

## **HEALTH SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

13 October 2009 at 6 p.m.

Panel Members present

Councillor Ault  
Councillor Aftab  
Councillor Carpenter  
Councillor Creaney  
Councillor Robertson  
Councillor Paul  
Councillor Woodruff

Officers present

Dave Martin – Executive Director Social Care and Inclusion  
Steph Simcox – Head of Finance - Social, Care and Inclusion  
Mark Gough - A&E Operational Service Delivery Director  
Paul Baylis - Group Station Manager  
Murray McGregor – Associate Director of Communications  
Gary Evans - Emergency Planning Officer (tPCT)  
Nikki Ehlen – Scrutiny Officer

### **21/09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Marsha Ingram, and Margaret Willcox.

### **22/09 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitution(s) for the duration of this meeting.

### **23/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

Councillor Woodruff declared an interest as an employee of Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust.

### **24/09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

In response to questions posed by members at the previous meeting the following responses were received from the PCT.

- 1) The surplus is not due to shortage or vacancies for front line staff. Walsall Community Health was forecast to breakeven at the year end so was not contributing to the overall planned surplus delivered by NHS Walsall. There was an expected under spend against the commissioning arm corporate costs of £300k which arose from slippage against the new NHS Walsall commissioning structure becoming fully established. The year end surplus was a planned

position, in line with national policy, to allow for an element of carry forward to the next financial year. The carry forward surplus during 08/09 was £11.5m so the overall picture, year on year, was one of a reducing in year surplus.

- 2) In terms of prescribing Walsall Community Health follow and implement NICE guidance on new technologies (i.e. drugs) in accordance with national policy. The surplus was not predicated on a change to that position. One of the in year cost pressures was funding high cost drugs, particularly lucentis.

### **Resolved**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2009, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.**

### **25/09 JOINT COMMITTEE WITH DUDLEY COUNCIL ON DUDLEY AND WALSALL MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP TRUST**

Members discussed the opportunity to work with counterparts in Dudley, and agreed the establishment of a joint committee, the terms of reference and the following nominations;

Councillors Ault, Carpenter, Paul Robertson, Woodruff.

Members volunteered to host the first meeting in Walsall.

### **Resolved that;**

- 1. A joint Committee with Dudley Council is established**
- 2. The terms of reference for this joint Committee was agreed**
- 3. Councillors Ault, Carpenter, Paul, Robertson, Woodruff were nominated to the membership of this group.**

### **26/09 WINTER PLANING AND SWINE FLU**

Gary Evans gave a presentation on winter planning and swine flu. The panel were given the national picture on swine flu and how Walsall fitted into this, including the local call centre situated in Jubilee house. The vaccination for swine flu was due to be delivered next week, front line workers would be the first to be vaccinated along with other vulnerable groups.

In terms of planning for winter 2009/10 agencies would be working together to ensure potential requirements would be met, and if there was a high level of flu that all partners were aware of how to deal with it.

Members were informed that people should take a maximum of 2 weeks off work to recover from swine flu. It was confirmed that pregnant women were a priority group for vaccination.

The national helpline was discussed and it was acknowledged that there had been difficulties implementing the system, but that the infrastructure was in place for future situations.

Public Health would be going out to schools to provide advice and support. Members considered the cost of the pandemic and winter planning. Gary Evans explained that the Treasury had a contingency fund for such circumstances.

West Midlands and London were considered hotspots, and Walsall had experienced a higher rate of swine flu than the rest of the Black Country. The reason for hotspots was unknown but may become apparent if cases were analysed.

#### **. 27/09 WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE (WMAS)**

The response rates of the ambulance service were described as making good progress, members were informed of the 'Lightfoot' report which had been clear that the service was under funded this had led to extra funding for the service, and should have an impact on response times across the West Midlands.

Members were asked if they wished to continue receiving the 'response times by post code', members agreed that this was valuable information and needed to be monitored.

WMAS officers informed the panel that they had been approached about the sale of a site in Aldridge. This has given WMAS the opportunity to consider the most effective way of delivery of the service in Walsall. As part of this process staff at Walsall and Aldridge Ambulance stations had been asked for their opinions and as a result of this some interesting ideas had emerged, but that ultimately only options which would improve the service for Walsall residents would be progressed. Officers suggested that it should be ensured that public services were working in partnership to identify any available land for this purpose in the borough.

WMAS stated that vehicles were located around the borough based on demand at certain times and days. The panel agreed that as elected members they needed to know the impact on response times of closing Aldridge ambulance station. Members were informed that with additional resource there was no reason why continued improvements in response times could not be made.

#### **| 28/09 FINANCIAL MONITORING (LOCAL AUTHORITY BUDGET)**

A presentation was given to members on the medium term financial planning and budget setting. Members were informed that to plan the budget for the next five years, a variety of intelligence including demographic data was used. Although it was emphasised that the gap between funding received from Government and the amount needed to spend was big. Members were informed that a balanced budget would need to be set in February 2010.

Officers suggested that the funding of the acute Trust and the PCT should also be considered which were also experiencing unprecedented cuts. Members agreed to invite the PCT to present its annual report and budget strategy. The panel agreed to include the Manor Hospital in these discussions.

#### **RESOLVED**

- **A presentation would be received from the PCT on its annual report and budget at the next health scrutiny panel.**
- **The Budget meetings scheduled for the Health Scrutiny Panel on 23 November and 25 January are cancelled.**

- **The Health Scrutiny Panel receive the agenda and papers for the budget meeting of the Social Care and Inclusion Scrutiny and Performance Panel on 30 November 2009 and 18 January 2010.**

#### **29/09 LEARNING DISABILITY POOLED BUDGET AND INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT STORE POOLED BUDGET**

Members noted the reports.

#### **30/09 HEALTH WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel were informed that the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel was attending a 'Dementia Care' conference. It was suggested that a working group would be established to consider this in more detail. The following members were nominated to sit on the group:

Councillor Creaney  
Councillor Woodruff  
Councillor Ault

It was agreed that a brief update on swine flu would be requested at the next meeting.

#### **Resolved that;**

A Dementia Care Working Group is established with the following membership; Councillors Ault, Creaney and Woodruff.

#### **31/09 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as 23 November 2009.

The meeting terminated at 7.45 pm.

Chair:

Date: