

People Scrutiny Committee – 12th April 2016

Public Questions

Questions from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Health & Adult Social Care

Question 1

“In Westborough we only have 2 doctors surgery for one of the most densely populated wards in Southend. 1 is under special measures and has stated he will retire in 4 months time. Dr Velmurgan stated if he wins the election he will close because of his Mayoral duties. This means 8,000 residents will have to travel and find new doctors. Q Will there be 2 local doctor surgeries kept open in Westborough for this year and the the future?”

Answer

Our aim is to deliver local GP services within larger and more modern premises alongside other health and care services such as phlebotomy, district nurses and social care to ensure our local GP services are sustainable for the future. These centres will house a number of GP practices alongside those other services. By delivering services together we are better equipped to ensure a more effective and joined-up approach to the needs of individual patients. Examples of such centres include the Valkyrie Road Primary Care Centre and the North Road Primary Care Centre. We also have two other centres currently being developed, one in St Luke’s and one in Shoeburyness. This new way of delivering GP services is reflective of national guidance and programmes such as The Success Regime. With NHS Southend CCG now approved for co-commissioning primary medical services, we will also be able to work with NHS England in a more responsive way to meet the needs of our local population. We will work with the two existing practise and their patient groups as the doctors’ plans become clearer, and will ensure patients are kept informed and involved so there is a safe transition to any new arrangements.

Question from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Children & Learning

Question 2

“Chase High Academy GCSE results in 2011 was 40%, decreased in 202 to 25%, decreased in 2013 to 18%. But increased by 6% in 2014 to 24%. However this means three quarters of students not achieving A-C grades in Maths and English which is essential basic skills to work effectively and progress in life. How has the improving learning together school improvement plan (3 year) and Southend Children's partnership:working together to achieve success for all going to benefit Chase High School Academy students and staff to raise GCSE results at a faster pace now and into the coming years?”

Answer

In relation to the specific school named in the question, Chase High School have now become a sponsored academy under the sponsorship of the Brentwood Academies Trust, and as such no longer fall under the control of the Council nor its intervention policies. The school have recently appointed a new Headteacher. The most recent set of results do indicate an improvement from a low base, and the new Leadership affirm that results are set to continue to rise over the coming years. In line with the direction set out in the white paper Educational Excellence Everywhere recently published, Southend Borough Council has already started to

refresh its intervention and school improvement strategy, including, where a school is an academy, working directly with the Regional Schools Commissioner to seek assurances that the required improvements are made rapidly. The Council remains fully committed to exercising its democratic mandate, acting as an advocate for children and families. As such, we are determined to continue to work with all schools, irrespective of their status, to improve outcomes for all learners, but especially to ensure that the achievements of our most vulnerable learners more closely matches that of their peers, and secondly to work with schools and other accountable bodies to ensure that in Southend all learners have the opportunity to attend a good or an outstanding school.

Question from Mr Thomas Webb to the Executive Councillor for Health & Adult Social Care

Question

“A recent review of mental health in Southend revealed that there was just under 20% of people who suffered from mental health issues, however there was only a small mention of work related mental health issues in the annual health report and none of the 5 targets for the next year mentioned mental health. If around 20% of our residents are suffering with a mental health issue then one of the targets should surely feature mental health and how we can get closer to the national average than we are. Can we add or change a target to reflect one of the biggest health issues in Southend?”

Answer

The Annual Public Health Report is an independent report in which the Director of Public Health makes recommendations on where actions can be focused to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Public health is about prevention and the Annual Public Health Report provides an opportunity to highlight where action can be taken ‘upstream’ to prevent poor physical and mental health.

We know that the wider determinants of health, such as education, housing, employment and the environment play a far more important role than health services in improving physical and mental health. The 2015 Annual Public Health Report builds on the theme of the wider determinants of health with a focus on ‘healthy settings’ and the opportunities they present for tackling key risk factors for poor physical and mental health. The Report does not set targets. However, the recommendations made in the report highlight where additional actions in these settings could further enhance opportunities to improve physical health and help to reduce the prevalence of mental health conditions in the Southend.