

Agenda item 7 – Councillors strategic theme priority questions and answers

1. From Councillor Gilli Lewis-Lavender to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Does the Cabinet Member agree that we can expect to see the number of residents with dementia increasing in the future as more residents and carers seek help and advice?

Reply

Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment states: “Based on current trends Merton’s population would increase by 16,000 people between 2011 and 2017. A significant feature of Merton’s population in 2017 is the changing age profile of the borough’s residents, with the most notable growth in those under the age of 9 yrs. and 65+.

In Merton it is estimated that 7.2% of women and 5.3% of men aged over 65 have dementia (2007), by 2021 this is predicted to reduce to 6.7% for women and increase to 5.6% for men.

With the potential increase in the numbers of people aged over 65, if nothing else changes (i.e. proportionally the prevalence of current long-term conditions doesn't change), then there will be a significant increase in the absolute numbers of people with dementia.”

In order to address this we have undertaken the following actions:

- The council has added £1m in growth each year to the social care budget recognising the demographic pressures caused by an increase in numbers of older people and those of working age with disabilities
- We have launched our Dementia Action Alliance for Merton whereby the council and its partner agencies commit to 3 actions to improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers
- We have produced a strategy for dementia in Merton, overseen by a multi-agency steering group

We successfully bid for £350,000 from the Department of Health to improve the building in Mitcham used for day support, have added council capital, and are re launching this Dementia Hub in June 2014. This is run by the Alzheimer’s Society and the service is already reaching over 300 people

2. From Councillor Stan Anderson to the Leader of the Council

What has the Leader done to support the campaign to save St Helier Hospital?

Reply

Over the last 12 months I have undertaken the following in support of the Save St Helier Hospital campaign:

- Written to the Secretary of State for Health asking for clarification on who makes the final decision on St Helier. The Secretary of State confirmed that he makes the final decision.
- Encouraged all Labour Councillors to write to GPs in their ward to urge support for St Helier hospital and written myself to the GPs in my own ward of Ravensbury.

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- Commissioned an investigation from independent healthcare experts into the BSBV business case.
- Spoken to countless local residents encouraging them to sign petitions in support of the hospital and to put a “Save St Helier” poster in their window
- Attended meetings of a number of local Save St Helier groups and facilitated the use of the council chamber and the Civic Centre foyer for meetings and stalls organised by local residents groups
- Ordered banners for the front of the Civic Centre to encourage local people to support the St Helier campaign.
- Written to the Secretary of State to ask for the re-instatement of the £219m investment in St Helier Hospital and to seek clarification of comments from NHS England which suggest the local NHS is “planning for failure” of local hospitals.

Attended the recent handing over to the Chief Executive of the CCG of 13,000 signatures from local people in support of maintaining services at St Helier hospital.

3. From Councillor David Williams to the Leader of the Council

On 6 March 2003 Cllr Alambritis was elected in the Ravensbury by-election styling himself as the Labour Party Save St Helier Hospital Candidate. 11 years on how does he rate the success of his campaign in terms of improvements to the services there compared with the other General Hospitals serving Merton residents (Mayday, St George's and Kingston), which have all seen major investment programmes in the interim?

Reply

I'm glad Cllr Williams remembers so vividly my by-election win in Ravensbury 11 years ago. I'm sure he will also recall that on being elected I worked closely with Siobhain McDonagh and together we persuaded the then Labour government to invest £219m in re-developing St Helier hospital. However, since that time his own party have taken power nationally and, as has only recently been confirmed, the £219m earmarked for the re-development of St Helier hospital now no longer features in the local NHS's long term strategic plan. I have written to the Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, to object to this and to ask that his government re-instate this investment.

4. From Councillor Iain Dysart to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

How does she consider the promotion of health and well-being in Merton to have been served by savings decisions made or reaffirmed at the recent Budget meeting?

Reply

In setting its budget and medium term financial strategy, the council has sought throughout to protect front line services as far as possible, and it has protected the public health grant. Whilst there have been difficult decisions to make in the detail,

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the councils overall strategy has been supported if we look at the evidence of resident satisfaction and the peer review of Health and Wellbeing.

5. From Councillor Debbie Shears to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Is the Cabinet Member aware of any firm proposals made by the CCG to close any services at St Helier hospital now that the Better Services Better Value review is off the table?

