



Wiltshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of a MEETING held at WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 9 MARCH 2005

PRESENT: County Councillors: Mr J Thomson (Chairman), Mr P Fox, Mrs M Groom, Mr A Moore, Mrs P Rugg and Mrs M Taylor. District Councillors: Mr M Hewitt & Mr P Paisey (Salisbury District Council), Mr G Cox (West Wiltshire District Council) and Mrs P Winchcombe (Kennet District Council).

STAKEHOLDERS: Mr B Brown (Member of Kennet & North Wilts PCT Patient Forum) and Mr T White (Chairman of South Wilts PCT Patient Forum) Mrs J Cole (User & Carers' Network).

OTHERS: Dr R Jones, Ms. J. Howes, Mr P Kelly (Wiltshire County Council), Mrs J Edwards (Kennet & North Wilts & West Wilts PCTs), Mrs G Holland (Chairman of Ambulance Trust Patient Forum), Mrs J Tompkins (Chairman of RUH Patient's Forum), Mr N Lockwood, Mr N Gillard, Dr S Burrell, Mrs J Edwards (Kennet & North & West Wiltshire PCTs), Marie Laws (West Wiltshire District Council), Mandy Bradley (Kennet District Council), Jill Crooks (Wiltshire Gazette & Herald), Ken Franks (Wiltshire County Council)

Members of the public present: 2

1. Apologies

Apologies were sent by Miranda Gilmour, Peter Biggs.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved:

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2004 as a true record.

3. Chairman's Announcements

Health Scrutiny Officer The Chairman welcomed Jo Howes to Wiltshire County Council as the new Health Scrutiny Officer.

Royal United Hospital (RUH), Bath The Chairman referred to the recent televised coverage of conditions at the RUH, Bath and proposed that the Committee wait until the Patients Forum for that Trust had carried out its investigations and reported to the Trust Board before considering the matter further. Jill Tompkins agreed that the Committee could receive the report when it becomes a public document. The Chairman invited the Patients

Forum to report any issues of further concern to the Committee should they arise.

Resolved:

To consider, at a later date, the findings of the RUH Patients Forum.

Ambulance & Mental Health Services Briefing The Chairman informed the Committee that he and the Health Scrutiny Officer have been invited to attend a briefing meeting at Avon Gloucestershire & Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority (AGW SHA) on 30 March 05 to hear details of proposals for the provision of mental health and ambulance services.

4. Members' Interests

Councillor Gordon Cox of West Wiltshire District Council declared that he is a member of the Wiltshire & Swindon User's Network.

6. Ambulance Service Task Group – Final Report

The Chairman thanked all those who had taken part in the review and helped to put the report together, and welcomed the report as an excellent example of joint working.

Cllr Allnatt, who had chaired the Task Group, introduced the report and drew the Committee's attention an erratum regarding recommendation 6 in the report. He stated that the members of the Task Group had received incorrect information, which had not come to light until after the report had been published.

The Task Group was not told of the possibility of a merger with other Ambulance Trusts until after it had concluded its investigations. The HOSC will be required to establish whether any such proposals constitute a substantial variation in service and deal with the matter accordingly. It is likely that any substantial variation will require joint scrutiny with neighbouring HOSCs.

Cllr Allnatt highlighted that the report asks the HOSC to look at the progress made by Wiltshire Ambulance Trust against its stated objectives in twelve months time.

It was requested that any future scrutiny work on this issue take in the views of the Fire Authority as, in many instances, the Fire Brigade is first on the scene.

It was agreed that the press coverage given to the report had been widespread and favourable, even reaching as far as Radio 5 Live.

Resolved:

- (i) *To delete recommendation 6 in the Ambulance Service Task Group final report and request instead that the Home Office confirm, in writing, the legal position regarding hoax calls.*
- (ii) *To otherwise receive and endorse the final report.*

- (iii) *To note in particular recommendations 1 and 3 including actions required by the HOSC.*

7. Response to South Wiltshire PCT's Consultation on Mental Health Services

It was agreed that the meeting held to put the response together had been very positive and the officers of the PCT had taken on board the concerns being raised during the course of the consultation. Members felt that Sally Banister in particular had endeavoured to answer all questions put to her and members were comfortable that the consultation process was inclusive and had effectively engaged the public.

Resolved:

To receive and endorse the response.

8. Kennet & North Wilts and West Wiltshire PCTs Strategic Service Review

The Chairman introduced Dr Simon Burrell, Chair of the Professional Executive Committee for Kennet & North Wilts PCT and Neil Lockwood, Acting Deputy Chief Executive, who both gave short presentations (copies circulated with the minutes).

