

Hertfordshire County Council Health Scrutiny Report for the Health in Dacorum Meeting of 9th June 2021

There was a meeting of Herts. County Council's (HCC's) Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) on 16th March 2021.

HSC received an update on Covid vaccination across the Herts. & West Essex Integrated Care System (ICS). Members heard that the national supply of Covid-19 vaccines had been below capacity in February 2021 but was getting better. There had been a large uptake of the vaccine across the County. There were communication programmes targeting ethnic minority communities to encourage uptake. Hard to reach residents who were known to GPs were contacted and would get home visits.

Uptake of vaccination for people with severe mental illness was lagging due to getting advocates signed up and getting people to the vaccination centres.

Healthwatch Hertfordshire had carried out two surveys, one on the patient experience and the other on why people had not taken up the offer of a vaccine.

HSC received an update from the Herts. Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT). HPFT was working with HCC on a number of services to ensure that integrated services were in place. It was working on a business case with HCC to provide integrated teams to visit childrens' homes.

Twice-weekly lateral flow testing for Covid-19 was taking place amongst front facing staff.

There was a year on year increase in the number of young people self-harming, which had increased throughout the pandemic. HPFT had seen higher levels of young people overdosing throughout the pandemic.

HPFT had no visiting restrictions but risk assessments had to be carried out. HPFT had introduced ways to enable visiting outside instead of entering the ward.

HSC received an update on the ICS response to Covid to February 2021. The Committee acknowledged the pressures that NHS staff had been under.

The NHS was working on a clinical priority system for the backlog of planned treatment.

There was an update on the Mount Vernon Cancer Centre review. Public consultation webinars were taking place. There was a possibility of a satellite radiotherapy centre. Current provision will continue at the present site in Hillingdon until the new site is operational.

HSC received the report which informed members of the outcome of the West Herts. Hospital Trust (WHHT) Infrastructure (HIP1) scrutiny. The Committee noted the outcome of the scrutiny. I voted against noting the report as did C/Cllr Ron Tindall. The scrutiny concluded that the proposals did not need to be referred to the Secretary of State because they were not a substantial change to health services. I believed that they were substantial because WHHT used the word “transformation” which is a substantial change. Therefore I voted against noting the report.

After the County Council elections on 6th May 2021, the former HSC Chairman C/Cllr Seamus Quilty became Chairman of HCC. C/Cllr Dee Hart became HSC Chairman. C/Cllr Chris White retained his role as HSC Vice Chairman.

On 7th June 2021, there was an induction to HSC.

C/Cllr Fiona Guest