At an informal meeting on 20 May 2020, the Chairman and two Vice-Chairmen of the Surrey Adults and Health Select Committee discussed an update report on proposed changes to urgent care in Surrey Heartlands. This update was initially scheduled to be considered by the full Select Committee at its public meeting on 22 April 2020, but this had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. As a result, it was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen would discuss the report on behalf of the full Select Committee with the following witnesses: Simon Angelides, Reconfiguration Programme Director; Jack Wagstaff, North West Surrey Integrated Care Partnership Director; and Giselle Rothwell, Associate Director of Communications and Engagement for Surrey Heartlands. The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen would like to thank the witnesses for attending the meeting and for producing a thorough and informative report.

Outlined below is a summary of the main discussion points, as well as specific actions the Select Committee would like to be pursued. Overall, the Select Committee is happy with the direction of travel and the engagement that has been undertaken with the public to date, although it recognises the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had, and will continue to have, on involving the public. Further explanation of the role of the Select Committee in this respect is provided below.

**Impact of Covid-19**

During the 20 May 2020 informal meeting, the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen were in agreement that the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most serious challenges facing the Programme and could have a major impact on its proposals. This is particularly the case when examining concerns around the Programme’s ability to deliver the necessary workforce against the backdrop of Covid-19 (particularly in relation to GPs). Modelling and analysis will also have to be revisited due to the societal shift that is likely to occur as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was further highlighted that the Covid-19 pandemic presents an opportunity to make positive changes to working habits inside the health service, particularly in relation to the use of digital technology and remote consultations, and Members recommended that these opportunities are examined in more detail. Members welcomed the fact that work is being done to look at assumptions and check whether the original design is still fit for purpose and asked for the Select Committee to be updated on the future of the Programme when there is a greater understanding of the long-term impact that Covid-19 could have on the proposals for urgent care in Surrey Heartlands.

**Haslemere Minor Injuries Unit**

Another main area of discussion was concerned with the future of the Haslemere Minor Injuries Unit (MIU). Members noted references in the report to the Haslemere MIU not complying fully with the new standards for Urgent Treatment Centres (UTCs) and pointed out that the Secretary of State for Health confirmed before the December 2019 general election that the MIU would remain open. They heard that the Secretary of State’s intervention ran contrary to the official NHS England (NHSE) guidance in terms of UTC standards, and that any decision to change Haslemere MIU into a UTC would need to be supported by NHSE. An assurance process to be undertaken by NHSE would determine whether this would be supported by the regulator. It was explained that Commissioners, not the Secretary of State for Health, have the legal duty and responsibility for local commissioning decisions. Commissioners have acknowledged the Secretary of State for Health’s statement but will complete their analysis, consider the evidence and will use this to come to a decision about the future of the Haslemere MIU. It was reiterated that a paper will be presented to the Select Committee for scrutiny and discussion once a final decision has been made.

**Role of the Adults and Health Select Committee to date**

The Adults and Health Select Committee subsumes the role of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), the legislative basis for which is contained in the following two documents: [Local Authority Health Scrutiny (June 2014)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/324965/Local_authority_health_scrutiny.pdf) and [Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities (May 2019)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/800048/Statutory_Guidance_on_Overview_and_Scrutiny_in_Local_and_Combined_Authorities.pdf).

Based on these documents, the approach of the Select Committee to the Urgent Care Programme has been to:

* Seek assurance that the public is involved at an adequate level throughout the life of the change programme so that their voice can be heard. Healthwatch Surrey is an important partner in this work. The Select Committee has been content that to date this has been happening for both the Guildford and Waverley and North West Surrey projects.
* Seek assurance that the direction of travel for the Programme will result in changes that are to the benefit of Surrey residents. The Select Committee is content that excellent liaison has been maintained with the Reconfiguration Programme Director in this respect.