

Provision of Minor Injury Services and Education Places in Wincanton

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Purpose of the Report

To report back from the Deanesly Way multi agency group about a) the current situation with provision of minor injuries services in the Wincanton area and consider if the Committee wish to take the matter further b) the provision of school places to meet the growing needs of the town.

Public Interest

Some concern has been expressed about the lack of, out of hours, access to minor accident treatment in the Wincanton area. The town is expanding and is remote from other Minor Injuries Units (MIUs) or Accident and Emergency Departments. An approach has been made to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to find out if there are any plans to upgrade services locally. They have told us that a national review and redesign of urgent and emergency care is underway but that there is not likely to be enough need in the Wincanton area to upgrade service levels.

As the town grows there is increasing pressure on primary schools places. Somerset County Council is working closing with the schools to monitor demand and increase the number of primary and nursery places to serve the growing needs of the town

Recommendation

That the Committee makes representations to the CCG as part of the current redesign of the urgent and emergency care system.

Background

The Deanesly Way multi agency group was set up in 2013 to bring together agencies and community representatives to share details of current and planned services/ facilities, plan for and welcome new residents to this large key site development on the northern edge of the town centre.

It has looked at the on and off site facilities provided by the town, factoring in the particular dimension of 85 properties purchased for military families by the MoD. It started by developing a welcome pack, highlighting the facilities available and where to go to for information. It has since followed up on some particular issues: connection to broadband; the on and off site infrastructure using 106 developer obligations; availability of nursery and school places. It has also looked at access to sports and youth group activities. Some funding may be available from the Armed Forces Community Covenant for suitable projects which help to integrate forces families with the wider community.

Access to Minor Injury Services

An issue raised by representatives was the lack of facilities for treating people with minor injuries. Wincanton has not had a minor injuries unit (MIU) A Local Treatment Centre used to operate at Wincanton Community Hospital but was transferred to Wincanton Health Centre when it opened at New Barns estate. Here the service was rebranded as a Minor Injury Service (MIS) complementing the services already provided and more cost effective to operate. When it was at the Hospital it was being operated by an agency nurse employed by Somerset Partnership and, given its limited service (open during the day on working days only), was not much used by local people. The MIS is open for slightly longer but is still closed in the evenings, at weekends and on Bank Holidays.

A letter was sent to the Clinical Commissioning Group by the Chairman, Cllr Weeks, seeking information about the trigger point for the upgrade of services for a growing town like Wincanton with a wide rural hinterland (see letter attached appendix 1 and schedule of MIUs for out of hours emergencies)

The reply from David Slack, CEO of the CCG, is also attached at appendix 2. He flagged up that a countryside review is going on about the provision of Emergency Care. In due course the Somerset CCG will implement its findings; he concluded that the level of demand will not make Wincanton a candidate for a MIU.

In his letter the "Wincanton MIU" he refers to has never existed. The Wincanton Community Hospital Local Treatment centre was unique in Somerset & did not have similar services and opening hours to MIUs elsewhere in Somerset. In effect it offered first aid only, so it is not surprising that comparatively few patients were recorded as using it. The transferred and slightly enhanced service at Wincanton Health Centre is still not a fully operational MIU. Also local patients must travel out of hours to Shepton Mallet MIU (last patient admission 7.30pm), Shaftesbury MIU, Sherborne MIU, Yeovil Medical Centre or A&E at Yeovil District Hospital. All are about 30 min travelling time from Wincanton.

Access to Schools Places

This has become a key issue with the advanced building out of the 2 key sites and the delays in building a new primary school / extending school places for the town. In addition the military families moving into the town have a much higher number of children per household than the usual model used by Somerset County Council to estimate demand for pre-school and school places. SCC staff have been consulting with the schools and developing solutions to release primary school places pending a longer term solution of a replacement or expanded primary school serving the town.

SCC reported in late January to the multi-agency group that the expansion of the primary school by 30 places for September 2015 will be achieved, by the pre-school being relocated to a new building. They say that *"we are looking forward to the new nursery building providing excellent facilities for the nursery, releasing 30 places for Wincanton primary school"*

An application for planning permission is currently under consideration.

Profile of Wincanton. (more data may follow.)

The Joint Health and Social Needs Analysis section on Wincanton shows levels of deprivation in the town, especially amongst older people. Service families are moving to Wincanton along with many other new residents on the 2 key sites. They will find that the nearest MIU/A&E is half an hour away. Also Wincanton is a significant catchment town for a

large rural area. its location on the edge of 3 counties would appear to make it more vulnerable to lack of investment and/ or service cuts.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications as a direct result of this report

Corporate Priority Implications

Carbon Emissions & Climate Change Implications

Local facilities able to meet local needs reduce carbon emissions as people can walk or travel short distances to access public services

Equality and Diversity Implications

The growth of our market towns takes place in a balanced way with the appropriate infrastructure giving equitable access to services in rural areas

Background Papers: