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Debra Elliot
Jubilee House
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22nd February 2016

Dear Debra,

Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee – Commissioning of NHS Dentistry in Buckinghamshire,

The Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee, at their meeting on 2nd February considered the provision of NHS Dentistry across the county. The Committee received presentations from the Dental Contract Manager at NHS South Central, The Chair of the Local Dental Committee and Healthwatch Bucks.

We understand that in 2009 there was significant investment in NHS dentistry and in Buckinghamshire there was a problem with under-utilisation of this investment. This has led to the re-distribution of Buckinghamshire underspend out of the county and across the region.

The Chair of the LDC highlighted issues with the way in which the 2008 Needs Assessment was conducted, that informed the 2009 spread of practices. The LDC stated that Buckinghamshire has a serious issue of over provision in some areas matched with severe under-provision in other areas. The impact of the clawing back of investment out of the county for dentistry is exacerbating the inequality where there is under provision. The Chair of the LDC stated the needs of the region needed to be re-assessed.

The Committee received the following headline figures which does highlight how Buckinghamshire has lower a lower amount of investment in NHS dental provision compared to its Berkshire and Oxfordshire neighbours

- Buckinghamshire had a lower dental commissioned budget in 14/15, than Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. £14.6 million in Bucks, compared to £24 million in Oxon and £28.7 million in Berks. The outcome is lower units of dental activity in Buckinghamshire.
- Bucks has a spend of £28.81 annually per head of population, compared to Oxon at £36.65 and Berks at £33.23. Bucks has 79% of the spend per person of Oxon and 87% of the spend of Berks.
- Bucks has on average only 1,2 units of activity per person commissioned a lot lower than Oxon and Berks.



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The Committee would like an explanation for the different levels of funding Buckinghamshire receives compared to its neighbours and work ongoing to assess access disparities across the region. In addition it would like to know if there are plans to re-dress the funding anomalies identified by the LDC in Bucks?

We understand that assessing levels of dental provision is further complicated by the significant amount of new development across the region and gaining detailed population growth and new housing figures for future primary and secondary health provision is challenging. The Committee during its discussions highlighted the need for NHS commissioners to have links with local planning authorities so they are aware of growth and provide links to Local Plan Development. I have attached the relevant District Council links to current Local Plan consultation as an appendix to this letter.

A concluding Healthwatch presentation on its survey findings around accessibility has highlighted discrepancies over the number of NHS dental practices in Bucks. 25 of the NHS choice dentists contacted stated they did not offer NHS appointments and were private practices.

Appreciating the difficulties in maintaining up to date information the Committee would like to know why there are a significant discrepancies in the number of NHS dental practices in Bucks

King regards



Angela Macpherson, County Councillor
Chairman, Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee



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Appendix 1 – Links to District Council Local Plans

Aylesbury Vale District Council

<http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/vale-aylesbury-local-plan-valp>

Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils

<http://www.southbucks.gov.uk/article/4814/Emerging-Chiltern-and-South-Bucks-Local-Plan-2014-2036>

Wycombe District Council

<http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-buildings/planning-policy/new-local-plan.aspx>



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