

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21 AUGUST 2018

MEMBER ITEM – PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE SUNLIGHT CENTRE GP SURGERY

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Summary

The issue has been raised by Councillor Stamp and will be considered by the Committee as a Member item.

This report advises the Committee of a proposal under consideration by Medway Clinical Commissioning Group to close the Sunlight GP Surgery in Gillingham. In the view of Medway Clinical Commissioning Group this **is not** a substantial service reconfiguration.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 Under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 the Council may review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of the health service in Medway. In carrying out health scrutiny a local authority must invite interested parties to comment and take account of any relevant information available to it, and in particular, relevant information provided to it by a local Healthwatch. The Council has delegated responsibility for discharging this function to this Committee and to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in the Council's Constitution.
- 1.2 Under Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Stamp has requested that an item on this matter is included on the agenda for this meeting.

2. Background

- 2.1 Councillor Stamp has requested that an item be placed on the agenda and the reasons set out by Councillor Stamp are as follows:
- 2.2 The item will address the concerns of patients at the Surgery and Community groups who could be adversely affected by closure. The Gillingham North ward Councillors have made direct contact with the CCG and asked for an extension to the deadline of 13th August for comments in order to hold a public meeting for patients and in Twydall Ward, Labour Councillors are requesting a meeting there. The Member's item is intended to provide a formal opportunity for the Councillors and their constituents to express their concerns and to question CCG representatives. The points shown below will be addressed:
- 2.3 The closures now proposed in Gillingham were not mentioned during the extensive engagement on the STP Medway model, rather CCG representatives at those meetings spoke in general terms about wishing to move to larger Health hubs based on the existing Healthy Living centres and a great deal of reassurance was given about maintaining access close to home for patients.
- 2.4 Gillingham North ward has 17,000 people and a rising population to be accommodated in new flats nearby on the boundary with River ward. The closure proposals do not address the population increase.
- 2.5 Gillingham North ward is one of the most deprived in Medway as shown in the Health profile produced by Public Health. The new proposals fail to address this issue.
- 2.6 During the STP consultation the use of social prescribing was widely promoted. There are a number of Groups who offer both commissioned and voluntary support groups for those with a range of health issues based at the Sunlight Centre, these groups will be adversely impacted by the proposals to withdraw GP services and opportunities to develop social prescribing will be missed, contradicting CCG policy on partnership working.
- 2.7 Balmoral Gardens surgery is already very busy and proposals to relocate the Walk in Centre to MMT have not yet been implemented and the timeline for achieving the relocation has not been publicly shared.
- 2.8 Members are invited to read the ward profile for Gillingham North.
<http://www.medwayjsna.info/profiles/wards/Gillingham%20North.pdf>

3. Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group Response

- 3.1 The Medway Model is based on delivering primary and community care to populations of 30,000 to 50,000 within local hubs. For Rainham, Lordswood, Rochester and Gillingham, these will be aligned to the Health Living Centres. A further two Healthy Living Centres in Strood and Chatham are being developed. These six hubs provide good health estate to enable care to be provided and maintained close to home within a modern environment.
- 3.2 The reasons for the proposed closure allow us to invest in more enhanced services on the Balmoral Site, increasing the number of services that are

provided locally and increasing the availability and access to primary care. The CCG has worked with Public Health to ensure that local needs are reflected in the new models of care. The Health Living Centre is served by good transport links and within a short walk from the Sunlight Centre. Appendix 2 illustrates the proximity and distribution of the Sunlight Patient List.

- 3.3 We currently have three contracts that need re-provision. Having consulted with potential providers the current configuration of these services would make it difficult for potential providers to provide a good quality resilient service in the locality. The risk of not securing a potential new provider would mean that from April 2019 patients who are currently under these providers would have no service provision.
- 3.4 The new contract will be able to offer patients appointments at their most convenient location. Gillingham, Boots Chatham or St Marys Island. The CCG will expect new provider to provide extended access and make the best use of technology including online consultation etc. The new service provider Will be in place by April 1st 2019.
- 3.5 The CCG has recently procured a Care Navigation Service. Care Navigators will work within all practices across Medway to ensure that patients across Medway have the necessary support and access to voluntary and appropriate commissioned services across the community, including those at the Sunlight Centre.
- 3.6 The relocation of the walk in centre to Medway Hospital was highlighted at public engagement events in Medway during 2017 and discussed at the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2017. Current walk in provision at Balmoral Healthy Living Centre will continue until March 2019. Improved access across Medway will ensure the provision of an additional 150 hours of appointments from October 2018 and the walk in service already in operation at Medway Hospital will expand to accommodate the residual demand from April 2019. The timeline for the new model was discussed at the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2017.

