

HEALTH SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

15 MARCH 2010 AT 6PM

Panel Members Present Councillor C Ault (Chair)
Councillor R Carpenter
Councillor I Robertson
Councillor K Aftab
Councillor A Mushtaq
Councillor A Paul
Councillor C Creaney

Portfolio Holders Present Councillor B McCracken – Social Care and Health

Officers Present Margaret Willcox – Assistant Director Adults Services

Denise McLellan - Denise McLellan Chief Executive of NHS Walsall

Barbara Watt - Consultant in Public Health
Phil Griffin - Assistant Director of Primary Care Contracting
Professor Sam Ramaiah - Director of Public Health for Walsall
Lloyd Haynes -Accountant
Nikki Ehlen – Scrutiny Officer

66/09 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor V Woodruff, Marsha Ingram, Kieran Larkin and Dr Desai.

67/09 SUBSTITUTIONS

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

68/09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

None declared.

69/09 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2010, copies having previously circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

70/09 FUTURE ACCESS TO PRIMARY MEDICAL CARE (GP SERVICES) FOR MOSSLEY AND DUDLEY FIELDS COMMUNITIES.

The Chair agreed to receive item 6 prior to item 5.

The panel received a briefing note and presentation to allow them to consider consultation on the future of GP services in Mossley following the retirement of Doctors at the surgery.

The panel were asked to consider the process of consultation for GP services for Mossley and Dudley Fields Communities. Officers stated that no decision had been made on this issue and this decision was reserved to the NHS Walsall board, who would consider a variety of factors when making their decision. The panel were informed that NHS Walsall had received a large response to this consultation. Members were assured that the continuation of services would continue at Abbey Square surgery until a decision had been made on its future.

A member of the public stated that some residents considered the figures relating to the number of patients registered at Mossley and Dudley Fields to be inaccurate. The Chair asked the individual to send this information into the scrutiny panel.

The Chair asked the panel to have regard to the letter from ward Member Councillor Des Pitt.

Councillor McCracken expressed the personal opinion that 'option one' was the most viable option for the people living in the area. Concern was expressed about the lack of public transport to the Pinfold Health Centre and the impact on surrounding businesses.

Officers were asked the number of responses received on the consultation and how likely NHS Walsall was to attract new GPs to the practice. Officers stated that it was their experience that newly trained G.Ps were attracted to bigger practices with modern facilities. Members were informed that responses had not been analysed yet, it was agreed that this information would be sent to the Health Scrutiny Panel at the end of the consultation period. Members suggested that option one was pursued with the potential to consider alternative accommodation, e.g. Housing 21 development.

Councillor Melvin Pitt reiterated the negative impact that the closure of the surgery would have on the economy in the area, and the sparse provision of primary care in this area. It was suggested that the Council and WHG were considered in provision of alternative accommodation in this area in order to allow primary care services to be provided in this area.

A member of the public addressed the panel to suggest that there were 5 Doctors interested in practicing medicine at the surgery and stated that Pinfold was not a viable alternative to Abbey Square due to waiting lists. The

panel were informed that the current accommodation was considered suitable for disabled access, and that the pharmacist serving patients from Abbey Square surgery had offered to buy the premises to rent it back to NHS Walsall at current rates. The panel were asked to continue to support residents.

In conclusion members considered that residents had made their views clear and it was recommended that NHS Walsall pursue option one by unanimous vote.

RESOLVED:

The panel recommend that;

- a) option one *'Abbey Square Surgery remains open with small scale redevelopment and refurbishment. GP services will be provided by a new team of doctors'* is pursued by NHS Walsall and recommended to the NHS Walsall board
- b) When considering option one, the use of alternative accommodation should not be excluded.

71/09 Transforming Community Services

The Chief Executive of NHS Walsall informed the panel that she would be providing more information on the future of PCT provided community services.

The panel received a presentation (annexed) on the following; -

- Background
- Timetable and process
- Key Issues
- Next steps

Members asked for clarification around mental health services and partnership working. Officers stated that services provided for learning disabilities and mental health services were distinct. It was suggested that the Black Country had the opportunity to create more local services, for which people currently had to travel some distance for. The report was noted by the panel.

72/09 Air quality testing points and air quality along the M6 corridor mapped to health of residents

The panel considered information on air quality in Walsall and how it may affect resident's health.

John Grant explained that within Walsall there were areas of poor air quality, which have been monitored for a number of years. These had to be reported to Government every 3 years and the Council has to show that it was taking action to achieve its air quality targets. It was noted that the M6 motorway is within the jurisdiction of the Highways Agency, although it had an effect on Walsall.

The panel were informed that key themes for managing air pollution in the UK were; -

- Stop congestion, and
- Cleaner technology

The panel were informed of a recent report by Defra on air quality, as it contained important information on health impacts.

Barbara Watt presented (annexed). Information on pollutants was provided and the main pollutant of interest was Nitrogen Oxide. Members were informed that in areas of interest there was a higher crude admission rate, although there appear to be no significant effects on younger age groups. Death by respiratory disease was higher around the M6 but not significantly higher. Officers emphasised that deprivation was an important factor when considering the health of residents, as was smoking on respiratory health.

Members discussed commercial lorries that leave their engines running.

**Recommended; -
That**

- 1. The Environment panel are sent the 'A clean bill of health (LACoRS publication)' and made aware of the health implications of pollution.**
- 2. The Environment Panel through their work programme consider the benefits in terms of air quality, of taxis and commercial lorries switching off their engines, when parked.**
- 3. A report is provided to the Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel in 6 months time.**

**73/09 Integrated Community Equipment Store (ICES) Pooled Budget –
2009/10 Third Quarter Forecast and Learning Disabilities Pooled Budget
– 2009/10 Third Quarter Forecast**

The panel received reports on pooled budgets between the Integrated Community Equipment Store and Learning Disabilities. Members were assured that wan action plan was in place to address the overspend in the learning disability pooled budget.

The report was noted.

The meeting terminated at 7.55pm