

**MINUTES of the meeting of Health Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 22 November 2010 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor PM Morgan (Chairman)  
Councillor AT Oliver (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: WU Atfield, PGH Cutter, MJ Fishley, RC Hunt, Brig P Jones CBE, MD Lloyd-Hayes, G Lucas, GA Powell and A Seldon

**In attendance:** Councillors PA Andrews, WLS Bowen and PJ Edwards

**36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**37. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

There were none.

**38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**39. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes for the meeting held on 20 September 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to recording that Councillor WU Atfield had submitted her apologies for that meeting.

**40. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY**

There were none.

**41. POPULATION HEALTH - ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES**

The Committee considered what Herefordshire Public Services are doing to improve access to health services.

The Assistant Director Public Health, the Associate Director of Integrated Commissioning and the Consultant in Dental Public Health presented the report.

The Assistant Director highlighted the role of the Rural Access Partnership which oversaw a number of programmes to address access to services in rural areas.

He also noted the role the Committee and all Members of the Council could play in developing and improving access to rural services, particularly around transport; supporting local projects within their wards; and lobbying for changes on a wider basis that would improve the health and wellbeing of the population of Herefordshire.

The report contained a detailed appendix on access to dental health services in response to a request from a member of the public to the Committee in June 2010 that this aspect be scrutinised.

The Associate Director emphasised the improvement made to access to dental care following an exercise to procure additional dental capacity with effect from 1 October 2010. In September 2010 the percentage of the resident population of Herefordshire who had accessed NHS dental care within the previous 24 month period was 52.16%, compared to 56% in England as a whole. The statistics quoted in the appendix to the report were not yet able to reflect the additional capacity provided from October 2010. The picture was therefore brighter than shown in that report.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The report stated that the percentage of Herefordshire households within set distances for most key services was much lower than for the West Midlands Region and England as a whole. Access to GP surgeries within the nationally set distance of 4km had increased from 76% in 2007 to 83% in 2008. It was requested that a further report be made to the next meeting on access, based on distance, to GPs, community hospitals, Hereford Hospital and other specialist hospitals out of the County. As a general principle it was requested that reports showed distances in both metric and imperial measures.

It was asked whether there was any intention to make additional provision to increase the percentage of people within the set distance of GP surgeries. The Associate Director replied that the list size of GPs within the County was better than the West Midlands average with no single-handed practices. Coverage was considered good given the rural nature of the County.

- The implications for access to services of the Government's reduction in the bus subsidy were noted.
- The role played by the voluntary sector, for example in providing community transport, and the potential implications of a reduction in support to that sector because of the financial situation was discussed.

The Grants and Partnership Officer commented that the community transport service was provided by independent charities that were dependent on grant and subsidy. The cost of replacement vehicles was significant and the availability of external grants to finance this expenditure was decreasing. Currently the Council provided some support for running costs. The resources currently available were not sufficient to support the continuation of the current level of community transport, a service that provided access to services to one of the most vulnerable sections of the community.

It was requested that further information be provided to the Committee on the proposed level of future support for community transport.

- Clarification was sought on a report in the Hereford Times that the GP Walk in Centre was to be relocated to a site adjacent to the Accident and Emergency Unit. The report had contained no mention of whether any form of provision would be retained on the site of the current facility at the Asda store in Belmont although requests had been made that this be considered.

The Associate Director commented that the original intention had been that the provision at the Asda site in Belmont would be temporary, pending the development of permanent provision adjacent to the Accident and Emergency Unit. However, the demand at the Asda site and the fact that some of those attending the Centre were

from traditionally hard to reach groups had led NHS Herefordshire (NHS) to review this decision. Plans were being drawn up, as part of the unscheduled care workstream, to provide some form of provision at Belmont.

It was requested that a press release be issued to this effect to correct any possible misunderstanding as a result of the original newspaper report.

- The work to improve the provision of Broadband within the County was welcomed. It was requested that a briefing note be provided providing assurance that in pursuit of more integrated working the joint needs of health and social care were being fully taken account in this work, including, for example, the need for satellite GP surgeries to have access to Broadband.

The Chairman of NHS confirmed that the Joint Director of ICT was considering how the use of both the Council's and NHS's infrastructure could be maximised.

