

12 December 2011

Development of a Midwifery Led Unit at Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust

Department Maternity Services at the Manor Hospital

Executive Summary:

Further to the paper submitted on 29 April 2011, where Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust highlighted a proposed significant change in the service model for Maternity care in Walsall through the proposed introduction of a midwifery led birthing unit, this paper provides an update on the situation following further discussions with GP's and Commissioners.

Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust has been seeking a solution regarding the continued safe management of the sustained additional activity its Maternity Services at the Manor site is seeing as a consequence of a number of key changes that have occurred in neighbouring health economies, notably the closure of the Sandwell Hospital Maternity Unit earlier this year and additional activity flows from South Staffordshire, alongside being able to offer a wider patient choice around birth.

The team advised the OSC they were seeking to establish a stand-alone MLU of 3 birthing rooms, which would be capable of managing circa 900 low risk births per year. At that time, both the financial and non financial appraisals had been completed indicating that an off-site option (0.4 miles from the acute hospital site and in the town centre) at Charles Street was the preferred solution. This has now been endorsed by the GP and Commissioner groups and is anticipated to open in March 2012.

Reason for scrutiny:

The purpose of bringing this issue to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to bring the committee up-to-date with the agreements reached with our GP and commissioner colleagues and to outline the timelines associated with this development.

Recommendations:

That:

- 1, That the Panel note the progress made and the preferred location and timescales surrounding this.

Background papers:

Business Case for the Development of a Midwifery Led Unit at Walsall Manor Hospital
28th March 2011. Original paper to OSC April 29th 2011.

Resource and legal considerations:

None. The Trust are self funding the development of this proposal.

Citizen impact:

The MLU at Charles Street will offer mothers with low risk pregnancy a greater choice, improved experience with an opportunity to experience the child's birth as a 'normal' experience in a home from home environment. The development of a stand-alone unit for all low risk births will also create a greater level of available capacity in the acute hospital setting for the women who remain on the high risk pathway and are planned to deliver their baby in the Delivery Suite.

Environmental impact:

The service will support a significantly different approach to supporting mothers with low risk pregnancies which will reduce hospital attendances by upto 50% which in turn contributes to the Trusts commitment to address the carbon and sustainability agenda.

Performance management:

The Division has established a formal project management and control structure to underpin the significant activity which is required to deliver the Unit by March 2012. The key activities, including design, commissioning, contract negotiation, marketing and workforce changes, are all managed through clear work streams which have identified resources, outputs and key milestones.

Led by the Divisional Director for FHD, the Project Team reports to the Estates Strategy Group on a monthly basis.

Equality Implications

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? Work in progress.
Results to be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when available if required.


Consultation:

Two consultation exercises have been undertaken focusing on our maternity patients.

One exercise was completed by the Community Midwives and the second by the Maternity Liaison Committee. The outcome of both was a resounding level of support for the development of the unit. Further consultation with local GPs and commissioners during the summer of 2011 has also been very supportive of the planned development in the Charles Street location.

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