

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
HEALTH ENGAGEMENT PANEL HELD
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
MONDAY 12 MAY 2008 AT 7.30 PM

PRESENT: Councillor K Darby (Chairman).
Councillors S A Bull, Mrs. D M Hone and Mrs B
Wrangles.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor N C Poulton

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Simon Barfoot	- Environmental Health Promotion Officer
Lorraine Blackburn	- Committee Secretary
Marian Langley	- Scrutiny Officer
Paul Thomas	- Environmental Health Manager - Commercial

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah Brierley	- Deputy Director Strategic Development (Hospital Trust)
Lynda Dent	- Lead for Public Engagement (PCT)
John Phipps	- Assistant Director Primary Care Trust (PCT)
Victoria Robb	- Hertfordshire County Council Scrutiny Officer

13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Members for sending their good wishes whilst recovering from an accident.

The Chairman commented that given the nature of the consultation exercise, she would be inviting the public to speak.

14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Mrs D M Hone declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that she was a Governor of Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation trust.

RESOLVED ITEMS

15 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2008 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

16 CONSULTATION ON THE EAST AND NORTH HERTS NHS TRUST (PRESENTATION)

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Brierley, the Trust's Deputy Director - Strategic Development. She explained that the Trust was consulting to become a Foundation Trust. The Consultation period would end on 26 May 2008. Mrs Brierley outlined what Foundation Trust status would mean. Views were being sought in relation to Governance, Vision and Values and Service Development Priorities.

Mrs Brierley commented that one of the benefits of Foundation Trust status was flexibility. The Foundation Trust Hospital would be "owned" by the Community and would have more flexibility in meeting the needs of the community and making their own decisions rather than having them imposed externally. She gave the example of a recent deep cleaning activity where an externally imposed time schedule had resulted in patients having to

be moved several times. Surpluses could be retained and ploughed back in to the hospital rather than the current arrangement whereby any surplus was clawed back by the NHS. There was still a need however to meet NHS standards.

The strategic aims and how the organisation could become more patient focussed were explained. She commented that it was important that the Foundation Trust was demographically representative and as such 5000 Members were being sought. So far the trust had 2000 Members. She explained the benefits of being a Member of the Foundation Trust and how to become one. Members could be as young as 14.

An explanation of the role of Governors was provided. It was confirmed that East Herts Council would have a seat on the Council of Governors.

In response to a question, Mrs Brierley explained that planned deep cleaning being done over a longer period would not have put patients at risk. Carrying this out in a more structured way was less intrusive than what was imposed on the Hospital. However, responses to infection control would always be immediate and rigorous where there was a clinical risk.

Councillor S A Bull sought clarification on cancer patients who had been referred to Mount Vernon. Mrs Brierley explained the provision of services to cancer patients in the area and the hospitals which fed into Mount Vernon.

Councillor Mrs B Wrangles commented on the difficulties in getting to the Lister Hospital from East Hertfordshire. This was recognised as an issue that the PCT was investigating. The Chairman commented that the PCT was appointing a new Transport Project Manager and that this new appointee had already been invited to attend this Panel in the autumn to discuss just these issues.

Councillor N C Poulton sought clarification on the provision of services to geriatric patients. Mrs Brierley commented that the majority of care for these people was provided in the community funded by the PCT. He also raised the issue of new health service provision at Welwyn Garden City which might impact on some GP surgeries. This issue would be discussed further in the next agenda item.

Mrs Brierley commented on what might happen if the Foundation Trust failed to obtain 5000 Members. She commented that Monitor (Code of Governance) would seek reassurance from the NHS Trust that the numbers were representative of the area.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Brierley for coming and for her presentation.

The Chairman sought Members' views in relation to the Questionnaire on the East and North Hertfordshire Foundation Trust Status Consultation Document. Members agreed to the following responses:

Question 1 – Do you agreed with our vision for the future of the Trust as a NHS foundation trust : **Yes**

Question 2 - Do you agree with our strategic aims? – **Yes**

Question 3 - What action should we take to build an organisation that is more patient focused? Eg How can we ensure that patients, staff and the community feel more able to influence and inform the work of the Trust? **By including Members of the public and widening the range of services provided.**

Question 4 – How can we best communicate with our Members? **All the communication methods listed ie email, post and website.**

Question 5 – How can we ensure that our membership is not over representative or under representative of those

who live in our community? **By working with the Council who work closely with the Community with a range of organisations.**

Question 6 – Do you agree with the proposals for the minimum age of Members to be 14? **Yes**

Question 7 – Do you think our proposals for the Council of Governors will ensure that it is representative of our community and that our proposed governance arrangements are comprehensive, practical and reasonable. **They are reasonable. The Council supports asking a Member of East Herts Council to sit as a Governor.**

Question 8 – Do you agree with the proposed arrangements to support our transition to becoming a NHS Foundation trust? **The Council is happy with the proposed arrangements**

Question 9 – Did you find this consultation document clear and easy to understand? **Yes**

The Chairman encouraged all Members to send off any individual comments by the closing date of 26 May 2008. The Chairman, with the support of Members asked that the Panel's comments be forwarded as soon as possible following appropriate consultation with the Chairman of Community Scrutiny Committee and Executive Member for Housing and Health.