- Concern was expressed about figure 1 in the appendix that showed the highest numbers of people on the NHS dental waiting list by ward of residence were in Ross on Wye East and Ross on Wye West. The Consultant in Dental Public Health confirmed that additional provision had been procured for the Ross Area with effect from October 2010.
- The Consultant confirmed that the recent procurement exercise for dental care had been undertaken to address current demand and acknowledged that the proposed increase in housing in the County would need to be addressed. This was recognised in the Local Development Framework currently under development.
- Noting that the percentage of the resident population of Herefordshire who had accessed NHS dental care within the previous 24 month period was 52.16%, clarification was sought on the dental care accessed by the remainder of the County's population. The Consultant commented that there were 6 private dental practices in the County but data on dental care provided by private practices was not collected locally or nationally. She reiterated that NHS recognised the need to increase access to NHS dental care and had already introduced measures as described both in the report to the Committee and in the Committee's discussion of that report.

It was suggested that NHS or the Council should include a question on access to private dental care in one of their forthcoming surveys.

- The proposal in the Health White Paper: Equity and Excellence - Liberating the NHS to expand the regulatory role of the Care Quality Commission and require all independent health contractors such as GPs and dentists to register with the Commission was discussed. Concern was expressed that this would prove a bureaucratic burden. The Associate Director commented that NHS had had local arrangements in place to satisfy itself that services being provided were of the appropriate quality. It had previously provided advice and some resources to support independent contractors in meeting regulatory requirements. Further advice would be provided to assist independent contractors in meeting the requirements of the new national regulatory regime.
- Further information was sought on the finding in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that dental health of children was poor. The Consultant informed the Committee of a number of preventative measures that were being taken in conjunction with dental practices and schools and with pre-school children through health visitors. She considered that the next nationally co-ordinated surveys of the dental health of children should show an improvement. The next survey of five year

olds was due to take place in 2011/12 and the next survey of 12 year olds in 2012/13.

The work undertaken to improve access to dental health was welcomed, whilst noting the need for further improvement in the dental health of children in particular. It was emphasised that the Committee needed to be assured that investment in both preventative measures and increased access were beneficial in particular in the case of children's dental health. The Committee requested updates when the results of the next nationally co-ordinated surveys were known.

**RESOLVED:**

- That (a) **a further report be made to the next meeting including information on access, based on distance, to GPs, Community Hospitals, Hereford Hospital and other specialist hospitals out of the County to enable the Committee to understand how the difficulties of distance are overcome or mitigated to ensure appropriate attention at health facilities;**
- (b) **further information be provided to the Committee on the proposed level of future support for community transport and how any reduction would affect the access to health care;**
- (c) **a briefing note be provided giving assurance that in pursuit of more integrated working the joint needs of health and social care were being fully taken account in the work being pursued to improve broadband coverage for the County, including, for example, the need for satellite GP surgeries to have access to Broadband;**
- (d) **NHS Herefordshire be requested to issue a press release making clear that it was intended to retain some form of provision at Belmont once a permanent Walk In Centre was operational adjacent to the Accident and Emergency Unit;**
- (e) **NHS Herefordshire or the Council should include a question on access to private dental care in one of their forthcoming surveys; and**
- (f) **updates be provided on dental health care of children in the County when the results of the next co-ordinated national surveys were published.**

**42. HEREFORDSHIRE SERVICE INTEGRATION PROGRAMME**

The Committee was invited to submit its formal response to the proposed integration of the provision of health and social care services in Herefordshire.

The report summarised engagement with patients, public and stakeholders on the integration proposals. It also reported on feedback from Councillors provided at a seminar on 30 September.

