

AT A MEETING
- of the -
HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL held at
the Council House, Walsall on
Thursday 15 December 2005 at
6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Val Woodruff (Chair)
Councillor D. Pitt

Dr Sam Ramiah – Director of Public Health
Mr. Jim Weston - Patient Forum
Ms Louise Madeley – PALS (PCT)
Kathy McAteer – Assistant Director Adult
Services
Pat Warner – Scrutiny Officer

INVITED SPEAKERS

Peter Arch – (PCT)
Martin Turner – Head of Community
Consultations (Walsall PCT)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for non attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Walker, Councillor Robertson, Mrs D. Russell and Mr David Martin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Woodruff declared a personal interest as an employee of Walsall Hospital NHS Trust and Councillor Des Pitt declared a personal interest as an employee of the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2005, a copy having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the chair as a correct record.

DEVELOPING A MEDIUM SECURE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE FOR MEN IN
THE WEST MIDLANDS

The panel received a copy of the consultation document in respect of this issue: -

(see annexed)

The panel welcomed Peter Arch from the Walsall PCT who wished to advise members on the proposals for developing a medium secure mental health service for men in the West Midlands.

Members were advised that as a result of the shortage of suitable NHS facilities within the West Midlands around one third of patients requiring medium secure facilities are to be placed within facilities outside the region. It is for this reason that the proposal is to build an additional medium secure unit in the West Midlands with a view to returning those patients housed outside the West Midlands to facilities nearer to their homes and their families. Currently there are around 75 patients from the West Midlands placed in facilities outside this region. Walsall has two patients placed in such a facility. He continued that if this unit is placed in Birmingham in the Yardley Green area as proposed the PCT will be in a position to create greater links between patients and their relatives. The cost per patient would also be reduced.

Peter Arch directed members to the issues on which the PCT were hoping that the scrutiny panel could make comments on, these included: -

1. On whether the proposed service would be meeting the needs of the patients.
2. On whether the proposed specialist unit should be closely integrated with locally based services to ensure continuity of care.
3. Partnership working and the links which this panel would expect the provider of the service to establish with other agencies to ensure that patients receive the most appropriate level of care.
4. In terms of education - what could be done to help dispel the myths and stereotypes that may exist about people's fear of complex mental health problems?
5. In respect of families – how could the proposed new service best provide support to patient's families?

Councillor Woodruff said that it was important that residents of Walsall are able to gain easy access to the new unit via public transport to visit their relatives.

Some concerns were raised about the possible noise level of the nearby airport to the proposed site. Members were advised however that the facility was very well sound proofed and would not be detrimental to the patients there.

The panel thanked Peter Arch for his presentation and:

RESOLVED

That the following comments be presented to the Heart of Birmingham Teaching Primary Care Trust as this panel's views in respect of the proposals: -

- In principle this panel agree that the Yardley Green site would meet the needs of the local people and provide locally based services and good transport links for family and friends.

- There is also a need to ensure that there are strong links between the proposed unit and locally based mental health services.

FORWARD PLAN OF NHS CONSULTATIONS

The panel welcomed Martin Turner, Head of Community Consultations at Walsall PCT who wished to advise the panel on the forthcoming consultations being organised through the PCT. He said he had agreed to attend the panel meeting on a regular basis to answer any questions raised by members and to advise members of the current position in relation to the services being provided by the NHS.

He advised members of the following consultations:-

1. Consultation on commissioning a patient led NHS. Launched 14 December 2005.

Members confirmed that the Panel had initially been advised of the pre-consultation views of the PCT on this issue and the panel's views had been sought on those.

Martin confirmed that the information previously brought to the panel had now been firmed up and the final consultation document was ready to receive the views of this panel and he hoped that this panel will feel able to make comments if it so wishes on the proposals set out in the consultation document.

Members were of the view that it would be advantageous to receive a presentation from Walsall PCT on the proposals set out in the consultation document. Members agreed that representatives of Strategic Health Authority should be invited to the next meeting of the panel to be held on 12 January 2006 to outline the proposals set out in the consultation document and how it would potentially affect the residents of this borough.

2. Consultation on reconfiguration of services within the Black Country to be launched in the new year, either January, February/March.

Martin confirmed that the first draft of the consultation document had been prepared and the aim is to produce an integrated service to ensure that the residents of Walsall receive a first class health service within easy access to their homes. He confirmed that the consultation would involve as well as Walsall two other boroughs in the Black Country i.e. Wolverhampton and Dudley. He said that currently Sandwell was not included within the list of authorities to be consulted.

He concluded that as members may be aware the consultation would not include any proposals for a merger of the hospitals.

3. Pharmaceutical needs assessment

Martin advised the panel that this consultation when launched would be looking at how many general practitioners were needed within an area. At the current time it is being examined informally within the PCT.

The panel thanked Martin Turner for his attendance.

RECONFIGURATION OF SERVICES IN BLACK COUNTRY – NOMINATIONS TO
JOINT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The report of the Executive Director was submitted: -

(see annexed)

The panel considered the report setting out arrangements for joint scrutiny and were of the view that the joint scrutiny committee when it is established should be able to co-opt onto that committee any relevant specialist the joint committee feels would be able to give an alternative view to that being presented within the consultation document.

Members considered the document further and:

RESOLVED

1. To nominate Councillor Ian Shires as one of the representatives to the joint scrutiny panel as the Liberal Democrat representative on that panel.
2. That the two group leaders for the Labour and Conservative groups be asked to nominate the remaining three representatives from this council to sit on the joint scrutiny committee i.e. two conservative representatives and one labour representative from the Health Scrutiny Panel.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.05 p.m.