4. Proposed service development or variation

- 4.1 The proposal is to close the Sunlight GP Surgery in Gillingham and DMC Branch Surgery in Twydall Green, Twydall. This would mean that patients would instead be treated at the Balmoral Healthy Living Centre in Balmoral Gardens, Gillingham, St Mary's Island Surgery or at the Pentagon Centre, Chatham.
- 4.2 This change is part of the re-procurement of GP services provided at five sites in Medway, one of which is the Sunlight Centre Surgery. Current contracts are due to run until 31 March 2019. Consideration is being given to providing more services over fewer sites covering the existing number of patients. The merging of GP practices would enable patients to access GP services at a greater number of locations and would also enable the provision of more specialist healthcare services that may not be made available at smaller sites. This Member's item relates to the GP Surgery at the Sunlight Centre and the

current Twydall DMC Branch Surgery, with patients and GPs attending one or all of the three remaining locations.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group has sent letters to patients of the five existing GP practices affected by the proposals. Responses were requested by 13 August 2018. These letters are attached as appendices 3 to 7.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 There are no specific risk implications for Medway Council arising directly from the contents of this report. However, the Committee has previously noted that the Council could potentially be exposed to risk in the event that declining GP numbers or GP provision make it increasingly difficult for residents to get an appointment or care from their GP.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no financial implications for Medway Council directly arising from this report.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Provision for health scrutiny is made in the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 and includes a requirement on relevant NHS bodies and health service providers (including Public Health to consult with local authorities about any proposal which they have under consideration for a substantial development of or variation in the provision of health services in the local authority's area. This obligation requires notification and publication of the date on which it is proposed to make a decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal and the date by which Overview and Scrutiny may comment. Where more than one local authority has to be consulted under these provisions those local authorities must convene a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of the consultation and only that Committee may comment.
- 8.2 The legislation makes provision for local authorities to report a contested substantial health service development or variation to the Secretary of State in certain circumstances, after reasonable steps have been taken locally to resolve any disagreement between the local authority and the relevant responsible person on any recommendations made by the local authority in relation to the proposal. The circumstances in which a report to the Secretary of State is permitted are where the local authority is not satisfied that consultation with the local authority on the proposed substantial health service development or variation has been adequate, in relation to content or time allowed, or where the authority considers that the proposal would not be in the interests of the health service in its area.
- 8.3 Revised guidance for health service Commissioners on the NHS England assurance process for service changes was published in March 2018:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/planning-assuring-delivering-service-change-v6-1.pdf>

- 8.4 The guidance states that broadly speaking, service change is any change to the provision of NHS services which involves a shift in the way front line health services are delivered, usually involving a change to the range of services available and/or the geographical location from which services are delivered. It also says that any proposed changes should be aligned to Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (STP) Plans.
- 8.5 The NHS England guidance acknowledges that the terms “substantial development” and “substantial variation” are not defined in the legislation. Instead commissioners and providers are encouraged to work with local authorities to determine whether the change proposed is substantial thereby triggering a statutory requirement to consult with Overview and Scrutiny. The Council has developed a template to assist the Committee in determining whether a proposed change is substantial (Appendix 2).
- 8.6 The NHS England guidance also states that public consultation, by commissioners and providers is usually required when the requirement to consult a local authority is triggered under the regulations because the proposal under consideration would involve a substantial change to NHS services. However, public consultation may not be required in every case, sometimes public engagement and involvement will be sufficient. The guidance says a decision around this should be made alongside the local authority.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 It is requested that the Committee:
- i) Considers and comments on the Member’s item.
 - ii) Considers the proposed development or variation to the health service as set out in this report and Appendix 1 and decides whether or not it is substantial.
 - iii) Considers whether it wishes to submit a formal response to the Medway NHS Clinical Commissioning Group ahead of the Primary Care Commissioning Committee on 29 August where a decision is due to be taken.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Substantial Variation Questionnaire
- Appendix 2 Map showing the proximity and distribution of the Sunlight Patient List
- Appendix 3 Letter to patients of the Sunlight GP Surgery, Gillingham
- Appendix 4 Letter to patients of DMC Branch Surgery, Twydall Green, Gillingham
- Appendix 5 Letter to patients of Balmoral Healthy Living Centre, Gillingham

Appendix 6 Letter to patients of Pentagon Centre Surgery, Chatham

Appendix 7 Letter to patients of St Mary's Island Surgery, Chatham

Background papers

None.

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