

HEALTH AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Notes of the Primary Care Applications Working Party meeting held in the Dunstanburgh Room, First Floor, County Hall, Morpeth at 10.00am on Monday, 23 September 2019

PRESENT

Councillor L Rickerby (Chair, in the Chair)

COUNCILLORS

Hutchinson, I (substitute)

Watson, J. (part)

OFFICERS

Bird, M

Vickerson, F (NHS England)

Fletcher, P (NHS England)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Dr Chohan, S (applicant)

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice-chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Rickerby be appointed chair and Councillor Watson vice-chair for the 2019/20 council year.

2. Membership and Terms of Reference

RESOLVED that the membership and terms of reference of the Primary Care Applications Working Party, as agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 June 2019, be noted:

Purpose: the Primary Care Applications Working Party's role is to scrutinise and comment upon applications for variations to primary care services as consultee on behalf of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including:

- acting as consultee for applications referred to the Council by the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS England, Northumbria Healthcare, Northumberland County Councillors, or directly by members of the public
- receiving advice from CCG and Officers

- gathering evidence from applicants
- reaching consensus on responses to applications
- reporting back to the Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Meetings: meetings will convene as and when business arises. Local members from areas affected by applications, as well as officers and applicants or their representatives, will attend meetings as appropriate for business on the agenda.

Membership: the Working Party will consist of four members of the Health & Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including the Chair and Vice-chair: Councillors Moore, Nisbet, Rickerby and Watson.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Moore and Nisbet.

4. Primary Care Application - Tweedmouth Dental Clinic

The meeting had been arranged to consider a re-application for a change in location for Tweedmouth Dental Clinic. The Working Party needed to give their views on the proposal before NHS England took a decision about the move.

Dr Shabin Chohan, the applicant, spoke in support of the proposed move. His key points included:

- permission had originally been granted four years ago but the development then delayed particularly due to rising financial costs. Now that the applicant had the budget in place he was ready to proceed, but NHS England asked him to re-apply and undertake further engagement due to the time elapsed since the previous application
- the current Tweedmouth site only included two surgery rooms; this application proposed four. Increasing the surgeries also suited workforce requirements as more part-time staff were now employed. He had addressed recruitment issues including participating in programmes and attracting staff from overseas
- anybody who had used the dental practice's services within the past two years had been consulted; a wide range of consultation measures had been used. 827 people replied to the consultation; 743 had supported the move and 84 were against
- the current and new site were only 0.8 miles apart from each other. The new location would also make the service more accessible to a greater number of residents, especially those from outside Berwick as it would be easier to access it by transport in its new town centre location
- the practice provided the 111 emergency dental service for north Northumberland, and would continue to reapply to keep providing it.

A member asked about any impact on the staffing resulting from Brexit. Dr Chohan responded that it was difficult to predict but that it was likely that many skilled staff such as GPs and dentists would continue to come from countries outside of the EU.

Pauline Fletcher of NHS England added that Dr Chohan had undertaken all actions that NHS England had asked him to do. The proposal would provide a modern facility, increase accommodation and thus improve capacity for part time staff. The increased space and location of the new premises would greatly assist access for patients attending the provider's urgent care service accessed through NHS 111. All feedback from the engagement undertaken would be considered by NHS England prior to a final decision being made.

Members agreed that the engagement report from the applicant and his presentation to the meeting were both very good. The proposal would greatly benefit local residents; in reality any change in service was unlikely to ever receive 100% support. The proposal and approach being taken was supported; the location was suitable especially for the convenient transport links. The three county councillors for Berwick had been consulted; they could not attend this meeting but two had emailed letters of support for the proposal (copies had been circulated at the beginning of the meeting).

Mr Chobin, Ms Fletcher and Ms Vickerson were thanked for their attendance and it was:

RESOLVED that the re-application be fully supported and this Working Party's views be submitted into the consultation process.

5. Next Meeting

It was noted that any additional meetings would continue to be arranged as and when business arose.

MDB/2019-09-23