

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2023

PRESENT:

Councillors M Wilcox (Chair), Norman (Vice-Chair), Cross, Eagland, Evans, Ho, Robertson and Mrs Tranter

(In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No.17 Councillor Strachan and Councillor Cox attended the meeting).

48 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Grange, Leytham, A Little, Silvester-Hall and A Yeates.

49 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Robertson declared a personal interest in Minute no. 51 as he is registered with Darwin Medical Centre.

Councillor Ho declared a personal interest in Minute no. 51 as he is registered with Boney Hay Surgery.

50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

51 BURNTWOOD HEALTH & WELLBEING CENTRE

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board - Chris Bird, Chief Transformation Officer (including executive leadership for delegated responsibilities the ICB have for general practice services), Nicola Bromage, Associate Director – Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism and Children and Young People and Dr Abid Khan, Medical Director of Midlands Partnership Trust.

The Chair advised that members had been sent a copy of the published letter sent to all stakeholders by the ICB and asked Mr Bird if he could update members with the history and the current position regarding the closure of the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre.

Mr Bird advised that the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre had opened in 2008 and had always been a temporary measure as the original permission was granted on condition that it be taken down after 3 years. Since that time several planning extensions had been given by the LDC planning department and the last extension in 2019 was by means of a contract which was timebound to September 2024 in order for the redevelopment of the health care facilities in Burntwood. Mr Bird confirmed that they had worked with colleagues at Staffordshire County Council and had opened Greenwood Health Centre and the new Burntwood North Centre at Cherry Close would be open and operational from 2025. He advised that they were confident that the plans were sound as they had engaged with all the relevant parties and the existing local surgeries had confirmed they could take on the existing patients with the intent that the new facility at Cherry Close will be open in 2025.

Members made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:-

- The consultation in 2009 was discussed as it was stated at the end of that consultation that the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre and Greenwood Health Centre were needed as the local surgeries had outgrown their accommodation and so unable to offer the sufficient health provision to the Burntwood people – why now is it to be closed before the new facility at Cherry Close is open?

Mr Bird confirmed that it was the end of the contract and a commissioning decision has been made to disperse the patient list. It was recognised that the levels of appointments for GPs were challenging and there were a range of approaches to be brought forward but all local practices had confirmed that the physical estate is available recognising that in 2025 the new Burntwood North Centre would be opening. He said they would need to manage the transitional period and it may be that they need to retain the building at the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre but will be working with the local practices on how best to use it – perhaps host back-office staff and administration so maximising clinical space at the other surgeries to take on the existing patient lists.

- Mr Bird was asked how confident he was in obtaining planning permission for this period from September 2024 to the opening date of the Burntwood North Centre in 2025 and how confident he was that the opening date would be in 2025 due to the delays encountered at Greenwood Health Centre?

Mr Bird said he was confident in the opening date of 2025 as they were working with Staffordshire County Council like they had done with the Greenwood Health Centre and would need to apply for the planning permission for September 2024 to 2025 as it had not been applied for yet but they would be trying to use this on a transitional basis and working with the local practices on its best use.

- Members asked why patients had not been consulted before a decision was made as this was a drastic and considerable change for them.

Mr Bird advised that a letter to the contract holder had been sent to highlight the end of the contract date and offer support and all local practices had been approached to confirm they had capacity which were the guidelines from Primary Medical Services/NHS England. He said at the end of a contract you do not need to consult with the local populations, that would be only if a major service change takes place. He said they were following the relevant national guidelines set out by Primary Medical Services/NHS England and the Local Medical Committee and local practices had been advised. He said there was a Communications & Engagement Plan in place to help with the transition for later in 2023/24 which would have to be brought forward now the decision was in the public domain. He said his colleagues were meeting with the Patients' Participation Group tomorrow and will be looking at the ideal communications to local populations.

- Members said a lot of patients were very worried about having to move elsewhere and wondered why the rush? It was stated that there would be no impact on local practices but members knew all practices were short of appointments at the moment as well as being short of GPs. It was noted that a number of complaints had been received relating to the Darwin Practice at Greenwood Health Centre as patients were being asked to travel to the Lichfield branch and vice-versa.

