



Wiltshire Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of a MEETING held at WILTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL 15 MARCH 2007

PRESENT: County Councillors; Dr J English, Mr J Osborn, Mrs P Rugg, Mrs J Seager, Mr R While (Chair), Mrs M White. District Councillors; Mrs P Winchcombe (Kennet District Council), Mr M Hewitt (Salisbury District Council), Mr E Manasseh (West Wiltshire District Council)

STAKEHOLDERS: Dr P Biggs, T White (Wiltshire Patient's Forum), Mrs J Cole (User & Carers' Network).

OTHERS: Alison Knowles, Jenny Edwards, Wiltshire Primary Care Trust; Jim Smallwood, Janice Gabriel, Wendy Keating, Tim Mellor, South Coast Cancer Network, Frank Harsent, Ian Downie, Salisbury Foundation Trust, Carl Beech, Swindon & Marlborough Trust, Jeanette Longhurst, Jo Howes, Wiltshire County Council, Miranda Gilmour, North Wilts District Council, Helen Karn, Kennet District Council

Members of the public present: 8

8. Apologies

Margaret White
Mike Griffiths
June Sadd

9. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes were agreed as a true record of the meeting held on 1 March 2007.

10. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made three announcements:

The next Health Scrutiny Support Day will be held at Urchfont Manor on 30 March.

There will be a report on the County Council motion on Alzheimer's drugs at the next meeting.

The Great Western Ambulance Trust has invited the three OSC's in its area to a meeting at Jenner House on 3 April.

11. Member's Interests

Jeff Osborn, Chair, Trowbridge Hospital League of Friends
Paula Winchcombe, DASH
Pat Rugg, DASH
Bill Moss, Governor, Salisbury Foundation Trust

12. Public Participation

The Committee heard a statement from Cllr Alan Wood of Kennet District Council on the Avon Valley Practice Item.

13. Avon Valley Practice: Netheravon Branch Surgery

Alison Knowles (AK), of Wiltshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) introduced the proposals that are being made by the practice. She recognised that the Parish Council has been involved for eight years and the PCT has supported the work and earmarked funds, but it now has to take into account new regulations for dispensing of drugs and the disability regulations which are making it difficult to maintain safe premises in Netheravon.

The practice wants to close the Netheravon surgery altogether and extend the services available at Durrington and Upavon. There are problems with staffing levels, equipment and premises management.

Roughly 1600 people attend Netheravon surgery. 800 people live in the village, so the rest come from outside and could go to either of the other two surgeries. The GPs say people are willing to travel.

Possible enhancements to the overall services include extended opening hours at the other two branches, increased capacity for home visits and prescription delivery.

The PCT has spoken to the practice at length and believes the proposals require consultation.

Mike Hewitt, of Salisbury District Council, confirmed that a discussion had taken place at the SDC Health Panel and members there, which include the Patient & Public Involvement Forum, agree it is a substantial change and should be consulted upon.

It will need a minimum of six weeks consultation and this needs to be more than just the GPs telling patients what they intend to do.

The Panel recognised that a lot of money had been spent trying to find a new home, but this is obviously not as easy as it sounds or it would have been done by now.

Terry White, of Wiltshire Patient & Public Involvement Forum confirmed the Forum had briefly discussed the issue and agreed a consultation period is necessary. Three things need to be agreed first; will the practice consult with

all of its patients? Who should do the consulting? Who will pose the questions?

AK confirmed that the consultation will cover the whole of the practice area and local meetings will be held in all three villages. The PCT will work with the PPIF to agree the structure of the questions. The consultation will start at the end of May, after the Easter holiday period is out of the way.

There was further discussion about how to involve people from Kennet, as the two areas overlap. It was agreed that the South Wilts Patient & Public Involvement Forum sub committee and the Salisbury District Panel would meet to discuss the consultation questions and would invite Mrs Winchcombe as the Kennet member to attend.

Other comments focused on the structure of the questions, the need for alternatives in the consultation and the over-reliance on Link drivers to ferry people around to the other two practices.

It was resolved that:

The OSC agrees consultation with all those registered with the Avon Valley Practice is necessary and that consultation should start at the end of May and last for not less than six weeks.

14. Head and Neck Cancer Services

The Chairman introduced the item and the team from Southampton Hospital who had brought the item to committee.

Jim Smallwood (JS), Medical Director for the South Coast Cancer Network gave a short presentation outlining the head and neck cancer services for the south coast area and indicating the need to consolidate those services at Southampton in accordance with NICE guidelines for cancer.

This is one of the less common types of cancer, so the guidance stresses the need to have centres of excellence which offer the best in care and experience. The Department of Health has asked the cancer network to submit a plan for future services which is in line with NICE guidance, and so this is why the centralisation is being proposed.

JS recognised that the level of service currently being provided by Salisbury Foundation Trust is excellent, although the number of patients is small.

Members asked a number of questions and it emerged that, following the change, patients who would normally be referred to Salisbury hospital would have to go to Southampton for their major surgery. Head and neck cancers divide into different groups and Salisbury has a particular interest in the facial cancers and the plastics work associated with that.

Members discussed whether the national guidance being offered was reasonable for this area, what the financial implications were, would people receive better outcomes if changes were made and how mortality rates in England compared to elsewhere in Europe.

The Committee also heard from Dr Frank Harsent, Chief Executive of Salisbury Foundation Trust, who expressed a firm desire to retain the service at Salisbury and who acknowledged a difference of opinion between his Trust and the cancer network. Salisbury takes cases from North Dorset who are not included in the cancer network area and who would, under these proposals, have great distances to travel to receive treatment.

Ian Downie, consultant surgeon at Salisbury hospital and member of the network, gave a presentation outlining the work that is carried out at Salisbury and stressing the reasons for retaining a service there. It was commented that Southampton does not currently have the plastics facilities that Salisbury has, and patients who need this work which involves prosthetics are often referred from Southampton to Salisbury.

Alison Knowles was asked to give a view on behalf of the PCT as commissioning body for Wiltshire. AK stated that she did not believe formal public consultation was needed, but that there was a clear need for the PCT to become involved in further work with clinicians and the network to ensure that services were provided in the right place, and the PCT would not be willing to agree to changes without first seeking assurance that proposals were in the interests of the residents of Wiltshire.

It was resolved that:

The PCT, Salisbury Foundation Trust and the South Coast Cancer Network would hold further discussions to establish the commissioning and delivery patterns for head and neck cancer for Wiltshire.

15. Swindon & Marlborough Trust Impact Assessment – For Information

Members were advised of the discussions held by Swindon OSC, which essentially agreed that the changes outlined by the Trust represented good clinical governance.

16. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 17 May 2007.

(Duration of the meeting 10:30 – 12:45)

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