

Scrutiny Commission

At 7:00pm on Tuesday 5 May 2022

Held in the Council Chamber, Corby Cube, George Street, Corby

Present:

Members

Councillor Wendy Brackenbury (Chair)	Councillor Kevin Watt (Vice Chair)
Councillor Valerie Anslow	Councillor Zoe McGhee
Councillor Robin Carter	Councillor Gill Mercer
Councillor John Currall	Councillor Geoff Shacklock
Councillor Jim Hakewill	Councillor Lee Wilkes
Councillor Philip Irwin	

Officers

Adele Wylie – Director of Governance and HR (Monitoring Officer)
David Watts – Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing
Tony Challinor – Assistant Director of Commissioning and Partnership
Guy Holloway – Assistant Chief Executive
Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

In attendance:

Stephen Graves - Kettering General Hospital
Councillor Mark Pengelly – Chair, Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Matt Binley – Executive Member for Housing, Communities and Levelling Up
Councillor Scott Edwards – Executive Member for Children’s, Families, Education and Skills
Councillor John McGhee

1. Welcome

The Chair wished to thank the previous members of the Commission, Councillors Matt Binley, John McGhee and Simon Rielly for their work and support over the last year. She also welcomed Councillors Valerie Anslow and Zoe McGhee to the Commission.

2. Apologies for Non-Attendance

There was an apology for non-attendance from Councillor Mark Dearing.

3. Members’ Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare any interests in respect of items on the agenda.

Councillors	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Robin Carter	Item 8 – Grant Maintained Nurseries – Scope and Membership	A member of his family works in one of the maintained nurseries.		Yes
Gill Mercer	Item 9 – Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Final Report	Was a board member of Groundwork, who were mentioned in the report.		Yes
Kevin Watt	Item 8 – Grant Maintained Nurseries – Scope and Membership	A member of his family works in one of the maintained nurseries.		Yes

4. Notification of Requests to Address the Meeting

There were no requests to address the meeting.

5. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 May 2022

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed, subject to:

Minute 59, Scrutiny Work Plan and Future Meetings – second paragraph add the word “received” so it reads “...had been **received** by the Chair...”.

6. Redevelopment of Kettering General Hospital

The Chair welcomed Stephen Graves of Kettering General Hospital to the meeting.

The Scrutiny Commission considered a briefing paper and presentation on the Kettering General Hospital HIP2 Redevelopment. The key points made were:

- In September 2019, Kettering General Hospital (KGH) was announced as one of 40 new hospital projects through the Hospital Infrastructure Plan (HIP2). This was re-confirmed by the Prime Minister in October 2020.
- In March 2021, the Trust had submitted a Strategic Outline Case to NHS England/Improvement that established the case for change and gained approval to proceed with its Outline Business Case.
- The Outline Business Case would be considered for approval by the Trust Board on 29 July 2022 and then submitted to the Department of Health and Social Care and to the Treasury.
- The planned redevelopment of KGH would comprise two main blocks built in phases. The phases would be:

Phase 1

Adult and Child Emergency Department
Short Stay Paediatric Assessment Unit
ED Imaging (also inpatient out of hours)
Elderly Frailty Unit & Emergency Decisions Unit
Medical SDEC and Medical Assessment Unit
Surgical SDEC and Surgical Decisions Unit
Six Generic Inpatient Wards

Phase 2

Main Entrance
Endoscopy Unit
Orthopaedics and Fracture Clinic
Diagnostic Imaging Department
6 Operating Theatres and Recovery Suite
20 bed Critical Care Unit
6 Generic Inpatient Wards
FM Service Hub

- The Trust was working towards having the site cleared and ready for construction to begin Q4 2023/24, although timescales were dependent on the release of funding and national prioritisation of which hospitals were built.

During discussion, the following principle points were noted:

- i. Members welcomed the plans for the future of the hospital.
- ii. Members questioned what had happened to the £46m and £360m which had previously been allocated to the project. In response, Mr Graves advised that only the £46m had been allocated. It was not clear where the £360m figure had come from but it had never been allocated.
- iii. It was queried what the interim parking solution would be for Phase 1 of the works. In response, it was advised that it would depend on the start date, but it was hoped that a car park would already be built before the work began. Conversations were being held with local landowners about temporary off-site parking for staff. It was in the Masterplan to work with a partner to build the car park rather than use NHS monies.
- iv. The timelines were driven by several factors. The driving issue would be when funding would be available to start. The move to net zero with the energy centre had made it more expensive. Making Phase 2 bigger than originally planned had also added more cost. Out of the hospital's income, there would be a requirement to pay the costs of the assets and there would be a need to identify where savings were to meet the extra capital costs.
- v. It was suggested that building on a brownfield site was more expensive than building a new hospital on a greenfield site. In response, it was advised that not all of the site would be rebuilt. Some elective services could be undertaken off site, but this was limited clinically as urgent care would not be available on those sites.

