

## Health Scrutiny Commission Update (April 2024)

The most recent Health Scrutiny Committee meeting was on 12 March 2024. The two substantive items on the agenda were Early Years Health Inequalities and Pharmaceutical Provisions.

The Committee brought together key partners to review public health data, highlight key concerns and to review health visiting services and key NHS service areas. The focus of the debate was to understand the inequalities in West Berkshire and to consider partnership working, barriers and opportunities for improvement. This work will move forward with the early years health inequalities group and will return to the committee with an update.

Pharmaceutical services were scrutinised in response to concerns raised about pharmacy closures and changes to the services provided at pharmacies. There was representation from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Local Pharmaceutical Committee (Community Pharmacy Thames Valley).

In addition, Adult Social Care provided their Social Care Inquests annual report and there were updates from Healthwatch and the Integrated Care Board on their key priorities and activities.

The Health Scrutiny Committee takes a collective approach by ensuring commissioners, service providers and public health are involved in preparing reports and answering questions. Healthwatch and the voluntary sector are also involved.

Members of the public were asked to input any concerns in relation to the key items on the agenda. This was done through a request in the resident's newsletter. The most recent request brought many points raised about pharmacy provision.

The Health Scrutiny Committee has an ongoing work programme and action log and are keeping the following items in their view:

- Continuing Healthcare – All Age Continuing Care Transformation Plan.
- The redevelopments of Royal Berkshire Hospital.
- The redevelopment of North Hampshire Hospital.

On 25 January 2024, Councillors Martha Vickers and Nigel Foot attended the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (BOB JHOSC). The Draft BOB Integrated Care Board (ICB) Primary Care Strategy and the BOB ICB Communication and Engagement Strategy were on the agenda with a detailed discussion. The BOB JHOSC followed this with a written response to the ICB on the draft Primary Care Strategy. Councillor Foot has raised concerns with dentistry provisions, and this will be considered on the BOB JHOSC work programme, or on the Health Scrutiny Commission work programme.

There have been four meetings of the Healthcare in New Developments Task Group. These sessions have brought together Planning, Public Health, Developers and the ICB to consider the draft health planning protocol and to review engagement in

planning policy and the planning process. The final report is being drafted and will be submitted at the next Health Scrutiny Committee in June.

**Councillor Martha Vickers**

Health Scrutiny Committee Chairman