Mr Bird said he was not aware of the complaints but asked that these be shared with him after the meeting as branch sites were utilised in general practices but the needs of the patient must be borne in mind. He advised that all the three local surgeries at The Darwin Practice, Salters Meadow Health Centre and The Langton Medical Group -

Boney Hay Surgery had advised they had capacity for the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre patients and although patients would be asked to register with a surrounding practice of their choice it may mean that as the Burntwood North Centre at Cherry Close opens the venue of their appointment would change.

- Members asked if the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre could be a branch site?

Mr Bird said this was not permissible within the guidelines and advised that the current contract holder had asked this with a number of other options but the only options available were those in the stakeholder letter.

- Members asked for assurance that members can give to patients at the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre that there will be no disruption to their care?

Mr Bird advised that it was always their intention to engage with the local communities and patients 12 months prior to the contract ending. He said they were willing to help and aimed to minimise the disruption having managed dispersal of practice lists previously elsewhere. He said the onus was on the patient to register elsewhere as would be personal preference but as it was linked to the decision taken by the ICB they would be supporting all to ensure a smooth dispersal.

- Members asked why a short-term contract cannot be offered?

Mr Bird confirmed they were not able to offer this as they cannot offer a one year contract nor extend the current contract.

- Members had calculated that the additional capacity at Greenwood Health Centre will not take all patients from the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre. It was known that Burntwood already had a high increased ratio access to healthcare and this was why there was so much concern.

Mr Bird said the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent GP per head ratio was just below average and general practice was being worked on nationally. He said a General Practice Strategy was currently being worked upon with additional roles/workforce as a central component. He agreed to share this with the committee in a few months and said he would return to a future meeting.

- Members asked if the existing GP's would TUPE over to the other practices?

Mr Bird confirmed yes, they would.

- A lot of concerns were raised by the committee members especially with regards to the continuity of care and highlighted those with complex needs.

Mr Bird said he would ensure there was support with the transitional period and a plan was being formulated with the contractor and his team and existing local practices to ensure this.

RESOLVED: The comments and observations be noted and the Chair requested that any further information be shared with this committee to reduce the disruption and asked Mr Bird to return in a couple of months with an update on the Burntwood Health & Wellbeing Centre and the General Practice Strategy.

The Chair welcomed representatives from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board - Chris Bird, Chief Transformation Officer (including executive leadership for delegated responsibilities the ICB have for general practice services), Nicola Bromage, Associate Director – Mental Health, Learning Disability and Autism and Children and Young People and Dr Abid Khan, Medical Director of Midlands Partnership Trust.

Mr Bird informed members that the ICB was considered the statutory body for the consultation process regarding the George Bryan Centre. A link to the consultation and associated documents had previously been circulated to members and the Chair encouraged members to participate in the consultation process which was currently taking place around the future provision.

Nicola Bromage from the In-patient Mental Health Team, ICB delivered a presentation explaining the reason for the review, the present community support and the proposal for the mental health transformation. She said there had been a national model which the long-term plan had focussed on which needed to work differently in the community setting rather than hospital stays. She said they recognised they needed to enhance the community and mental health services by providing more mental health practitioners in GP settings, improving the continuity of care and focus on more personalised care with more integrated working so care is coordinated between teams. She advised that a lot of work was being carried out with partner organisations and with crisis teams with a crisis café in Tamworth recently opening. It was also very important to support the physical health needs as well as the mental health needs.

Community Mental Health case studies were shared showing the new pathways for mental health older adults and adults with dementia.

Ms Bromage advised that Older Adults Specialists had been appointed since the George Bryan Centre closed and said support was now available before diagnosis. She said the staff work really close within the community with voluntary groups, social services, council and other partner organisations.

