



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH)

RE-CONVENED SPECIAL MEETING HELD AT THE
TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON TUESDAY 3RD APRIL, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Page (in the Chair)
Councillor Marianne Welsh (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Burns, Carr, Linda Cluskey and Bill Welsh

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. B. Clark, Healthwatch
Mr. R. Hutchings, Healthwatch
Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member – Adult Social Care
Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Roscoe (Substitute Member for Councillor Marianne Welsh)
1 member of the public

53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pugh and Lynne Thompson.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of pecuniary interest were made.

55. HIGHTOWN G.P. SURGERY

Further to Minute No. 52 of 22 March 2018, the Committee re-considered the covering report of the Head of Regulation and Compliance on the future of Hightown Village GP Surgery, requesting Committee Members to consider the report submitted by NHS England and seeking views from the Committee.

The Committee also re-considered the report submitted jointly by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The report set out the background to the matter; the procurement exercise undertaken for both Hightown Village GP Surgery and Freshfield GP Surgery; the options reviewed; the outcome;

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH) - TUESDAY 3RD APRIL, 2018

engagement with patients and stakeholders; and a summary of the current position.

The report outlined the procurement exercise undertaken, indicating that initially, bids had been received for both Practices. However, on 5 February 2018, the only bidder for the Hightown Practice had indicated they could no longer proceed and as a result, there was no Provider available to deliver services at the Practice from 8 June 2018, when the current interim Provider would withdraw, having agreed to extend the interim contract for a maximum of three months from 31 March 2018 when the current contract would expire. The report indicated that there were some 2,013 patients registered with the surgery who would need continuity of care and just three months in which to arrange this.

The Committee also considered an additional report submitted jointly by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), providing a further update on services at Hightown Village GP Surgery and Commissioners' attempts to secure a Provider.

The additional report indicated that Chapel Lane Surgery, Formby, had come forward with a bid to run Hightown Village GP Surgery. At the same time, the current interim Provider, Ashurst Healthcare, had indicated that they would need to withdraw on 31 March 2018 when their current contract expired and not on 8 June 2018, as previously indicated. Commissioners were satisfied that Chapel Lane Surgery could deliver care to acceptable quality standards for patients and the Provider would be offering a full-time GP-led primary care service. A GP would be present at Hightown Village GP Surgery every day and patients would also be able to access a wider range of services at the Provider's main premises in Formby. The new Provider was also financially stable and had sufficient resources to ensure they could operate the practice within available resources. Due to the expiry of the existing contract on 31 March 2018, Commissioners had had to take immediate action to ensure that the newly identified quality provider could commence service provision on 1 April 2018, in order to ensure continuity of primary care services for patients. In view of the urgent need to appoint a provider and in the absence of required information from the other parties who had tentatively expressed an interest, Commissioners had offered the contract to the newly identified Provider on an emergency basis. The report set out the background to the matter, together with next steps to be taken.

Anthony Leo, Director of Commissioning; Alan Cummings, Senior Commissioning Manager; and Cathy Stuart, Deputy Head of Communications and Engagement; were in attendance from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) to present information on the matter and respond to questions put by Members.

Jan Leonard, Chief Redesign and Commissioning Officer, was in attendance from the South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH) - TUESDAY 3RD APRIL, 2018

and Southport and Formby CCG to present information on the matter and respond to questions put by Members.

Mr. Leo introduced the item, outlining the background to the matter, and considered that both the interim and future Providers had been very accommodating. A seamless transfer would take place; relevant websites had been updated to reflect the changes; letters had been despatched to patients; and engagement with patient participation groups had taken place the previous week. The new Provider might wish to make improvements to the Hightown Village GP Surgery.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:-

- How long would the contract with the new Provider be?
Three years with the option to extend for an additional two years.
- Why had the new Provider not come forward during the original procurement exercise?
A number of local practices had been approached during the original procurement exercise and the new Provider had not submitted a bid at that time.
- Concerns were raised that the outgoing Provider had changed the expiry date at very short notice which could have resulted in Hightown Village GP Surgery having to close. How could this situation be avoided in the future?
NHS contracting arrangements usually had long lead-in times. The interim Provider had originally agreed to extend the interim contract to 8 June 2018 and had subsequently considered they had legal obligations to meet, resulting in unforeseen circumstances.
- Commissioners had been working to a deadline of 8 June 2018 and patients should not have been placed in the position that they were in.
The imposition of a much tighter deadline had necessitated the commencement of preparations to re-allocate patients, as a contingency. Commissioners acknowledged that the last minute position had not been ideal.
- Would the new arrangements result in any job losses at the Hightown Village GP Surgery?
No, people who had been on temporary contracts would now be fully employed.
- The interim Provider had changed the expiry date of the contract at very short notice which could have resulted in a calamitous situation.
Commissioners had relied on the good will of the interim Provider to continue to 8 June 2018, although officially they had been working to an end date of 31 March 2018. As Commissioners had a

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH) - TUESDAY 3RD APRIL, 2018

statutory duty to ensure patients were registered with a GP, they had had to consider the re-allocation of patients from 31 March 2018.

- To have left the process within the same month as the end of the contract was not acceptable.
The Interim Provider's notice to end the contract had come at the same time as the offer from the new Provider. Commissioners would have supported the interim Provider through their legal difficulties, if necessary.
- Concerns were held that the Committee had had to request the travel survey for Hightown Village GP Surgery; that not all alternative GP Surgeries were fully accessible for older patients; and that choices should have been known much earlier.
- Concerns were also raised regarding the fact that a request had had to be made for Commissioners to attend a meeting in order for the Committee to be updated on the matter; issues with the SSP Health Ltd. Group that had previously provided services at a number of GP practices within the Sefton area; and the difficulties encountered in progressing a working group to consider NHS complaints. It was considered that there appeared to be a lack of transparency and co-operation displayed by Commissioners, on occasions. It was hoped that arrangements would be made for the Committee to establish a working group to consider NHS complaints during the 2018/19 Municipal Year.

Confirmation and assurances were sought on a number of issues arising from the matter, as follows:-

- As some improvements were required to improve the condition of the premises for Hightown Village GP Surgery, what arrangements would be made?
The CCG would work with NHS Property and the landlord to ensure that services were safe and accessible for the residents of Hightown.
- What arrangements do the CCGs and NHS England have in place regarding compliance with the legal requirements for engaging on substantial variations/changes in service? The Committee might wish to have a particular interest in this matter during the forthcoming 2018/19 Municipal Year in order to seek assurances that a similar situation does not arise in the future within Sefton.
Commissioners had discussed the matter together and stated that they were happy to hold conversations with the Committee as to what a strategy might look like, in the future, as they did not wish to face a similar situation within Sefton again.
- The role of this Committee in scrutinising significant changes to NHS services, as it is important that the Committee is notified well

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH) - TUESDAY 3RD APRIL, 2018

in advance of decisions being taken. The Committee might wish to consider receiving a separate report on this matter, in due course.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports and information provided by NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on Hightown Village GP Surgery be noted; and
- (2) information on a potential strategy by the CCGs and NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) regarding substantial variations/changes in service, together with the role of this Committee in scrutinising significant changes to NHS services, be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.