Reply

Although the six south west London CCGs and NHS England (who commission specialised services in south west London) have just begun working on their new strategy for local health services, in their most recent public statement in February they stated the following:

- “We recognise that the status quo is even less of an option now than it was when the BSBV programme started.”
- “We unanimously support the clinical case for change set out as part of the BSBV programme.”
- “We will use the detailed and thorough analysis developed through the BSBV programme, setting out expected future patient need and provider trust staffing and finances, to develop our future commissioning strategies.”

In addition, NHS England has written to say that the local NHS is “preparing for clinical and financial failure” and that local hospitals will not be granted Foundation Trust status “since the provider landscape is unsustainable”.

In light of the above, it is clear that the assumptions behind the discredited BSBV proposals remain at the heart of the CCGs’ future strategy. Added to this, the recent removal of the sign heralding the promised £219m investment in St Helier has made residents all the more suspicious that services at St Helier remain at risk.

6. From Councillor Agatha Akyigyina to the Cabinet Member for Community and Culture

Does he believe the new Morden Park Leisure Centre will contribute to health outcomes in Morden and could he update us on progress with replacing it?

Reply

Yes, the new Morden Park Leisure Centre will contribute to health outcomes in the Morden area as it will give families, school children and local people many and varied sports and leisure opportunities to take part in and improve their physical and mental well-being. The first stage consultation is taking place at this time and local people are being asked what they would like to see in such a facility. We look forward to receiving the findings of this work in due course to inform the next stages of this development.

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7. From Councillor Richard Hilton to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

What, if any, enforcement action has the Cabinet Member pushed for with regard to the continued breach of planning rules by Rapid Ready Mix in Lower Morden ward which threatens the health of residents in the area by subjecting them to poor air quality?

Reply

Cllr Andrew Judge is the Cabinet Member responsible for this area and I know he is fully aware of the importance of taking health concerns into account where they are relevant. The Council has invested significant resources in purchasing specialist air quality monitoring equipment and using it to monitor air quality in the area around Rapid Ready Mix. To date this has failed to identify any health concerns regarding air quality.

We recently met with residents and assured them of this and we are arranging a full briefing for residents by the laboratory responsible for the testing. We will be keeping this matter under review.

Quite separately, and unrelated to air quality issues, we are taking enforcement action against this landowner for breach of planning conditions.

8. From Councillor Maurice Groves to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Could the Cabinet Member tell me if she is supportive of the building of the helipad at St George's hospital?

Reply

I welcome proposals that will lead to better health outcomes for Merton residents, and would like to thank the charity responsible for the £1m donation towards it, the County Air Ambulance Trust HELP appeal. I hope the helipad will speed up the time it takes to transfer major trauma patients, such as road traffic accidents, shootings and stabbings, to St George's. Nonetheless there will still be a vital need for local A&E departments such as that at St Helier hospital and I think local people are very disappointed that due to Clause 119 of the Care Bill, well run hospitals like St George's (or indeed St Helier) can be closed by a Minister. If St George's has a helipad that should not be seen as an excuse to argue that St Helier no longer needs an A&E.

9. From Councillor Sam Thomas to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Could she update us on the next steps for St Helier hospital?

Reply

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The South West London Collaborative Commissioning partnership is required to produce a high level five year strategy by June. It has not yet been announced how this will impact on services at St Helier but it has been confirmed by the CCG that the hospital's £219m redevelopment agreed in March 2010 is no longer part of the Trust's proposed Long Term Financial Model, and that the banner stating that this redevelopment was "coming soon" has consequently been taken down.

10. From Councillor Suzanne Evans to the Cabinet Member for Health

Since its first meeting in shadow form to the last meeting held to date, how many pages in total have the combined full Agendas for the Health and Wellbeing Board, together with attachments, reports, appendices, etc. run to? Please also break down the information by number of pages per meeting.

Reply

Shadow HWBB

Date	No. of Pages
14-Jun-11	81
09-Aug-11	124
25-Oct-11	42
13-Dec-11	62
14-Feb-12	75
10-Apr-12	114
29-May-12	89
10-Jul-12	63
11-Sep-12	117
13-Nov-12	169
05-Feb-12	233

Health and Wellbeing Board

Date	No. of Pages
23-Apr-13	139
04-Jun-13	95
01-Oct-13	155
28-Jan-14	454
25-Mar-14	390

TOTAL 2321

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