

Appendix C

Report from People Overview and Scrutiny Committee: recommendation in respect of proposed changes to the provision of NHS outpatient renal dialysis services in Northampton and the change of use of Riverside House

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee carries out West Northamptonshire Council's statutory responsibilities for scrutinising the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the local authority area. As such, at its meeting on 21 June 2022 the Committee considered proposals for changes to the provision of outpatient renal dialysis services in Northampton. The proposed changes involve the relocation of an existing unit from the ground floor of Riverside House to a new site in the town.
- 1.2 The Committee considered the requirements relating to dialysis services and the case for moving the existing unit. The Committee was advised that the case for the move included that the redevelopment of Riverside House from office space to housing affected its suitability as a base for dialysis provision. The Committee was further advised that the service provider had experienced a number of issues with the build programme that had affected the health and safety of patients and staff.
- 1.3 The Committee ultimately resolved to support the need to relocate the outpatient renal dialysis unit at Riverside House from its current site. The Committee also resolved that the issues relating to the redevelopment work at Riverside House mentioned to the Committee should be highlighted to the Cabinet, with a view to identifying if there was any learning that should be taken from this matter.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet looks into issues arising from the change of use of Riverside House from office space to housing that have affected its continued suitability as a site for outpatient renal dialysis, in order to support effective partnership working.

3. Reason for Recommendations

- 3.1 The recommendation seeks to bring to the attention of the Cabinet an area of possible concern identified by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee arising from recent scrutiny work.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee carries out West Northamptonshire Council's statutory responsibilities for scrutinising the planning, provision and operation of the health service in the local authority area. As such, at its meeting on 21 June 2022 the Committee considered proposals for changes to the provision of outpatient renal dialysis services in Northampton. These were presented by the General Manager for Renal and Transport Services and the Deputy Head of Nursing from the University Hospitals of Leicester (UHL) NHS Trust.

- 4.2 UHL is commissioned to provide outpatient renal dialysis services in various areas within the East Midlands, including Northamptonshire. UHL uses a third party provider – Renal Services (UK) Ltd – to operate two renal dialysis units in Northamptonshire: one based in Kettering and one based on the ground floor at Riverside House, Bedford Road, Northampton. The Northampton unit has 24 dialysis stations serving 115 patients, although with 12 patients being supported at the Kettering unit due to capacity pressures (as of 10 June 2022). There are approximately 250 dialysis patients across Northamptonshire. Patients receiving in-centre haemodialysis attend a dialysis unit for four hours of treatment three times each week. Patients should have access to a dialysis unit located within 30 minutes of their home as a standard.
- 4.3 The dialysis units in Kettering and Northampton were opened in 2014 and UHL’s contracts with Renal Services (UK) Ltd are now subject to renewal. The Committee was advised that UHL was planning for the future delivery of the service so as to meet the following objectives:
- To provide and facilitate the delivery of high quality and cost-effective care that meets national standards.
 - To improve capacity and access to local outpatient haemodialysis facilities for patients in Northamptonshire, including an improved pathway for in-patients for the population and the surrounding area. A 4% growth in the number of people requiring dialysis treatment is forecast and patients treated with dialysis also have increasingly complex health and social care needs.
 - To reflect the change of use of Riverside House from office space to housing, which meant that the current unit was no longer considered to be a suitable environment for treatment of dialysis patients. The service had experienced a number of issues with the build programme that had affected the health and safety of patients and staff. Renal Services (UK) Ltd now had a window of opportunity to serve notice for Riverside House and to provide UHL with an alternative location for the Northampton unit – 15 Edgemoor Close, Round Spinney – subject to securing related planning permission in December 2022.
- 4.4 The last point above relates to the decision by the Northampton Borough Council Cabinet on 20 May 2020 to approve the purchase and redevelopment of Riverside House, funded through the Housing Revenue Account, in order to provide 60 apartments that would be let to eligible households on the Housing Register. This proposal involved Northampton Partnership Homes (NPH) overseeing the redevelopment and managing the new homes once complete.
- 4.5 The People Overview and Scrutiny Committee questioned the UHL representatives on the case for relocating the Northampton dialysis unit. The Committee was advised that there would be a shared entrance at Riverside House for the homes and remaining office space, which could create a risk of infection for patients as well as possible security considerations. Renal Services (UK) Ltd had not been able to resolve issues arising from the building works with the other party involved. The Committee also sought assurances about the suitability of the proposed new location for the Northampton dialysis unit, raising questions about its accessibility to patients, transport links, staffing levels and the availability of additional medical support in the event of an emergency. The Committee was satisfied that the proposed new location would