Key points included:

- The PCTs must give consideration to areas which do not have good health care provision, such as Pewsey, Calne and Wootton Bassett.
- The old ways of delivering care, through the community hospitals, are not meeting the needs of the communities. The community hospitals had been built for a bygone age.
- MRSA is a significant issue, therefore it is preferable to minimise the risk of spreading infection by reducing the necessity for people to spend time in hospitals.
- Services delivered at GP surgery level need to be enhanced, with more specialised treatment available at one or two sites. This would help to minimise the number of times patients have to attend clinics and hospitals in order to be diagnosed and treated for any particular condition.
- The PECs for both PCTs feel that significant changes will result in vast improvements.
- The PCTs are very concerned that due process is followed during the course of the review, which is why a long engagement process is planned.

- The PCTs have welcomed the Health Scrutiny Officer to the Project Steering Group as a way of keeping the HOSC abreast of all developments and of flagging up potential problems at an early stage.
- The Independent Reconfiguration Panel has offered to come and give advice to the PCTs regarding their process and the HOSC is very welcome to attend this session.
- The staff of both PCTs will be heavily involved at all stages. The aim is to develop something sustainable, to develop a vision for the next ten years and to work towards delivering it.
- The PCTs intend to hold five large scale Reference Assemblies and a mechanism has been developed so that the messages from those meetings will go out within 48 hours to keep all stakeholders informed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lockwood and Dr Burrell for attending and commented that the review process is clearly being taken very seriously by both Trusts, and that the planned engagement process appears to be much more inclusive than had previously been the case.

Resolved:

- (i) *To note the presentations received by the PCTs.*
- (ii) *To monitor the process as it develops and receive regular updates from the PCTs.*
- (iii) *To engage with the IRP and the PCTs in order to establish best practice principles for the engagement / consultation process.*

9. Update on Financial Briefing Meeting – 23 February 05

The Chairman sought agreement from the Committee to put a number of detailed questions to AGW SHA, and to invite the Chief Executive, Trevor Jones, to a future HOSC meeting.

At the briefing, the HOSC had been made aware that KNW & WW PCTs would be receiving an increase in future funding allocation, taking effect from 2006/07, which it welcomed.

Resolved:

- (i) *That the Chairman would write to Trevor Jones, to invite him to attend a future meeting.*
- (ii) *To include in the above letter, the previously agreed questions and to patient care, to allow the necessary short term financial flexibility to the Wiltshire PCTs to enable them to conduct their strategic service reviews, over the planned 18 month time-scale, and so avoid damaging, short-term, financially driven service cuts.*

- (iii) *To ask the Secretary of State for Health to confirm that the historic £90m deficit within AGW SHA will be written off.*
- (iv) *That the Chairman would be acting with the full backing of the HOSC in corresponding with both agencies.*

10. Update on Maternity Services in Kennet & North Wiltshire

The Chairman stated that the referral of maternity service provision in Kennet & North Wiltshire to the Secretary of State for Health had been something of a watershed, but added that, given the manner in which it was dealt with by the Department of Health, he would like to forward all correspondence, along with an account of the experience from the HOSCs point of view, to the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Resolved:

That an account of the referral and its treatment be sent to the Centre for Public Scrutiny, along with copies of all the correspondence regarding the referral.

11. Guidance for Joint Health Scrutiny Committees

The Committee received the paper detailing further guidance on the formation and application of joint health overview & scrutiny committees. This led to a discussion of the protocols for health OSC Task Groups, which needs to be modified to reflect the particular requirements of health scrutiny.

Resolved:

To task the Health Scrutiny Officer with developing joint working protocols with neighbouring local authorities at County, Borough and District level, to include Task Group and Joint Committee protocols.

12. Health OSC Work Programme

The Committee agreed to include five new subjects into the work programme for future scrutiny.

Resolved to include in the future work programme:

- (i) *Care for people with long term conditions*
- (ii) *Protocols for Joint Committees and Task Groups*
- (iii) *The AGW-wide Ambulance Review*
- (iv) *The Financial and Strategic position of AGW SHA*
- (v) *The Healthier Wiltshire 2020 Project*

13. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on 23 March 2005. This is a special meeting convened to discuss the outcomes of the South Wiltshire PCTs consultation on mental health services.

The next scheduled meeting of the Committee will be on 29 June 2005.

14. Urgent Items

The Chairman had been made aware that WW PCT was planning to suspend new admissions to Melksham Hospital due to a lack of GP's to provide services following changes to the GP contract.

Members of the Committee had been told that a similar situation arose at the same time in 2004 and queried why this should be the case.

Resolved:

The Chairman would write, on behalf of the Committee, to WW PCT seeking further information about why this situation has arisen, what steps were being taken to combat it, what measures would be put in place to prevent a repeat of this occurrence and how long the situation was expected to continue.

(Duration of meeting: 2.00 p.m. – 4.15 p.m.)

The Officer who has produced these notes is Jo Howes, Health Scrutiny Officer within Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 713004; email johowes@wiltshire.gov.uk