

CABINET
24 JUNE 2008

WILTSHIRE AIR AMBULANCE

Purpose of Report

1. To update Cabinet at the request of the Leader on information received from the Great Western Ambulance Service (GWAS), and others, about concerns for the future of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance Service, and to explain actions to monitor progress of the Clinical Review.

Background

2. Following media speculation, concerns were raised at the 13 May 2008 Council meeting on the future of the Wiltshire Air Ambulance, and the impact new proposals could have on its location and the ability to provide a Police Helicopter Service.
3. As a consequence, the following action has been taken:
 - a) There has been an exchange of correspondence between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive of GWAS - his reply in the form of a standard letter being issued on the subject, is appended to this report.
 - b) The Chairman of Wiltshire Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) reported these concerns to the recently formed Joint Great Western Ambulance Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Joint GWA OSC) of which Wiltshire is a member, on 23 May.
 - c) The Chairman also met directly with the Chief Executive of GWAS on 9 June.
4. The following points represent the current position established from the above actions and official statements:
 - a) The Wiltshire Police Air Support Unit is operated by Wiltshire Police and is crewed by a police officer, a paramedic and a pilot.
 - b) The Wiltshire Air Ambulance charity funds 25% share of the available operational hours of the aircraft. The Unit operates nineteen hours a day. In daylight hours it operates in the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service role (HEMS) and the routine air ambulance role. During hours of darkness the unit can operate in

the HEMS role, but only within the geographical area of Wiltshire.

- c) The current 10 year contract for the helicopter ends in December 2008, with provision to renew for a further 5 years. The contract is currently being re-negotiated with the Police, and GWAS is looking at a two year renewal whilst a clinical review is being undertaken.
- d) A six month Trust wide Clinical Review commenced last month. It will look at topics such as hours of operation, crewing arrangements, day and time of activity, and case mix. It will also review national guidance on air support arrangements, look at other UK Operational models, and compare existing GWAS arrangements with Best Clinical Practice.
- e) GWAS would report progress on the Clinical Review to the Joint GWA Committee.
- f) The new Filton based Air Ambulance has been set up as an additional resource to cover Avon, and is not a replacement for Wiltshire.

Proposal

- 1. To note the current position set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
- 2. To note that the Leader has asked the Chief Executive of GWAS to keep her personally informed of the results of the review later in the year.
- 3. To note that the progress and outcome of the Trust Wide Clinical Review would be reported to the Joint GWA OSC.
- 4. To support the Chairman of the Council's HOSC in monitoring events and reporting to members as and when appropriate.

Reason for Proposal

The issue is of concern to Members and the general public, and therefore the Council wishes to retain an interest.

The Clinical Review has only just begun so it is appropriate to report back to future meetings.

Mr Roy While
Chairman of Wiltshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

- Letters from Jane Scott to Tim Lynch (GWAS) dated 19 May 2008, 11 June 2008
- Letter from Tim Lynch to Jane Scott dated 22 May 2008.
- GWAS Briefing to Joint GWA OSC 23 May 2008.

Appendix

Letter: Great Western Ambulance Service: 22 May 2008
