

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting - 1 October 2019

Present: P Bastiman (Vice-Chairman - In the chair), M Bezzant, D Dhillon, T Egleton and P Kelly

Apologies for M Bradford, M Lewis and D Saunders
absence:

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 June 2019 were approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee as a correct record subject to an amendment to Minute No. 5 – Homelessness in South Bucks – Update, in relation to the discussion which took place on performance indicators for homelessness, it was agreed that it should read that performance indicator targets for homelessness should be reduced.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. SOUTH CENTRAL AMBULANCE SERVICE PRESENTATION

The Committee was provided with a presentation from Andrew Battye, Head of Operations at South Central Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust.

The Ambulance Response Program (ARP) was the largest change to Ambulance response since the late 70's. It identified the most appropriate resource that needed to be measured; this resulted in different time parameters. It is no longer a percentage of achievement, but now looks at the average (mean, to improve response to more patients.

The system benefits were that life threatening categories were measured by response and conveyance, conveying resource was measured for all calls and a review of the response model. Risks included the possibility of skewed numbers as a result of low numbers in some categories. There is a risk of false negatives in the data due to measurement.

Responses were sorted into 4 categories. Category 1 were the highest priority patients; unconscious, not breathing and drowning. These had 7 minutes initial response on average. Category 2 were the higher priority patients; chest pain, stroke and breathing difficulties. These had a 17 minutes average conveying resource time.

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Category 3 were lower acuity patients; abdominal pain, fall with injury and minor with and road traffic incident. This had an average 2 hours conveying resource time. Category 4 patients were the lowest acuity patients; fall without injury and generally unwell. These had an average 3 hours average conveying resource time.

Demand was growing for the ambulance service. In response to questions from members, Andrew Battye explained that this was in part due to an ageing population. Despite the growing demand, performance had remained similar with minor shifts in the response times. For 2019/20, at the 50th percentile, there had been a 3 second increase, at the 75th percentile, a 7 second decrease and at the 90th percentile a 2 second decrease. The performances for 2019/20 at the 50th, 75th and 90th percentile were 6:31, 9:55 and 17:17 respectively.

South Bucks contains sections of both the M40 and the M25 motorways. It was reported that since 1st April 2019, there had been 55 incidents on the M25 and 102 incidents on the M40.

Hospital handover times were reported to have improved significantly. At Wexham Park Hospital, the introduction of a new Emergency department had drastically reduced handover excesses. At Stoke Mandeville hospital, there had been a modest reduction in handover excesses.

Delays can cause a knock-on effect where patients could need greater care. For example if a patient was on the ground due to a fall, they can be treated on the spot if the response time is within a certain timeframe. However, if they are on the ground for an extended period, there is a need for further care. This causes extra delays for the ambulance service.

It was reported that there is a significant challenge in recruiting and retaining ambulance staff. GPs were now recruiting paramedics with better working conditions. Paramedics had a greater suicide rate than the rest of the population. Team leaders within the ambulance service helped manage staff and ensure their wellbeing. Cost of housing was an issue and staff regularly left for more affordable areas. In response to questions from Members, it was reported there was currently no London weighting available for ambulance staff in the area. Andrew Battye informed Members he was looking to contact the South Bucks MP to express his concerns about this.

Reference was made to negotiations which had taken place with a mortgage lender about getting preferential rates for ambulance staff. The lack of affordable and key worker housing in the region was a problem.

The ambulance fleet vehicles are currently maintained and run for up to 10 years. There were 52 new vehicles ordered and roll out will start in November.

RESOLVED – That the South Central Ambulance Service be thanked for their presentation.

19. **PRESENTATION ON FLOODING ISSUES AND PREVENTION MEASURES IN SOUTH BUCKS DISTRICT**

The Committee was provided with a presentation from Huw Thomas (Thames Water), Grace Harland (Affinity) and a verbal update from Alex Back (Bucks County Council).

Thames Water

Huw Thomas from Thames Water gave an overview of the Thames Valley Network, it was explained that groundwater can cause sewers to become permanently full. This results in further rain causing sewers to surface. It was reported that Thames Water had become more pro-active with sewer maintenance since 2015. There were depth monitors in place in sewers.

Members were informed that Thames Water identified risks by using several resources. They analysed proposed growth through Local Plans. A Pre-planning enquiry process was free and developers were being encouraged to contact them in advance of the submission of planning applications. Their customer relationship managers were proactively seeking out site developers and working to meet developers, promoters and agents for large development sites at an early stage of the planning process.

