

MINUTES
HEALTH IN DACORUM
28 JUNE 2023

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Bhinder
Elliot
Hannell
Maddern
McArevey (Chair)
Patterson
Pound
Williams

Officers:
James Doe
Diane
Southam

Also Attendance: Edith Glatter
Kevin Miner

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 **MINUTES**

The meeting was opened and introductions were made.

The minutes of the previous meeting were formally approved.

On the action to invite David Evans to attend meetings, it was noted that no response was received back.

On the action to circulate the ICB slides, it was confirmed this was completed.

2 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr Link and Cllr Cox.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair declared that they are an employee of two local NHS trusts, Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Trust and Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust. The Chair advised that they will not be working at Hertfordshire Partnership Trust from September and will be working at the ICB. It was confirmed that this is listed on the Chair's register of interests.

Cllr Hannell declared that they work as a paramedic in the NHS in the London Ambulance Service and also work for the FA at Wembley Stadium.

Cllr Madden (ph) declared that they campaign for hospital services.

4 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

KMinier noted that David Evans works for the Hertfordshire Partnership Foundation Trust as the Transformation and Partnership Manager. KMinier confirmed that he is on the South and West Hertfordshire Healthcare Partnership Co-Production Board, which discusses projects for the area and is not an official commissioning body.

5 **WARD ISSUES**

Cllr Hannell referred to the recent fire on 8 May 2023 that devastated the pharmacy at Bennetts End. A full report has been provided on the actions that Cllr Hannell will be taking to ensure that impacts are minimised to Bennetts End residents. It is the only surgery in the Bennetts End ward and one of only two pharmacies. Cllr Hannell noted that staff ensured the surgery was running the following morning and is now operating with minimal impact to the local community, though there is an impact through losing a pharmacy that served around 16,500 constituents and has also impacted the other pharmacy in Bennetts Gate, which is now seeing a 400% rise in prescriptions they need to process. Cllr Hannell praised all involved and stated that they hope that the surgery will be returning to full capacity in the coming weeks and a temporary pharmacy will be installed in 4-6 weeks time. The surgery has asked the council to assist with messaging regarding the circumstances.

The Chair asked if regular messages are being sent out to the community regarding the surgery. DSoutham confirmed that this would be checked with the comms team and would be picked up if not.

Cllr Bhinder queried what caused the pharmacy fire. Cllr Hannell advised that this is a matter of public record and it is believed to be an electrical fire that started accidentally. Cllr Hannell commended the work of the staff and that the Council has been able to provide support.

The Chair thanked Cllr Hannell for supporting the surgery.

Cllr Patterson asked if any prescribing issues have been addressed. Cllr Hannell confirmed that there has been no impact on patient services as the 13 doctor rooms and one waiting area were left undamaged. On advanced care, Cllr Hannell stated that medical staff have confirmed that there has been no impact on the care they can provide for patients.

Cllr Madden provided an update on Gade Tower and advised that she is working with residents as well as the headteacher at Nash Mills School, who contacted the councillor to raise his concerns regarding the mental and physical wellbeing of residents at Gade Tower. Cllr Madden advised that Gade Tower is in a poor state with black mould in bedrooms, a ventilation system that draws smoke from other flats into children's bedrooms at night, and resident children have poor school attendance rates due to ongoing chest infections. Cllr Madden explained that she is currently drafting an email to the Dacorum housing team to ask when action will be taken to move families out and make the building safe and habitable.

The death of a child in Rochdale due to effects of black mould was referred to. JDoe advised that the housing team has reviewed if there are any issues in Dacorum properties. Cllr Madden confirmed that the team have surveyed all properties several weeks ago and that she has not received a further update. Cllr Madden advised that one family in the worst affected flat is being moved out and she is receiving daily messages from residents asking for further updates. JDoe confirmed that he would look to get an update from the housing team to be circulated to the Committee.

6 WEST HERTS HOSPITAL TRUST

The Chair noted that West Herts Hospital Trust representatives have not been attending meetings for some time. It was noted that they have previously declined to attend. Cllr Bhinder noted that they are now looking at new avenues. It was suggested that the lack of attendance should be raised with Trust management.

The Chair queried how many times West Herts Hospital Trust have declined to attend meetings. Cllr Bhinder suggested that they have now declined to attend 3-4 times, adding that it is not uncommon for them to not reply and they last attended over a year ago. Cllr Madden advised that the Trust has recently updated its Board of

Directors and it was noted that this has made it more challenging to identify the correct contact.

JDoe confirmed that this item could be picked up at SLT level and provide a response back to the Committee.

It was noted that updates should be provided to the Committee if no representatives are able to attend.

EGlatter commented that there is no statutory duty for the Trust.

It was suggested that West Herts Hospital Trust's public engagement strategy be reviewed. Dacorum is a large area and it is therefore essential that the voices of residents are heard.

7 CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP

The Chair noted that this item needs to be updated to the Integrated Care Board.

8 COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chair confirmed there was no report to receive.

9 COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT CARE SERVICES REPORT

The Chair confirmed there was no report to receive.

10 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair commented on the lack of representation from other agencies and that this should be addressed.

The Chair suggested that the committee look to be a collaborative working group that represents residents and asked councillors to make suggestions regarding attendees and major issues that should be considered.

Cllr Madden stated that Jim McManus should be invited to speak to provide the group with a background on public health. The Chair agreed that Jim McManus should be invited to attend.

EGlatter asked that Hemel Hospital be considered, stating that it is being neglected and that services are being moved elsewhere. EGlatter advised that they have looked

to present a vision on the use of Hemel Hospital and referred to a news story in the Hemel Gazette regarding the growth of house building in the area between Hemel and the M1 with a proposed 5,000 houses.

