

HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2021

PETITIONS

Report from: James Williams, Director of Public Health

Author: Stephen Platt, Democratic Services Officer

Summary

The Committee is requested to consider a petition referral request.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 In summary, the Council's Petition Scheme requires the relevant Director to respond to the petition organiser, usually within 10 working days of the receipt of the petition by the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Committees are always advised of any petitions falling within their terms of reference together with the officer response. There is a right of referral of a petition for consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee by the petitioners if they consider the Director's response to be inadequate. Should the Committee determine that the petition has not been dealt with adequately it may use any of its powers to deal with the matter. These powers include instigating an investigation, making recommendations to Cabinet and arranging for the matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council.

1.2 The petition scheme is set out in full in the Council's Constitution at:

<https://www.medway.gov.uk/downloads/file/2657/401 - council rules>

1.3 Any budget or policy framework implications will be set out in the specific petition response.

2. Background

2.1 The Council's Constitution provides that petitions received by the Council relating to matters within the remit of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be referred immediately to the relevant Director for consideration at officer level.

- 2.2 Where the Director is able to fully meet the request of the petitioners a response is sent setting out the proposed action and timescales for implementation.
- 2.3 For petitions where the petition organiser is not satisfied with the response provided by the Director there is provision for the petition organiser to request that the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the steps the Council has taken, or is proposing to take, in response to the petition.

3. Petition Referred to this Committee

- 3.1 The following petition has been referred to this Committee at the request of the petition organiser, Councillor Potter.

- 3.2 **Oppose GP Practices moving out of the Rainham Health Living Centre.**

- 3.3 A paper petition containing 108 signatures and an e-petition containing 25 signatures was presented by Councillor Potter on behalf of all Rainham Councillors at full Council on 21 January 2021. The petition statement was as follows:

‘The CCG need to locate GP practices where they can be easily accessed by local people, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, and they must ensure Rainham residents can get access to GP services when they need them.’

- 3.4 On 4 February 2021, The Director of Public Health responded as follows:

‘Thank you for contacting us and setting out your concerns regarding the relocation of primary care services from Rainham Healthy Living Centre (RHLC). Your petition requests that the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), locate GP practices where they can be easily accessed by local people. Particularly the elderly and most vulnerable. You require the CCG to ensure Rainham people are able to access primary care services in a timely manner when they most need them.

The Council is clear that all residents should be able to access appropriate health and care services that meet their needs. This aspiration is set out in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Medway (JHWBS). Kent and Medway CCG are also committed to tackling health inequalities and delivering on the aspirations of the JHWBS.

I have liaised with the Kent and Medway CCG in relation to proposals to change the current use of Rainham Healthy Living Centre and they confirm:

- NHS policy requires appropriate engagement to be undertaken for any proposed changes to local service provision. The Medway Health and Adult Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HASC) would be consulted should there be any significant changes to current provision.

- Dr Shah (Blue Suite at Rainham) has approached the CCG with regards to consolidating on one site. The CCG has advised (Dr Shah) that further information would be required to inform its consideration of any application for consolidation. This information to include the demographics of patients attending Blue Suite and a detailed plan. This plan to set out how the practice will effectively target, engage and consult with the registered population.

The Council through HASC scrutiny, will be in a position to review any proposals related to changes to the current primary care provision at the Rainham Healthy Living Centre. The CCG has required the specific practice based at RHLC Blue Suite, to evidence how it has engaged and consulted with registered patients. This process enables these patients to make their views known. HASC will be able to determine to what extent the needs of people have been taken into account should they receive any submission from the CCG in relation to Rainham Healthy Living Centre. It is therefore important that local people engage in this consultation should it occur, specifically older people who may be most impacted by any changes.

The CCG has provided assurances that local people will be engaged and consulted and any proposals that relate to RHLC will be brought before HASC to consider. It is my view that the Council through HASC, will be able to negotiate with the CCG to secure the best outcomes for the residents of Rainham. Should a negotiated outcome not be possible, HASC ultimately are able to formally refer the local NHS's reconfiguration proposals to the Secretary of State for Health. This last option should only be considered as a final resort.

I hope my response has been helpful for you.'

3.5 On 18 February 2021, Councillor Potter requested that the matter be reviewed by Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The referral request was as follows:

1. The council have been informed the blue suite at Rainham Healthy Living Centre has not closed and there will be a full consultation process on consolidation. However, patients have been told the suite has already closed and there is a notice on the GP surgery's website saying they aimed for the closure to come into effect in autumn 2020, hence we launched the petition.
2. We have not been provided a specific response about the concerns we have raised about the availability of doctors in the Rainham area. In particular to ensure capacity to provide GP services to the elderly and most vulnerable who will struggle to travel further afield (i.e. from Rainham to Parkwood).
3. We also need to explore why the purpose built centre for health services in Rainham, the Rainham Healthy Living Centre, is not being fully utilised at the moment.

4. Failure of the GP Surgery to engage local Councillors in the consultation process.'

3.6 In response, the Director of Public Health has consulted the CCG, who have responded as follows:

- '1. The Blue Suite, the branch surgery of Long Catlis Road Surgery, has not closed. As a response to the Covid pandemic it has been necessary for some surgeries that normally operate over two sites to consolidate service delivery for face-to-face appointments on one site in order to maintain safe services for patients. The practice is undertaking both administrative work and telephone triage from the Blue Suite site. This is not a formal closure and is an incident response to the pandemic.

An application from Long Catlis Road Surgery to consolidate on one site has not yet been formally considered by the CCG Primary Care Commissioning Committee.

The CCG has informed the practice that the information on their website is not up-to-date.

2. There are seven GP practices, delivering services over nine sites, in the Rainham area that have open lists for new patient registrations. Three of these practices operate from Rainham Healthy Living Centre.

The CCG previously confirmed that more detailed information would be required to inform its consideration of any application for consolidation by Long Catlis Road Surgery. To further clarify, this specifically includes information regarding the patient demographics and patient engagement feedback. This would be informed by a plan that included targeted engagement activities, including elderly and vulnerable patient groups.

3. The Medway and Swale Integrated Care Partnership (ICP), which incorporates Medway Maritime Hospital, community healthcare providers, the mental health trust, councils, primary care networks and commissioning colleagues, is committed to reviewing the use of healthy living centres. The intention is that they should continue to be used for a range of clinical services.
4. The CCG can only advise surgeries on how to conduct their engagement process but we did suggest they email councillors. We understood councillors in Rainham Central, North and South had been notified at the start of the surgery's engagement process ahead of them contacting patients. As stated above, we require the surgery to carry out more targeted engagement activities and we will suggest councillors are included in this process.'

4. Risk Management

- 4.1 The Council has a clear scheme for handling petitions set out in its Constitution. This ensures consistency and clarity of process, minimising the risk of complaints about the administration of petitions.

5. Financial and Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any financial implications arising from the issues raised by the petition will be taken into account as part of the review of this matter.
- 5.2 Overview and Scrutiny Rule 21.1 (xiv) in the Council's Constitution provides that the terms of reference of this Committee include the power to deal with petitions referred to the Committee under and in accordance with the Council's petition scheme.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 The Committee is requested to consider the petition referral request.

Lead Officer Contact

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Appendices

None

Background Papers

None