Members supported the response as detailed above.

RESOLVED – that (A) the presentation be received;
and

(B) the Panel's comments on the Consultation be forwarded following consultation with the Chairman of Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Member for Housing and Health by 23

May 2008.

17 GP-LED HEALTH CENTRES (PRESENTATION)

John Phipps outlined the consultation paper setting out proposals for the establishment of two GP-led health centres on local general hospital sites, one in Hemel Hempstead in the West Hertfordshire PCT area and the other in Welwyn Hatfield in the East and North Hertfordshire's PCT area. He explained what the proposals were and how the centres would operate.

Mr Phipps explained that the centres would provide more bookable times for appointments, which was a direct response to concerns expressed by the public and the need to improve access to primary care services.

He explained that the Health Centres were designed to provide more flexibility, essentially a "one stop" approach to delivering primary care providing patients with enhanced services.

Councillor N C Poulton expressed concern for doctors and local surgeries which he felt would be affected. Mr Phipps commented that using the health centre did not mean that a patient would have to leave his normal surgery. The existing out of hours service would also remain. Urgent care would be available 24 hours at the QEII.

Mr Phipps explained that the concept of these new health centres was that they would provide another link in primary care available to public. It was planned that the centre would offer a broader spread of services including minor surgery and community pharmacy.

Councillor S A Bull commented on problems of transport to Welwyn from his ward.

A Member of the public was concerned at the impact this would have on local doctors' surgeries. Mr Phipps commented that the Health Centres would have longer

opening hours, ie 8am to 8pm and that the planned services would complement current GP services. It was expected that patients would be drawn from the area.

The Chairman commented that if the hours of the centres were in response to demand from people commuting into London, then the opening hours should be earlier. Mr Phipps agreed that there was nothing to stop the Centres from opening earlier. Pump priming (funding) had been provided to fund the centres which would be patient driven.

The Chairman commented on the difficulties the Health Centres might have in accessing Patients' notes, particularly for patients remaining registered with their own GP and using the new centre only occasionally.

Lynda Dent commented that the Health Centres would link into local general hospitals to expand the services provided.

The Chairman thanked Mr Phipps and Mrs Dent for their presentation.

The Chairman sought the Panel's views in relation to the questions posed by the PCT in their "Issues for further consideration and dialogue" consultation letter.

Members expressed concern that in relation to registering with a Health Centre, this could mean GPs would lose funds as people "deregistered". Members noted that 6000 people were needed to register with the Health Centres for them to be viable and of the impact this would have on local service provision by local GPs which would have to close or cut back on staff. The issue of transport and car parking was of considerable concern to Members especially since the QEII was the preferred site for the new local general hospital at Welwyn, Hatfield.

In response to the question about what services could be provided from each Health Centre, Members supported the provision of a pharmacy, minor surgery, blood tests, pre

natal checks, stitch removal, optician and urgent dentistry.

Members were of the view that knowledge of the community, generally, culturally and demographically was essential for the Health Centres to be viable. The use of local GPs should be encouraged. Ability to access translation service was encouraged as the area continued to grow. Members requested that consideration be given to the Centres opening from 7am. Members were also of the view that monitoring profit and investing this back into the system was essential for the effective provision of services and in responding to local demands. Monitoring their effectiveness could be fed back to the community using the Council's Community Voice meetings.

Members supported the response as detailed above.

RESOLVED – that (A) that the presentation be received; and

(B) the Panel's comments on the Consultation be submitted, following consultation with the Chairman of Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Member for Housing and Health by 23 May 2008.

19 FEEDBACK FROM 11 MAY 2008 CONSULTATION EVENT ON SITE OPTION APPRIASAL FOR HOSPITAL / HEALTH CAMPUS IN WELWYN, HATFIELD

The Chairman provided an update in relation to the appraisal undertaken of a shortlist of three potential sites for the new local general hospital in Welwyn, Hatfield. She explained how the working group undertook a non financial evaluation of each site and the criteria which was applied. Each working group then evaluated and scored each site independently against the established criteria.

Members expressed their concern about car parking at the QEII and that this issue should be brought to the attention of the PCT in relation to the consultation regarding GP-led

Health Centres.

It was noted that the QEII site was chosen as the preferred site.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

20 ITEMS TO BE ADDRESSED AT HERTFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY MEETING: 17 JUNE
2008

The Minutes of the County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee held on 18 March 2008 were attached to the report now submitted.

Members noted the report.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Chairman
Date