



Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Annual Report 2021/2022

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to write this short introduction to the summary of the Sub-Committee's work during the 2021-2022 municipal year.

The period under review started with significant Covid-19 restrictions still in place and I am delighted that the period under review has seen the removal of these as well as some reduction in the level of pressure on Health Services as a result of the pandemic. The Sub-Committee will continue to monitor local health services as they seek to recover from the pandemic period at both a Havering and North East London level.

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 in this report.

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 Clinical 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

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 also covered information on the four-hour emergency access performance and the number of patients waiting in excess of 52 weeks for treatment which had increased over the post-Covid period.

2. Access to GP Services

The Sub-Committee scrutinised the level of access local residents had to GP services and the level of face to face appointments available following the pandemic. It was accepted that it was important to manage people's expectations about GP access and that treatment or advice could often be effectively given by GP nurses or pharmacists.

3. Healthwatch Havering

Healthwatch Havering has continued to bring to the Committee a number of reports the organisation has compiled covering areas such as access to GP practices and the impact of Covid-19 on disabled residents of Havering.

A director of the organisation regularly attends meetings of the Sub-Committee and is allowed to ask questions of witnesses, hence aiding the Sub-Committee's scrutiny of issues.

4. St George's Hospital Redevelopment

The Sub-Committee held a special meeting in January 2022 to scrutinise proposals for the development of a new health hub on the site of the former St George's Hospital site in Hornchurch. The Sub-Committee has reviewed the engagement process for the project and noted plans for a variety of services to be available on the site including phlebotomy, X-ray and a frailty hub. The new facility was scheduled to open in early 2024.

5. Phlebotomy Services

The Committee has scrutinised on several occasions during the year the phlebotomy pilot service and local blood testing facilities that were available. Although some improvements were noted, the Sub-Committee is likely to continue to monitor the situation and what provision is put in place following the conclusion of the pilot in June 2022.

6. 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 and associated recovery work scrutinised along with progress with the vaccination programme across the region.

Other areas scrutinised by the JHOSC have included the planned redevelopment of Whipps Cross Hospital, the clinical strategy being developed by the Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals' NHS Trust (BHRUT) and collaborative working between BHRUT and Barts Health. The Chair in Common of both organisations addressed the JHOSC on two occasions during the year.

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.

Environmental and Climate Change 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.