

**Minutes of the meeting of the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee,  
held in County Hall, Chelmsford on Thursday 9 June 2022 at 10:30am**

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**Present**

Cllr Jeff Henry (Chairman)	Cllr Carlie Mayes (Co-opted)
Cllr David Carter (Co-opted)	Cllr Jaymey McIvor
Cllr Paul Gadd	Cllr Richard Moore
Cllr Dave Harris (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Clive Souter (Vice-Chairman)

**Apologies**

Cllr Martin Foley	Cllr Bob Massey
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**Remote Attendees**

Cllr June Lumley	Cllr Mike Steptoe
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The following officers were supporting the meeting:

- Richard Buttress, Democratic Services Manager
- Joanna Boaler, Head of Democracy and Transparency
- Freddey Ayres, Democratic Services Officer
- Jasmine Carswell, Democratic Services Officer.

**1. Election of Vice-Chairman**

The Committee nominated Cllr Dave Harris and Cllr Clive Harris as Vice-Chairman.

**2. Membership, apologies and declarations**

Apologies were received from Cllr Bob Massey and Cllr Martin Foley.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Stephen Robinson and Cllr Richard Moore to the committee, replacing Cllr Mark and Cory and Cllr Luke Mackenzie respectively.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 7 June 2022 were approved by the Committee as an accurate record.

**4. Questions from the public**

No questions from members of the public were received.

**5. GP Provision in Essex**

The Chairman welcomed the following to the meeting:

- Pam Green, Alliance Director, North East Essex
- Avni Shah, Director of Primary Care, Herts and West Essex
- William Guy, Director of Primary Care, Mid and South Essex

The Committee received the following update covering the following key issues:

- It is a challenging time for the population currently trying to access primary care and there are different perceptions as to why. The health service is under significant strain
- Issues are mainly due to increased demand rather than GP surgeries closing
- Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the delivery of primary care
- A review of primary care has been ongoing for some years but has been impacted because of the pandemic
- Primary care is the front centre of the health service – 80% of health services are delivered through general practice
- Over the past 12 months there has been an increase in activity across the whole of Essex – over half a million appointments
- Primary care is doing a lot to address patient need
- Changes in how appointments are delivered since the pandemic and moved to a telephone triage method
- Gradually this is phasing back but levels have not returned to face-to-face levels from 2019/20
- The triage and telephone approach here to stay and will become a blended method going forward
- Primary care going forward will not be dominated by GP's and will be delivered from different places
- Trying to support practices to better communicate this change of model with patients as it has not always been the case across all practices
- Feedback is being driven by what patients are saying
- Morale in GP practices have hit an all time low, partly due to media reports and demand is outstripping supply
- Primary care cannot work in isolation, it needs collaboration
- Looking towards more digital solutions – video consultations, apps to support patients
- Starting to utilise other providers that can deliver primary care services
- Currently recruiting to new roles in primary care – Care Navigators, Nurse Practitioners, Clinical Pharmacists
- All areas of Essex have an ageing workforce and it is recognised that it will be significant loss of knowledge and experience when they do leave
- Introducing initiatives to improve workforce development, recruitment and retention
- Extended access offer goes live from October 2022 and will be at a primary care network level. The model needs to be tailored to a local population level

Members made the following comments and received responses as below:

- It was noted that health professionals cannot be faulted during appointments, but there are issues around trying to access face-to-face appointments
- Element of customer service is at times unacceptable and is not always possible to maintain dignity when a patient is trying to book an appointment
- People have taken it upon themselves to source alternative methods of care
- Improvements in customer service are much needed

- Receptionists are Care Navigators and should be asking questions in a sensitive way
- During exit interviews with staff, reports of abuse of sometimes given as reasons
- Suggestion that 'mystery shopping' exercise should be undertaken to ensure GP practices are providing a high level of customer service
- Service offers need to be tailored depending on the area/individual to address health inequalities
- Undertaking work to break the perception that access is only available at 8:00am in the mornings
- It is difficult to know what the true demand for primary care is at the moment
- Access to enough GP trainers in surgeries is an issue.

After discussion, it was **Resolved** that:

- i) How many people attend A&E who could've been seen by a GP across Essex
- ii) Officers were invited to provide a further update on 6 – 8 months

## 6. Chairman's Report

The Committee noted the information update within the Chairman's report.

## 7. Member Updates

Members noted the report.

## 8. Work Programme

The Committee noted the current work programme, and the following comments were made:

- Cllr Gadd made a further request for a list of services and providers that fall under the HOSC's remit

*Update: This information has since been shared with Cllr Gadd and will be made available to other members of the committee.*

## 9. Date of next meeting

To note that the next committee meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday 7 July 2022 at 10:30am.

## 10. Urgent business

No urgent business received.

## 11. Urgent exempt business

No urgent exempt business received.

The meeting closed at 12:40pm.

**Chairman**