairman of Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, updated the Committee on the work being done by the Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

Several questions followed the presentation and Councillor Marshall suggested questions on alcohol services in Tamworth and GP out of hour's services be put to the local CCG, as they commission services in Tamworth and across Staffordshire.

Councillor Marshall was thanked for the update, and it was resolved that the Accountable Officer from the South East Staffordshire and Seisdon Peninsula Clinical Commissioning Group be invited to a future meeting to answer questions on alcohol services in Tamworth and GP out of hour's services.

27 February 2014

Sexual Health Services in Tamworth

A presentation on current and future sexual health services in Tamworth was given Tim Leese, District Commissioning Lead for Tamworth, and Rachel Chapman, Sexual Health Commissioner.

The presentation was in response to the committee's proposal to carry out a full review of sexual health services for across Tamworth, in light of the Glascote Heath sexual health clinic only opening on a Wednesday morning and ask the local CCG what services are available in the Borough of Tamworth to ensure that residents do not have to travel outside of Tamworth to access the service.

Several questions and comments were put both during and following the presentation to Tim Leese and Rachel Chapman.

Sir Robert Peel Hospital

In light of the announcement in the local press and at meetings given to staff that Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are reviewing services

at Sir Robert Peel hospital the committee had a detailed discussion on the proposals and consequences of any changes to services offered locally.

The Chairman informed the committee that Sir Robert Peel hospital will be an agenda item on the next Healthy Staffordshire meeting on 25 March, when a representative of the Trust will give a full report on the proposed changes to services at the hospital.

Members were also told that they can attend the Healthy Staffordshire meeting, although, they will not be able to put questions direct to the Trust's spokesman. However, the Chairman will put all questions from members to the Trust at the aforementioned meeting.

The committee unanimously agreed to forward the below questions to Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Staffordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board, Staffordshire CCG and South East Staffordshire & Seisdon CCG and write direct to Tamworth's MP.

Questions to Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

- What is the future of Sir Robert Peel hospital
- Where are the operations going to be moved to

Question to Staffordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board

- What are the views of the Health and Wellbeing Board on the proposed closure of services at Sir Robert Peel
- What conversations have the Board had with the Trust over the proposed closure of services at Sir Robert Peel

Question to Staffordshire CCG / South East Staffordshire & Seisdon CCG

- What percentage of the services currently taking place at Sir Robert Peel hospital can be carried out in GP surgeries
- Why are GP's not using the facilities and services at Sir Robert Peel more (the committee was told of Tamworth residents being sent to Good Hope hospital for endoscopy services when the same facility is available at Sir Robert Peel)

The committee also agreed to write to Tamworth's MP, Christopher Pincher, calling on him to meet with the Secretary of State for Health with regard to the lack of communication from Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to all parties on the proposed closure of facilities and services at Sir Robert Peel hospital.

1 April 2014

Alcohol Services and GP Out of Hours' Services in Tamworth

Representatives from South East Staffordshire and Seisdon CCG will be attending to discuss alcohol services and GP out of hours' services in Tamworth.

10 April 2014

Car Parking Charges at Sir Robert Peel Hospital

Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Chief Executive, Helen Ashley, will be attending to answer questions on the car parking charges at Sir Robert Peel hospital

Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

The Healthy Staffordshire Select committee have held eleven committee meetings and a further six public accountability sessions both in Stafford and across the county.

The Healthy Staffordshire select committee have scrutinised a wide range of health issues during 2013/14

- alcohol and drugs programme
- appropriate use of accident and emergency services
- children and adolescent mental health services
- independent futures
- intermediate care/frail older people and long term conditions
- Living My Life My Way – a strategy for disabled people
- Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust – implications of the final report of the public inquiry
- Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust – the future
- modernisation of day services for people with learning disabilities
- NHS 11
- Sir Robert Peel hospital – the future of services offered
- Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent transforming cancer and end of life programme
- Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- stroke services – reconfiguration of the hyper acute stroke service
- update on project to shift acute mental health care provision from hospital to Community in South Staffordshire

The Healthy Staffordshire Select committee also held six public accountability sessions during 2013/14 with the various NHS Foundation Trusts that cover the health of Staffordshire.

The committee held two public meetings with both Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and also met University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Partnership NHS Trust.

Several meetings were also held to discuss in detail and make recommendations on both the future of Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust and the implications of the final report of the public inquiry on Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

The final Healthy Staffordshire meeting of 2013/14 is on 25 March 2014 and the agenda will include a full report from Burton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on the future of services at Sir Robert Peel hospital.

Full details of all County Council Health Select committee meetings and public accountability sessions are available on the County Council's website

<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Act=later&CId=871&D=201308121000&MD=ielistmeetings>

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew James', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cllr Andrew James – Chairman
Healthier & Safer scrutiny committee