

.A T A M E E T I N G

- of the -

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL held at
Dorothy Pattison Hospital, Walsall on
18 January 2007 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillor Woodruff	(Chair)
Councillor D Pitt	
Councillor Micklewright	
Jim Weston	Patient Forum
Doreen Russell	
Catherine Boneham	
Dr Ramaiah	Director of public health

OFFICERS PRESENT

Kathy McAteer	Interim Executive Director Social Care & Supported Housing
Sue James	Chief Executive Manor Hospital
Nikki Ehlen	Scrutiny Officer

37/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Robertson, and Dr Desai.

38/07 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

39/07 DECLERATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

Councillor Woodruff declared a personal non prejudicial interest as employee 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.

40/07 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

That the minutes of the meeting held on 02 November 2006, copies having been previously circulated to each member of the panel be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record with the following amendment:-

- the minutes were amended to include apologies from Doreen Russell.

41/07 AGREEMENT TO CHANGE OF AGENDA

Councillor Woodruff asked the panel to agree to receive the update on mental health section 31 agreements prior to the update on Walsall private finance initiative, under item 6 on the agenda.

Resolved

The panel agreed to receive the update on mental health section 31 agreements prior to the update on Walsall private finance initiative.

42/07 Update on Mental Health Section 31 agreements

Kathy McAteer reminded the panel of the plans to develop a Mental Health partnership trust across Walsall, Sandwell, and Dudley that would eventually become a MH Foundation Trust. However, there were legal issues for Sandwell Health and Social Care Trust which means that in the first phase of the work, Walsall and Dudley would become a new MH partnership trust in preparation for later forming a 3 way foundation trust.

Kathy McAteer also reminded the panel that the council had several years ago entered into a partnership arrangement with the tPCT. However, development of the section 31 agreements had been put on hold whilst there had been uncertainty about the restructuring of the tPCT and the development of separate commissioning and provider organisations. Kathy stated that now the direction forward is clearer, there was a need to put the section 31 agreements in position, to allow arrangements. There will be 2 separate agreements, one for the joint commissioning arrangements and one for the integrated provision – the latter of which will subsequently transfer to the new joint provider organisation with Dudley. Kathy McAteer added that the Council would follow a logical process to put into place provider agreements, this would require the Council to consider whether staff should be seconded or transferred through TUPE, and to do this legal advice would be sought.

Kathy McAteer explained that this item would go to Cabinet 21 March 2007. Councillor Woodruff asked if this affected the social services budget in March. Kathy McAteer replied that it would not.

43/07 Update on Walsall private finance initiative (PFI)

Sue James introduced herself to the panel, and explained that she had been invited to provide an update on the redevelopment programme and to talk about foundation trust status for the hospital. Sue James requested that the panel provided advice on consulting stakeholders.

Sue James spoke to the presentation (annexed) and the panel were informed of the background to the PFI. Sue James informed the panel that as part of the competitive bidding there were 2 companies with design solutions who submitted bids. Skanska Innisfree were evaluated as the preferable bidder.

Sue James stated that staff at the Manor hospital were pleased to receive the support of the people in Walsall.

Sue James explained to the panel that many of the buildings including the East Wing, and St Johns were old buildings and structurally were not fit for purpose.

The panel were advised that there would be disruption to car parking, but that solutions were being put into place to deal with this, such as staff parking at the proposed Manor Quays. Although consultation with staff would be taking place.

Sue James stated that the reduction in the number of beds would be a challenge that the hospital would have to manage. The panel were advised that partnership working was vital as was ensuring that patients were not in acute care if it was not required.

Councillor Woodruff asked if buses to the Manor Hospital were still operating. Sue James stated that the Hospital were working with the bus company to retain the service and at the moment it was working well.

Councillor Woodruff requested that the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel were informed of the issues, as she was aware that transport around the town centre was an item on their work programme.

Sue James informed the panel that a group had been set up to work alongside partners to consider this issue.

Councillor Micklewright asked where the chapel and pharmacy would be situated. Sue James replied that the chapel and pharmacy would be in the same place.

Dr Ramaiah asked if it was possible to see the PFI as an employment opportunity for the people of Walsall. Sue James informed the panel that Skanska Innisfree were a company that had a value based ethic which supported local employment, and the environment. The panel were informed that the hospital were working with partners to ensure that courses in Walsall provided training opportunities that matched the skill requirements of Skanska Innisfree.

Sue James stated that the hospital aimed to cut waiting and focus on patient requirements; she added that medical advances may reduce pressures and invited Dr Ramaiah to give his opinions to the panel. Dr Ramaiah stated that often beds were used for geriatric care, and that the biggest impact would be working with partners.

The Panel discussed the implications of reducing beds and asked if the level of intermediate care services was planned to be increased in line with the planned reduction of beds. Kathy McAteer reported that the ITC strategy did identify the need to increase service provision in the future. Councillor Woodruff asked for more information on this to the next panel.

Sue James explained that the quality of the some of the housing stock may mean that people would not be able to go back to their home if it was not suitable for adaptation.

Dr Ramaiah stated that in the last few years, new health centres have been built in the borough for example; Blakenall Village Centre and in conjunction with the hospital this would allow some people to be cared for in the community.

Councillor Woodruff asked whether the hospital would continue to have an isolation unit. Sue James informed the panel that an isolation unit had been set up to deal with patients who had the Clostridium Difficile bug. Sue James stated that patients appeared to be benefiting from being on an open ward; however the plans for the future of the unit would be decided once the implications of the current unit had been fully assessed. This was likely to be in the summer.

Councillor Pitt asked if there were any strategies in place to divert traffic from problem areas. With reference to the slides, Sue James explained the strategies in place. The panel were advised that motorists who parked in disabled bays without a disabled badge or permit could be fined £30; although Sue James stated that there would be an appeals procedure for extenuating circumstances.

Dr Ramaiah stated that the Hospital team should be given congratulations, and complimented Sue James on her dedication.

The panel discussed the benefits of the hospital achieving foundation trust status. Sue James stated that the delay in achieving this had been positive. The panel were advised that this would bring control from Whitehall to Walsall, and anybody who wished to be involved could be, if the hospital was a foundation trust.

The consultation process was discussed, and Sue James asked the panel if they could suggest any other groups of people who should be consulted.

The panel considered how the consultation process could involve representatives from ethnic minority groups. Councillor Micklewright suggested involving older children. Sue James informed the panel that it was hoped to access this group through sixth form centres. Sue James emphasised that the Hospital only had a 12 week fixed consultation period.

Councillor Pitt stated that the media was an important influence, and asked how the hospital managed this. Sue James explained that the hospital had a dedicated press officer.

Jim Weston stated that from a personal perspective the foundation trust status was a positive move forward as it allowed people to have an input, and be involved, where they had never had before.

RESOLVED

Councillor Woodruff requested that the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel were informed of the issues, as she was aware that transport around the town centre was an item on their work programme.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman
Date