

**NORTHUMBRIA NHS FOUNDATION TRUST AND NORTHUMBERLAND
CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED
DURING PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AT THE NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND
LOCAL AREA COUNCIL**

(Excerpts from the minutes of the meeting are in italics. Responses from the Trust and CCG are in bold.)

Carole Murrayson, local resident, on behalf of A Better Hospital for Berwick Campaign, asked if the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) had ever either stopped an issue from being further investigated, called in or stopped a development?

Councillor Watson, as chair of the Health and Wellbeing OSC responded. All items on the OSC's agendas were items called that the committee either was required to look at or issues that they decided to investigate. The committee then scrutinised whether they agreed or not with what NHS organisations proposed. The committee could not stop NHS developments, but they could refer some matters to the Secretary of State for Health. For example, the committee was concerned about the suspension of dental services in the Rothbury and Hadston areas, and asked NHS England to provide updates regularly to the committee so members could keep track of the resolution of the issue. Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust would need to present an update to the committee when proposals were developed for the new Berwick Hospital. Democratic Services had contacted the Trust that day asking when the update could be provided. The committee would support receiving the update and members had to impartially assess what was proposed so could not make any judgement yet about what was proposed for the hospital.

Councillor Hill, as local member added that the previous proposal for a joint leisure and hospital development in Berwick had been agreed but then dropped due to the strength of public opinion. No update had since been provided about plans for the hospital, and it was also news that the current site was now to be reconsidered. There was a high level of local concern about what was happening and an update was needed.

Democratic Services would further follow up the request for an update with Northumbria NHS Foundation Trust.

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:
Northumbria Healthcare has now publically announced that the new Berwick hospital will be on the current Infirmary site and is happy to provide an**

update, at the appropriate time, to the committee as plans progress. The Trust is committed to a new hospital in Berwick with all of the current services it has now.

Jen McClean, local resident asked about bidding arrangements for the site of the hospital. The Chair responded that there might be commercial sensitivities about this but clarity would be sought about the next steps to get an update as soon as possible. This would be raised with both the Council's chief executive and Northumbria Healthcare.

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:
Northumbria Healthcare has now publically announced that the new Berwick hospital will be on the current Infirmary site.**

Kirsty Jamieson, local resident asked if the Health and Wellbeing OSC were all lay members or whether they had any medical training/background. She asked if members were able to take decisions if they were not health professionals and whether they just accepted reports on the presumption they were presented by health experts. She felt that local health services were being stripped away.

The Chair explained that elected members were all lay people who made judgements on the issues presented to them. Councillor Watson explained that members were elected and then appointed to council committees which then met to judge whether reports/proposals were in the interests of their communities and listen to the evidence of experts. The same principle applied when members considered planning applications like earlier in this meeting; members received presentations from planning professionals and made their own judgments on proposals. Councillor Hill added that scrutiny skills were very important, so that members challenged experts and the basis of their proposals.

Gordon McClean, local resident stressed the campaign group's aim to get the best hospital for Berwick, in light of concerns about services, and asked elected representatives to commit to keeping asking questions and pursuing their concerns. The two local Berwick county councillors said they would and added that they were meeting the Council's chief executive to discuss this further on 22 March.

**Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:
Northumbria Healthcare is committed to a new hospital in Berwick with all of the current services the hospital has now. A public announcement has been**

made that this will be built on the current Infirmary site and the Trust will continue to engage with local people as plans progress.

Mr McClean also asked how an integrated health/leisure services facility would work, as residents preferred a standalone hospital? Councillor Watson confirmed that the current position was to develop a standalone hospital; the joint proposal had since been discontinued. Local councillors would continue to represent residents' views during this process.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:

Following public engagement, it was clear a joint development was not what the people of Berwick wanted and plans are progressing as a stand-alone hospital. Northumbria Healthcare has now publically announced that the new Berwick hospital will be on the current Infirmary site.

Jannette Beresford, local resident expressed concern that no further information was available about the hospital and asked what the timescale was for developing it. The Chair explained that it was still early in the process for this but progress would be made.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:

Northumbria Healthcare has now publically announced that the new Berwick hospital will be on the current Infirmary site. The Trust will continue to engage with local people as plans progress.

Geoff Thomas, local resident stressed the importance of involving the staff who delivered health services in the planning about how their future delivery. It was essential that everybody involved in planning such services understood how important the leisure centre, school and hospital were to the Berwick community.

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust's response:

Please be assured that staff are very much involved in the planning of the new hospital. They were heavily involved with the 2014 plans and this ethos remains as we move forward.

A local resident asked about what health service partnerships/arrangements existed with the Scottish Borders Council. Further points were also made about how Berwick was equidistant between the Borders Hospital and Northumbria Specialist

Emergency Care Hospital and the issues this raised for treatment and access to maternity services.

Members considered that more could be done to coordinate between the two and there had been more joint working previously. Members also acknowledged that the Scottish NHS was a different organisation and expressed concern about their level of engagement, but this to do with national policy/arrangements. It was agreed that a written response would be requested, to include Northumbria Healthcare's input.

Response by the Northumberland Clinical Commissioning Group:

The CCG has a Service Level Agreement with NHS Borders to the value of £2 million. The SLA means that NHS Borders can treat Northumberland residents within the scope of the SLA (predominantly emergency admission/care and some elective care). In addition to the SLA the CCG funds all maternity care for Northumberland residents who wish to give birth in Scotland.

The CCG works very closely with Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and encourages cooperation and engagement between Northumbria and Borders, as it does between all its providers.