- vi. It was questioned whether there was a Plan B. In response, it was stated that the Plan B was whether the hospital could continue at its current level. Some areas were more advanced in preventing people going into hospital by supporting them to stay at home.
- vii. If eventually Phase 3 could go ahead, it was confirmed that none of the proposed Phase 2 would be made redundant.
- viii. The development of a proper park and ride service should be considered. It was confirmed that the shuttle bus was now being looked at to see if it could go further out.

RESOLVED:

To note the briefing and presentation.

7. Performance Indicator Report 2021/22 (Period 11)

The Scrutiny Commission considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on the Council's performance across a wide range of services, as measured by performance indicators.

The report provided a summary of the performance of Council services and further detail including trend lines and exception reports. Performance measures were being developed to better reflect the desired outcomes set out at a high level through the Council's recently adopted Corporate Plan.

During discussion, the following principle points were noted:

- i. Comments on several specific indicators were made, including:
 - Number of rough sleepers (T8) – were there certain areas where there were rough sleepers and what was being done to address this? Work was needed to provide shelters for those towns which had issues, particularly in the winter months. In response, the Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that the number of rough sleepers was not static, and they were not necessarily the same people. It was also a very transient population. The Outreach Team were aware of the places where people bedded down. Since the end of the pandemic, when the ban on landlords evicting tenants ended, there had been an increase in the number of eviction notices being issued. However, the number of rough sleepers remained low. Some rough sleepers had accommodation but chose to rough sleep and for some it was more stressful for them to manage a tenancy. Temporary accommodation would be found if needed or wanted and the Council had mobilised a hotel in Wellingborough over the winter. It had been a government instruction during Covid that shelters were not to be used, to prevent the spread of infection.
 - Number of working days lost to sickness per employee (long-term) (T20) – what was being done to support employees return to work? The Director of Governance and HR advised that

several employee assistance programmes were in place, along with Health and Safety and Wellbeing working groups. Managers continued to work with employees to find solutions to assist them to return to work.

- Average time taken to process benefits and Council Tax Support Claims (T17) – was there enough staff to process claims and what was being done to improve performance? The Assistant Chief Executive undertook to provide a response to Members.
- Void turnaround time (STP37) - it would be useful to see information on void council homes and how long they remained void to aid understanding on how to improve. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the next performance report would contain more data around voids. The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing clarified that the difference between major and minor voids needed to be considered as any major voids could skew the turnaround times.
- Staffing levels — was physical and verbal abuse a reason staff were leaving? The Director of Governance and HR advised that all incidents of physical and verbal abuse should be reported. Directors regularly meet with the trade unions to discuss incidents and issues. People would be prosecuted if necessary.
- Occupancy rates of assets (MPS28) – relates to Chesham House in Kettering and the East Northamptonshire Enterprise Centre. A marketing plan was now in place for the Enterprise Centre. Overall, the returns were quite healthy.
- The indicators relating to waste did not show any information. The Assistant Chief Executive advised that the service used several systems and there was often a delay in getting data back out of some of these systems. Information would be coming shortly.
- There were a high number of vacancies, particularly in Housing and the HRA, with a high level of agency staff covering and Members enquired what was being done to become less reliant on agency staff. The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing clarified that there needed to be a cleanse of data regarding vacancy information. Some roles were also challenging to recruit to. The Council was also currently undergoing a review of pay and reward, along with harmonisation of terms and conditions.
- Total active applicants on the Keyways Housing Register (STP04) – Members felt that a breakdown by area and waiting times would be helpful to understand performance. The Executive Director of Adults, Communities and Wellbeing advised that this was a difficult area to report on and would bring a report to a future meeting.

- In response to a question about dedicated scrutiny support, the Director of Governance and HR advised that there was currently a restructure consultation being undertaken within Democratic Services, which was looking to bring together five legacy teams. A proposed dedicated scrutiny team was part of that consultation.
- Planning applications processed (T1 – T3) – it was acknowledged that the indicators were showing as on or above target, however the public's perception was often very different.

RESOLVED:

To note the performance of the Council and its services.

