

CABINET

4 APRIL 2023

GP ACCESS TASK GROUP – MINORITY REPORT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Brake, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services

Report from: Bhupinder Gill, Assistant Director Legal and Governance

Author: Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services

Summary

This report sets out the majority and minority views of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in relation to the GP Access Task Group (Appendix 1).

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1. This report is submitted to Cabinet in accordance with paragraph 11.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny rules.

1.2. This rule states:

“If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on one single final set of proposals or recommendations to the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate), then a minority view which is supported by the largest minority, but at least three members, may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate) with the proposals and recommendations supported by the majority of the Committee.”

1.3. In this case five members of the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee gave support for a minority view at its meeting on 9 March 2023.

2. Background

2.1. A report was initially submitted to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2023 to consider the interim report of the GP Access Task Group. The Task Group made 14 recommendations which were aimed at improving the workforce capacity across primary care in

Medway to ensure patients receive better access and outcomes for their health needs.

- 2.2. The membership of the Task Group comprised Councillors Wildey (Chairman), Murray, Price, Purdy and Mrs Elizabeth Turpin.
- 2.3. Despite its best efforts, the Task Group were unable to meet with many GPs during the review. This was anticipated due to the pressures general practices are under but regardless, this was still a frustration. The Task Group had wanted to visit more practices and to meet with more GPs to enrich their understanding of the current situation and to identify possible solutions.
- 2.4. They did, however, meet with 4 GPs (1 external to Medway) and visited 2 surgeries. All the evidence gathering sessions were incredibly valuable in informing some of the Task Group's findings and recommendations to date. Additionally, the Task Group was well supported by the Director of Primary Care from NHS Kent and Medway and met with other stakeholders including Patient Participation Group representatives, Community based organisations and Community Pharmacists representatives.
- 2.5. The Task Group recognised that it was difficult to meet with GPs at this time due to the pressures within primary care and the wider NHS system. It therefore considered the report and recommendations as interim, but with a strong intention to revisit the review work later in 2023, when it is hoped that more effective engagement with a larger number of Medway GPs can take place.
- 2.6. Therefore, the Task Group considered it most appropriate at this point (December 2022) to prepare an interim report and interim recommendations, based on the evidence it had been able to gather across its nine meetings, but with a view that the work would remain incomplete until a time when more GPs can be effectively consulted with as part of the Task Group's work.
- 2.7. The Committee was asked to determine whether to forward the interim report and its interim recommendations to the Cabinet for its consideration. On 12 January 2023, it agreed the following:
 - a) to note the interim report from the GP Access Task Group.
 - b) that the report is not forwarded to the Cabinet at this stage.
 - c) that the report and its interim recommendations be revisited in the summer when the work can be completed with more engagement with GPs.
- 2.8. Following the meeting, Councillor Murray requested that an item be placed on the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda for 9 March 2023 as follows:

“At the last meeting of this Committee, following a discussion on the Interim GP Access Task Group, the following was agreed:

- a) to note the interim report from the GP Access Task Group.*
- b) that it is not forwarded to the Cabinet at this stage.*
- c) that the report and draft recommendations be revisited in the summer when the work can be completed with more engagement with GPs.*

A number of Members spoke during the debate in favour of the Committee agreeing to forward the report and recommendations to the Cabinet. The decisions made by the Committee (on the Chairman’s casting vote), demonstrated that the Committee could not agree on a final set of proposals to be forwarded to the Cabinet.

Paragraph 11.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules state: “If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on one single final set of proposals or recommendations to the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate), then a minority view which is supported by the largest minority, but at least three members, may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate) with the proposals and recommendations supported by the majority of the Committee. The names of those who dissent may, at a member’s request, be recorded on the main submission.”

Therefore, I request that (at least) three Members of this Committee indicate their support for a minority view which is to submit the GP Access Task Group interim report and interim recommendations to the next meeting of the Cabinet (4 April 2023).”

