

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 (A&E) Departments. An approach has been made to the Somerset 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, based on low levels of demand, 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 pre-school & 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

1. notes and comments on the report
2. Considers if it wishes to make further 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. It brings 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 in the town, factoring in the particular dimension of the 85 properties purchased for military families by the MoD. It started by developing a welcome pack, highlighting the facilities available and where to go 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 (LTC) used to operate at Wincanton Community Hospital but was transferred to Wincanton Health Centre when this facility moved to the 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 his letter attached Appendix 1 and supporting schedule of MIUs for out of hours emergencies Appendix 2).

The reply from David Slack, CEO of the CCG, is also attached at Appendix 3. He flagged up that a countrywide 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 LTC was unique in Somerset and 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. Out of hours local patients must travel 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 largely completed 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 in the short term pending a longer term solution of a replacement or expanded primary school serving the town.

SCC reported in late January, to the Deanesly Way 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. This follows an extensive search for suitable premises carried out during 2014. 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 by SCC.

Profile of Wincanton

The Joint Health and Social Needs Analysis section on Wincanton shows higher levels of deprivation in the town, especially amongst older people. Those without their own private transport and on lower incomes are heavily reliant on the services provided locally in the town. Further data has been requested and if this is available a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Service families are moving to Wincanton along with many other new residents buying or renting homes on the 2 key sites. They will find that the nearest MIU/A&E, for injuries or emergency care out of hours, 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

Under our focus on Health & Communities the Council is committed to:

- Ensure that the Strategic Priorities of the Somerset health and Wellbeing Board reflect local needs and align resources to deliver projects that address those needs
- Work with and lobby partners to help communities to develop transport schemes and local solutions to reduce rural isolation and inequalities to meet existing needs of those communities

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: Notes of Deanesly Way multi- agency group 2013-15