

Report to Newton Poppleford and Harpford Parish Council

Cllr Jess Bailey, Otter Valley Ward Devon County Council

31st January 2022

Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee – 20th January 2022

The webcast of this meeting can be viewed here: [Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee - Thursday, 20th January 2022 at 2:15pm - Devon County Council Webcasting \(public-i.tv\)](#)

Closure of Newton Poppleford branch surgery (1 hr 22 into webcast)

Despite it having been previously agreed at my request that the closure of Newton Poppleford branch surgery would be an item on the agenda, the closure of the branch surgery at Newton Poppleford was included at the end of a general health update composite report. If you watch the recording, you will see the difficulty with me trying to scrutinize the issue when it is mixed in with discussions around other completely unrelated items.

In the meeting I noted that the item in the composite report did not make it clear that 30 people per week have previously used the surgery nor did it make it clear that Coleridge Medical Centre only consulted 87 people out of a population of 1800.

I stated that I was not at all convinced that the CCG have met their threshold for consultation because they were required to consult people who services were being provided to, *or may be provided to* and actually they only wrote to the people who had used the branch surgery in the six months prior to the temporary closure at the start of the pandemic in March 2020. I also noted that the Parish Council carried out their own survey in 2019, 5 times more people responded, overwhelmingly supporting keeping the branch surgery open.

I pointed out that service change is affecting the people who are most vulnerable who will now be forced to travel. I stated that the service change was being presented as a positive change in the agenda papers. I also stated that the CCG told me in July that it was an early stage proposal and then I did not hear anything and then I was told in January that it is closed with immediate effect.

I concluded by stating that I felt frustrated that a decision was taken, it hadn't been brought properly to the scrutiny committee and the report in item 8 does not reflect the service change that has taken place. I asked for my concerns to be minuted.

The representative from the CCG (1 hr 31) said that it closed during covid because of challenges around social distancing, nobody will be asked to change practice, but new people will be asked to register in Sidmouth. It was felt that there was a decent and reasonable process and it was suggested that I had a different idea of what is and is not reasonable.

With regards the procedural aspects, the chair of the committee Sara Randall Johnson advised me that just because it was agreed an item would go on the agenda it would not necessarily have a report. I pointed out that there was a report but it hadn't been included and that it was about being open so that people could understand the decision making. I also pointed out that the Parish Council had tried to work with the CCG but that did not happen. I said it was important when there were service changes affecting people that it was dealt with properly.

Long term plan for the NHS in Devon (33 mins into the webcast)

This was the third time the committee looked at aspects of the long term plan since May 2021. I have repeatedly raised my concerns about the way in which reports are brought forward by the CCG. The reports are characterized by lack of detail, no timescales, no numbers and contain much NHS management speak which makes it very difficult to scrutinize because the reports are therefore quite abstract. There are clearly big changes planned but I cannot tell what they are going to look like based on the information provided.

I gave an example of a sentence from the report which is indicative of the style I referred to: “ We will develop analysis to better understand ambulance demand and develop a strategy for a newly procured integrated urgent care system service to divert demand more appropriately through hear and treat and see and treat”.

The long term plan has been worked on since 2018 and whilst I acknowledge all the pressures due to the pandemic there still seems to be a lack of detail to enable meaningful scrutiny. I also expressed my view that I felt that if the committee was going to be shaping the NHS in Devon this should be done in open committee meetings rather than behind closed doors in ‘masterclasses’ as had been suggested in the report. I asked when were we going to see some detail and some information on finances because there was a SOP 4 notice (this relates to financial pressure) in July as we hadn’t seen anything further about this. The response was that it was not the case that there was information being withheld and not being shared, they didn’t yet have any more details but were working towards March and there were difficulties because people were currently tied up with operational matters.

Road safety issues

I was pleased to arrange for DCC officers Tom Vaughan and Nigel Flower to meet with myself Cllrs Chris Burhop and Rosemary Walker and several residents to discuss the different road safety issues on 7th January. We walked along the high street and discussed various options including;

- (a) An additional stretch of pavement
- (b) Removal of the central white line in places
- (c) Alterations to the markings, particularly close to Back Lane
- (d) Introductions of safe refuge crossings, one near King Alfred Way and one near Back Lane.

At the end of the meeting, I asked Nigel Flower Road Safety Officer which interventions he thought would be most effective and he thought that the introduction of two pedestrian safe refuge crossings would be most effective. They would cost around £5k each. The Parish Council may wish to consider asking DCC to prioritize investigating the introduction of these two crossings.

I will ask Tom Vaughan for an update on the resurfacing and the speed survey.

I have not yet received any information about applications for funding for the new 20mph zones but will update when I do.

Best wishes

Jess