



Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2020/2021

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to write this short introduction to the summary of the Sub-Committee's work during the 2020-2021 municipal year.

The Sub-Committee's work has of course been dominated by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. We have sought to understand the impact of Covid-19 on local health services whilst also being conscious of not adding unnecessarily to NHS colleagues' workload at such an unprecedented time. We will of course continue to scrutinise the performance of local health services as we move, we all hope, into the period of post-Covid recovery for the country as a whole.

The Sub-Committee has continued to enjoy a positive and productive relationship with Healthwatch Havering – an organisation representing the users of local health services. Healthwatch officers have brought a number of reports to the Sub-Committee and further details are given overleaf.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the other members of the Sub-Committee and all officers, both from the Council and the NHS, who have supported the Sub-Committee's work during such a challenging time.

I commend this annual report and am pleased to submit it to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

REMIT AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee undertakes the Council's Health Scrutiny function as granted under the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013. This allows the scrutiny of health services provided to Havering residents by NHS bodies, in addition to those provided by the Council.

Scrutiny regularly takes place of services provided by a number of NHS bodies including, but not limited to, Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (BHRUT) North East London Commissioning Group (CCG) and the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT).

The Members on the Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee during the year were:

Councillor Nisha Patel (Chairman)
Councillor Ciaran White (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Philippa Crowder
Councillor Nic Dodin
Councillor David Durant
Councillor Darren Wise

Review of Activity

During the year under review, the sub-committee dealt with the following issues:

1. Performance Information

Throughout the period under review, the Sub-Committee has sought to keep up to date with performance information from local NHS bodies. Discussions with BHRUT have of course focussed on the impact of Covid-19 on services. This included the unavoidable suspension of many less urgent services during the peak of the pandemic. The Sub-Committee was pleased to note that many trauma and cancer services were provided by the independent sector on behalf of the NHS and that some hospital services have restarted recently as Covid pressures have eased somewhat.

Information on NELFT performance that the Sub-Committee scrutinised covered areas such as the performance of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and antenatal checks completed by health visitors.

2. Healthy Child Programme

The Council's Senior Public Health Specialist briefed the Sub-Committee on the Healthy Child Programme which had commissioned new contracts for the Council's health visiting and school nursing services. The new contracts had commenced in April 2020 and the Sub-Committee noted the impact of Covid-19 on these services which had nevertheless continued to be provided.

3. Housing Strategy

The Sub-Committee was briefed on the Council's draft housing strategy and its links with public health. The strategy was due to be submitted for public consultation and emphasised the importance to health of the provision of balconies, green spaces etc in developments.

4. Covid-19

Updates on the position with Covid-19 in Havering have continued to be received by the Sub-Committee as NHS colleagues have continued to deal with the second wave of Covid cases. Members have sought to understand the impact of the virus on hospital staff and the position with the vaccination programme locally. The Sub-Committee has supported the provision of consultations and appointments virtually, provided this does not lead to incidences of digital exclusion.

5. Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC)

Councillors Patel, Dodin and White have represented the Sub-Committee on the JHOSC which scrutinises NHS matters affecting the Outer North East London area. The work of the JHOSC was also impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic with responses to the pandemic scrutinised along with progress with the vaccination across the region.

Other areas scrutinised by the JHOSC have included the move of location of the NELFT prosthetics centre from Harold Wood to a site in Billericay and plans for NHS investment in projects such as the former St George's Hospital site and the redevelopment of Whipps Cross Hospital. The move towards a single CCG for North East London as well as an Integrated Care System for the region have also been brought to the JHOSC for scrutiny during the year.

6. Healthwatch Havering

The Sub-Committee has continued to enjoy a good relationship with Healthwatch Havering and the organisation has used its legal powers to bring a number of reports to the Sub-Committee during the year. These have included investigations on the role of care homes during the pandemic, the extent of NHS dental services in Havering and a review of GP practice websites.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Legal implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None – narrative report only.

Equalities implications and risks:

While the work of the Sub-Committee can impact on all members of the community, there are no implications arising from this specific report which is a narrative of the Sub-Committee's work over the past year.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.