Cllr Cox joined the meeting.

EGlatter advised that housing developers are being asked to provide something back to the community and that there is no mention of any health provision. JDoe confirmed that the St Albans Local Plan will go out to consultation in July and DBC will be a statutory consultee in the process with council officers already liaising with St Albans officers regarding the matter. JDoe confirmed that the portfolio holder will be briefed in due course and a report can be brought back to SPAE. A response can be formulated regarding any items relating to public health. JDoe added that DBC hosts the Hemel Garden Communities Team and that the service is putting together an infrastructure delivery plan to support the development and this will also include health.

EGlatter voiced her concerns regarding current services at Hemel Hospital being lost, including phlebotomy and radiology, and noted that the promised MRI will now be at St Albans.

EGlatter asked members to review the Hemel Hospital vision so that work on the plan can progress. Cllr Bhinder queried where the vision is available to view. EGlatter stated that it should be available via their website.

Cllr Bhinder requested clarification regarding the 11,000 homes and it was confirmed that the 5,000 homes referred to by EGlatter was included in this. JDoe confirmed that this is an estimated figure at present and may be refined further.

Cllr Madden commented that a resident had discussed a recent antenatal appointment at Hemel Hospital and that she had described it as a 'ghost town' and that it was not a pleasant experience to attend. Cllr Bhinder responded that these concerns have been raised repeatedly and that representatives are no longer attending meetings.

The Chair asked if there is a joint strategic needs assessment around health at a local level. JDoe confirmed that this would be checked. The Chair suggested that this would allow for the identification of health needs of residents. The Chair noted that residents have raised issues regarding GP surgery access and a strategic needs assessment for Dacorum will help the committee define the work programme.

KMinier commented on population health management, the primary care networks and integrated neighbourhood teams, noting that they are allegedly looking at priority areas in Dacorum. KMinier stated that they therefore need to ensure they are making a

strong case for support around health needs in the area. The Chair agreed, noting that having a strategic needs assessment would help with planning.

Cllr Hannell noted current strike action and that voting for low taxation will result in lower services. Cllr Hannell stated that he hoped to see greater investment in health following a change in government next year. The Chair stated that they need to ensure that investment goes to the right areas within Dacorum.

Cllr Patterson queried what contact there is with the Buckinghamshire NHS Trust and asked if this was previously raised by Cllr Hollinghurst. Cllr Madden suggested that she was not aware of this being raised by Cllr Hollinghurst and suggested that they invite a representative from Buckinghamshire NHS Trust to attend a meeting given that residents use Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The Chair agreed that neighbouring NHS trusts would be looked at as part of future work programmes.

The Chair asked if they should look to invite voluntary services to future meetings to discuss what work they are doing. Cllr Madden agreed, noting that they could also invite local charities. It was noted that mental health and domestic abuse services could be invited to attend and the Chair recommended that they look at a schedule to invite other agencies.

Cllr Hannell noted that his focus would be on the health of young people and advised that he had visited Longdean School to speak to the headteacher, Graham Cunningham. Cllr Hannell stated that he had asked for the four main challenges that the headteacher is currently seeing and that he had raised over a third of the pupil cohort have some form of special educational need or disability, which is not funded adequately by Hertfordshire County Council, and causes issues in recruiting teachers. The headteacher also raised the scale of pupils suffering from mental health issues post-Covid with 26% of pupils attending school 90% of the time with some of the most persistent offenders suffering with emotionally-based school avoidance, which is primarily caused by anxiety and three members of staff have had to be engaged to assist with this. It was noted that this primarily affects pupils in years 7-9 that were impacted in their transition from primary to secondary school.

Cllr Hannell next looked at the issue around access to marijuana and suggested that this could be discussed further outside of the meeting, noting that it is impacting the education of young people. Cllr Hannell also noted the difference in levels of physical activity undertaken by girls and boys at the school, which then impacts the physical activity levels of women aged 16-24. Cllr Hannell advised that he is working with Longdean School to co-produce a young people's action group to identify ways to get local solutions to the issues raised and confirmed he is working with Kiyana Fryer at Herts Sports Partnership and the Healthy U Ladies Gym in Bennetts End.

Cllr Hannell asked if Graham Cunningham could be invited to speak to the committee at a future meeting to discuss the effects of health proactively. It was noted that whilst there were no objections to inviting Graham Cunningham someone should also be invited to ensure that they could respond to concerns raised. The Chair advised that it would be beneficial for the committee to better understand the impact of health on education.

Cllr Madden advised that Graham Cunningham has been at Longdean School for 16 years and that it would be interesting for the committee to understand the changes that have taken place over this time.

EGlatter commented that she has heard reports of children suffering with panic attacks. The Chair noted that they could also look to invite youth workers.

The Chair noted that whilst Covid-19 has had a significant impact on young people, social media is also significantly impacting the younger generation's mental wellbeing.

Cllr Bhinder commented on the impact of easier access to marijuana and that he has previously spoken to the police about how prevalent it now is.

Cllr Hannell remarked on the impact caused by young people being denied 18 months of their childhood and that this impact should not be underestimated. The impact on all ages was noted and that recovery will take a number of years. Cllr Hannell reminded members that young people have been through an unusual event and should not be referred to as being less resilient than other generations.

There being no further business, the meeting was formally closed.

Agreed Actions

- To check with Comms team regarding communications in relation to the recent pharmacy fire. (DSoutham)
- To seek an update from the housing team on Gade Tower and circulate this to the Committee. (JDoe)
- To look into West Herts Hospital Trust meeting attendance. (JDoe)
- To bring a strategic needs assessment to the next meeting. (JDoe)
- To look at schedule to invite voluntary services to attend future meetings. (Chair)

The Meeting ended at 8.40 pm