

Health meeting

Urban&Civic have been working with health partners since initial planning discussions from 2015 and have always been hugely conscious this is an issue of real concern for local people, who have had a turbulent time with local health delivery.

The team have regular discussions with the Integrated Care Board, and the now permanent operator established to run the existing and planned new surgery (the third that has been involved in discussions so far). Partly linked to some of the existing difficulties the current surgery faces, some of the health partners have been reluctant to engage the community in the plans, and so Urban&Civic have been most vocal and accessible in updating the Patient Participation Group and the local community through the existing Community Forum events and U&C updates.

When the Chair of the PPG approached health partners to suggest a village meeting to ensure transparency of the plans, the partners were initially reluctant, and so Urban&Civic worked with the PPG to design a session that the PPG would lead, U&C would answer the core questions, with health partners available to pick up questions on the future plans, and colleagues doing a separate session beforehand to pick up existing issues – to separate out the different dynamics.

While the session was an emotive and complicated two hour discussion, the Communities team were given a round of applause at the end, and have had a number of supportive comments and letters since, as well as fielded the slide deck and Q&A used for the event in separate sessions.

U&C continue to attend the PPG regularly and they are helping to support both the initial designs for the interim provision, as well as inputting to the scope for the permanent provision which will come forward in the future town centre.

Viv Cooper, Chair of Waterbeach PPG said, 'The PPG meets monthly with the Practice Manager, who also meets regularly with U&C so everyone is clear about progress in Waterbeach new town. We have been really grateful for the time Rebecca has spent with us. Health planning is a complicated area, and hugely emotive for the existing village community who have had a challenging time with lots of changes to the GPs providing services and challenges getting appointments, even before new residents move in. We know how hard the ICB and partners in health work to plan future services, but we need to ensure we communicate that well and clearly to the local community. The open meeting we held was a really good example of that and enabled a good discussion and Q&A to ensure everyone knew how the future roll-out of health would work, and even to get excited about the potential improvements and new services in a new future-proofed health centre.'

