

A T A M E E T I N G

- of the -

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL held at
the Council House, Walsall on
3 August 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Woodruff
Councillor D Pitt
Councillor Micklewright
Jim Weston – Patient Forum
D Russell – PALS (NHS)

OFFICERS PRESENT

David Martin	(Executive Director Social Care & Supported Housing)
Kathy McAteer	(Assistant Director, Adult Services Social Care & Inclusion)
Stella Forsdike	(Chief Director of commissioning and performance, Walsall NHS trust)
Sue James	(Chief Executive – Manor Hospital, Walsall)
Stuart Bentley	Scrutiny Officer

10/06 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs. L. Mabley and Dr Desai.

11/06 SUBSTITUTIONS

The chair advised the panel of the following changes to the membership of the committee for the duration of the meeting: -

- Delete: Councillor Robertson
- Substitute: Councillor Creaney

12/06 DECLERATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Woodruff and Mrs D. Russell declared a personal non prejudicial interest as employees of the Walsall hospital NHS trust and Councillor D Pitt declared a personal and non prejudicial interest as an employee of West Midlands Ambulance Service.

13/06 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2006, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record, subject to the following amendments.

The inclusion of Mrs. D. Russell's declaration of personal non prejudicial interest as an employee of the Walsall hospital NHS trust; and that paragraph 6 of minute 7/06 now read:

Dr Sam Ramiah suggested that the panel write to the Secretary of State to raise their concerns. David Martin explained that as a Council the 3 leaders wrote to the Secretary of State explaining that the risk to the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and the NHS Bank would have a detrimental impact upon the borough of Walsall. Councillor Woodruff requested a copy of this letter so that the panel could also send a version containing the panels' views.

6/06 BLACK COUNTRY REVIEW CONSULTATION

Stuart Bentley tabled copies of the presentations and the independent consultants report entitled "Black Country Review."

(annexed)

Councillor Woodruff welcomed Stella Forsdike who gave a presentation outlining the Black Country Review consultation process, a reminder of the areas of change and the outcomes of the consultation. The presentation also highlighted the key issues from a commissioning perspective and for the Manor Hospital.

David Martin noted that a superficial view of the outcomes would seem to indicate a significant number of services being relocated to Wolverhampton without anything coming to Walsall. He suggested that this may have been an issue.

Stella Forsdike replied that it had been an issue but she pointed out that there were specialisms being developed at Walsall that were not covered as part of the review.

Sue James added that Wolverhampton already had high cost cancer and cardiac units in place and was, therefore, a naturally choice for those services.

David Martin stated that the distribution of services needed to be handled in a balanced way.

Sue James replied that any local services had to be subject to clinical viability in order to ensure that they could maintain the high level of service over the medium and long term.

Councillor Woodruff stated that transportation had been an issue since 2003 and that she found it frustrating that it had not been taken into consideration.

Stella Forsdike replied that transportation would always be an issue unless all services could be provided at all sites.

Sue James added that the local authority could be more influential with regards to enabling transportation links, although there would need to be some liaison to identify routes.

David Martin stated that there had been some interesting work undertaken on the mapping of traffic flow around the borough that could help highlight transportation issues.

Stuart Bentley added that the regeneration scrutiny and performance panel had scoped a review of strategic transportation issues, focusing on routes to work, into their work programme and he was happy to feed the concerns of this panel into that review.

7/06 PUBLIC FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI)

Sue James then gave a presentation giving; an overview of the progress of the PFI over the last 12 months, the redevelopment of the Manor Hospital, how the services will be delivered differently and the future of children's services.

Councillor Woodruff noted that there was a move to move some services back into the community. She asked if the PCT were sufficiently financed and equipped to be able to address the increase in demand.

Stella Forsdike replied that plans had been drawn up in partnership with the PCT and that new services had been created to cope.

Dave Martin added that the relationship was actually triangular in nature, with social services playing a role in servicing patient demand.

Councillor Pitt stated that there were significant numbers of people who go to the hospital as they are frustrated by trying to find the appropriate service in the community.

Sue James replied that the hospital is trying to make sure that its remit does not stop of the front door. It is working closely with the community to enable the PCT to cope with patient demand.

Stella Forsdike added that there was a drive to reduce the number of contact methods, both physically and by phone or network.

Kathy McAteer stated that a directory was being developed for the ambulance service, so that they could direct people to the most appropriate intermediate service first.

Sue James stated that a centralisation of services, enabling a single contact point for patients, would help to ease the process.

Councillor Pitt asked if it would be similar to the council's first stop shop.

Mr. Weston added that he had recently visited Kidderminster diagnostic centre, where all the services were compatible. He asked if this was a view of the shape of things to come.

Sue James replied that it was the idea. This would produce easy to navigate, fit for purpose, services.

David Martin highlighted that there was a risk that projects, such as this PFI, could be driven ahead by external sources at the detriment to Walsall and that there was a need to manage them in such a way as to maximise the benefit to the borough.

Sue James replied that the aim had always been to provide a high quality, fit for purpose service for Walsall.

Councillor Woodruff asked if Sue James was confident that the PFI would be agreed.

Sue James replied that she was.

8/06 UPDATE ON GOSCOTE HOSPITAL

Stella Forsdike reported that the last 100 beds had been closed in April 2006, with approximately half the beds being absorbed by the Manor Hospital and the other half by the community. As a result, she felt that a much better service was being provided. The rehabilitation unit had been transferred to Dartmouth House and the average stay was now in the order of 2 weeks with no negative feedback from patients and carers.

Kathy McAteer added that positive feedback was also being received from patients attending the Rushall Mews site.

Stella Forsdike replied that this was an excellent example of partnership working. Waldoc would remain at the Goscote site for the time being and there was now discussions taking place around a further 2 phases of development for the site. A steering group had been formed including Social Care and Inclusion, the PCT and WHG. As a result, plans were progressing for a dementia unit, through the local authority and a Hospice / Palliative Care Centre, through the Walsall Hospice Team.

Councillor Woodruff asked when the dementia unit would be completed.

Kathy McAteer replied that cabinet were due to select a preferred bidder in October 2006 with the contract being approved by cabinet by February 2007. Building works would be due to start in late 2007 following that.

Stella Forsdike added that the Palliative Care Centre was due for completion by 2009 and a master plan was now being developed, with Liftco, to produce options for the complete development of the site.

Councillor Micklewright informed the panel at this stage that if plans for the site were to be discussed, she would have to declare an interest as a member of the development control committee and excuse herself from the meeting.

Stella Forsdike replied that there was no need to discuss the plans in any further detail at this stage.

RESOLVED

That a further update on the development progress of the Goscote Site be presented at a future meeting of the panel.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Chairman

Date