

## **People and Health Scrutiny Committee - 2 November 2020**

### **Questions from Councillors**

#### Questions from Cllr William Trite

Since (a) according to the minutes of the meeting of the Dorset Health Scrutiny Committee (DHSC) on 5th March 2020, the DHSC Chairman was able to confirm that an assurance had previously been given that the Swanage Paramedic (Ambulance) Car would not be withdrawn; and (b) there was an outstanding DHSC commitment to 'Call in' the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (DCCG) in the wake of a promise to increase ambulance resources for Swanage (particularly important for the purpose of retaining the Paramedic Car); and (c) there is growing anxiety in Swanage about whether or not the Paramedic Car will be retained in order to continue its vital, 24/7, sometimes life-saving role prior to an ambulance reaching an emergency case; then

1. Can the Committee provide an assurance that the Swanage Paramedic Car will not be withdrawn at any point between now and the next scheduled meeting of the People & Health Scrutiny Committee?

#### **Response from the Chairman**

It is the Committees understanding that the CCG has already written to Swanage Town Council confirming its intention to engage with them prior to any decisions being taken on the Purbeck car service. Unfortunately, the Covid 19 pandemic continues to be the main focus of attention for our national and local NHS, which has delayed further work on the Purbeck car service. It is the Committees understanding that in the meantime the service remains in place.

2. Does the Committee recognise that any move to refer the Paramedic Car issue to a Joint Health Services Committee or Joint Health Scrutiny Committee is an inappropriate one, since (i) such a Committee would meet infrequently, (ii) at least half the Committee wouldn't be interested in what would be seen as a comparatively parochial matter, and (iii) a Joint Committee could hardly 'call in' a promise which the DCCG had made to a different Committee?

#### **Response from the Chairman**

The People and Health Scrutiny Committee is a new committee which was formed at the Dorset Council AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020. This new committee performs the Council's statutory functions in relation to education matters and in relation to health scrutiny as well as having a remit as a critical friend in matters relating to the People Directorate of Dorset Council. There remains a substantial amount of work to be done to get this Committee to where I would like it to be. However this Committee is under no obligation to honour any commitments from any of its predecessor committees. Going forward in the current situation the key issues for our health partners and Dorset Council are the Covid pandemic, the winter flu season and the budget issues of Dorset Council and this is where this Committee's focus will be. This Committee has limited capacity and while I am happy to retain the requested items on the forward plan as 'items to be scheduled' I am not in a position to be able to give any assurances as to the date they will come before this committee.

### Questions from Cllr Jon Andrews

1. I am concerned that the continued closure of the Sherborne Yeatman Hospital Minor Injuries Unit in Sherborne will become permanent. The service is vital to residents of Sherborne and the rural Sherborne residents. It is also putting undue pressure on the already stretched surgeries in Sherborne, Yetminster, Milborne Port and Cerne Abbas. People are now using surgery nurses as a substitute as the alternative signposted is either Shaftesbury hospital or Dorchester hospital. I am sure this has also resulted in ambulance calls. Chris Loder keeps asking questions about an opening date but keep getting fobbed off by the Dorset Health trust CE.

My question is when will the Yeatman and other MIU's in Portland and Blandford that are currently closed be re-opening?

### **Response from Dorset Healthcare University NHS Foundation Trust**

The Chief Executive has just responded to Sherborne's MP that we are still in pandemic and not able to make any decisions or changes re the units at the moment. Also bookable appts is following national advice re protecting people from covid. We will follow this up with the same message

2. During the early stages of the Pandemic the Matron of the Yeatman Hospital left her post to take up another position. We in Sherborne now share a Matron with Blandford Hospital. Is it the intention to fill the vacant post of Matron at the Yeatman, If so when as these posts were deemed full time prior and during the pandemic and now we are in the second spike are probably more key now that strong leadership not part time leadership is required, after all we don't have a part time CE or is that the next step?

### **Response from the Chairman**

As yet no response to this question has been received. It will be published as soon as it is available.