The Proposal for delivering mental health services was clarified:-

Ms Bromage said since the fire in 2019 at The George Bryan Centre, Tamworth the Commissioners had been looking for a long-term solution for providing the services previously provided there and two suggestions had been proposed:-

1. Keep 18 beds at St Georges site in Stafford; and
2. Provide 18 beds at The George Bryan Centre.

However, after extensive research it was felt that only the one proposal was viable at the St Georges site in Stafford because it was felt a single isolated site would not be clinically safe in Tamworth. Ms Bromage said St Georges was significant and recognised as being able to provide better care with a psychiatric unit being able to provide rapid support with trained professionals on hand. The treatments were more varied i.e. art therapy/speech therapy and as the national best practice was to look at community-based projects this was recognised by the ICB as the best proposal even though the travel to Stafford was recognised as a disadvantage. It was possible with the community-based project that there would be fewer admitted into hospital in the future.

Ms Bromage said they were looking at the possible mitigations and encouraged members to comment using the consultation surveys especially with ideas for travel issues in how we can support people more effectively should the single proposal go ahead. She said they were looking at all previous suggestions i.e. offering financial support for travel costs/flexible visiting

hours to enable people to visit at any time rather than constrained visiting hours making it impossible to visit via public transport.

Members made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:-

- Members agreed that transport was the major concern with no rebuild at The George Bryan Centre in Tamworth as people in this district will find it very hard to commute to St. Georges in Stafford. A lot of elderly people in particular would find it difficult and members suggested the Support Staffordshire Voluntary Driving Scheme as an option. Concerns about travel to Stafford generally ensued as a lot of people do not have a car and the bus stops are not very near to their home nor are there enough bus services. It was concerning because if people cannot get there then this causes additional problems and visits from family and friends is very important. Definitely need a patient transport service.

Ms Bromage noted this and said if the proposal goes ahead there will be a 'standard operating procedure' looking at providing support for travel assistance.

- Members asked that the dementia patients be monitored and the data be reported back to a future meeting. It was noted that Lichfield and Burntwood were both dementia friendly communities and any help would be welcomed to improve peoples' knowledge.
- Members asked if there was sufficient capacity at St. Georges in Stafford if the George Bryan Centre were not to reopen?

Dr Khan confirmed that there was enough capacity in his opinion as having a constant presence of a consultant on a ward was leading to a quicker turnover and therefore helping with capacity issues.

- Mental Health in younger people was discussed as this was very concerning now as it was agreed that bad mental health was being diagnosed younger and younger. Again, it was asked if the statistics for this could be monitored as experience had found that CAMHS were not very effective, and families and schools had to wait a long time and could not get the support when they wanted it. The suicidal thoughts, attempts and deaths of children were increasing, and members asked that this be looked at as a priority.

Dr Khan advised that the CAMHS services had recently improved in Staffordshire and assessments were being done much more quickly especially if the child has an acute need. The higher the need the more urgently they will be seen and so this should be stated on the referral. Dr Khan said that during the pandemic the NHS provided more training and expanded the CAMHS teams all across the district – expanding the specialist services in the community being paramount and making them more accessible to all.

- Members asked if there was enough staff?

Dr Khan said there had been a lot of success in CAMHS in the Midlands and the NHS were trying to home produce a lot of social worker staff and train and recruit overseas to community teams. He said a lot of planning for the workforce to become fit for purpose was being done.

Ms Bromage said the Community teams will respond to people in crisis and provide home treatment rather than hospital admission primarily but if a hospital admission is required then it would be facilitated. She said there were now two crisis teams working to keep patients closer to home rather than hospital.

- Members noted that in the recent budget, the government said they would put £10m into suicide prevention and support, is there any news on the allocation yet – is this something which could be supported?

Ms Bromage confirmed they had areas they would like to provide support and implement. No allocation yet known.

- Members asked if Mental Health professionals go out to the Police?

Ms Bromage said yes it was called street triage where a mental health nurse visits the police.

- Members asked if there was any extra support for carers looking after dementia patients at home?

Ms Bromage said that the requirement when The George Bryan Centre closed was recognised and an older age specialist team working with social care to maintain people in their homes and work together had been implemented and they had lots of work to improve this offer.

- Members asked if the Peer Support Workers were paid roles?

Ms Bromage confirmed that the roles were paid with career progression and there were some volunteers as well.

- Members asked if there was liaison with the probation service and a possibility for cross-over working?

- What can be done for men in mental health?

Dr Khan said that nationally, there is a lot more awareness of this subject now and it is changing slowly. The visiting people in their own homes in the community gives more opportunities for this to be recognised and help to be sought.