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the conversion of offices to flats is unlikely to be picked up by Thames Water and Members were informed that the Local Authority should communicate this to the Water Authorities. However, flow monitors in sewers allow them to be aware of altered activity.

Drainage and Wastewater management plans had been developed by Water and wastewater Companies, Defra Environment Agency, Ofwat, Consumer Council for Water and the National Infrastructure Commission. This framework was published in 2018 to provide a basis for more collaborative and integrated long term planning.

It was reported that £150,000 is to be made available to all districts in the region for the installation of surface water management schemes. Alex Back from Bucks County Council confirmed that the new unitary council will receive the amounts intended for all local authorities to be merged.

Members were informed that generally South Bucks was reasonably well looked after, with no major flooded areas, although there were isolated small areas which encountered the occasional flooding. Reference was made to Chalfont St Peter and Chesham where there were issues with the drainage. Thames Water was asked to investigate Lakes Lane, Beaconsfield where there were potential drainage problems which resulted in flooding.

Affinity

Grace Harland from Affinity gave an overview of the River Restoration projects on the River Misbourne. The presentation focused on 3 projects, Barn Meadow, Amersham to Q Mill and the Isle of Wight Farm.

The Isle of Wight Farm Project at Gerrards Cross was completed December 2018. Its aim was to build a bund that diverts river flow into the main channel. To narrow and add flow diversity to the channel and to narrow and to increase the amount of light into the channel through tree works.

Members were shown a portion of tree works completed. Gravels were exposed on the bed and monitoring was in place at the site. This was to spot gauging and macroinvertebrate sampling.

The Amersham to Quarrendon Mill project was aimed at improving habitat and flows in the existing channel (mill leat) through in-channel enhancements, including tree works. Also to better connect the channel to groundwater by re-meandering the channel through the grazing field at the bottom of the valley just below Amersham Bypass.

The Outline designs were produced in April 2019, with a detailed design to be completed later in the year. Tree works were due to be completed in November 2019 and the re-meander in 2020.

County Council

Alex Back, Senior Strategic Flood Management Officer from Bucks County Council (BCC) gave a verbal update on the role of the County Council with regards to flooding.

Bucks County Council is responsible for all rivers within the County. Should a landowner wish to alter a river, they must obtain the Council's consent. If they fail to obtain this, they shall be fined for the corrective works.

Awareness of flooding issues relies on local authority reporting, it was reported there was a severe lack of information about highway drainage assets and their state of maintenance. Members were informed that the County Council tended to be reactive rather than pro-active in dealing with drainage matters, and it tended to be matters raised by members and parishes that received attention in the absence of a formal planned maintenance programme.

Members were invited to contribute with any information they had, and email it to strategicfloodmanagement@buckscc.gov.uk.

BCC communication with Parish Councils took place via local area forums. When a flood incident took place, team members aimed to go out to the affected area. Members suggested it would be useful for Parish Councils to receive the minutes of the Strategic Flood Management Committee.

Reference was made to drainage issues at Farnham Lane, North Burnham and the officer said he would look at this.

Helen Harding, Principal Planner for South Bucks explained to Members that officers worked together with the water authorities at the Local Plan stage.

RESOLVED – That Thames Water, Affinity and Buckinghamshire County Council be thanked for their presentations.

20. **PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1 2019/20**

The Committee received a report which outlined the annual performance of Council services against pre-agreed performance indicators and service objectives for Quarter 1 of 2019-20. The Performance and Policy Officer informed the committee that the performance indicator being referred to in 4.2.3 was the Percentage of food premises improving their Food Hygiene Rating from 0-2 rating to achieve rating of 3 and above.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

21. **STATISTICS ON TPO COMPLAINTS AND PROSECUTIONS**

Members requested that the item be deferred pending further detail on the report. Members asked for details regarding current Tree Protection Order (TPO) Policy, the total number of TPO's and current enforcement policy. Members expressed concern that there had been no enforcement prosecutions for 5 years and wished to know why no action had been taken.

RESOLVED that the report be deferred to the next meeting pending further details.

22. **BUCKS HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SELECT COMMITTEE**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee held on 2 July 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee be noted.

23. **BUCKS CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND LEARNING SELECT COMMITTEE**

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Members were informed that the Minutes of the 6 September 2019 Bucks Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee would be submitted to the next meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Buckinghamshire County Council Children's Social Care and Learning Select Committee be submitted to the next meeting.

24. **MEMBERS QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

There were no questions from Members.

The meeting terminated at 7.43 pm