

MINUTES
HEALTH IN DACORUM
8 MARCH 2023

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Allen
Beauchamp
Bhinder (Chairman)
Durrant
Guest (Vice-
Chairman)
Hollinghurst
Johnson
Maddern

Officers:

JWebb

Also Attendance:

EGlater

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

01 MINUTES

Cllr Allen noted that the previous minutes were not available on mod.gov. Cllr Maddern referred to the email sent on 16th January 2023 stating that the minutes had been published and could be viewed via the link provided.

The Chair advised that as the minutes had not been read before the meeting that members should therefore review the minutes before proceeding.

Cllr Guest noted item 6 on ward issues and a typo in the third paragraph, stating that this should read 'Gadebridge' not 'Gatebridge'.

The minutes of the previous meeting were formally approved as an accurate record, subject to the agreed amendment.

Cllr Maddern queried the actions. The Chair suggested that these were primarily related to contacting people regarding talking to the group.

On the action for JWebb to circulate the presentation from Jim McManus and for JWebb to contact DBC housing department. JWebb confirmed that she had forwarded on the information provided by N Beresford regarding discharging to hotels to the chair. On the circulation of J McManus' presentation, JWebb also confirmed that she has emailed him and is yet to hear back.

On the action point regarding the closure of surgeries, Cllr Guest confirmed that this would be covered under item 5.

E Glatter asked for an update on the action regarding the vision and future of Hemel Hospital. The Chair advised that this would be discussed under item 10.

Cllr Beauchamp noted the action regarding HCC Health Scrutiny meeting, noting that he did not receive the minutes until earlier that evening and that he had now circulated these. Cllr Beauchamp confirmed that he sent out the two reports from the agenda of the last meeting regarding the update on the development of the West Herts and Essex ICP and ICS, and the Integrated Hospital Discharging arrangements.

Action:

To correct spelling of Gadebridge under item 6 of the minutes.

02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were noted from Cllr Sinha.

Apologies were also noted from Matt Webb, the contact for the Herts Valley CCG, and that he had questioned his attendance. It was noted that this would be discussed later in the meeting.

03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

04 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No public participation was declared.

05 WARD ISSUE

Cllr Guest provided the update on Parkwood Surgery, noting that she had asked about the closure of the Gadebridge and Boxmoor branch surgeries. Cllr Guest stated that the receptionist had advised her to look on the website for further information and that the website doesn't specify how long the surgeries will be closed for. Cllr Guest confirmed that she wrote to the Practice Business Manager, Ms Badu, at the beginning of February and that she is yet to receive a reply. Cllr Guest

confirmed that she will therefore be calling the surgery as the local ward councillor and county councillor to request a meeting. Cllr Guest stated that she was disappointed to not receive a reply to her letter so far.

Cllr Allen commented that he was contacted by a resident who lives next door to the Boxmoor practice and that she had spoken to gentlemen who were stood outside of the practice where she found out that they were estate agents who were overseeing the sale of the property. Cllr Allen suggested that the notion that the closure is temporary is therefore ill-founded and is therefore an urgent matter. Cllr Allen added that he has also received information from another neighbouring resident who has stated when the development was built, a covenant was put on the building that it had to be used for health purposes. Cllr Allen suggested that further investigations are required to understand Parkwood's intentions and if the covenant will be honoured or bought out if there is one in place. Cllr Allen stated that they also need to understand why this decision was made without any consultation or discussions with the community.

Cllr Maddern raised issues regarding Gade Tower, noting that she has now visited 7-8 flats out of 40, and that each one she has visited have children with recurring respiratory problems and are having to take time off school due to being unwell as a result of the building being so damp. Cllr Maddern confirmed that she is talking to the new Chief Housing Officer about this.

Cllr Hollinghurst commented on the seriousness of the closures of Boxmoor and Gadebridge branch surgeries, noting that this will reduce NHS access. Cllr Hollinghurst suggested that the practice may own the property and recommended that the issue be raised by the Committee with the HCC Health Scrutiny Committee to investigate whether a consultation should have taken place. Cllr Beauchamp confirmed that he would raise this at the next HCC Health Scrutiny meeting.

Cllr Guest referred to the issues raised by Cllr Maddern regarding Gade Tower, noting the impact that these have on people's health.

