

## Neighbourhood Plan Report for June 2017

### SECTION HEALTH and COMMUNITY

#### Introduction

In looking at this issue we have sought to take into account the fact that health and social care based mainly in the town in fact serves a wider population. A good example of this is our Community Hospital which serves a very wide geographical area and not just Swaffham and its immediate surrounding villages. Aspects of Mental Health Services and Social Care equally serve wider populations than just Swaffham.

*We also express thoughts on health prevention which often gets neglected.*

These views/ideas also seek to reflect (where known) existing plans of health and social care providers and without forgetting the valued role of many charities and local organisations.

#### Geographical Aspects of the Town

This has a significant bearing on our thinking as we consider the existing and possible future extensions of the extra population expected in Swaffham itself and neighbouring villages. At this time we are aware of the proposed new housing at the North, East and South of the town which will add 1,600 homes over the plan period.

It is foreseeable that (if needed and planning agreed) future growth opportunities may favour even greater expansion south of the Town. This leads us to believe that it is very important to look for opportunities to expand all forms of health and social care provision to help better serve the residents in the south in particular

This of course does not rule out future expansion anywhere in the local area.

#### Health Profile of Swaffham

We have a higher % than average of people over 65, 32% Swaffham, 23% Norfolk (source mid 2013 estimates [www.norfolkinsight.org.uk](http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk)).

Self-assessed general health in Swaffham is worse than Norfolk average. 73.3% of people described their health as good or very good compared with 79.3% in Norfolk and 7.6% bad or very bad as against 5.6% in Norfolk. 12% of the people in Swaffham said their day to day activities were limited a lot by long term illness or disability compared with 9.1% in Norfolk and 8.3% in England (source Census 2011 and [www.norfolkinsight.org.uk](http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk)).

The town is popular with retirees and **housing costs are below average (details and source??)**. It is envisaged that we will remain a popular destination. It is therefore important to plan for this increasing elderly population. It is established that we are 'living longer and with ongoing advances in treatments and drugs life expectancy will increase. This is likely to put increasing strain on our existing services.

Another factor to be considered is the Governments approach to funding of health and social care. It is possible that funding will be restricted/cut in some areas and

that a greater burden could fall on individuals and/or their families. A good example of this is the latest Government proposals on funding social care.

All of this means that it is important to think ahead as to how our local population can best be served.

**VISION: Sustaining the vitality, health and safety of the community and allowing residents of all ages the opportunity of remaining part of it.**

#### Discussions / Meetings Held to Date

A number of informal meetings have been held by this group and in May 2017 a wider audience of health and social care and other organisations supporting the community were invited to an open meeting. This meeting was not as well attended as we had hoped and notable absentees were the three GP practices in town. To address the lack of GP input individual approaches are being made by members of the group to meet with them to ascertain current issues and future plans. (Any update will be provided in June)

What has become very clear from both our meetings and general feedback obtained is:

- Funding is a critical issue for all. Some services receive no central funding whilst others are restricted
- Many rely very significantly on fundraising
- Virtually all organisations are running at or near capacity
- Virtually all are having to place restrictions on demand
- Many would like to expand but face accommodation issues
- Most are concerned about future local population growth
- Voluntary organisations are facing increasing requests for help/advice

### **Primary Care Services**

#### GP Services

Swaffham is served by three main practices with surgeries in town and also at Narborough and Necton. Between them the surgeries care for nearly 20,000 patients. In Swaffham two are located towards the north of town and one fairly central.

The number of patients registered with these three practices far exceeds the population of the immediate town. This is because many residents of our surrounding villages travel to the town. Within the "practice areas" at this time it is still possible for new residents to register with a GP.

We are seeking more detailed information about GP services to add to our thinking. We note the national position of declining GP numbers and the increase in early retirement. Swaffham may have difficulties in attracting or retaining GPs.



In terms of expansion, it is known at this time that the "central" practice has ambitions to extend their surgery premises. Although land is available we understand funding is an issue.

#### Dental Services

At present new residents in town face a wait to get registered with a dental practice. It is our aim to seek to provide a dental facility in the south of town to meet rising the population.

#### Ophthalmic Services

Present provision is not perceived as a problem. It is within the town centre.

#### Pharmacies

At present served by two retail pharmacies and some limited GP dispensing. No perceived pressure on existing service and it is highly unlikely that it viable for any extra provision in the near future.

#### Community Hospital

This provides three wards of patient beds and a range of outpatient clinics (approx 24). It has to serve a very wide population and there is constant pressure on beds and services. The hospital was extensively refurbished in recent years and it is not foreseen that its overall capacity will grow in the near future.

#### New Provision

The ideal way to meet future need could be to consider the possibility of earmarking a new site to the south for establishing a comprehensive care complex such as that built in Aylesham. Such a facility could potentially meet a wide range of needs for general health/mental health/social support facilities and help better serve the growing/aging population.

Given the potential availability of land in the south this concept is very high on our list of desirable developments.

#### Mental Health Services

We are served by Community mental health teams.

Swaffham is very fortunate to be well supported by local charities and voluntary bodies. We have the Merle Boddy social day care centre which provides a warm and friendly social day care service for people living with mental health problems including dementia and other disabilities. They are at capacity and would like to expand both numbers and accommodation.

The Garden Science Trust has a portakabin at the Green Britain Centre that acts as a classroom for crafts. Clients often have mental health issues and much of their time is spent in the organic garden.

The Escape Project is aimed at people with both physical and mental health issues.

**VISION: High quality service that support older people and those with long term conditions to live independently at home.**

Whilst seeking support for individuals to remain at home, it is recognised that this is not always possible and that there is a high need for residential care also.

#### Residential & Care Homes

There is a view that our population may be better served by closer coordination of these homes and this is currently being explored by a multi disciplinary group. Until recently there were six homes registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) but now The Old Maltings has changed to sheltered housing. We understand the five homes have a capacity of 314 beds of which 38 are for the under 65s.

#### Sheltered Accommodation

There are thirteen sites in the town providing accommodation either for rent or lease. In total there total of 265 one or two bedroom units, comprising 103 age exclusive and 162 retirement/sheltered units.

#### Community Centre

This is a very important hub for the community. It houses the Red Cross, Age Concern, Norfolk Recovery Service, Mid Norfolk Citizens Advice, Wellbeing Service and the offices of Icini Partnership. Again there are capacity issues at the centre and a desire to expand both accommodation and services.

#### General Support for Older People

There are already a number of schemes in place to provide support. Many of these rely on volunteers. More support is always welcome and we need new and expanded services.

**VISION: To improve the breadth and quality of community and sports facilities in the town and surrounding villages to ensure recreational and visual amenity for all ages.**

#### Envisaged Way Forward

We are aware that we still lack some hard data and we seek to obtain as much as possible including from all health providers.

We acknowledge the wide support given to the Community from all the voluntary organisations.

With health prevention we would like to support the groups covering open spaces and sports and leisure as there are health links.

We acknowledge that future health care provision in its widest context is only something that the Statutory Authorities can lead on, but we hope that our ideas and vision will be helpful in influencing future thinking and direction.