Mr Woodford, Chief Executive of Hereford Hospitals NHS Trust, presented the report. He informed the Committee that there would be further opportunity for the Committee to comment on the proposals, noting that the Committee was scheduled to receive a report in January 2011.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- Mr Woodford confirmed that his team were working closely with commissioners and GPs to ensure that the changes would be well managed. He considered that the GPs supported the proposals.
- The Associate Director of Integrated Commissioning reported that relations between NHS Herefordshire (NHSH) and the GPs were good and that NHSH was working proactively with GPs on the proposals in the Health White Paper: Equity and Excellence – liberating the NHS, to establish GP Consortia to undertake the future commissioning of services.
- That a financial overview of the integration proposals would be included in the report to the Committee in January. Mr Woodford commented that the proposals were intended to deliver savings for reinvestment into services.
- The proposal to develop 8 neighbourhood teams was discussed. Mr Woodford advised that this was compatible with the Council's development of 9 localities as a basis for service delivery and arrived at as the practical solution in consultation with GPs. It was requested that all Councillors and the PCT Board be kept informed of developments on this aspect of the proposals.

**RESOLVED:**

- That (a) the themes set out in the report arising from the Member seminar held on 30 September 2010 form the basis of the Committee's formal response to the consultation exercise, emphasising the importance that the proposals were sustainable in terms of cost;**
- (b) a further report be made to the Committee in January 2011 describing the overall engagement process, the responses and any changes made to the proposed services as a result, together with a financial overview, at which point it be noted that the Committee would make further observations as it sees fit; and**
- (c) Councillors and PCT Board Members be kept informed of the proposals for the development of neighbourhood teams.**

**43. MENTAL HEALTH & LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES - PROCUREMENT OF A PREFERRED PARTNER**

The Committee considered progress on the mental health procurement project.

The Associate Director of Integrated Commissioning presented the report. He advised that there was still a significant amount of work to be undertaken to enable the new provider, once appointed, to operate as service provider with effect from 1 April 2011.

It was noted that the Section 75 arrangements for the provision of social care services for mental health and learning disabilities required careful consideration to ensure that the provider could deliver the required level of service. The Associate Director said that a detailed specification had been drawn up and the potential providers were both experienced in providing the required range of services.

It was noted that the NHS Herefordshire Board had approved the procurement process in July 2009. Concern was expressed at the length of time taken to conclude the process and it was requested that a review should be undertaken to see what lessons could be learned from the exercise.

The Committee was also assured that the Committee would be formally consulted on any detailed proposals varying the range and location of services.

**RESOLVED:**

- That
- (a) **the progress and next steps to procure a preferred partner to provide Mental Health (health & social care) services & Learning Disability (health care) services be noted;**
  - (b) **any proposals to vary the range and location of services upon which formal consultation is required be brought to the Committee as appropriate should that be necessary after the new provider is appointed; and**
  - (c) **the Committee's concerns at the length of time taken to conduct the procurement exercise be registered and it be requested that officers undertake a review to see what lessons can be learned from this exercise and the outcome of the review be reported to the Committee.**

**44. HEREFORDSHIRE 2010 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT (JSNA)**

The Committee was informed of the key points and recommendations of the JSNA 2010.

The Assistant Director Public Health presented the report noting that the findings were intended to inform the planning of all council services.

In response to questions about the expenditure on preventative health measures the Assistant Director replied that this was being considered as part of the development of the Health Improvement Plan.

- THAT**
- (a) **key points and recommendations from the 2010 JSNA be noted; and**
  - (b) **the use of the findings of the JSNA across the local health and social care economy, to inform future plans, strategy development, budget decisions and commissioning of services be encouraged.**

**45. INTERIM TRUST UPDATES**

The Committee noted the report.

**46. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered its work programme.

The following additions were agreed:

- a further report in relation to access to health services including information on access, based on distance, to GPs, Community Hospitals, Hereford Hospital and other specialist hospitals out of the County to enable the Committee to understand how the difficulties of distance are overcome or mitigated to ensure appropriate attention at health facilities;
- an update be provided on dental health care of children in the County when the results of the next co-ordinated National Surveys were published.

- a report on the outcome of a review of the mental health procurement exercise to see what lessons can be learned from this exercise.
- the NHS Herefordshire update should include developments relating to the Health White Paper – Equity and Excellence – Liberating the NHS, including information on GP consortia, development of Healthwatch, Health and Wellbeing Boards; and information on proposals relating to the GP led Walk in Centre.
- a presentation on West Midlands Ambulance Service’s plans to seek Foundation Trust Status.

**RESOLVED: That the Work Programme as amended be approved and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

**CHAIRMAN**