

Interim report of Scrutiny Committee investigation

Investigation title: **SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF NHS ENGLAND COMMISSIONING WITH REGARD TO LOCAL HEALTH SERVICES CAPACITY**

October 2013

Councillors :-

Mary Burstow (Chair)

Alan Salter (Vice-Chair)

Nick Emmerson

Stuart Gordon-Bullock

Kirsty Jerome

Edward Joyce

Stephen Fenwick

Peter Fosdike

Jonathan Pritchard

## **INTRODUCTION**

As part of the Scrutiny Committee's 2013/14 annual workplan it was decided that members would investigate the local impact of what at the time were understood to be proposals to redevelop the GP practice services at 2 surgeries in the borough.

As progress was made to prepare for the investigation and identify the right witnesses it became clear that the original scope had not fully understood the location of new responsibilities following the major changes to the health landscape brought in by the Health and Social Care Act on 1 April 2013.

This interim report therefore records and reflects on the new information the committee found and acts as a staging post to enable members to return to the topic at some point in the next cycle.

## **BACKGROUND**

This investigation was initially scoped to take place over 2 meetings looking at 2 key areas

- 1) To comment on proposals for the development of enhanced services at the Henderson and Priory Road sites in terms of range and quality of services available; opening hours; accessibility.
- 2) To comment on the implications for ambulance service capacity to deliver services in the proposed new configuration of services

This work was also seen in the context of the wider re-organisational proposals being taken forward across South West London by the 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) under the title of 'Better Services, Better Value' (BSBV).

The investigation was initially designed on the assumption that following the deletion of the Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust (also known as NHS Sutton and Merton) the responsibility for commissioning new GP services, and oversight of the arrangements to ensure matters such as location and population need were addressed, would be with the new Sutton CCG.

Following discussions with CCG colleagues it was identified that it is NHS England that has these responsibilities.

Colleagues from NHS England were able to attend the committee's first evidence gathering session at its meeting on 9 October 2013. The outcome of the discussions at this meeting are set out in the next section.

## INVESTIGATION AND FINDINGS

The committee heard from Dr Hudson and Dr Croucher who explained the long histories of their efforts to secure better, more accessible facilities for the Grove Road and Belmont practices. They explained that they have engaged a specialist company, Assura Medical Centres Ltd, to help progress the plans for the development of a new facility, to be called the South Sutton Medical Centre (SSMC) at the former Henderson hospital site.

The proposed relocation of the two GP practices, Belmont and Grove Rd to the Henderson site is intended to resolve the problems of space experienced by both surgeries, as it is a hospital site, and is large enough to accommodate both practices. This proposal does not represent a merger of both practices, as each one would retain its distinct identity. Belmont and Grove Rd practice would simply be sharing the site.

Simon Gould from Assura explained their role in supporting the practices redevelopment plans. Assura, works with GPs to provide specialist development advice to enable the building of modern, compliant primary care buildings. The development will house both Grove Rd and Belmont practices, has incorporated the specific requirements of the GPs, and the building design has applied NHS design guidance and best practice. Mr Gould advised the practices will share rooms which will provide economies of scale and better value for money.

Mr Gould reiterated that several opportunities were looked at over the years but none were successful, hence the decision to purchase the Henderson site in advance of submitting the proposals to NHS England.

Assura have entered into a contract to purchase the Henderson site with its owners (LBS and St George's Mental Health Trust) subject to planning permission. A planning application has been submitted and has been validated by LBS Planning Department. It will be brought before Development Control Committee in December.

Some advantages of the proposed development include:

- Building compliant with legislation
- Disability, fire, infections control
- Easy to clean work surfaces with sloping tops to minimise infection
- New facilities offer best experience possible for patients
- Good ventilation
- Sufficient workspace

Doris Richards, Healthwatch Sutton, offered to provide the benefit of their learning from the recent development of the Jubilee Health Centre (JHC) particularly in respect of disabled access and signage, and Mr Gould indicated that he would take up that offer

**RECOMMENDATION 1** Healthwatch Sutton and Assura arrange to meet and / or share information, in good time, to allow lessons learned from JHC to be considered for SSMC.

Mr Cunningham-Davis (NHS England, South Local Area Team) explained that it is NHS England which is responsible for commissioning GP services and reimbursing GP practices for their business rates and rental costs. It is NHS England that holds the contract for both the Grove Road and Belmont practices. It would therefore be NHS England that would authorise the future plans to move to the Henderson site.

The business case for the SSMC development was submitted to NHS England earlier this year. However in addition to new proposals such as these NHS England has inherited the signed off business cases for a number of developments from the previous PCT cluster boards. These earlier plans will have priority in terms of how and when they will be dealt with. The SSMC business case would therefore not be in a position to be considered for approval until at the earliest 2014/15 and would be looked at in the context of other proposals across London.

**RECOMMENDATION 2 FOR NHSE.** When future proposals are received by NHSE regarding GP premises developments they should notify Sutton's HWBB and Scrutiny Committee.

NHS England is currently developing its evaluation criteria and governance arrangements for primary care investments and expect them to be finalised by December. The SSMC proposal would need to be considered against those criteria – which will cover value for money considerations, appropriateness of location and compatibility with local CCG strategy. There will also be an affordability test, which would form part of NHS England's 2014/15 budget setting process.

**RECOMMENDATION 3 FOR NHSE.** The Scrutiny committee would welcome the opportunity to assist NHS England in its preparation of new evaluation criteria by offering a perspective from local scrutiny.

**RECOMMENDATION 4 FOR NHSE.** In order to help the Scrutiny Committee engage with these and future proposals, it is crucial that there is clarity on exactly what services are being proposed in what settings. NHS England should provide a comprehensive glossary table which defines (1) the different service settings (e.g. A&E, Local Care Centres, Urgent Care Centres) and (2) the full range of services available in those settings.

The committee concluded by agreeing to postpone the remainder of this investigation until 2014/15 when the NHS England decision on the SSMC business case is made.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Scrutiny Committee makes the following recommendations for consideration by the relevant partner. The Committee requests that written response to these recommendations is provided within the 28 day timescale.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR HEALTHWATCH AND ASSURA**

1. Healthwatch Sutton and Assura arrange to meet and / or share information, in good time, to allow lessons learned from JHC to be considered for SSMC.

### **RECOMMENDATION FOR NHSE**

2. When future proposals are received by NHSE regarding GP premises developments they should notify Sutton's HWBB and Scrutiny Committee.
3. The Scrutiny committee would welcome the opportunity to assist NHS England in its preparation of new evaluation criteria by offering a perspective from local scrutiny.
4. In order to help the Scrutiny Committee engage with these and future proposals, it is crucial that there is clarity on exactly what services are being proposed in what settings. NHS England should provide a comprehensive glossary table which defines (1) the different service settings (e.g. A&E, Local Care Centres, Urgent Care Centres) and (2) the full range of services available in those settings.