The Chair noted that the next HCC Health Scrutiny meeting would be taking place in a week's time and that they will look to phase DBC meetings to be more in line with HCC in the New Year.

Cllr Hollinghurst suggested that scrutiny officers could also raise the issue independently of the HCC meeting schedule. Cllr Beauchamp noted the current issues with the HCC secretariat and noted that he could raise concerns at the meeting next week.

The Chair confirmed that he would liaise with Cllr Guest to contact HCC directly. Cllr Guest recommended that the Chair contact Artemis Kassi at HCC and recommended that she also speak to Cllr Beauchamp outside of the meeting to see if the concerns can be raised at the meeting as the agenda has already been circulated. Cllr Guest

suggested that they could request that the closure of GP surgeries be added to the HCC Health Scrutiny work programme.

Cllr Allen thanked the Committee for prioritising the issue around branch surgery closures, noting that it had been raised at previous meetings.

Cllr Maddern commented on the suggestion to put the closure of branch surgeries onto the work programme, stating that this would mean that it will not be discussed for another three months. Cllr Beauchamp agreed, noting the difficulty of raising topics that aren't part of the agenda. The Chair suggested that the item could be taken to the Committee and that he could also write to the Committee. It was suggested that the Chair could also copy in the Parkwood Practice Manager. The Chair requested to join Cllrs Guest and Beauchamp for their discussion to ensure that the issue is brought to the attention of the HCC Health Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Hollinghurst noted that the Health Scrutiny Committee has to prepare a short report to HCC and that the matter could be raised when the report is being accepted. Cllr Hollinghurst noted that this would raise the matter publicly and would need to be recorded. Cllr Guest confirmed that she would be placed to make a comment as a county councillor. Cllr Maddern added that a question could also be raised once the report has been given.

Actions:

- Cllr Guest to report back on progress regarding closure of Gadebridge and Boxmoor branch surgeries.
- Cllr Maddern to report back on progress regarding damp issues in Gade Tower.
- Cllr Beauchamp to raise issue regarding closure of Boxmoor and Gadebridge branch surgeries with HCC Health Scrutiny Committee.

06 **COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Cllr Beauchamp will circulate information when available.

07 **COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT CARE SERVICES REPORT**

Cllr Guest took the report as read. No questions were raised.

08 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair noted the need to pursue the issues raised during the meeting. The Chair commented that there are matters that need to be dealt with that may not be directly linked to West Herts Hospital Trust and that they need to consider how, going forward, they receive information from other bodies.

Cllr Guest commented that today's meeting had highlighted that there are other issues away from West Herts Hospital Trust and Herts Valley CCG and that these items can be addressed in other ways away from the Committee. Cllr Guest noted that items can be raised at the HCC Health Scrutiny Committee and that all members can raise issues with the relevant portfolio holder. Cllr Guest commented on the officer time that is taken up with scrutiny, which also comes at a cost, and suggested that a message could be sent to DBC members regarding how issues not related to West Herts Hospital Trust or Herts Valley CCG can be raised.

Cllr Guest noted that West Herts Hospital Trust and Herts Valley CCG representatives were not in attendance and asked if the Committee had outlived its usefulness given that the relevant people that they wish to scrutinise had not attended.

The Chair referred to the approach that the Committee had agreed upon regarding the branch surgery closures and queried how this would have been reached without the Committee, adding that Cllr Maddern formally reporting the damp issues in Gade Tower ensured that this was noted and will be reported back on.

Cllr Hollinghurst noted the importance of the Health Scrutiny Committee and advised that they need to acknowledge that it doesn't have any statutory powers. Cllr Hollinghurst commented that there is a willingness for public health professionals to liaise in a formal manner with the borough, adding that the Committee remains a formal channel of communication and continues to be valuable.

Cllr Maddern agreed with Cllr Hollinghurst's comments, noting the importance of continuing with the Committee and the need to explore other areas within health, such as pharmacies and dentists.

E Glatter suggested that closing the Committee would be detrimental and that they need to continue to have a presence. E Glatter noted the importance of having a strong voice and suggested that this can be provided by the Committee, adding that they need to be clear with representatives what the Committee requires of them.

