

Item 6: Single Pathology Service for Kent and Medway

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer

To: Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11 May 2022

Subject: Single Pathology Service for Kent and Medway

Summary: This report invites the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group.

It provides background information which may prove useful to Members.

The Committee has decided that the proposed changes do not constitute a substantial variation of service.

1) Introduction

- a) "Pathology is the study of disease. It is the bridge between science and medicine. It underpins every aspect of patient care, from diagnostic testing and treatment advice to using cutting-edge genetic technologies and preventing disease."¹
- b) In September 2017, NHS Improvement set out its intention for all acute hospital trusts in England to enter pathology networks. The aim of the pathology networks is to provide more responsive, high quality and efficient services. It would also reduce the unwarranted variation in pathology services. All networks were to be fully operational by 2021.²
- c) NHS Improvement set out plans for 29 pathology networks. The "Kent Pathology Services" network was to cover:
 - i) Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
 - ii) East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust
 - iii) Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
 - iv) Medway NHS Foundation Trust

2) Previous engagement with HOSC

- a) HOSC has received updates on the plans since September 2018. The expectation was for a Final Business Case to be approved towards the end of 2019 with implementation taking place between 2020 and 2024.
- b) At their meeting on 19 September 2019, HOSC determined that the proposed changes did not constitute a substantial variation of service.

¹ The Royal College of Pathologists (online) What is pathology? <https://www.rcpath.org/discover-pathology/what-is-pathology.html>

² NHS Improvement (2018) NHS Improvement pathology networking in England: the state of the nation

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- c) The Committee last received an update on 22 July 2020. The strategic outline business case (SOC) had been approved by the Kent and Medway STP in April 2019. Three outline business cases (OBC's) for service change, a laboratory information management system (LIMS), and managed service contracts (MSC)) were going through the approvals process. Three full business cases (FBC) were in development. A timeline was provided setting out the milestones to be reached and their scheduled date.
- d) At the end of its last discussion, the Committee resolved that the update be noted, with thanks, and that Kent and Medway CCG be invited to attend and present an update at the appropriate time.
- e) Members are asked to consider the attached update from the NHS.

3) Recommendation

HOSC note the report and the Kent and Medway CCG be invited to attend and present an update at the appropriate time.

Background Documents

Kent County Council (2020) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (22/07/20)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=8496&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2019) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (19/09/19)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=8283&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2019) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (25/01/19)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MID=7924>

Kent County Council (2018) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (21/09/18)*', <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=7921&Ver=4>

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