

## **SOUTHEND-ON-SEA CITY COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: Tuesday, 29th October, 2024**

**Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite**

**Present:** Councillor C Nevin (Chair)  
Councillors D Poulton (Vice-Chair), S W Allen, M Borton\*,  
C Campbell, O Cartey, T Cox, I Ferguson\*, J Harland, S Habermel,  
K Murphy, S Nadeem, J Norman, D Richardson, L Salter and  
C Webster\*

O Richards, (Co-opted Member, Healthwatch Southend)  
A Quinn, (Co-opted Member, Southend Association of Voluntary  
Services)  
Rev. Cannon L Williams, (Co-opted Member, Church of England  
Diocese)

(\*Substitute in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30.)

**In Attendance:** Councillors L Burton, D Cowan and L Hyde (Cabinet Members)  
M Harvey, M Marks and S Cox (Southend-on-Sea City Council)  
N Abbott, T Fox, J Murdoch-Kelly and M Mushabe (NHS Mid and  
South Essex)

**Start/End Time:** 6.30pm – 9.20pm

#### **18 Chair's Introduction & Apologies for Absence**

##### **(a) Chair's Introduction**

Prior to the consideration of the matters set out in the agenda, the Vice-Chair outlined their expectations of the standard of conduct and behaviour to be shown at the meeting.

##### **(b) Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Badger (no substitute), Councillor M Faulkner-Hatt (substitute: Councillor M Borton), Councillor P Kinsella (substitute: Councillor C Webster) and Councillor M O'Connor (substitute: Councillor I Ferguson).

#### **19 Declarations of Interest**

The following interests were declared at the meeting:

- (a) O Richards (Co-opted Member, Southend Healthwatch) in relation to all agenda items – is a Town Councillor at Leigh Town Council and Minute No.25 (Extension of contract for the provision of Southend Sexual Health Services) – Southend Healthwatch has been commissioned by the Director

of Public health to work with women to consider why update has been so low.

- (b) Councillor L Salter – Minute No. 22 (Southend Neonatal Unit designation) – Husband is a consultant surgeon at Southend Hospital; Daughter is a consultant at Basildon Hospital; Son-in-law is a general practitioner in Southend-on-Sea.
- (c) Councillor J Harland – Minute No. 22 (Southend Neonatal Unit designation) – family member is employed at Southend Hospital and Minute 23 (Corporate Performance) is a member of the Fostering and Adoption panels.
- (d) Councillor S Habermel – Minute No. 22 (Southend Neonatal Unit designation) –sister and nephew employed at Southend Hospital.
- (e) Councillor C Nevin – Minute No. 22 (Southend Neonatal Unit designation) – employed at external National Health Service Trust; family members employed at Mid and South Essex Trust hospitals.

## **20 Questions from Members of the Public**

The Committee noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and SEND to a question presented by Ms Cowdrey.

The Committee also noted the response of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities to questions presented by Ms Mitchell and Mr Webb.

The Chair advised that a written response would be sent to Mr Nickless in response to a question for the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and SEND, as he was not present at the meeting.

## **21 Minutes of the Special Meeting held on Thursday, 19th September 2024**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

The Chair proposed to bring forward the consideration of item 8 (Southend Neonatal Unit designation) to allow external partners to leave the meeting after discussion of the item, to which the Committee agreed.

## **22 Southend Neonatal Unit designation**

The Interim Managing Director for Women and Children (Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust) presented the report which outlined the clinical case for change for paediatric reconfiguration at Southend Hospital, which proposed the redesignation of the neonatal unit from a Level 2 Local Neonatal Unit (LNU) to a Level 1 Special Care Baby Unit (SCBU).

The Committee discussed the report in some detail and expressed a number of concerns, as summarised below:

- The impact on birthing mothers being transferred locally from Southend to Basildon or Broomfield over a further distance.
- How it was guaranteed that a cot would be available at a hospital, with the Maternity and Neonate bed availability being on the same site within the Trust.
- That at a distressing time for the family, parents and their support network would need to travel greater distances to receive care and visit mother and or baby.
- It was queried what accommodation was available for parents to stay on site or whether there was any support in meeting travel costs.
- Whether the messaging to expectant mothers regarding the proposed changes to neonatal care had been adequate.
- The condition of estates, cap safety levels and ability to provide safe infection control between cots.
- The feeling that the proposal to redesignate the unit was another example of the gradual downgrading of Southend Hospital, as it was felt that The Trust was adopting a piece-meal approach to relocating services and departments at Basildon and Broomfield hospitals, thereby resulting in Southend residents having to travel further to receive appropriate care.

O. Richards (Co-Opted Member, Healthwatch Southend) provided an update to the Committee on the outcome of an online survey ran by Healthwatch Southend regarding changes to neonatal care and recognised the tension between getting the best outcome for children and families and the access issues that had been discussed.

The Deputy Director of Nursing, Paediatrics and Neonates (Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust) responded to questions and set out the benefits of specialist units.

Following the debate and comments, a number of members of the Committee indicated that they did not wish to support the redesignation of the unit.

The Chair permitted Councillor L Hyde to comment (under Council Procedure Rule 14 ((Part4(a)(iii))), although the Councillor was not a member of the Committee and did not have voting rights.

