



## Borough of Telford and Wrekin

### Health Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 17 January 2023

### Primary Care Services – Establishment of a Working Group

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<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Andy Burford - Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care and Health, Integration and Transformation
<b>Lead Director:</b>	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
<b>Service Area:</b>	Policy & Governance
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<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Not Key Decision
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Report considered by:</b>	Health Scrutiny – 17 January 2023

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#### 1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that the Health Scrutiny Committee:

- 1.1 Establish a working group to consider access into primary care services.

#### 2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek agreement from Members of the Health Scrutiny Committee to establish a working group to examine concerns around access into local primary care services and how this impacts on the Borough's residents.

#### 3.0 Background

- 3.1 Primary Care Services are the gateway into the health service, with 90% of all patient contact being within Primary Care.

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- 3.2 During the coronavirus pandemic, many primary care services became 'telephone or digital first' services to limit the spread of the virus.
- 3.3 Many of the more vulnerable residents within the Borough struggle with accessing care this way and will attend A&E rather than try to access these services. Many different groups of people can be disadvantaged by digital appointments, including some older people, homeless people, people on low incomes, people whose first language is not English and people who work full time.
- 3.4 For some residents, digital services are more convenient; digital services mean that many residents don't have to travel to appointments and can save time for both clinicians and patients.
- 3.5 Concerns have also been raised in respect of call waiting times when trying to make an appointment, a 2020 Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin report found an average call waiting time of between 6 and 10 minutes (depending on time of day), with the longest waiting time of 45 minutes. The same report found that 21% of callers had to make multiple attempts to get through to a call handler.
- 3.6 There is concern within the community that primary care services are becoming less accessible for residents. The 2021 General Practice Patient Survey for NHS Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin found that 31% of respondents (on average across the CCG area) found it was not easy to get through to their GP on the telephone.
- 3.7 Nationally, a Healthwatch England Survey found that more than 80% of respondents felt negatively about GP services in December 2020, compared with less than 60% of respondents in April 2019.

## 4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee requested that the Health Scrutiny Committee undertake a piece of work on access to primary care services within Telford and Wrekin. The Chair asked if this could be commissioned under the Councillor Call for Action framework.
- 4.2 The Call for Action legislation has been significantly amended, so with the Chair's agreement, work can be undertaken in the style of a call for action in order to drive forward the deep dive into primary care services.
- 4.3 A deep-dive into access into primary care services would enable the committee to understand the current service provision offered across the Borough, as well as the challenges and advantages this poses to service users. It is proposed this takes the form of a working group to enable evidence gathering to take place.
- 4.4 In order to undertake this work, it is proposed that officers will:

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- Secure attendance from external organisations to give their views on the subject matter, such as Healthwatch and patient participation groups ;
- Look for areas of best practice; and
- Look at similar pieces of work that have been undertaken and how this could be used within Telford and Wrekin.

4.5 The working group will then feedback to a formal committee meeting with their findings and proceed to recommendations.

### **5.0 Alternative Options**

5.1 The Committee could hear all representations for the issue in public session, however, this would not allow for members of the public to share their experiences openly as they may have confidential information that they would not want to share in public session.

5.2 Alternatively, the Committee may not undertake the review at all, however, this would mean that the issues facing primary care within the Borough would not be reviewed in any great detail.

### **6.0 Key Risks**

6.1 There are no key risks associated with this report.

### **7.0 Council Priorities**

7.1 Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy.

7.2 All neighbourhoods are a great place to live.

7.3 A community focused innovative council providing effective, efficient and quality services.

### **8.0 Financial Implications**

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from establishing a working group as outlined in this report. Any financial implications that arise from findings and recommendations made by the working group will need to be considered in future committee reports.

### **9.0 Legal and HR Implications**

9.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

### **10.0 Ward Implications**

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10.1 No direct implications for any individual wards.

### **11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications**

11.1 There are no direct Health, Social and Economic Implications from the proposals to create a working group, however it is possible that following completion of the working group that proposals will be brought forward which do impact on these implications.

### **12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

12.1 There are no direct Equality and Diversity Implications arising from this report. However should the proposals be approved, consideration of equality and diversity issues will take place as part of the working groups work plan.

### **13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

13.1 There are no direct Climate Change and Environmental implications arising from this report.

### **14.0 Background Papers**

None.

### **15.0 Appendices**

None.

### **16.0 Report Sign Off**

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date signed off</b>	<b>Initials</b>
Legal	04/01/23	05/01/23	RP
Finance	09/01/23	09/01/23	MLB