offer suitable premises, with increased capacity for the future and that better reflected the location of patients. The use of a non-medical site was normal practice: it was not standard for dialysis units to be located on hospital sites due to pressures on space there. The proposed new location was also very close to an ambulance station.

- 4.6 The Committee provided further challenge relating to securing best value from the lease on the proposed new site and the risk of not securing planning permission. It was confirmed to the Committee that UHL had consulted existing patients about the proposed changes and intended to engage with Healthwatch Northamptonshire.
- 4.7 The Committee ultimately resolved to support the need to relocate the outpatient renal dialysis unit at Riverside House, Northampton, from its current site. This conclusion has been communicated to UHL. Committee members also proposed that issues relating to the redevelopment work at Riverside House mentioned to the Committee should be highlighted to the Cabinet. This would reflect both the need to make best use of the building whilst the dialysis unit still operates from it and to understand issues that appeared to have affected the relationship with a partner.
- 4.8 The Committee therefore resolved to recommend that the Cabinet looks into issues arising from the change of use of Riverside House from office space to housing that have affected its continued suitability as a site for outpatient renal dialysis, in order to support effective partnership working.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendation by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee and provide a response to the Committee.
- 5.2 The Committee has made this recommendation with a view to highlighting to the Cabinet a matter relating to the effectiveness of partnership working. It is recognised that the decision to redevelop Riverside House is a historic one taken by a predecessor authority. It is also recognised that NPH is responsible for overseeing the redevelopment of Riverside House and for its management once complete. However, it remains a property that is owned by West Northamptonshire Council and for which it is responsible. The Council also has a role in community leadership and for promoting local partnership working when this will benefit residents.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 The recommendation by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee does not have any direct resources or financial implications.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 Overview and Scrutiny operates within the provisions as set out in:

- the Local Government Act 2000
- the Health and Social Care Act 2001
- the Local Government Act 2003
- the Police and Justice Act 2006
- the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- the Localism Act 2011
- the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- the Overview and Scrutiny (Reference by Councillors) (Excluded Matters) (England) Order 2012
- the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013

6.2.2 The West Northamptonshire Council Constitution (December 2021) Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules section 6 sets out the following provisions relating to reports by Overview and Scrutiny committees:

6.1 Once recommendations have been formed, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may submit a formal report for consideration by the Cabinet (if the proposals relate to an executive function and are consistent with the existing budgetary and Policy Framework), or to the Council as appropriate (if the recommendation would require a departure from or a change to the agreed budget and Policy Framework).

6.2 The Council or the Cabinet shall consider the report of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the next available meeting. The Council or the Cabinet shall respond to that Overview and Scrutiny Committee within two months (or following the next available meeting in the case of the Council) of it being submitted.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 The recommendation made by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee asks the Cabinet to look into the situation regarding the redevelopment of Riverside House and the impact on its continued use as a site for outpatient renal dialysis, with a view to identifying if there are any lessons that can be taken from this situation that may be relevant to other partnership working by the Council. If the recommendation is not agreed the Council may risk missing an opportunity to inform and enhance future partnership working.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 Consideration of proposed changes to the provision of NHS outpatient renal dialysis services in Northampton by the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was informed by discussion with representatives from the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust as set out in paragraph 5.1 above.

6.4.2 Information relating to the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 June 2022 was published in advance through the Council's usual channels.

6.5 **Climate Impact**

6.5.1 There are no climate impact issues arising from this report.

6.6 **Community Impact**

6.6.1 There are no community impact issues arising from this report.

7. Background Papers

People Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21 June 2022 – agenda papers