Following the debate and comments from Members, the Chair proposed to move the following recommendations:

*That the People Scrutiny Committee:*

1. *Note the contents of the report.*
2. *Support the proposal to redesignate the status of the neonatal unit at Southend Hospital from a Level 2 Local Neonatal unit to a Level 1 Special Care Baby Unit.*

3. *Welcome the further engagement plan and request that the Committees feedback is considered in the final service specification and operating model, including concerns regarding the Fairglen interchange.*

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18 ((Part4(a)(iii) – procedure rules relating to Overview and Scrutiny Committees) a named vote was requested by Councillor T Cox and supported by Councillors O Cartey, C Campbell and K Murphy, and it was agreed that a recorded vote would be undertaken for each of the three proposed recommendations.

#### Recommendation 1:

That the People Scrutiny Committee:

1. Note the contents of the report.

The Chair advised that the results of the recorded vote were as follows:

*For:* Councillors M Borton, O Cartey, I Ferguson, S Habermel, J Harland, S Nadeem, C Nevin, J Norman, D Poulton, D Richardson, L Salter and C Webster (12).

*Against:* Councillor S Allen, T Cox, C Campbell and K Murphy (4)

*Abstained:* None (0)

The Chair declared that the recommendation was carried.

#### Recommendation 2

That the Committee:

2. Support the proposal to redesignate the status of the neonatal unit at Southend Hospital from a Level 2 Local Neonatal unit to a Level 1 Special Care Baby Unit.

*For:* None (0)

*Against:* Councillors S Allen, M Borton, T Cox, C Campbell, O Cartey, I Ferguson, S Habermel, K Murphy, S Nadeem, J Norman, D Poulton, D Richardson and C Webster (13)

*Abstained:* Councillors J Harland, C Nevin and L Salter (3)

The Chair declared the recommendation was lost.

#### Recommendation 3

That the Committee:

3. Welcome the further engagement plan and request that the Committees feedback is considered in the final service specification and operating model, including concerns regarding the Fairglen interchange.

*For:* Councillors S Allen, M Borton, T Cox, C Campbell, O Cartey, I Ferguson, S Habermel, J Harland, S Nadeem, C Nevin, J Norman, D Poulton, D Richardson, L Salter and C Webster (15)

*Against:* Councillor K Murphy (1).

*Abstained:* None (0)

The Chair declared the recommendation was carried.

A motion was proposed by Councillor T Cox and seconded by Councillor K Murphy, to change the second recommendation, which read as follows:

*That the Committee strongly objects to the plans by Mid and South Essex Trust (MSE) to redesignate the status of the neonatal unit at Southend Hospital and urges the Trust to think again.*

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18 ((Part4(a)(iii) – procedure rules relating to Overview and Scrutiny Committees) a named vote was requested by Councillor T Cox and supported by Councillors O Cartey, C Campbell and K Murphy, and it was agreed that a recorded vote would be undertaken for the new recommendation, the result of which was as follows:

New motion, proposed by Councillor T Cox and seconded by Councillor K Murphy

That the Committee strongly objects to the plans by Mid and South Essex Trust (MSE) to redesignate the status of the neonatal unit at Southend Hospital and urges the Trust to think again.

*For:* Councillors S Allen, T Cox, C Campbell, O Cartey, I Ferguson, S Habermel, K Murphy and D Poulton (8)

*Against:* Councillors J Harland, D Richardson and L Salter (3).

*Abstained:* Councillors M Borton, S Nadeem, C Nevin, J Norman and C Webster (5).

The Chair declared the recommendation was carried.

**Resolved:**

**That the People Scrutiny Committee:**

- 1. Note the contents of the report**
- 2. Strongly objects to the plans by Mid and South Essex Trust (MSE) to redesignate the status of the neonatal unit at Southend Hospital and urges the Trust to think again.**
- 3. Welcome the further engagement plan and request that the Committees feedback is considered in the final service specification**

## **and operating model, including concerns regarding the Fairglen interchange**

*At 8.25pm the Chair agreed to adjourn the meeting for a short break. The meeting resumed at 8.32pm.*

### **23 Southend-on-Sea Council Corporate Performance - Report Quarter 2**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director (Strategy & Change), by way of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny, that provided an update on the corporate performance indicators for quarter 2 (July to September 2024).

The Committee discussed the report and asked questions that were responded to by the Leader of the Council and the relevant Cabinet Members.

The relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Executive Directors undertook to provide written responses to questions raised by members of the Committee, with regard to:

- Any evidence regarding the demographic uptake of the NHS Health Check Programme (CP03.01) (Cabinet Member, Councillor M Sadza).
- An update on the support available and outcomes for Care Leavers aged between 18-25 years that the Council supports.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the report to Cabinet be noted.**

Note: This is an Executive function  
Cabinet Member: Councillor D Cowan

### **24 Framework for Supply and Installation of Home Adaptations**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director (Adults & Communities), by way of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny, that set out the procurement of a framework of contractors for the supply, delivery and installation on home adaptations for qualifying residents.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities.

#### **Resolved:**

**That the report to Cabinet be noted.**

Note: This is an Executive Function  
Cabinet Member: Councillor M Sadza (Social Care and Healthier Communities).

**25 Extension of the contact for the provision of Southend Sexual Health Services**

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director (Adults & Communities), by way of pre-Cabinet Scrutiny, that presented the outcomes of the commissioning team review to inform the commissioning recommendation for the delivery of Southend sexual health services from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025.

The Committee asked a number of questions which were responded to by the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Healthier Communities, who also agreed to provide a written response in relation to:

- The impact of the contract on decreasing teenage pregnancy rates in the City.
- Detail about any free rent space provided, that was outside the scope of the contract.

**Resolved:**

**That the report to Cabinet be noted.**

Note: This is an Executive Function

Cabinet Member: Councillor M Sadza (Social Care and Healthier Communities).

**Chair:**

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