

Norwich City Council
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Item No 6

REPORT for meeting to be held on Thursday 21 March

Norfolk Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC)

Summary: Councillor David Fullman is the council's representative on the Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The last meeting of the NHOSC took place on 28 February 2019. Attached is the representative's update from that meeting.

Conclusions: The purpose of this report is to receive an update from Scrutiny's representative on NHOSC.

Recommendation: To note the update of the NHOSC representative.

Contact Officers: Emma Webster, scrutiny liaison officer
preferred contact by e-mail
emmawebster@norwich.gov.uk

Notes of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 28th February 2019

The meeting examined ambulance response and turnaround times as well as children's speech and language therapy.

There were reports from the Ambulance Trust, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital Trust and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Trust. The interim chief executive of the Ambulance Trust said that there had been improvements in turnaround times but there was still a very long way to go. They have increased their workforce and there is better co-ordination. The main problem is that patients taken to hospital go through a system that no one organisation has responsibility for. Having said that, partnership working has greatly improved, and there is now an Emergency Care Board which is starting to address the issues.

It seems to me that, meeting after meeting, the HOSC gets presentations from new chiefs of failing parts of the local health service. The pattern seems to be that the failing service renews either their management team or their board, and sometimes both. The new management is committed to improving the service and their commitment cannot be doubted. We interview them and examine their improvement plans and then decide to get them back in six months' time, during which period there is often some sort of crisis which means that they renew their management, their board or both.

The speech and language therapy service for children is getting an injection of £0.5million. This represents an increase of 30% in their funding, but, as the service is underfunded by 45% the parents attending the meeting were not as impressed as the County Council seemed to hope they might be. The parents' group – SENSational Families – is now included in the stakeholder group, which is a good thing. There is a dispute between the commissioners and the parents over whether children with autism and Downs syndrome are included in the service – the commissioners say they are, but the parents' experience contradicts this. The commissioners say that they need to work with children before they are old enough to go to school, but no-one explained how that squares with the closure of most of the children's centres in the county.

Councillor David Fullman