RESOLVED: The comments and observations be noted and the Chair requested that the findings of the consultation be shared with this committee in due course.

53 HEALTH MATTERS

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Norman, attended the previous Staffordshire County Council's Health & Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Monday 13 February 2023 agenda items – Draft Mental Health Strategy 2023-2028, Mental Health Support Teams in Schools Update and Children's Mental Health Update.

It was noted that looking ahead at the Work Programme for 2023/24 that SCC Health & Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee should itemise - S106 monies for GP Practices. (It was known that the ICB had applied to LDC for £550,000 for additional GP capacity sought at the Rugeley Power Station site). The Chair and Vice-Chair noted this.

54 NOTES OF TASK GROUP

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Norman presented the Notes of the Climate Emergency Task Group as Chair of the Task Group and the contents were noted. Councillor Norman explained that there had been several delays and it was agreed that this should be prioritised after the 2023 Elections. It was noted that the number of days that have elapsed since the Climate

motion was declared at Council on 10 December 2019 is already at 10.8% of the deadline which was set to 2050.

55 WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that there was one meeting left on the Work Programme for 2022/23 – 25 May 2023 and the Chair said there were only two items for discussion:-

Outcomes of the Procurement process;
Communications

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

56 VOTER ID UPDATE

Christie Tims, Assistant Director of Operations, Regulation & Enforcement and Deputy Returning Officer provided an updated presentation to members further to the presentation given to January's meeting. She advised members that all the changes to the 2023 Election had now been made and all training received. The planning/ preparations are where we were expecting it to be, and the Voter ID applications were coming through the portal steadily. She said there was a new form - Ballot Paper Refusal List which would be an ongoing characteristic going forward which the polling station staff will be asked to complete to specify and keep a running total of those who have been refused a ballot paper and the reasons for the refusal. This will link to the prescribed questions. Another addition is a Voter Identification Evaluation Form – to be used at this Election and the first General Election to track people who have not brought the recommended form of ID. The new process will be for the Presiding Officer to check the ID after the voter has confirmed their name and address before the number list is marked and any ballot paper is given out.

Ms Tims advised that 59 Voter ID applications had been received so far and 20 applications were currently on hold due to unsuitable photographs. There had also been 2 anonymous Voter ID applications received to date.

Members were reminded that postal votes are not affected for this Election and if voting by proxy – the person acting as proxy must have their ID.

Ms Tims confirmed that a lot of social media had been done since last time, linking it to the national campaign. All newsletters and one free newspaper had included the need for photo ID at all poll stations and posters and leaflets will be sent to key partners. Some leaflets had been put in with the council tax bills and press releases were ongoing up until the polling day. It was confirmed that the poll cards would have clear messaging on the front of them and a list of the acceptable forms of ID too. Ms Tims said she was meeting with several outreach groups and parish councils to encourage and see if any thing can be done to help with regards to accessibility and all the TV adverts were increasing.

Members were advised that the government were also running a campaign on voter fraud ensuring you are not being persuaded to vote by anyone and the timing was exactly the same.

Ms Tims confirmed that there was an active recruitment drive for all polling stations currently taking place with an increased number of Supervisors to help Presiding Officers with Voter ID problems being allocated.

Quick Reminder – Election Day – Thursday 4 May 2023 – Stations open from 7am-10pm
Receipting/Verification into the early hours at Burntwood Leisure Centre
and 10am Friday Count will take place

The pre-election period is due to start 21 March meaning a restriction on council resources for Election reasons but council business is as usual.

Members suggested contact be made with the Lichfield Mosque and faith groups who may be organisations affected.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be circulated to all committee members and a verbal update be given at a future meeting after the Election.

57 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

IN PRIVATE

58 NOTES FROM TASK GROUPS

The Committee noted the two meetings held by the Task Group and were pleased at the progress made to date.

RESOLVED: That the Confidential notes be received.

59 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Confidential Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 February 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair advised members that we had now reached the end of the current cycle of meetings ahead of the Local Elections, and thanked all members for their contributions whilst sitting on this committee and the officers for all their help and support.

(The Meeting closed at 8.55 pm)

CHAIR