The meeting adjourned at 8.50pm and reconvened at 9.00pm

8. Grant Maintained Nurseries Scrutiny Review – Scope and Membership

The Scrutiny Commission considered the draft scoping document for the Grant Maintained Nurseries Scrutiny Review which had been considered by the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Mark Pengelly, Chair of the Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, introduced the scoping document and advised that Councillor Valerie Anslow would be a member of the Group in place of Councillor Matt Keane, who would act as a substitute member. It was proposed that the timescale for the review be three months, with a review at that time. It was also proposed that substitute members should be included.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To approve the scoping document for the Grant Maintained Nurseries Scrutiny Review, including the timescale of the Review.
- (ii) To approve the membership of the Scrutiny Review Group as:

Cllr Valerie Anslow
 Cllr Jim Hakewill
 Cllr Richard Levell
 Cllr Paul Marks
 Cllr Steven North
 Cllr Mark Pengelly
 Cllr Malcolm Ward

Substitute members to be allowed up to the number of each political grouping. Names to be provided to Democratic Services.

- (iii) That Councillor Mark Pengelly be appointed Lead Member of the Review at this time.

Councillor Kevin Watt left the meeting and did not return.

9. Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Group Final report

The Scrutiny Commission considered the final report of the Levelling Up Communities Scrutiny Review Group.

Councillor Zoe McGhee, Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group, wished to thank everyone who had participated in the Review, particularly David Watts and the other members of the Review Group. She felt that this was an example of good cross party working. She also wished to thank all of the communities who had taken part in the Review, particularly with sharing their experiences. It had been an honour and privilege to Chair the Review and she thanked everyone for their support.

During discussion, the following principle points were noted:

- i. The Scrutiny Commission welcomed the report.
- ii. It was noted that some of the recommendations were already being dealt with by the Executive, for example, there was now an Executive Member with responsibility for Levelling Up, who was present tonight.
- iii. Charities and the voluntary sector should also be included in the sectors to work with on community issues and projects along with local businesses. The report shined a light on the voluntary and charity sector; however, it was local businesses who were more likely to have the money to invest in local projects.
- iv. The emphasis on youth work was supported and it would be good to link into the existing infrastructure. There were excellent organisations already engaged with youth work.
- v. The difficulty of some groups accessing small grants and other funding streams was noted. The previous East Northamptonshire Council had a member of staff who was an excellent resource in helping groups find sources of funding and writing bids and a similar post should be considered for NNC.
- vi. It was noted that there was a commonality in the issues raised in each of the three neighbourhoods. The outcomes of this Review may be an opportunity for the new Town Councils.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the work undertaken by, and on behalf of, the Scrutiny Review Group.
- (ii) To recommend the report to the Executive.

10. Executive Forward Plan – July to October 2022

The Scrutiny Commission received the Executive Forward Plan which showed the key and significant decisions the Executive would be making over the next few months.

At the last meeting, Members indicated that they would wish to consider the Executive Decision on the Garden Waste: Future Service Provision. All Commission members had been invited to attend the meeting of the Service Delivery, Performance and Customers Executive Advisory Panel, where the issue was considered.

It was moved by Councillor John Currall and seconded by Councillor Jim Hakewill that the Scrutiny Commission write to the Leader of the Council requesting that the Green Waste decision be deferred to enable the Scrutiny Commission to consider the proposed decision.

On being put to the vote, there were six votes for the motion and four against, therefore the motion was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the Executive Forward Plan.
- (ii) To write to the Leader of the Council requesting that the Green Waste decision be deferred to enable the Scrutiny Commission to consider the proposed decision.

11. Suspension of Council Procedure Rule 10

RESOLVED:

That Meeting Procedure Rule 10 (Guillotine) be suspended to enable the Committee to continue the business on the agenda.

12. Scrutiny Work Plan and Future Meetings

The Scrutiny Commission received the Scrutiny Work Plan, details of future meetings and other information relevant to the management of the Scrutiny Commission.

The response from the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration providing an update on the S106 audit was noted.

Members identified the following as items they would wish to consider in the future:

- Knife Crime – follow up from Levelling Up Scrutiny Review. Officers to liaise with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office about attending a future meeting.
- Staff vacancies and the cost of agency staff.
- Housing repairs service – length of time of repairs and what are the delays.
- Keyways.
- Special Educational Needs/Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) – process, performance and why does it take so long to obtain a Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the Scrutiny Work Plan and items for future consideration.
- (ii) To note the items being brought to future meetings.
- (iii) To note the response from the Assistant Director of Growth and Regeneration on the S106 audit.

13. Close of Meeting

The Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 10.24pm.

Chair

Date