

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD
IN THE WAYTEMORE ROOM, BISHOP'S
STORTFORD ON WEDNESDAY
26 MARCH 2008 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor S A Bull (in the Chair).
Councillor M Wood.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr J Day - Secretary to the Trust

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors R N Copping, J Demonti, R Gilbert,
Mrs M H Goldspink, Mrs D L E Hollebon,
J Mayes, R L Parker, R Taylor and C Woodward.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Tracy Strange	- Head of Health and Housing
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager - Commercial

7 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of
Councillors K Darby (Chairman), Mrs D Hone and
B Wrangles.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor S A Bull asked that Members' good wishes for a speedy recovery be passed on to the Chairman.

9 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor S A Bull declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that he was a voluntary driver for Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge.

Councillor R Taylor declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that his wife worked for West Essex PCT.

RESOLVED ITEMSACTION10 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Chairman, it was moved and seconded that Councillor S A Bull be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

RESOLVED – that Councillor S A Bull be appointed Chairman for this meeting.

11 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2008 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12 PRESENTATION BY THE PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL – TRUST STATUS

The Chairman welcomed Mr James Day, Secretary to the Trust who had been invited to give Members an overview of the hospital's trust status. It was noted that the hospitals had 500 beds, a staff of 3000 with a catchment area of 258,000 people. Turnover was £143 million and assets worth £32 million.

Mr Day explained what a Foundation Trust was and what benefits would accrue to the community and to staff. He stressed that the Trust was still a part of the National Health Service and was accountable for its actions to local people, staff and an elected Council of Governors. The hospital would still need to balance its budget and if possible, offer a surplus. Foundation status would allow the hospital the freedom to invest in what was needed locally without layers of Government bureaucracy.

Mr Day explained that the Trust's "vision" was "*to enhance our position as the local hospital choice by ensuring that all services are innovative, high quality and patient centred. This will be supported by our service ethos which promotes reliability, safety and effectiveness*"

Mr Day explained the new structure of the Trust including the role to be played by Members taken from a variety of backgrounds, including public, staff and partners. The roles of Members, the Council of Governors and the Board of Directors were explained.

It was noted that whilst the consultation was over, there was still an opportunity for people to get involved and submit comments.

With the consent of Members, the Chairman commented that he would take questions from Members prior to inviting the public to ask questions.

Councillor R L Gilbert asked what the position of the Trust was with regard to the PCT. Mr Day explained the position of the East Herts and West Essex PCTs and how they related to the Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH). He explained how the funding proposals worked and how services were commissioned by the PCT. Councillor R L Gilbert commented on boundary difficulties he had experienced in relation to an MS Nurse. Mr Day agreed to investigate the matter.

Councillor R I Taylor commented on the proportionality of Members in relation to the catchment area and what steps had been taken by the Trust to encourage public participation. Mr Day explained what action had been taken to disseminate information. He commented that 1% Membership could be improved upon.

Mr Day explained what the “vision” for the hospital would mean in terms of improvements to the hospital, new wards and pressure being taken off the accident and emergency section. The need to meet population growth and get people through casualty faster. In the longer term, the Trust aimed to knock down wards and create something more modern. There were long term plans for parking which might go underground and new wards built were the car park had been.

On behalf of Councillor M G Carver, the Scrutiny Officer sought clarification on an issue in relation to integrated transport and whether expansion proposals would take into account proposals for Harlow North. Mr Day commented that the Trust was not in the transport business but hoped that Governors from the local area would have the ability and expertise in such issues and would bring to the table, their expertise on how to create accessible transport. Mr Day commented that the Trust had “factored” in 60,000 new homes in anticipation of the Harlow North expansion.

Councillor C Woodward commented that working in partnership with the PAH might cause problems within the hospital in Bishop’s Stortford. Mr. Day explained how the partnership would work. Councillor Woodward commented on problems associated with communication and administration. He commented that loss of documents was a national problem and that the Trust knew that it should not become complacent.

Councillor R Taylor commented that there were plans to have an urgent injuries unit at Herts and Essex hospital. He asked whether funding would be via the PCTs. Mr Day was not aware of these proposals and undertook to take

the matter back and investigate. Councillor Taylor went on to explain that the QE2 would lose its accident and emergency facility and get an urgent care centre. Concerns were expressed that Mr Day did not know of these proposals.

Mr Eric Marshall commented that, as a Member of the Patients Forum he was concerned that it was about to disappear and be replaced by LINKS. He commented that the PCT used to “work” but that everything now was orientated towards the west and that areas east of the A10 were not acknowledged. He felt that it was “stupid” to run a health facility based on county boundaries. Mr Marshall said that everyone east of the A10 used Harlow services. He expressed concern that Mr. Day did not know about the proposed urgent care service. Mr Marshall suggested that county boundaries should be ignored and that his comments be referred to the Trust’s Board.

Councillor R L Parker was pleased to hear that there was a part for East Herts to play with a seat on the new Council as one of the nominated Governors and hoped that Members of the Council could become Members of the Trust. He recounted a number of previous unhappy personal experiences at the PAH. He hoped that the new body would overcome its current problems.

Mr Day commented that the Trust did not set out to give a poor service. It was however hoped that any surplus achieved could be ploughed back giving people a positive experience. He commented that hospitals were places where sometimes people did not experience a happy ending. It was hoped that their statistics would improve. It was the Trust’s intention to produce a better, cleaner hospital and become the hospital where people wanted to come.

ACTION

Mr Marshall commented on problems at the PAH of communication and administration and referred to the case of a baby who died recently. Mr Day was aware of the case. He commented that very specialist work would be undertaken at Great Ormond Street.

The Chairman, on behalf of Members thanked Mr Day for his presentation and his helpful response to questions.

RESOLVED – that the presentation be received.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Chairman
Date