

People Scrutiny Committee – 26th November 2019

Public Questions

Question from T Cowdrey to the Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Social Care – Cllr Trevor Harp

Question 1

Preamble

I have been aware of plans to reconfigure, rather than close, the Shoeburyness Ambulance Station since July this year when I created an online petition for concerned individuals, particularly those in the SS3 postcode area. The petition now has close to 2000 signatures and comments from residents who have either benefitted from the service or are concerned for their own lives and those of their families.

I have presented this petition to East England Ambulance Service, who had planned to remove the ambulance on 25th November, I also met with their senior managers to gain clarity and understanding, inviting representatives from Healthwatch, Shoeburyness Residents Association and the Save Southend NHS campaign.

I have written to James Duddridge prior to purdah as well as NHS England and Southend CCG, who appear to have little awareness of this situation or of residents concerns.

I understand that there is a motion before this meeting today opposing the closure of this essential resource to the people in Shoeburyness, however I do not believe that this goes far enough.

Question

Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Health and Social Care please provide some assurances that they will contact the Southend CCG to ensure that they are fully aware of the plans to reconfigure, as well as of the potential impact on response times for the SS3 postcode area alongside the external study undertaken by East England Ambulance Service stating that a minimum of 2 ambulances need to be stationed in this area.

I believe that this will enable the Council and CCG to go forward in opposing the reconfiguration in an informed way.

Answer

Many thanks for your question. I am equally as concerned regarding the issues you raise. The matter was originally raised by Healthwatch Southend at the September Health and Wellbeing Board and since that time myself, Councillor Salter and the Accountable Officer of Southend CCG have been actively seeking clarity on the detail. Any changes to

the provision of health services within the Borough must be subjected to engagement with the residents and Local Authority.

I can assure Ms Cowdrey that both the Accountable Officer and myself are fully aware of the plans to reconfigure, as well as of the potential impact on response times for the SS3 postcode.

Our discussions with the Ambulance service have led to a commitment from EEAST to discuss the planned changes with the affected residents, Ward Councillors and this Scrutiny Committee. These discussions are due to take place during December and the early part of next year with a specially convened Scrutiny Committee taking place on 20th January 2020.

We have assurance from EEAST that the views of those affected will be listened to and used to inform any proposed changes.

EEAST have also now provided me with a 'general statement' which they are giving out in response to any queries about Shoebury:-

"We would like to reassure residents that we are not removing ambulance responses from the local area, we intend to increase the number of ambulance vehicles in the Southend locality and providing a Shoebury-based response as part of those plans. We currently operate two ambulances from Shoeburyness in Essex, one starting its shift from Shoebury, the other from Southend.

Following changes we're making across the region this month, from January 2020 both ambulances will start at our larger hub base at Southend but will move to Shoeburyness so that crews can continue to respond to incidents quickly as part of deployment planning.

This decision has been made based around improving our response to as many patients across the whole Trust and at a more local level."