

Report to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 17 March 2020



Subject: Local Mental Health Services - Scrutiny of External Organisation

Responsible Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992) 564470

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992) 564470

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the Committee undertake appropriate external scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of local mental health services across the Epping Forest District.

1. The Committee has previously requested an opportunity to undertake appropriate external scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of local mental health care services. This issue is included in the current work programme for the Committee.

2. Invitations were extended to the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (EPUT) and the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group. Ms Stephanie Rae – Associate Director of West Essex Mental Health Services – has confirmed that she will attend the Committee meeting.

3. The following overarching themes relating to local mental health services, as agreed at the meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2019, have been notified to Ms Rae as the focus of the external scrutiny:

(a) how issues of isolation within the local population, particularly amongst older residents, were addressed through the provision of local mental services;

(b) how apparent mental health concerns amongst local students could be referred to service providers by primary and secondary schools in the Epping Forest District and how quickly such referrals could expect to be assessed;

(c) whether funding for local mental health services was being maintained or increased by the Clinical Commissioning Group, at a time when the mental health sector appeared to be under increasing pressure; and

(d) How Epping Forest District Council could work effectively with the CCG and the NHS Trust to support the provision of local mental health services and how the CCG and NHS Trust intended to engage with this Council to ensure the best level of service provision to local residents.

4. Ms Rae has advised that her organisation EPUT does not provide children's mental health services, so item (b) above cannot be covered at the meeting on 17 March 2020. However, she can provide the Council with a contact if Members would like to examine these issues in the future.

5. The identification of relevant lines of questioning to be raised with the Associate Director of EPUT has also been sought from members through the Council Bulletin.

6. Although the review and scrutiny of matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services across Essex is generally a function reserved to Essex County Council through the auspices of its Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee, the County Council has not normally been averse to this authority undertaking appropriate health scrutiny where local concerns exist. As a matter of courtesy, the intentions of the Committee in this regard has been communicated to the Health Overview Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Resource Implications:

The recommendations of this report seek to enable scrutiny activity to more effectively meet work programme requirements.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities. Although external organisations are not generally required by legislation to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it is hoped that most would be willing to engage constructively with the Council's scrutiny activity when invited to do so.

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Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the corporate Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues within the District.

Consultation Undertaken:

The proposed scrutiny of the current provision, planning, management and performance of local adult social care services is included in the current work programme for the Committee.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The Council's constitution sets out rules for the management of its Overview and Scrutiny responsibilities.

Equality:

There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations of this report.