The Chair commented that the Committee has no statutory rights and suggested that it can only note issues. E Glatter stated that they can lobby and raise issues to HCC. The Chair suggested that they will need to consider a way forward for issues such as West Herts Hospital Trust. The Chair referred to Cllr Guest's comment regarding the use of resources to run Committee meetings, stating that they appear to have now gone backwards as no representatives are speaking to them, though it remains a Committee to bring issues to and formalise them. E Glatter commented that there are a number of other areas to comment on, such as mental health and community health, and that the population of Dacorum would want the Committee to continue given the importance of the subject.

Cllr Maddern referred to E Glatter's comments, stating that they owe it to the people of Dacorum to continue with the Committee and scrutinise what is happening with health in the borough. Cllr Maddern stated that if people are refusing to talk to them then they can still put out statements to highlight that representatives declined to comment or refused to attend the meeting.

Cllr Beauchamp noted that the Committee has a duty of care to its residents. On the use of resources, Cllr Beauchamp suggested that meetings continue to be held virtually as this may also encourage representatives to attend.

Cllr Allen commented on the steady closure of West Herts Hospital and how prevalent an issue this is within the community, noting that the Committee needs to fight to preserve any health services that remain at the hospital. Cllr Allen suggested that they would need to accept that the hospital has gone and they should therefore focus on which services they are able to maintain.

Cllr Allen agreed with Cllr Beauchamp's comment regarding online meetings and suggested that this would remove a barrier to engagement. The Chair suggested that scrutiny committees can continue to meet virtually. Cllr Beauchamp agreed that the Committee can continue to meet online as it is not a statutory committee.

Cllr Guest commented that representatives had been given the opportunity to join virtually and had chosen not to.

The Chair stated that he was in favour of noting that representatives had been invited to attend and had chosen not to be in attendance.

E Glatter asked if representatives could be invited to the meetings to discuss a specific item rather than to attend on a general basis. The Chair suggested that he had heard they would not be attending well before it was decided what they would discuss with them.

Cllr Maddern noted that David Evans is now an Executive Director at Hertfordshire Partnership University Trust and suggested that they invite him as he has attended in the past.

Cllr Beauchamp commented that the ICB is the overarching authority and agreed that they need to have specific items to discuss so they can look at who is within the localised Integrated Care Partnership who could answer the Committee's queries and concerns. Cllr Beauchamp noted that he now has the names of particular individuals for the HCC Health Scrutiny Committee agenda and that he would ask Dee if the slides could be provided to the Committee so they can approach representatives directly.

The Chair referred to E Glatter's previous presentation regarding the provision of healthcare in Hemel Hempstead and suggested that a document should be set up to set out what the Committee feels should be done. The Chair recommended that E Glatter set up the document and that the Committee would then provide scrutiny.

Cllr Beauchamp commented on the lack of budget and suggested that little money would come out to meet requirements. The Chair stated that they needed to make a start on this and consider what the Committee wants to see in Hemel Hempstead by setting out realistic objectives.

Cllr Guest agreed that E Glatter should work with colleagues to put together a vision for healthcare in Dacorum and that this then be brought back to the Committee for scrutiny. Cllr Guest suggested that this would be a positive vision and stated that the vision would need to be strategic, measurable, achievable, realistic and within a set timescale. It was stated that the vision should be brought back to the Committee at various stages for scrutiny.

E Glatter advised that a vision was provided to the Committee and noted the number of services that are being outsourced, stating that the ICB are now looking at how to handle these as the contracts will come up in 2024. E Glatter advised that she would circulate the slides to allow the Committee to consider further.

The Chair asked JWebb to recirculate E Glatter's presentation. The Chair suggested that E Glatter resend this to JWebb for circulation.

The Chair apologised for the shortness of the meeting, though he noted the importance of the discussions regarding the Gadebridge and Boxmoor branch closures and damp issues in Gade Tower and that he was pleased they had been brought to the attention of the Committee.

Cllr Hollinghurst commented on the strength of the discussion and thanked members for their support.

Cllr Maddern confirmed that she would be putting together a folder of all problems in individual flats and the whole of Gade Tower and asked if a copy should be sent to the Committee. The Chair asked that this be shared.

The members thanked Cllr Hollinghurst for his contribution over the years.

Actions:

- JWebb to invite David Evans to attend meetings.
- E Glatter to circulate slides from ICB.
- JWebb to recirculate E Glatter's presentation.

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm