

HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 7 September 2010
At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Tom McGee (Chair) in the chair; Sue Ingham (Vice Chair) Councillors Walter Brett, Chris Gordon, Bryan Leck, Margaret McClay, Adrian Nottingham, June Somekh and Craig Wright.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 13 July 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CALL-IN

There were no items to consider.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

5. STOCKPORT NHS FOUNDATION TRUST BUSINESS PLAN 2010/11

The Committee considered copies of the Stockport NHS Foundation Trust's Business Plan for 2010/2011 (copies of which had been circulated) and was informed that a number of updates would be added within the next four weeks. Specific reference was made to the context for 2010/11 which described the external environment in which the Trust would operate this year and where relevant, for subsequent years. In response to Councillor's questions it was commented that there had been political dispute with regard to the transfer of Council services and that the arrangements would be clearer during the coming months.

With regard to the transfer of community services it reported that this was seen by the Trust in terms of an improvement to clinical pathways. However, concern was expressed that previous experience had shown that community services were neglected and undeveloped when they were part of a hospital focus.

In response to further questions it was commented that there was no current answer regarding proposals for voluntary services. It was recognised that significant pathology services would need to be provided in order to maintain certain services and that pathologists were against the centralisation of their service.

Health Scrutiny Committee – 7 September 2010

Further questions were asked with regard to allowances for and take-up of meals in hospital and the need to ensure that patients were given any necessary help when feeding. In response it was reported that the Foundation Trust employed a committee on nutrition which considered current arrangements and methods of improvement. There were systems and a care plan place to identify nutritional needs and to ensure that nursing provision was appropriate.

With regard to the reduction of hospital bed capacity and length of stay it was reported that work was in hand to ensure that patient preferred alternatives would be put in place and that the right 'packages' were available before patients were sent home. It was also recognised that A&E admissions were amongst the second highest in England and this was a measure of the lack of available alternatives. In response it was reported that a 'Choose Well' campaign was a major attempt to make the public aware of alternative provision.

In response to further questions it was reported that administration support workloads had been the focus of attention and that that new technology had helped to increase staff efficiency. It was also suggested that consideration could be given to the differing life expectancies between the affluent and those on lower incomes.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. TEENAGE PREGNANCY STRATEGY – PROGRESS TOWARDS THE 2010 TARGET

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People submitted a follow-up report (copies of which had been circulated) outlining Stockport's progress towards reducing under 18 conception rates, performance data and related challenges. Year end performance data for 2009/10 showed that Stockport had failed to meet its target to "achieve a percentage reduction in under 18 conception rates from 1998 baseline by 26%."

Councillors commented on the inconsistent trends revealed within the figures, which were experimental at this stage. The need for more accurate data was expressed and it was reported that this was in hand. In addition, Councillors recognised that short terms cuts to the strategy would lead to long term expenditure and that there were clear links to teenage pregnancy rates in respect of income and equality.

With regard to teaching in schools, the Committee was informed that 'Sex Education' was now entitled 'Relationships Education' and now had an emphasis the building of relationships between young people. In addition, Councillors commented on the need to consider how risks were managed, possible future grant reductions to voluntary organisations, and the ongoing battle to reduce teenage pregnancy.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and that further findings be reported back to the Committee in 18 months time.

7. HEALTHY WEIGHT STRATEGY

The Corporate Director, Adult Social Care & Health submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing progress on the Healthy Weight Strategy since the consultation with the Committee in September 2009. The information included examples of the strategy in action and it was reported that key aims had been allocated to strategic need.

Councillors commented on the link between obesity and poverty/deprivation and suggested that it might be useful to focus on age banding and gender then target action accordingly. Particular concern was also expressed with regard to the age group of 20 – 30 in respect of nutrition and alcohol consumption. In addition, Councillors recognised the positive work undertaken within schools through the healthy schools agenda.

The Committee was informed that work carried out in consultation with health professionals had led to the provision of four obese nurseries’.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

8. SERVICE CHANGES TO ACHIEVE FINANCIAL BALANCE

(Note – The Chair was of the opinion that this item, although not included on the agenda, should be considered as a matter of urgency in accordance with Section 4B (b) of the Local Government Act 1972, to enable the Committee to consider the item as it involved significant changes in service provision.

A report of NHS Stockport was considered (copies of which were circulated at the meeting) detailing a range of urgent decommissioning decisions as part of efforts to restore financial stability. Of a target reduction of £22m, it was reported that approximately £10m had been identified through urgent measures and that ideas were in hand for a further £8m in cuts. If the reductions were implemented, significant changes were anticipated in terms of service delivery which would change NHS Stockport in terms of its ability to provide their current range of services.

Councillors asked a number of questions in terms of the probable negative effects on service provision resulting from projected shortfalls in funding while expressing particular concern with regard the anticipated loss of funding for preventative services which were bound to have future negative knock-on effects.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

9. GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER “EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE: LIBERATING THE NHS”

The Committee was requested to compile a response in respect of proposals for democratic legitimacy in health as contained in the Government’s recent White Paper.

Health Scrutiny Committee – 7 September 2010

RESLVED – That a special meeting of the Committee be held on Monday 4th October 2010 (in meeting room 5) in order that a dedicated response could be made.

10. AGENDA PLANNING

A representative of the Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy and Democracy) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the planned agenda items for the Committee's next meeting and Forward Plan items which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.15 pm

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