- 2.9. On 9 March 2023 five members of the committee gave support for a minority view. In support of the minority view, the Lead Member for the Member’s item stated that she did not agree with the view that the report’s findings were insufficient. She accepted the Task Group had not seen as many GPs as they would have liked but the Group had spoken to key practitioners and allied professionals who shared good practice and ideas. The people who the Task Group had engaged with felt the report was an excellent piece of work. There had been no forward planning about how this work could be progressed after the elections and this was the time to forward the recommendations.

3. Monitoring Officer’s comments

- 3.1. In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Rules, once an Overview and Scrutiny Committee has formed proposals or recommendations on any matter, the Committee will formally report these to the proper officer for consideration by the Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate) or to the Council as appropriate (e.g. if the recommendation would require a departure from or a

change to the agreed budget and policy framework). In the case of Task Group recommendations, these are forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

- 3.2. Paragraph 11.2, the Overview and Scrutiny Rules provide for a minority view to be submitted to Cabinet. The content of this paragraph is important and therefore it is cited below;

If an Overview and Scrutiny Committee cannot agree on one single final set of proposals or recommendations to the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate), then a minority view which is supported by the largest minority, but at least three members, may be prepared and submitted for consideration by the Council or Leader/Cabinet (as appropriate) with the proposals and recommendations supported by the majority of the Committee. The names of those who dissent may, at a member's request, be recorded on the main submission.

*MO's emphasis

- 3.3. The report to Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 9 March 2023, advised Members that before a minority report can be submitted, Members who are inclined to support such a report should be satisfied that:
- it is reasonable to conclude that the work of the Task Group has concluded or come to a close and
 - the Task Group is in a position to make proposals or recommendations.
- 3.4. The report to Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on 9 March 2023, also advised Members if there is support for a minority report, Members need to be cognisant that the Constitution permits a minority report to be submitted by the largest minority. Thus, if Members determine to submit one now, they will not have the option to submit another when the majority report is submitted.
- 3.5. At this meeting (9 March 2023), five Members indicated their support for a minority report to be submitted.
- 3.6. Therefore, the minority report is submitted to Cabinet along with the decision of the Committee which was to:
- a) note the interim report from the GP Access Task Group.
 - b) not forward the report to the Cabinet at this stage.
 - c) agree that the report and its draft recommendations be revisited in the summer when the work can be completed with more engagement with GPs.
- 3.7. The Cabinet is requested to consider the procedural matter.

4. Risk Management

- 4.1. There are no specific risk implications for Medway Council arising directly from the contents of this report. For completeness, the following risk management implications were reported to the Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12 January 2023:

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Lack of engagement of Medway GPs	The review and recommendations are based on evidence gathered by very few Medway GPs due to their unavailability and work pressures throughout the Task Group's work.	The Task Group engaged with many other stakeholders, including some GPs and was supported throughout the review by the Director of Primary Care. It believes its recommendations will contribute positively to the issues relating to primary care access and hopes to pick this work up again in the summer of 2023 to reattempt at reaching and consulting with more GPs.	B2
The recommendations are not carried out	The report and recommendations are in addition to other work that is taking place to tackle this issue and the recommendations in this report may not be prioritised or undertaken	The recommendations are aimed to enhance the work already being undertaken to improve patient access to and outcomes from primary care and have been written in a way that they align with the GP Development Plan's priorities so will work alongside other actions being undertaken.	C2

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very high	1 Catastrophic (Showstopper)
B High	2 Critical
C Significant	3 Marginal
D Low	4 Negligible
E Very low	
F Almost impossible	

5. Legal and Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no specific financial or legal implications for Medway Council arising directly from the contents of the report.

6. Recommendations

6.1. The Cabinet is asked to consider:

- 6.1.1. the minority report;
- 6.1.2. the decision of the committee and;
- 6.1.3. what action, if any that arises.

7. Suggested reasons for decision

- 7.1. The Cabinet has a choice to consider the minority report, the decision of the committee and determine what action to take in response as set out in paragraph 11.2 of the Overview and Scrutiny Rules.

Lead officer contact

Wayne Hemingway, Head of Democratic Services
Telephone: 01634 332509
E-mail: wayne.hemingway@medway.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1 – GP Access Task Group interim report
Appendix 2 – Diversity Impact Assessment
Appendix 3 – Minutes of HASC OS 12 January 2023 and 9 March 2023

Background papers

None